THE REVIVAL OF ARISTOCRACY

BY
OSCAR LEVY

TRANSLATED BY
LEONARD A. MAGNUS

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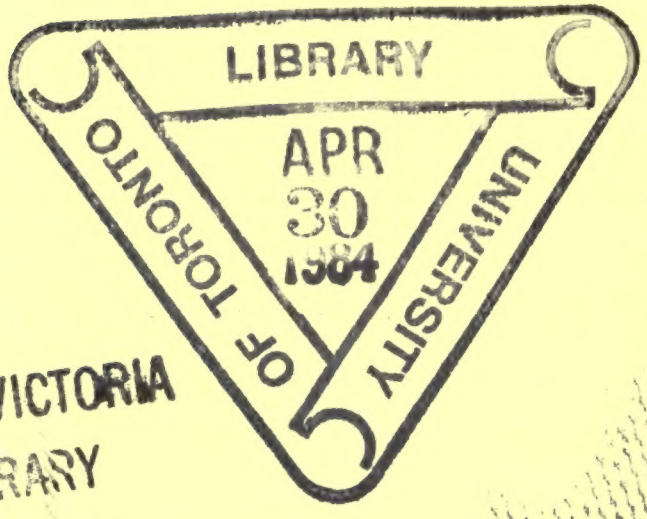

PREFACE

DEAR ENGLISHMEN,

While in the nineteenth century you have been occupied in consolidating an empire, conquering new countries, and spreading civilization to all parts of the world, you have in true British magnanimity forgotten to confer this blessing upon yourselves; you have, while benefiting others, neglected your own interests, and you have all but overlooked a new continental philosophy that is destined to play a very important part in the civilization of mankind. There is no cause for astonishment: for you have no belief in philosophy. You have succeeded splendidly without it: you have become more prosperous and powerful than other nations; you are a practical people, possessing that right instinct for the good and the bad, which is worth more than ten continental philosophies. Your disregard of philosophy even proves your happiness, for who does indulge in that malady of thought, if not the unhappy man? who has a wish for that "adversity's sweet milk," if not a poor suffering mortal? who does, in fact, try to escape into theory, dreams, ideals, if not the man

who is not pleased with reality and needs a change? Now, dear Englishmen, you are a healthy nation, you do not need a change, you are very comfortable, and you do not suffer. You have felt very little of that deep ill that has been pervading the world in our times. You have never been struck by that mental plague, pessimism, that has afflicted all Europe. You have remained strong and robust; your appetite has never been impaired; you have been sitting and copiously feeding at the dining-table of this world—helping yourselves to nice little bits of fat countries, while we were fasting and mourning—you have acquired wealth and weight, your success has made you despise your less gifted neighbours, and you have become somewhat similar to Trimalchio in Petronius Arbiter, who openly boasted that he possessed thirty millions of sesterces "*nec unquam philosophum audivit.*"

Now shall I go on and tell you about the value of philosophy? Shall I prove to you that the idea is the "*antefatto*," as the Italians say; that a new philosophy may be a more powerful enemy than all the navies of the world, and therefore well worth knowing; that your common sense is worth nothing compared with that uncommon sense you stand in need of so badly; that poetry is better than truth; that theory is more important than practice; that a very practical man, Napoleon, dreaded a philosophy, that "*idéologie allemande*," more than his

armed enemies, that he was rightly afraid of his unseen foe, and that he finally succumbed to him? I shall do nothing of the kind. I know that, should I do so, your eyes, otherwise so sharp and keen-sighted, will stare at me in bewilderment, your tongues, that can talk so ably and fluently on politics, will become less mobile, and you will very soon leave your German metaphysician with a shake of the head and a contemptuous smile.

And this word "German" twice repeated in combination with that other word "philosophy" will only increase your prejudices. But you must not be frightened. Think that I, the importer and exponent of this new creed, am not German myself, but belong to a race not without some experience in propagating new creeds; a race which has a keen business instinct for philosophies, and that most successful kind of philosophies, religions; a race that has produced a first-rate commercial traveller in new ideas—the apostle Paul. No, trust in me: I would not for anything take up the usual German philosophical article and extol its merits to the world. So you will not be led by me into a Kantian labyrinth, into an Hegelian logomachy, into a scholastic Inferno. You will not have to swallow those terrible tape-worms of German philosophical prose that was once, rightly or wrongly, called "the Sanskrit of Europe." You will be bored, I am sure—for general ideas always bore you—but this time it will not be the

absence of clearness and form that makes you prefer the Frenchman to his less polished neighbour. The fact is, that a reaction has set in in Germany against the narrow patriotism that excluded foreign style and ideas from the home market. You will be pleased to hear that the two principal exponents of the new spirit have been entirely super-German, because deeply imbued with French culture; that they have been deriding their time and their country for their national barbarism; and that this new philosophy is not so much German, but anti-German to the core.

Now I have come to a somewhat ticklish point. For you must not imagine for a moment that I mean anti-German in the narrow sense of the word. I rather mean anti-Teuton, and you English will be attacked as well as the Germans in this book of mine. Wherever the word "German" stands in the following chapters, put the word "English" instead and even accentuate my tirades—for, to tell you candidly, I have only attacked the Germans more because they are the originators of our latter-day civilization; because they are, theoretically and apologetically, the exponents of the victorious, contemporary Germanic spirit; because they are terribly in earnest with whatever they do, however silly it be; because they are the more dangerous enemies—while you English are never as thorough, never as decided, never as dead-set in your views as your cousins over the

Channel. You are a people of compromises, of opportunism, of amiable and business-like settlements; you can even strike a bargain with your own conscience and live ever happy afterwards; you can even come to an understanding with your Lord or mediate between Him and His enemies successfully, as that masterpiece of lawyer-like shrewdness, the preface to your Book of Common Prayer, clearly demonstrates. This is no doubt a great virtue, because it has preserved you from great follies, and it is no doubt a great vice, because it has sadly refrigerated your enthusiasm and your "*feu sacré.*" So you are neither thorough Protestants nor thorough Catholics; you are neither thorough Democrats nor thorough Aristocrats; you are neither thorough Socialists nor thorough Individualists; you are neither thorough Conservatives nor thorough Revolutionaries; you are neither foolish nor clever; you are neither devils nor gods. You are the people spoken of in Revelation (iii. 15) that are neither cold nor hot; and you remember what happened to these lukewarm and conciliatory gentlemen in the next verse of that gruesome chapter of the Bible. . . .

You know the Shakespearian saying: "The devil can cite Scripture!" It is a true saying. He has just done it. You will see that he is the devil, when he goes on and touches even a sorer point, when he confesses that he has spoken contemptuously in the following chapters of Christianity. Now, I do not

regret it, but I wish to point out to you this fact beforehand, that you may lay this book down at once and say no more about it; such unspoken criticism is the most outspoken and honest a writer nowadays can get. Put the book down, if you are a Christian; but, if you be not a Christian—put it at once into the fire. If, in spite of my warning, which is not given in order to make you curious, you go on, you will most likely completely misunderstand me. I am now already afraid of those reviewers and private correspondents who will grasp my hand and tell me "you are our friend, you have done right; give us a lecture on the subject!" I shall be very much ashamed of these admirers, freethinkers, rationalists, agnostics, reformers, and Ibsenites; I shall hate my brethren in St. Revoluzio, because they spoil all my pleasure in being disobedient and revolutionary myself; I shall love my enemies much better than those enthusiastic persons: but I shall console myself with the example of some one else, who also loved his enemies and, nevertheless, had, in propagating a new teaching, to suffer from the society of sinners, hysterical women, maniacs, and all the poor in spirit.

Yes, believe it, whoever understand it—in spite of my attack on Christianity: the Englishman who is a Christian is very much nearer to my heart than he who is not. If I have blamed here Christianity, Christian morals, Christian humanity and helpfulness; if I have spoken ironically of all the lighter,

minor, and female virtues this teaching has produced and still produces—I have done so in the name of those who have lifted themselves above them, who have outgrown them, who have acquired greater than Christian virtues, who stand nearer to the pagan culture of Greece and Rome than to that of the revolutionary good people which supplanted it. But never shall it enter my mind to make those good people ashamed of the small virtues they possess and are justly proud of, or to ridicule these tender teachings—the only ones that enable them to educate their children. I acknowledge the value of Christianity everywhere, but especially in England. I like that national and masculine ferocity to be paired with a little feminine sentimentality; I love that terrible Northern god Thor to put aside his deadly hammer and humbly to grasp the thin reed of his tamer Nazarene colleague; I think the strong English whisky only palatable when freely diluted in a good dose of Christian soda-water. But as to myself—I am not fond of soda-water.

But you need it, dear Englishmen, you do! And you know it yourselves! The puritan and the revivalist does you good, although his frozen face and his hysterical shouts may get sometimes on your nerves. Your narrow egotism cannot be told, as I have done in this book: "Be natural! follow your instinct! be selfish!" I must repeat it: do not listen to me! I am not a modern Mandeville, who

wishes to canonize all the seven capital sins that still slumber in the British breast. I am not a Herbert Spencer, who even encourages that pitiful egotism of his class and country—I am a faithful Ekkehard, who sits in front of his book and warns you not to enter its fiendish interior, where a pagan Venus may ensnare you and spoil your good manners and respectable morals. And I shall let pass only those happy few (or unhappy few) who understand that the logical outcome of Christianity is the modern universal democracy and even socialism ; who understand that my attack is directed against that threatened realization of the Christian Kingdom of Heaven, against that terrible state of universal love and brotherhood, that—be it from want of imagination and ideals, or from the practical and individualistic sense of the English—has not yet been reached in this country.

It is really amusing how I have to turn and shift about in my little boat to avoid the rocks and fogs of prejudice. It is true, these threaten the man who has embarked upon the high sea of speculation everywhere, but nowhere more than when approaching your island. As a matter of fact : I have been warned by friends and publishers. I have been warned from abroad. Some one wrote to me upon the publication of my book two years ago : "But you live in England ! Poor man : then you are a preacher in the desert !" So I am. But I owe

something to my desert. The desert is an excellent place for anybody who can make use of it, as biblical and post-biblical experience proves. Without my desert I should not have written my book. Without coming to England I should have become a modern creature, going in for money and motor-cars. For I was born with a fatal inclination for such lighter and brighter kind of things. I was born under a lucky star, so to say : I was born with a warm heart and a happy disposition ; I was born to play a good figure in one of those delightful *fêtes champêtres* of Watteau, Lancret, and Boucher, with a nice little shepherdess on my arm, listening to the sweet music of Rossini and drinking the inspiring " Capri bianco " or " Verona soave " of that beautiful country Italy. But the sky over here is not blue—nor grows there any wine in England—and no Rossini ever lived here ; and towards the native shepherdesses I adopted the ways of the Christian towards his beautiful ideals : I admired them intensely but kept myself afar. So there was nothing to console your thirsty and disenchanted traveller in the British Sahara. In the depths of his despair, there was sent to him, as to the traveller in the desert, an enchanting vision, a beautiful *fata Morgana* rising on the horizon of the future, a fertile and promising Canaan of a new creed that had arisen in Germany (there too as a revulsion against the desert): the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.

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The Revival of Aristocracy

I

NAPOLEON AND AFTER

TIMES of disruption are not favourable to great men. When the Roman Empire sank to the depths before the deluge of Christianity, it was not long ere what was left of the firm Roman rocks was swept away in the dun floods. When the German Revolution, euphemistically baptized the Reformation, gave the Renascence of Italy its death-blow, not one man arose capable of stemming the unlocked waters. It was only at the third and last plague of this description, namely, the breaking of the French Revolution over Europe, that Nature was kind, and created—after the manner of some of her bacilli—the remedy to counter the disease, a Napoleon to baffle anarchy.

When Napoleon came forward, anarchy was for Europe nothing strange. Since the downfall of the Roman Empire anarchy had laid firm root on this continent, had become a phenomenon to which her victims were quite accustomed. The names conferred on the anarchists might, indeed, change during those

two thousand years: in the Middle Ages they were called heretics; during Luther's time, peasants and anabaptists; under Louis XVI., Sansculottes, Jacobins; or again, in the nineteenth century, communists, socialists, popularists, up-to-date men,—but the multiplicity of names only concealed the self-same strivings. With the anarchy of individuals, the anarchy of the European States ran parallel,—to offer a further proof of the close connection of morals and politics. This State anarchy was styled the balance of the Powers, and consisted in that condition of feebleness and vacillation and lordlessness that thenceforth forbade to any people a Roman sovereignty. Or, since sovereignty is never permitted but always taken, there no longer existed in Europe any imperial people. Or better still, since there has never been an imperial people, but only imperial individuals, there was no man in Europe at this epoch strong enough to manacle the anarchy of citizen and state.

But Napoleon had been a man who might have been able to effect this; in his artist's brain there still hovered the old dream of the Roman Empire that had enchanted the Middle Ages, and to an artist's fantasy he conjoined a conqueror's energy. He took up once again the German notions of empire, and talked of a *translatio imperii Romani ad Francos.* East and West were embraced in this mighty man's mind; the welding of Europe and Asia into one agitated him, who would be Alexander the Great *plus* Caesar. Politically and morally, he would regenerate the world; he came to understand that, without a different moral order, no new polity could be; without a new

faith no intelligent civilization was possible; and, on his expedition to the East, he announced: "I wished to found a new religion; already I saw myself on an elephant, on my head a turban, and a new Koran, drawn up by myself, in my hand."

Instinctively the great man felt that his greatest enemy was the old Koran, with its rights of the generality, of all, of the people as against extraordinary men, the right of the weaker against the strong, of the uncouth against the beautiful, of woman against man, of the serf against his lord. To this Nazarene view of mutual love, containing within itself the postulate of equality, French aristocracy had succumbed. The country, which in the eighteenth century had had the intellectual hegemony of Europe, was now leaderless. And the aspect of things in Europe and on her thrones was the same: four kings were daft; aristocracy was no more. And when the iron fist of the Italian, with the blood of the Sforzas, the Malatestas, and Piccininos in his veins, clashed down on these amiable and weak governments, they cowered down helpless, and knelt.

Napoleon's first idea was the union of Europe, his second the re-birth of aristocracy. The good blood of Letizia Ramolino was to supply the delicate frozen common sense of the North with a little more "brio." Napoleon and his family inter-married with the ancient dynasties; these monarchs, after the union of Europe, were to build their palaces in Paris; their presence was to give his coronation as Emperor an air of consecration. The Pope, too, was to come to Paris, as the spiritual master to his temporal lord, the heir of Charlemagne. Napoleon

only regretted he could not transport St. Peter as well, and erect that noble temple in the stead of his miserable Notre Dame.

But the Koran, the old Koran, withstood these titanic designs. Little men had little ideas, and little was the epoch that met the hero. Seldom had so great a man been seen, never so paltry a time. Never had Christian persuasions of equality penetrated so deeply into the masses as in the early nineteenth century, and not only there, but also into their leaders, their rulers, their artists, into every head up to the poet. The populace was everything. Three men only understood the Corsican : these were three poets. And, curiously enough, these three belonged to three peoples, the constant champions in the world's history of the lowering and not the raising of man, of the lessening of his worth, the representation of the common, of numbers against the rare, the exceptional, and the divine. One was Goethe, the German, with whom Napoleon once drafted a tragedy, *Julius Caesar.* Julius Caesar also, like Napoleon, had been overwhelmed by the jealousy, envy, and crassness of little men. The second " Hosanna dem Kaiser " came from the lips of a Jew, from the pen of Heinrich Heine the democrat. True, he often spoke of barricades and the Marseillaise and the liberation of slaves, but his satire was only aimed at the shifty and enfeebled leaders of his day, and his scourge bowed in reverence to one really notable. The third ally was an Englishman, who, on hearing of the Battle of Waterloo, shook his fist and said, " I am damned sorry." He was a nobleman, but one who on sufficient grounds despised his own kinsmen

and people, like Heine and Goethe—it was Lord Byron.

But the old Koran was the predestined foe and conqueror of Napoleon, his pitiless *Ἄτη*, his consciously immanent *fatalité*. It is easy to fill a people with enthusiasm, hard to keep them enthusiastic. And he was one and they were many. Even thus he would have won, and a kindlier heaven might have risen over Europe; the plague-stricken atmosphere and all the after-misery would have been spared this Continent, had not "public opinion," which Goethe so contemned, turned even in France against this man and helped the stupid old cow, Europe, to conquer her conqueror. When the allied monarchs came back to French soil, Caesar cried out in anguish: "The fools! Cannot they see that I have stifled anarchy and revolution, and laboured twenty years to give monarchy a new lease of life? They will see that, after I am gone, theirs will not be the strength to dam the flood, which will sweep them along."

No oracle ever foretold a more fearful truth. After Napoleon's death the nineteenth century came in and broke over Europe; a time that ought to bear the name of a most terrible, a darkest, and most superstitious medievalism.

Since Napoleon the outcome of the Christian democratic revolution has swayed throughout Europe. For the first time in the world's history, Christianity was not only believed in (which is comparatively harmless) but practised and made real. The Kingdom of God, which was not intended to be of this world, nevertheless was founded on earth. For the first time philanthropy became universal and extended to

all that was feeble, commonplace, pitiable, unsound, and helpless ; and these elements, through the charity and humanity of the epoch, were horribly fostered. Since then, as regards quantity, the population of the earth has rapidly increased, and, like the weeds in the field, to the prejudice of quality : for it was from the rich and wise and strong that the new teaching, now revived, stole away their best. This unqualified Christian doctrine of love quelled all passions ; none who cannot hate can possibly love. If the great motive-forces of man, his own heart, his instinct and his egoism, the great passions, be stunted, all doing is baulked. Mankind was lamed, his sins were less—and his achievements ; his will-power suffered ; his desires became confused ; he began whittling himself down, studying refinement, groaning, boring himself ; finally reflecting whether life was worth living—cursing everything, like Faust :

> Accursed be knowledge and accursed be faith,
> On patience be the supremest curse !

And whilst, in the breast of this embryo of the nineteenth century, two souls still lived and strove against each other, in the breast of the men of the expiring age not even one soul might be found, for the soul, whence the light and air of self-love had been reft, had gradually died away.

The masses, thus not only dangerously multiplied, but also robbed of their leaders, began to feel quite uncomfortable. A horse is glad to be ridden when a good horseman is on its back. An iron sheet likes being hammered, if it be conscious that one day a kettle will be made out of it :

Liken the land to this anvil and unto the sovereign the hammer,
Unto the people the sheet, moulding itself to some form.
Woe worth the hapless sheet, if blows raining down on it aimless,
Strike it uncertainly, and never a caldron appear.

(GOETHE.)

But the reign of mediocrity, the command of one not born to command, the judgment that comes staggering and slow out of the mouths of sly, blinking, round-shouldered officials is odious even to such a patient ass as a people. And even though the upper classes had forfeited their will-power, and through their educational system and their society turned their attention to preventing any greater man piercing upwards amongst them, yet the lower sections of the people, not vitiated to the same extent by the ideas of the time, still possessed their strength of will. Revolts broke out everywhere. Liberal, communist, anarchist ideas of the most insane order thrust themselves forward. Everywhere could the cry of the huge shepherdless flock be heard. Everywhere the weak met the weak in combat, crowding, scuffling, hot and angry ; and, thanks to the prevailing principle of humanity, the weak ever multiplied and increased, and with every decade their leaderlessness became greater. Thus Napoleon's prophecy was fulfilled. On the descendants of the *misérables* who had not understood that his fight had been in support of the thrones of Europe, their fathers' crime came home, and was visited in a terrible and unparalleled manner. The rage of the populace was let loose and vented itself in attacks on the lives of their masters. Italy had been the land of energy, of love

and hate, where, as a poet has said, the plant of man grows stronger than elsewhere in Europe, and thence originated many of the sturdy but brainless criminals, whose hands impartially emptied the thrones of Europe and the seats of ministerial and presidential power. And any one who at that time saw the heads of the European states drive about at a fast pace, between ranks of soldiery and accompanied by black-habited cyclists and with cuirassiers trotting anxiously on either side; who saw beside them nervous Court-dames carefully glancing round the corners for possible bomb-throwers;—persecuted shadows condemned to nod a friendly smile to their own foes and murderers; —fugitives in their own country, vanishing with a sigh of relief within the portals of some well-guarded palace,—at this sight he may well have thought of Napoleon's curse: "*Misérables! Ils ne voient pas que j'ai éteint les révolutions, et travaillé vingt ans à consolider la monarchie? Ils verront qu'après moi ils ne seront pas assez forts pour arrêter le torrent, qui les entraînera tous.*"

In philosophy, art, and literature a reflected picture of the humanitarian age might soon be seen. From the despair of a Faust the downward course arrived at a Buddhistic Nirvana, at the negation of the will, the extirpation of longings, wishes, and hopes, as recommended in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Teeth had decayed; better have them out for peace' sake. So, too, if some will still lingered on, it were better to offer this remnant also to the surgeon, for in epochs devoid of passions everything not already attuned to unison runs the greatest risk. Imprisonment usually seemed the worst and a social ostracism but a slight

penalty which a decadent day might easily condone for its less decadent sons ; it was not long ere Falstaff's words could obtain in Europe :

> There live not three good men unhanged in England, and one of them is fat and grows old——

and men like Dostoyevski and other seers might voice their complaints that the most talented of that time must end their days in prison.

Together with the saplessness of the time, its absence of passion, and lack of instinct, might be found mixture of blood and crossed wills ; and in individuals unions of incongruous and contradictory strivings, begotten of senseless marriages between different ranks, and the so-called love-matches of effeminate, enervated weaklings with the steadfastness of a weathercock. Rousseau's ideal of equality had sunk deep into men's characters. His Julie and St. Preux had already been of unlike station in life ; Faust was the university scholar, whereas Gretchen's family had not even a servant ; and the blood of gentlemen was being to an extraordinary and undiscerning extent contaminated with that of their servants. European noses grew flatter, foreheads narrower, the ironical smile became rarer, eyes smaller, glinting more craftily and with less divine composure. In the stead of that peace which consciousness of an ideal, or a task, or an inward zeal confers on man, there arose neurasthenic spasms, an atmosphere of haste and scurry ; every bawler received ingenuous homage, and every novelty and stupidity was welcomed ; and in the general lack of good taste, under the auspices of which nothing became prominent save what was

spicy, exceptional, glaring or fast, eccentric or unusual, that which was universally and eternally true, the supreme humanity, the natural simplicity, could not any longer make itself evident.

In fact, the world had turned sour. Nowhere was blitheness, pleasure, contentment, or quiet enjoyment to be had. Some minds, who dwelt in the past, looked back regretfully to the days of Plautus and Terence when even slaves had a merry time. What did the latter-day hinds do? They were rebelling against lords who were lords no more, whose greasy civic ethics made the burden of obedience infinitely heavier for their subjects. Christian teaching had indeed freed the labourer, but there was no Christ to spread a banquet for the freedman, and no Father in heaven to whom the Son erstwhile referred, who fed the ravens, which neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn. The labourers hungered and were afflicted. Under the stress of the balance of the powers, and their feuds, and unforeseen tariff-wars, or bad harvests, no far-sighted reckoning could be made to aid the distress of the overpopulation; and suddenly thousands of the freed brethren were thrown on the streets. Then their cry sounded in the homes of the rich, who felt some little qualm—they had still some remnant of conscience left—or went to the theatre and encored the dramatist who was pleading for the fourth estate: this was all very disquieting, but who could amend it?

After the freed slave came the freed woman. Whilst one dramatist was portraying the misery of the lower classes, the other was declaring that of the upper, their conjugal misfits, the misunderstood wife,

the husband mean, inactive, abased. Shrill the clamour of the feminine sex echoed, not only in the warring home-circle, but also in books and from pulpit and platform. The husband was engrossed in his professional world; his wife was free, cultured, and his equal consort. The ethics of the day celebrated only the private and negative virtues of family life; not power, but avoidance of mistakes; not deeds, but endurance and patience; actions that sustained weakness, and not actions that favoured strength. The ideal was a nurse's work in hospitals, love marital and maternal, home cares, the "unselfish" self-sacrifice of the mother to the child, and other feminine, cosmic, picture-book virtues of this order. Helplessness only honours and understands helplessness. Thus it was everywhere. Generations visibly emasculated. The smell from this simmering witches' caldron forced nicer nostrils away in disgust. Many better natures, repelled by this pettiness and untruth and impertinence, crawled into their shells, became confirmed bachelors and would not propagate.

The field of literature was barren, because men feared the criticism of incompetent critics who everywhere had the say in Parliaments, in ministries, journalism, and universities; men durst not work and committed the task to the unworthier. Others, again, found consolation in the religion of suffering: the figure of the Redeemer who had borne so much more met their eye; the faith of solace again had its votaries who needed solace; churches and monasteries, which had been almost empty during the eighteenth century, filled up anew; the Pope's authority revived; the satire that had once poured

forth from the lips of a Voltaire over the pastor of Christendom was heard no more; the doctrine of poverty for the hapless and burthened was not, as before, condescendingly smiled at by the aristocracy and clergy of France. Hapless and laden were now all men; the invalid again required his tonic—and greedily gulped down the Christian Locusta's poison, which afforded relief for wounds she herself had inflicted.

More even, than from the outer world did the nobler natures suffer in themselves, in their conscience. A terrible severment yawned open between body and soul, desire and reason, feeling and doctrine, intellect and sensuality, morals and politics. Only as rough and unphilosophic a nation as the English could, during the Transvaal War, burn houses down and fight against women and children abroad, and, at home, fine a man £10 for maltreating a cockatoo; any other people would have been shattered by such contradictory principles of public and private morals. And this hypocrisy was not only English but universal, for at this fearful time every man and every state was hypocritical. Again and again consciences revolted against the conventions and falsehood of state and society, of commerce and intercourse: never did these consciences hurl themselves against Christian philosophy, the creator of these lies by its condemnation of the ego. They still always aimed their artillery at the liars and hypocrites themselves, who were, of course, far more worthy people than the real besotted half-Christians who accepted the teaching. The irksome and oppressive mask of hypocrisy, which almost stifled

the speaker, was the price paid by the compulsory Christian to offended Nature ; it was only just that such a treason should involve its own punishment.

Thus the world was weighed down with a Cimmerian darkness of barbarous civilization. But already, in the middle of the nineteenth century, we can trace a few genial sunbeams warming the wintry air, and see a few buds still almost beneath the snow. Like the old Renascence, this newer re-birth is signalized by three names.

II

STENDHAL

WHEN travellers nowadays visit the Dauphiné at that Alpine capital, Grenoble, they always should go to see a plastered two-storey building, lettered up as " Musée et Bibliothèque," and standing in a square with flowering avenues. Their Baedecker will guide them into a room in which the local patriotism of bygone days has hung up rows of portraits of famous Dauphinois in frock-coats and bedecked with stars and orders. Most of them are forgotten. One little picture, however, in a gold frame, the work of a novice, attracts longer and keener attention. Reverently the tourist gazes at a face not particularly handsome, cased in with mutton-chop whiskers, its mien gentle and kindly; the eyes merry but searchingly scanning something that annoys them and has provoked in the left corner of the mouth a very characteristic sarcastic smile. The name inscribed below is: Henri Beyle (Stendhal). The tourist is standing in front of the first philosopher of the second European Renascence.

At all times there have been men who were the Opposition party of their epoch. Deeply is he harrowed who stands apart in solitude, and plods misunderstood and unacknowledged through his

life, whilst his inferiors have to their lot plaudits and laurels; it is a deep pain, and yet fraught with a deep contentment: pride, one of man's noblest passions, is sated, and a pleasant feeling, contempt for one's fellows, is kindled. Naturally, to differ from the race of men is perilous; we only love those like ourselves, and hate all non-conformities. But never in the world's record was it more jeopardous, disastrous, or chilly to stand alone, to be original with the weight of prescience, than at the time when Stendhal thundered his "NO" to the face of post-Revolutionary civilization and measured his whole Herculean strength against the torrential flood-stream of democracy, when he defied his age with his scornful challenge: "*Le présent, je m'en moque.*" True, in the nineteenth century the risk was less than in foregone days: enmity, malice, and hate, or the dungeon were no longer the meed of bold innovators who preluded the coming age. For such manly feelings the epoch of feebleness no longer possessed the energy. Yet this softening was far worse than open war; a thousand pin-pricks wounded the hero, but never an honourable stab; the great man was simply disregarded, not publicly reproved. Vengeance had a new rule of three in the nineteenth century: I cannot understand; don't take any notice; he's mad. The few distinguished men of this period were called monsters and upbraided. Never had any epoch been known so unconsciously and deeply hostile to the great; never, on such a maxim as that of universal liberation so as to foster some submerged genius, had there followed results so entirely contradictory and unforeseen.

No age had done more for the good of the poor in spirit, nor so thwarted the gifted, as this reign of Christian democracy. All pre-eminence was laid low—for none was there to recognise it.

Poor Stendhal, the last of the aristocrats, had to withstand the first onset of a plebs let loose, and in a realm where democracy had celebrated its last orgy and was most logically carried through,—in France. There, as elsewhere, the Revolution had thrust the middle classes up to the surface—those men who had better have remained buried, and been used as the basis and not as the pinnacle of the social pyramid. They were professors, doctors, lawyers, officials, merchants, engineers—the entire professional mob of slaves, glued to the benches of the counter or the library, or the university-galley; and they who had no leisure to form opinions of their own were summoned to be the leaders of the post-Napoleonic era. Stendhal held himself aloof and mournfully would often gaze in retrospect at the beauty of the past century, in which a ruling aristocracy had still viewed the world gaily and naturally; and he deplored the memory of the Grandseigneur: "all the philosophers of the eighteenth century," he writes, "have demonstrated to me that the Grandseigneur is an unmoral and very dangerous person. I can only retort that I passionately revere my Grandseigneur, the merry, cultured man who is no more, who never took anything in a tragical and heavy spirit . . . I like Society, and the condition of hysterics and disquiet into which it has sunk, troubles me. Should I not regret the fact that I, who have but one day to live in this chamber of

earth, am to find it besieged by masons who are restoring it, painters who are colouring it from evil-smelling pails, and carpenters noisily hammering the floor with all their might? These workers all aver but for them the whole house would collapse: be it so. But why was not I to have the luck to become tenant before repairs began?"

Stendhal was one of that rarest class of writers, of that best kind of philosophers, those men of uncommon texture, who were the products of classical antiquity, and only once again emerged for a short while during the Renascence, and then only to disappear for ever: he was also a man of action. Writing was to him just what it should be, a makeshift. That in the beginning was the Word, as the Gospel of St. John says, he would have doubted strongly. Like Faust, he would have substituted "the deed," or, after Napoleon, have liked to levy soldiers to crush wordy M.P's; he would, too, have commanded "away with these babblers." Byron once regretted that he had sunk to the level of a rhyme-smith and word-maker; and in like manner did Stendhal console himself for his pen-craft with the Englishman's words: "Something ought to be done, but luckily there's nothing to do." He prefaced his "History of Italian Painting" with a quotation from Alfieri: "My only reason for writing was that my gloomy age afforded me no other occupation." Before he, under the rule of the restored Bourbons, had resolved to live as a private individual, in disgust at the little successors of a great man, he had served in Napoleon's army. As an administrator he had gained his Emperor's thanks. He went through the Russian campaign in the

company of officers he disliked; who in their turn thought very meanly of the be-uniformed philosopher and psychologist who read Voltaire by the light of the camp-fire. He used to stand in deep thought on the bridge over the Memel, and watch Napoleon's international army defiling past him, whilst he studied their various physical and moral peculiarities; but his companions could hardly have apprehended the thinker in their mess-mate. Not long afterwards Stendhal abandoned soldiering; only for a short while later did he become a very self-willed civil servant: this much can therefore be said in his praise, that his character was never spoiled by any continuous profession. An inquisitive country cousin once asked him what was his occupation; he replied "*observateur du cœur humain.*"

What reproach did the philosopher of Grenoble, then, cast at his age? He indicted it for its weakness, its fumbling will, the supremacy of the head over the heart, the luke-warmness of its impulses and desires. And why was that era so gloomy and consumptive? Because in the souls of its leaders passion had ceased to beat. Passion, which is the best and real and fundamental in man, the steam that drives the machine, the mother of crafts and fame and infamy, "*le ressort qui fait les grands hommes*," was lacking to his age. This was the golden thread that ran through his works. "Without passion there is neither virtue nor vice" was his persistent theme. Weakness knows neither good nor evil, and is too paltry even to do evil. It does not sin, because it cannot; it tells no lies, for it cannot; it neither robs nor murders, for its courage is no more. To Stendhal

nineteenth-century morality seemed monkish; it makes need into a virtue, and pillories those greater than itself. This morality lauds only negative virtues; thus woman is more virtuous than man, because there are fewer female convicts. To his adoration of true, deep-inwrought passions, be they hate or love or pride or ambition, Stendhal offered up his all: humanity, he maintained, had had so many teeth drawn by the systems of government, state, tradition, and morals, that it was high time to breathe into mankind anew some whit of the divine spark; otherwise a generation of man might come that destroyed nothing but also created nothing; and this was the fearsome danger.

To understand the purblindness and derision with which Stendhal's principles were received, let us carry ourselves back to the breezeless atmosphere of the nineteenth century. Millions fainted if a spider were squashed, or poetized on a falling leaf, or made out that they loved and lived only for their neighbour: men had none but unselfish motives, and, in the stead of serving themselves, boasted their preference of serving art, science, or mankind at large. And this social scheme was actually followed all the length and breadth of Europe, from Madrid to St. Petersburg, from Rome to London, by the various Upper Tens, who were all very polished, very wooden, very stately, and, at the utmost, very amiable people, who in their passionless Code of Decencies penalized in company all gesticulation and every expression of any feeling, and altogether forbade clenched fists, angry looks, quivering nostrils. The passions were more and more suppressed from generation to

generation and finally flickered out. French nobles, bred in the school of Louis XV., forgot to seize the first Jacobin they met by the nape of his neck and to kick him downstairs. On the contrary, they let themselves be driven to prison and be led to the slaughtering-place like tame sheep. Louis XVI. donned the red cap, instead of routing his rebellious subjects with a whiff of grape-shot, and quite mildly nodded to the mob from the Tuileries, a sight which drew from young Bonaparte the cutting Italian expression: "*Che coglione!*" "Louis, you may sit down," said the President to his former king on his trial, and Louis meekly sat down, instead of announcing, like Charles I., "I will not be judged save by my peers."

The nobility of 1830 consisted of wishy-washy characters, like the marble columns of their palaces, cold and polished, none of whom took part in the Barricades, because street-fighting was not the proper thing. This was indeed a lapse from the spirit of energy of the sixteenth century. The new generation of the nineteenth was to be wholly effeminate, enfeebled and nerveless, was to waver, womanish, from moment to moment between ardent sympathy and incalculable gusts of passion; now raging *more mulierum*, as Tacitus says, now *more Christianorum* in throes of uncontrollable over-zeal: and all these feelings differed from the great passions of the Renascence entirely in their being derived from strengthlessness, and hence being so much more purblind.

It was only evident that such a tame society, so systematized, so conventional, and so unmanned, was

bound to cast off all those whose blood still beat hotter. Hence it followed that the asylums kept by these fine domestic pets necessarily contained all their best—namely, all those who gibbed at civilization, all the few survivals of more manly ages who would have then become the captains and condottieri —men like the Cellinis and Michael Angelos, whose art was none the less great because they now and then dabbled in murder. Dagger-thrusts and works of art often come from the same source, from the passions. Later ages will see the curse under which the nineteenth century lay; it threw an even darker pall over this epoch than over the previous Middle Ages with all their witch-baitings, *autos-da-fé*, and inquisitions: men at that time regarded the deed but not the doer, did not grasp that the measure of criminality is the criminal, did not imagine that their failing was just what many evildoers did possess; that strength and energy in action had to find one natural outlet in violence, when society was so civil and uniform, because there was no discharging station. Would not sheep accuse men of immorality, and, if they could, lock them up? For men occasionally kill them, and shear them at least once a year. What is Man's reply? I am the stronger, and that is my nature; you are sheep, and non-adepts in ethics. But should the sheep be too many, and their watch-dogs turn against him too, then woe betide Man; then he must not stir one foot—and the dear good sheep will live a life of security, but will, nevertheless, have lost their shepherd.

These ideas will one day, as Stendhal hoped, be

those of the man in the street. It will be difficult to conceive how astounded was that established and adulterated caste, which was with every generation sinking lower, when Stendhal preached the principles of his philosophy to them—true, with the greatest caution, under varying pseudonyms—saying: bandits are the Opposition-party of this decayed age. All the most remarkable, original, and gifted of our time are serving as galley-slaves. Convicts have one great virtue, lacking to those of their fellow-citizens who are about and free: *la force du caractère.* According to Stendhal, the marauder Maudrin (who in the eighteenth century made the half of France unsafe, attacked cities, defeated the regular army, and was at last betrayed by his mistress, and, after a short trial, broken on the wheel, and so died "nobly") had a hundred times more military talent than all the generals in France put together. The regicide Fieschi had in his person more will than all the conjoint one hundred and sixty peers who condemned him to a just death. Travellers to Rome, no doubt, remember the district of Trastevere, with its beautiful women and dark-browed men; down to very late it enjoyed a reputation for savagery and poetry. There, during Stendhal's life-time, as afterwards, every minute a man was murdered.

"A bad part of the town," muttered the milksops of editorial and statistical offices.

"Not at all," said Stendhal, "a charming neighbourhood; energy is there still to be had, a quality significantly disappearing from our times."

The good Italians, he thought, were the Calabrians. South of the Tiber the forcefulness and happiness

of savagery could still be seen. Some one told him one day that he thought the Italian rabble the worst of any: Stendhal took that as a proof of the superiority of the Southerner over the Northerner. When he was being bored as French Consul, in Cività Vecchia, he wrote to Balzac:

"It's awful: women here have only one idea, a new Parisian hat. No poetry here or tolerable company—except with prisoners; with whom, as French consul, I cannot possibly seek friendship."

When such narrow views prevailed, must not these doctrines have exploded like bomb-shells? His teaching comprised a revolt against everyone and everything: he preached selfishness, the needs of individuality, the right of the stronger, mightier, and more passionate elements in an era which had embroidered on its banner philanthropy for all. An age which commiserated delinquents, declared them to be mad, and measured their skulls, he told that most of the insane were running about free. No wonder, then, if he were depicted as a symbol of immorality. He knew it and recked nought of it. "In the nineteenth century one must be either a monster or a sheep," he wrote to Lord Byron to console his indignation at his ostracism by English society.

Some day it will be seen that Stendhal, as against his time, was in the right; his disdain will be understood, and the civilization of that day recognized as a guillotine that lopped off all the best heads. Posterity will grieve at the tragedy of these tiny, weak, crafty Liliputians eagerly setting about the

task of fettering the sleeping Gulliver; but their great success, at the very beginning of the century, gives us the motto of their training: the great must go to prison. The first giant of that time was dragged to St. Helena. The second was accorded by this doleful age its alternative penalties: Stendhal all but starved. He was too proud to enrol himself in a society he contemned. The sight of a friend making his way gave him the shudders, at the thought of the condescensions, trickeries, and cringings indispensable for this end. Suicide often tempted him. The first great and true Antichrist suffered somewhat as did Christ, whose morality he was warring against.

It is not too much to say that the deity of the nineteenth century was hardly believed in, but seemed a sort of kinsman, was loved and understood and honoured, if not as God, as a noble, helpful man. But Stendhal's estimation of Jesus Christ was not as commendatory as that of his contemporaries. His friend Prosper Mérimée has left an anonymous book entitled, "*H.B., par un des quarante, avec un frontispice stupéfiant dessiné et gravé. Eleuthéropolis, l'an* 1864 *du mensonge Nazaréen.*" Mérimée tells us here that Stendhal wrote a drama on the life of Jesus Christ, and portrayed him as a simple ingenuous soul, full of tenderness and delicacy, but not the man to command others.

"One day," Mérimée continues, "we met Stendhal at the house of the famous *comédienne* Mme. Pasta. He was relating a little cosmogony:

"'Once upon a time, before things had been made, God was a very clever artisan. Day and night he

kept on working, and talked very little. But he was always inventing something new, suns, comets, and so on. He was once told :

"'"You really ought to write a book and perpetuate these magnificent results."

"'"No," replied God, "nothing is as yet as perfect as I should like. Just let me complete my discoveries and we'll see."

"'But one fine day God died, quite suddenly—perhaps of heart-disease. His son, who was being brought up by the Jesuits, was at once called in. He was a gentle and zealous youth, without an inkling of practical mechanics. He was conducted into his father's workshop.

"'"Start away," they told him, "and govern the world."

"' The poor boy was in a quandary and asked :

"'"But how did my father do it?"

"'"Oh, he used to turn this wheel, and make this or that out of it."

"'The son is turning the wheel—and the engines are reversed!'"

Heine had already declared that "after the fall of Christendom we should have to give our wives new thoughts and chemises, and fumigate all our feelings, as though after a plague." This man thus already anticipated the "transvaluation of all values," and Stendhal's picture of the reversed engines of Christianity would no doubt have amused him. But in Heine, somewhat inexplicably, often the patriot outweighed the man, and deeply in him there was an enthusiasm for his German home, despite the reciprocal scoldings of poet and people, a love no

hatred could stifle, which he once attributed to the kinship in morality between the Germans and the Jews. But Stendhal and his chivalry were characterized by one feature that assimilates them to the first Christians they so disdained: they had no country. The word "patriotism" never passed the lips of the French cosmopolitan without an ironic twitch of the mouth. To him it was a mere disguise and not a manly motive, a rag with which contemporary blockheads covered the emptiness of their heart; a pretty jacket borrowed from another civilization, clad in which the foolish nigger of democratic training strutted about to his own self-complacency. "A patriot is either a dolt or a rogue," he used to say. Montesquieu had taught him that in Europe life was quite as tolerable under one government as under another—"*je m'en fiche d'être conquis*," was one of his phrases. He preferred to live abroad, probably because one is most sensible of the rabble that speaks one's own language. In antiquity, the state of affairs had been different; the citizen was inextricably connected with his country. Then a choice was left to the condemned between banishment and death; then the burgher had some interest in the State. The welfare of the State was his welfare, and its defeat meant his own death and the enslavement of his wife and children. But how stood it in the Christian State? Condone it who may; it gave itself airs, puffed and blew its cheeks, called itself a State, and talked big of death for the fatherland and duties to the Commonweal. Why, the Commonweal had become common, so common that every collier and clerkling had his little

word to say. Stendhal would not accept the historic parallel :

> Ye prate aloud in every school
> Of Roman patriots :
> They did not share with clowns their rule,
> Nor gave their lands to sots.

And thus the countrylessness of these new Anti-christs took a quite different direction from that of the first Christians. Stendhal stood above the State, the Christians beneath it. The latter might have declared war against the heathen State, for that dream of a universal brotherhood lured them on, of which the German philosopher, Kant, was the last inheritor ; these vulgar people might have sworn enmity to Rome in life and death, on the plea that they, the slaves, had no say in the State. This they might have done ; but for Stendhal and his contemporaries exactly the opposite conditions obtained : in the Christian State the masters had no might. Rule went by polls and not by brains. Stendhal's interest was only in his equals, not in the mob, albeit they from time to time grunted their patriotism. "My country is where there are most people like me." His finer nature recoiled of itself before the reeking society of his time, before the half-socialized State, which society had cut after their own pattern, before that enormous coffee-grinder that ground everything down to equally insignificant pulp. Stendhal hated his country, and called it "*le plus vilain pays du monde que les nigauds appellent la belle France.*" Once necessity constrained him to accept the French consulate at Cività Vecchia : and in that same consulate in a moment of revulsion he

abjured his nationality. He would not be buried in France, in the ungrateful soil that had brought him only ill; his fiery soul was far more akin to that of the natural Italian than to the frivolous and theatrical Frenchman; half of his life he had passed in Italy, in the south, the favourite resort of all representers of the great awakening: and for his tombstone he himself drew up the inscription:

ARRIGO BEYLE MILANESE,
VISSE, SCRISSE, AMÒ.

III

GOETHE

A DISTINGUISHED German, who lived through the struggle against Napoleon, was once asked how he had managed to exist during the days of shame, defeat, and humiliation. He replied: "I have nothing to complain of. Like one who, from the fastness of a cliff, gazes down on the raging sea, unable to help the ship-wrecked crew, but also out of the reach of the billows—according to Lucretius, a not unpleasant feeling—I have been standing in security, and have watched the fury of the storm passing by me."

At these words, which were spoken with a strange composure, the listeners shivered. One of them at once held forth in enthusiastic patriotism, and was bravoed by the others; but he who had provoked this outbreak said no more, but stared fixedly into vacancy. He, too, like Stendhal, was a Manfred-like soul:

> From my youth
> My spirit walked not with the souls of men,
> Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes:
> The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
> The aim of their existence was not mine;
> My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers
> Made me a stranger.

And this man, too, whose words savoured of anarchy to those deaf to them, was the greatest German of the nineteenth century, was the poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

It was not only on the political combats and storms of his emasculate fellow-countrymen that Goethe looked down with indifference; to those troubles of the heart, which Rousseau's teaching had quickened, a philanthropic and educational enthusiasm, he was not merely apathetic; he was positively hostile. In the Revolution's very honeymoon this famous man made the Revolution laughable, and his satire knew no bounds when he was told of the decree conferring on Schiller French citizenship. Goethe understood what was to be expected of the Reign of Reason, he who understood how sparsely reason is distributed on earth. Often he quoted Epicurus' motto: that what the people disapproves must be right. He knew that government was an art to be learnt like any other, and only to be mastered by those born to it. In his soul he hated state-dabblers, and the topsy-turvydom of the day which forced the millions to express their views on what they did not understand. He never read the periodicals, and only learned the events of the day at dinner-table. In his Epigrams and *Xenien* he declaimed against public opinion and the liberty of the press and other modern acquisitions.

To a man of Goethe's disposition, sensible, joyous, and strongly impulsive, the vampire of that Christianity and that Christian philosophy which branded every self-based yearning as sinful and wrong must have been utterly repulsive; and this feeling he also had in regard to him who with tender

words founded a religion of melancholy, who, like all weaklings, so often varied the note of love for tones of abuse. Stendhal had drawn Christ as a feckless youth, without knowledge of the ways of the world. Goethe, however, in one of the Venetian Epigrams, applauded the crucifixion of the thirty-year old Saviour. Better was it, he thought, that this "good man" grew no older; otherwise revengefulness might have made him the dupe, as often happens, into an arch-deceiver; even as slaves whom Fate designates to the throne become the worst of tyrants:

Crucify every fanatic before his years number thirty:
Show them the world, and forthwith simpletons turn into rogues.

Mournfully he admitted:

"Christ is risen!" nothing stands
Firmer rooted in all lands:
Eighteen hundred years, full sure,—
And two more, doth it endure!

Goethe loathed the cross as he did "insects, tobacco, and garlic." He knew well enough what it was that had released the masses of his day, and whence arose the evil odours and the clangour of his time: he fully perceived that the French Revolution was only the last link in the chain that reached back to primitive Christianity by way of the German Reformation.

"As of old Lutherdom, so now French ideals are forcing us away from a peaceful development of culture," he used to say. To Goethe the dangers were only too well known with which that continuous trend of rebelliousness, the New Testament, threatened all that was great. In a conversation with the King

of Holland on books, their distribution and influence, he was not able to repress the remark: "Of all books, from a historical point of view, the most perilous is, indisputably, the Bible, if the public peril is to be in any way considered." Whereupon the King of Holland smilingly rejoined: "*Cela perce quelquefois que Monsieur de Goethe est hérétique.*" And a heretic he was, but his choice did not descend towards Christianity; it ascended towards heathendom. "Even now," he says, "does an end to those disheartening aberrations of the spirit loom in view, which, since the Reformation, have arisen amongst us from the divulgation of its Mysteries to the people and the betrayal of them to subtle but warped intellects." In Goethe's healthy disposition, so strong, unaffected, and devoid of self-consciousness or repinings were his own strivings of heart, which, at all costs, and also at the cost of others, must seek their own aggrandisement; so kingly and scornful of all morals was the majesty of his ego, that his circumstances might very probably have overwhelmed him, had he not been born under a fortunate star. In Goethe, as in all great men, there lurked potentialities of evil. Of the "wolfishness" of their Goethe (of which Karoline Herder is always speaking), his genial but to him alien countrymen had no conception. When it came to the pugnacity and passionateness, the pique and cutting irony latent in him, his biographers had the serpent's wisdom of silence, even as they also said nothing of the cynicism and bitter sense of humour which were the abrupt and forbidding aspects of the Goethe whom Chancellor Friedrich von Müller knew. His chroniclers, indeed, apparently shared Kant the

great philosopher's view—that only absence of emotion is compatible with the pure reason of great men. True, his countrymen dubbed him the heathen ; but to them this name meant a sort of hilarious atheist. The cooing German turtle-doves were really proud of their pole-cat and first poet. And the cat himself was cautious and did not make too much display of his claws. Goethe was an expert hypocrite, borrowing from cats their noiseless step, and concealing his carnivorous nature under a prudent sheepskin—*vulgo* ministerial coat ; clad in which, and bedecked with orders, he used to promenade about like an ordinary man. The Democrats of the day butted in wild bovine fury at Goethe's official garb, nor ever imagined that a skilled *espada* was only dangling this red rag in their eyes to deceive them, so as not to run any personal risk, so as to hide from view his blade, with which now and then he made a vigorous onset on the dull mass :

You clods and clouts,
You losels and louts,
The devil wouldn't have you !
You broadmouthed apers,
You hagglers and gapers,
Gape, sell and buy !
Brutes, to your sty !
Babies and flunkeys,
Mummers and monkeys,
No such stuff for me,
Were it given free !
Could I but master you,
Oh, oh, the things I'd do !
Give you such tousings,
Give you such lousings !
Had I men but twenty,
Mine were all your plenty !

Goethe had the good luck of being completely misunderstood. One man only, his congener, understood him and hated him, for a reason he freely admitted, out of envy ; he was Heinrich Heine. Every other ear, unlike those of this Ulysses, lashed to his mast, was stopped with national wax, and did not hear anything of Goethe's siren-song, the sweet voice of dead paganism, throbbing through the mephitic air and proclaiming its new gospel :

> Love thyself, learn to love thyself, but have reason to love thyself.

It was an evil portent that Goethe was only understood when talking nonsense :

> When I am stupid, they uphold me :
> When I am right, they fain would scold me.

Yet worse was it that since Goethe, in all the literatures of Europe, not one man appeared to take up the struggle for a sound nature against the blood-sucking doctrine of Christianity. After his death an atrophy of instinct, in history unparalleled, seized upon Europe. Men jargoned of the altruistic life, of working for the abstract good of all mankind ; blaming their unvirtuousness, if two doses a day were not swallowed of the bitter medicaments, self-sacrifice and self-denial. At first the wretched human hounds chafed and strained at their leash, and endeavoured to free themselves ; but custom asserted herself and they obediently crouched down at the swish of the Categorical Imperative. They were dieted down ethically ; got only water and no alcohol ; sheer vegetarianism even was sometimes impressed on them, in order to tame wicked animal vigour. Very

soon man became a very well domesticated creature, sleeping quietly beside his consort, and only winked when some other female passed by. The legally privileged wife took such conduct very much to heart, and preached the sacrosanct rights of canine matrimony, the equality *in puncto puncti* of the two contracting parties, and managed the passing of an act in the canine parliament for the compulsory muzzling of the "selfish" husband. For years he wore this muzzle, and began to like it. At last, however, a philotherist came along and took the muzzle off, but the faithful dog was furious, and, barking his imprecations, fell upon his befriender in a rage.

The man on whom this tragical destiny fell was the third and greatest hero of the new Renascence, Friedrich Nietzsche.

IV

NIETZSCHE

NIETZSCHE was the pupil of Stendhal and Goethe, and followed their lead in accentuating the ego, and aiming at individuality, selfness, and the longing for passions mightier and stronger. But in him the warrior-stamp was more deeply impressed than in either of his masters; for they, despite their definition of purpose, could not altogether look away from the comfort proffered to them by their gloomy surroundings, and had not the courage to cut the hawser that still kept them moored to the ancient scheme. Nietzsche also had suffered more from the pessimistic teaching than Stendhal and Goethe; as a youth he had deeply fallen under the influence of the two great Christian pessimists and unhealthy romantic conjurers, Schopenhauer and Wagner. Later in life, the good luck befell him to espouse the cause he was afterwards to combat; and, for this reason, there could be found no more dangerous foe, none who knew the flaws in the armour of Christianity better, no more merciless enemy, than this gifted deserter and proselyte. It is a Jewish saying that Jewish converts make the most virulent antisemites; Christians in Turkey dread those of their own co-religionists most of all who have gone over to

Islam and Turkish officialdom. None wounds more cunningly than a former friend; and if the change of one aspect of Judaism for another be potent enough to create this antagonism, how much more must a conversion effect from Christianity to paganism, from the sick-house to the open air, from self-tortured conscience to the glorious blitheness of the laughing sunshine? "Oh! the years I have lost," will be the exclamation of a man, if he be not philosophical, and not possess Friedrich Nietzsche's appreciation of the value of sorrow in education.

Altruism itself was so insisted upon in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the philosophy of that day could cast in the teeth of the Jew Spinoza the reproach of an Old Testament insensibility towards animals. Yet beside tenderest sympathy there existed the most revolting brutality. Theory and practice, words and deeds, stood in liveliest contradiction: in theory, after the fashion of Buddhist monks, no one ventured to catch fleas; in practice, hundreds of Jews and thousands of Armenians were knouted to death in a single day. Everywhere a conflict rent the world in twain: it created abysses in every thinker's scheme of things: it made its presence so unpleasantly real that the best brains gave up research and thinking, and crept for refuge into a profession, a craft, into libraries, or hid themselves in the mine-shafts of specialism, or abandoned themselves to the insanest exercises, such as mountaineering, shooting, or adventures abroad; anything rather than have to endure the pang of a broken heart, the pain of their wounds, the incompatibility of what they might, what they fain would, and

what they needs must. The hour was nigh for a fearful reaction: it came. The voices of Stendhal and Goethe have been only as the mumbling under earth of spirits of a healthier epoch long bygone; with Nietzsche, the volcano shot up, and over the crosses and cloisters and torture-chambers of Christendom there burst the glowing lava-stream of heathendom, fated to sweep away the ancient civilization, ready to rebuild a home for a happier posterity.

Nietzsche's ethics were pagan, and, as such, denied the love of one's neighbour, which to him seemed contrary to nature. This love of one's neighbour was found in no sane man's breast, unlike that of the Self. But how did that altruism gain the day? Who required love? Who wished to be spared, to be taken care of, to be nicely handled? Whose need had become a faith and a commandment? Whose interest was it to protect the weak? It was the weak themselves, the slave and the woman. And was not this verdict in conformity with historical fact? Who were the first Christians? Slaves and women. Who next swore that it was incumbent on men to love their neighbour as themselves, to break their bread with the hungry, to give them their cloak and their possessions? They who had nor bread nor cloaks, nor possessions, they who might win by the bargain. Easy was it, and, perchance, noble, to dwell upon the duty of sharing, when the preacher had not wherewith to bestow; it was quite proper, and intelligible to declare, "It is better to give than to take," when the speaker had nought to give.

These ethics defined good as what benefited the

neighbour, evil as what injured him. They overlooked one slight point: strength is involved in the purpose of good. He who cannot inflict harm cannot confer an advantage. He who is himself useless and cannot plunder, conquer, and command, is too weak to be able to help others—quite apart from the fact that only the really happy can make others happy, and that the gentleness and kindness of the feeble are worth as much as the cold rays of the wintry sun. And a superstition like that of the nineteenth century gained ascendancy. According to its tenets, all selfness, ambition, empire-seeking, falsehood, and deceit was utterly to be rejected: the weak as against the strong, the stupid as against the intelligent, the lower as against the higher, had a right to protection. The consequence is not hard to see. Goodness perished: the great virtue of generosity, the peculiar property of the strong, became rarer. With the great quality of egoism, great deeds and great merits became extinct. At last only a harmless flock of sheep was left surviving, mutually innocuous and useless, and even in this herd, owing to its unchecked increase in numbers, some jostling and friction had to occur; and then even these conflicts were pronounced selfish and unmoral, and attempts were made to reduce them within narrower limits. Thus the generations multiplied and weakened, and man became degenerate.

Hence Nietzsche's philosophy, like Stendhal's, centred round the rejustification of instinct and the passions; for this was the best in man, the kernel whence comes good and evil, and had yet been so mutilated and abused. Rehabilitation of instinct and

the heart, of man's ego, was Nietzsche's great accomplishment. His Columbus' egg moral, the "will to power," won him every heart which had not been grieved to death ; every one whose ego had not frozen hard felt the truth of these simple words. It was on these grounds that Nietzsche glorified the conquering people of Rome, amongst whom this self-will became most operative. Could such a civilization be thinkable, without self-seekings, ambitions, indulgence, and cruelty? And were its issues really as wicked as the legend of its foundation? Did not the whole of the Middle Ages and times even later derive their being from what was left of those wicked men and their followers, the Italians of the Renascence? Was not humanity in ancient days, even the pitilessly maltreated slaves, happier than the labourer of the aftertime with his freedom—to starve? Evil surely had good as its outcome, and the rule of the strong is the best for mankind. The murderous wars of a Napoleon, who achieves his aim, should, certainly, be deemed a boon, in comparison with the ceaseless fire-alarms of the weak and down-trodden, anarchic in their self-lacerations, unanimous only in the resolve to kill all would-be and could-be helpers. Nietzsche's teachings brought egoism once more into currency, and redeemed men from compulsory meekness ; unburdened their natural tendencies of the consciousness of sin, and restored to new honour the one old friend of humanity, who had been so vilely calumniated. Goethe even had felt he was somehow akin with this pagan spirit, and had accordingly handled him with kid gloves, instead of blackening and assailing him, as did the Fathers or the Protestants, or making him

enter into Gadarene swine. Rather he dressed the devil up fashionably, anxiously poked his hoof out of sight, and let his Lord God "speak so humanly to him." He philosophized in a thoughtful fashion that scarcely masked a secret approval of "sin and destruction," the elements of devilry, and let his Mephistopheles enounce that confession for which Germany should have stoned their Goethe, as even as they did their Nietzsche, in after years; the avowal that he, the devil, was

> A part of that great might
> That ever wills the wrong, but makes the right.

The evil and devilish on which Goethe and Nietzsche set the lofty value of being the source of good was, as may be imagined, not the conventional machine-manufactured article of which contemporaries, whether moral or even up-to-date sections of society, improper, profligate, and impudently free, had laid in stock. If not in its nature different, it was in origin.

For in all his achievements, virtues, vices, and feelings man acts from two sets of motives, driven by superfluity or want. Reserve springs either from self-repression or tetchiness. A consciousness of constant discomfiture, such as women and womanish men have, arises from a feeling of insecurity, or, because, as with men like Charles V. and Napoleon, the engine is working under excessive pressure. Phlegma or inward strength equally enable the day to be passed in calmness. A man may feel irked by men and withdraw from them, like poets and philosophers, because he, being the stronger, finds not his

like among them; or a recluse may become such, because he feels himself to be feebler and thus has often had to play the fool or the economic wall-flower. The mouths of those whose hearts are full must infallibly overflow; even thus must the mouth of those whose hearts are empty, and this is the contrast between the Jews of the Old and the New Testament; and, as in those hoary times, authorship originates either in a message to be delivered, or in vacuity of spirit.

Similarly, evil has twofold roots; in weakness—and then it is better called the pitiable and the flabby—or in strength; in the latter case it is, in the highest degree, creative, vivifying, fertilizing, and might be named "*bonum per se*," for this is no gratuitous destructiveness: on the contrary it is the mutability that heals, a sensible re-forming—like the flowers that bloom in the crannies of a ruined abbey. Who, to-day, does not laugh at the story of Napoleon's reply to the secretary, who, dumbfoundered at the Emperor's trickeries, laid his pen down, and stared at him with a look of woe-begone reproach: "*Mon cher, vous êtes un nigaud, vous n'y entendez rien!*"? It is a very different story if a barbarian or Turk is laying territories waste out of blind fanaticism, or an anarchist is venting his hatred of all that has turned out better, or if the Corsican hero or a Roman people, conscious of power, is destroying because they can and must make things better. In this case evil has its ancestry in excess—is allied to Bacchic and classical enthusiasm, not to Jewish-Nazarene tameness; be the course of action identical, there is all the world between the motive and the work effected. The lofty kind of revolution may employ the same tools as the

lower order ; but the means used by a Caesar will be hallowed, albeit they be profane, and the steps taken by a Christian will be execrable, be they ever so holy. *Quod licet Romanis, non licet Christianis* : God himself smiles approvingly on the theory of a Nietzsche and the doings of a Napoleon—and "forgiveth them, for they know what they do."

True ; for two thousand years Nietzsche's Europe had been acquainted only with a common, Christian, anarchic evil, that which came of weakness. The moaning air of Nietzsche's time echoed to the shrieks of bigoted mobs. On to the wishes and words of these hoarse-voiced demagogues every eye and every ear was directed ; suddenly there flashed into view a philosopher who spoke like the man in the street, entitling himself "immoralist, cosmopolitan, egoist, and very free," and sang a song of praise to revengefulness, avarice, lust, and cruelty. Had not this catechism ever sounded in men's ears? Was it that anarchists had got themselves a philosophical spokesman? Was the blind rage against excellence, wealth, and beauty going to bedizen itself with a scientific overall, and to the aid of the overworked Friends of the People was then, indeed, come a skilful, tail-coated dialectician, a witty Pied Piper whose Latin and Greek trills might ensnare the unlearned rats?

Thus befell all the great men of the nineteenth century this misfortune, that they were confounded with the mob. When Napoleon ordered the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, comparisons were drawn between him and the incendiaries of the French Revolution. Lord Byron was likened by English critics to Jean Jacques Rousseau. Nietzsche was

spoken of by Germans in the same breath with the Christian Leo Tolstoy. The untethered populaces were firmly convinced that a mean act must have reference to a mean man. It had become an indisputable dogma that every expression in the same language must bear the same meaning in all peoples. And this was really the greatest affliction of the Select of that epoch, that they had to converse in the same tongue as the rabble, which had so often been desecrated in Parliaments, and assemblies, and lectures, and railway carriages; all of them, like Stendhal, would have given a great deal to have a *langue sacrée*, comprehensible only by the few. All of them, like Goethe, allegorized meanings into their best works, in order to give the slip to prying snouts, and endeavoured to make themselves, as did Nietzsche, inaccessible, in order that "the swine might not break into the gardens."

Unfortunately, they only half succeeded. Nietzsche especially was run after by half of the literature of Germany, and the philosopher was obliged to give notice that the first adherents of a creed proved nothing against its validity. The man must have been horribly frightened at seeing himself in the company of German dramatists and novelists, without a glimmer of hope of rescue by those for whom he had entered the lists—namely, those who kept the broad middle way of the imperative norm and calculable virtues, yet admitting virtue, religion, or authority. For, howsoever much a Stendhal or Goethe or Nietzsche may have regretted the lack of every feature of greatness or superhumanity in their fellows, they never doubted the just claim of these average

men to feel exalted as against their underlings. They insisted that these duteous and pettily virtuous, that the much-abused middle-class, are worth more than those who, unjustifiably, raised themselves beyond duty and virtue. But they did protest against those good and honest folk pluming themselves as the sole and supreme models of worldly wisdom, as being morality *par excellence*, or the pillars of the Cosmos. Only when these luke-good gentlemen wanted to measure them too by the ell of their own cotton-wool ethics, did they cry out: "Hands off! You good and orderly citizens also belong to the mob!"

And the result for Nietzsche, in his appeal to those for whom he was struggling, was the same as for Napoleon with the wretched dynasties of Europe. "He that is not with us is against us," was the royal and civic conclusion, arrived at with a truly evangelical sense of logic. That he who is not with us can be above us, was forgotten: and the men, who were themselves so helpless, in hapless self-delusion, resisted their born leaders. The entire epoch was affected with neurosis: nothing was tested; nothing could ripen; the age was too asthmatic; nothing was left but impressions, feelings, overflowing aspirations, and feminine apprehensions. And these fine fellows had hardly caught the words of the new Sermon on the Mount, "Become ye more evil, that goodness may increase and joy delight you," than they rushed in disgust out of the ranks. Scarcely had the modern Christians heard the word "evil," than they dreaded poison, smelt gunpowder-plots, and seemed to listen to exploding bombs and dynamite. That dynamite

also is a splendid implement, if one can only be sure who is to be blown to bits, never occurred to the poor men. That the Fiend is an invaluable ally for those who can rein him, was to the bourgeoisie an unrealized fact. That the hum-drum ethics of the counter will never win great battles, altogether escaped the attention of respectable fathers.

But this was not the worst. The fault was more than an oversight or mere misunderstanding. It was a deficiency, a sort of blind alley and partial or total insensibility in the most essential part of the brain of that day. This was the real evil. Goethe and Nietzsche no longer spoke the same language as their fellow-countrymen. Their speech was the German tongue, but not the tongue of the Germans. Masters and slaves were become mutually unintelligible: had Nietzsche never opened up this gulf, this result had yet come about, for it was already in existence, though covered over. With the greatest difficulty was intercourse between both parties kept up; as a fact, a far more terrible division yawned between the two camps than race, speech, or faith had ever interposed between any two peoples. A foreign tongue can be learnt and understood; but one's own how can one master, if spoken by higher beings, especially if identical words signify one thing for one, and another for another? Or, if what the lords call "ill" is not what the slaves mean by that expression? Nietzsche's readers naturally thought his "evil" was their own conception, and imagined it was their own green-eyed envy, their own log-rollings and mendacities and place-seekings, their own covetousness and bull-and-bear speculations. When he spoke of "sin," they

bethought themselves of the confidence-trick which made the Father Confessor, the theatre-goer, or commercial traveller quietly smirk, or of their little wiles and foibles and snobbishnesses—nay, even when he spoke of the will to be strong, they dreamed of their strength ! As though Nietzsche had been a Christian, and deemed mercifulness holy, or had exalted the self-seeking of officialdom as divine! The dolly ambitions of the commissioners of Slytown and Shrewdbury he did not consider bad enough to win his approbation. Unlike the patient tolerance of his day, he would not have left at large those mean poltroons and spoilt tabby-cats. No; he who honoured a Catiline, he who had enounced, "The selfishness of thieves, usurers, and speculators is, absolutely considered, of a very modest range: no one can well extort from men less than their money," could not condone the embezzlements of a banker.

Every man mirrors in his fellow but himself. One contemporary of Nietzsche stood beneath morality; such as the decadent, the weakling, the brute, or anarchist: he confused the philosophical ideal, the fair and gorgeous animal, the Renascence type of man, with himself, the off-scouring of his time, loathsome, blind in hatred and destructiveness. The other, the moral, contemporary, construed Nietzsche's "evil" into his own ; and thus all these staunch warriors had unconsciously left their own figurements of shame to their descendants as a legacy. The reasons for the enthusiasm of the one and the placidness of the other can be detected: visionless licence delighted the former, the latter shrank back dismayed by

their own instincts. These tepid contemporaries of Friedrich Nietzsche had no self-confidence or self-respect, no talent for egoism, too little morality to understand the higher morality—hence their hostility. Nor without reason; they were right in mistrusting the cheap and common instincts that stirred in their breasts; their yearning for the decorous protection of the fig-leaf and moral bathing-drawers was quite reasonable; and justifiable was their annoyance, like that of skinny women with thin shoulders, at the last *modiste* who preached the *décolleté* of the Natural Man; with all their might and strength they defended themselves against the impudent philosopher, who was bold enough

to mark
What they graciously hide in robes dull and dark.

Thus Nietzsche's call to arms: "Have trust in your own desires, for they will soon give you new ideals," to its own disaster fell on the ears of men who no longer had desires. How can a society in such depths be raised up anew? When was there a firm foothold on which to build? The instincts Nietzsche so belauded, were gangrened. Were it not better to saw away these mortifying limbs with the Christian-Buddhist knife, following the well-known receipt of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount?—"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." Are not cripples also happy?

One day, when Nietzsche was telling his friend

Deussen that it was not abrogation of the will nor extinction of the passions he aimed at, but their ennobling, his friend, a learned man, fast in the trammels of Christian doctrine, answered—not without some justice—that the only means of ennoblement was abrogation and extinction. Nietzsche had a difficult position to maintain; for what he wished to ennoble was no longer there, even as what Deussen wished to uproot had vanished, and the dispute of the two school-friends was somewhat like a scene in a farce, where mother and father are arguing whether an imaginary child is to be washed every morning in hot or cold water. But Nietzsche saw—and so far was in the right—that this best quality in mankind had only temporarily languished owing to unfavourable circumstances, and the stiff and courtly fashions of the feudal eighteenth century, as well as in consequence of the most Christian nineteenth century; and that it might be cultivated, if light and air were allowed it.

Of course, as has been already seen, it was not the average man's instincts that the teaching of Nietzsche canonized, least of all the instincts of the lowly, poor, oppressed, and burthened, to whom the Gospel at one time afforded relief. Nietzsche, unlike Jesus Christ, did not mistake his common folk and their ideals; he knew all they wanted was bread and fish, and that they spurned the bread which "cometh from Heaven," and "promiseth eternal life." He would have guessed that the Jews would murmur, when, in the place of the ancestral manna, a Christian spirit was offered them; perhaps, too, he could not have arraigned them for bad taste. Nietzsche would not have complained, like St. Paul and Luther, that the brethren

interpreted the Gospel carnally, and abused the freedom of the Christian man in every arbitrary sense—this vulgar realism would not have evoked anything more than a smile : " I could have warned you beforehand," had been his answer. But he would have stemmed the general tendency : masters might have liberty of instinct, but never those congregators of the witless who fished for their petty profit in every gutter ; never those slavish characters of the nineteenth century whose strident scales clanged out not only on the Stock Exchange ; and least the rabble that, from out of its early beginnings as the Christian community of Corinth, had gradually conquered the world.

Nietzsche, indeed, knew too well what came of popular instinct ; he had seen too much to advise freedom of action for the masses. Furiously, rather, did he, like Goethe at Venice, mutter curses under his breath against the democracies, which were the product of Christian cosmopolitanism :

> Sovereign let him make himself, who understands his own profit :
> Yet did we choose us one, who seeketh but ours, not his own.

For this phrase the Germans should have howled Goethe down, as was done to Nietzsche ; for their first poet, the man the eulogies of whom were always ringing on their lips, was an anarchist in Nietzsche's sense of the term. But if Kant was saved by his own obscurity, Goethe escaped by that of others.

The lapse in the instincts of the ruling classes had already been grasped and lamented by Stendhal ; as

Goethe had stigmatized crowned powerlessness and imbecility in his Emperor in the Second Part of *Faust.* That Nietzsche in his apophthegm "everything is free, nought is true," had not intended to preach to the descendants of Napoleon's *misérables* a religion of untrammelled licence, is certain ; but he would have admonished them to embrace it had he deemed them sufficiently able and strong. "Oh ! Would that ye understood my bidding ever to do as ye lust ; but, ere that, be capable of will." Nietzsche knew what his opinion had to be of the kings of the nineteenth century ; their wills were too much shattered, and they of parentage and upbringing too bad and too pitiable. Throughout this dark age there sat not on a single throne of Europe a single man : "Kings are extinct," sighed the thinker. And when the two kings and their ass came up to Zarathustra the wise man muttered : "Two kings and only *one* ass !" Nietzsche's estimate of courts and the court-life of his day, was, at best, that of Goethe, who spoke from intimate knowledge :

Aristocrats, ye may go your way ; your pride still is courtly ;
Praiseworthy people, avaunt, thou art so haughty and rough !

As erstwhile Aegeus buried his sword under a heavy boulder, to await the time when his son Theseus should have strength enough to lift it, thus, too, the great philosopher hid under the weight of the time the rapier he had forged so sharp, his saying "Do as ye will." Nietzsche's hope lay in the future. For the present he could not work, for his own time was too full of blunders, was too incurably sick and plague-stricken, and above, beneath, nothing was

there but rabble. "Who is now poor or rich? This difference have I unlearned." Was there no hope? This much: man might be regenerated; conceivably might a new shepherd be found for this straying herd of waifs; an aristocracy might be established to counterbalance that equalized and contemptible *rudis indigestaque moles*. And Nietzsche's persistent admonition and hope lay in sensible marriages of men whose wills were not knee-haltered with women of families still less worm-eaten by this sickly "modernity." These families themselves should again be answerable for the selection of the new generation, for this was the only means of maintaining a fixed standard of power, influence, riches, talent, man-culture, and genius through the centuries, and solving well-worn problems of civilization. Modern love-matches, the yielding of his fellow-men to that fascination (*titillatio* as Spinoza called it, or love-tickle) he bitterly reprehended: a careless family might forfeit their best results by a single unhappy pairing. In this matter, too, Nietzsche was faithful to classical authority: ancient civilization had also mocked at love; their comic writers have long monologues directed against this "noble" feeling. Then even, was love regarded as unworthy of a man, and just condoned in a girl; at Rome marriages were concluded with an eye to the offspring (*liberorum quaerendorum causa*). But sexual impulse he was not going to lose; he regretted the slackening of it in Northern Europe, produced by the equalization of the two fundamentally different sexes. This prompting was, next to the motives of property and dominion, one of the sound bases of marriage, and fitted into

his philosophy as being aristocratic, preferring certain individuals, and not declaring all equally entitled, as did the old ladies in the *Ecclesiazusae* of Aristophanes. This instinct stopped motiveless profligacy, and thwarted only social conventions.

Nietzsche's doctrine on suicide, marriage, women, immortality, and the family was derived throughout from antiquity: he almost seems to have copied the ancients. The Roman aristocrats of old thought and acted in a like manner; they reverenced healthy matrimony and fostered and improved progenies; they even appreciated the middle classes: and Nietzsche's predilection for them recalls the days of Augustus and Maecenas, when Horace, the son of a slave—but not the sons of all slaves, nor the slaves themselves—could hobnob with the great. Such classes formed the foundation of Nietzsche's hopes: he felt some confidence in the families of the lesser nobility and the middle classes, where obedience and command were combined; who still knew of self-culture, self-mastery, and self-advancement; where the father still wielded family-sway, husband and wife lived in peace with each other; where children loved one another unconsciously and from inborn instinct. From their gestures and voices and eyes and deportment it was observable that their forebears had not for a long time done manual labour, and ruled not only their inferiors, but also extended their empire far beyond the family circle; and them, so thought the sage, the lower classes would obey more willingly than Jourdain-like upstarts and coarse-handed manufacturers, compared with whom they felt themselves almost on an equality, whose very appearance furnished

those who had eyes in their heads with an explanation of the portent Socialism.

However, it was for higher issue, not for continuous, least of all for degeneration, that the philosopher counselled marriage. He shivered at the actualities of wedlock. He was shocked at the luxuriant growth of the weeds, and the sparse connections between noble men and women,—thanks to the fetid time ; at that thought—which was only too true—he lamented aloud : "The worthy is so hard of propagation." "Visit our capitals ; in these lairs no further procreation should be tolerated," he cried out. "Matrimony should be less common ; in the majority of cases concubinage without issue suffices." "Go to your harlots !" was the teaching of the new instructor, like Cato of old. "Prostitution must not be a human sacrifice to the ladies and the good society, as your Socialist bawlers tell you ; it must be the fee paid by to-day for to-morrow's better and higher race. These weeds of the Too Many must vanish. Use the barren wombs as your waste-pipe, to prevent their continuance, to put a stop to the proletariate's privilege of fecundity, so as at last to make love's labour lost for these lower creatures, and to provide modern society with a safety-valve against this mischief." Lecky had already declared harlots "priestesses of humanity," but assigned a very silly reason. Nietzsche treated them more kindly ; he deemed their office more honourable than that of decent wives, who could only be gained for a written contract ; "for," said he, "they at least do not throttle the men in the withes of matrimony."

The philosopher had seen too much greatness sink

to nothingness through marriage to be able to sing a Plutarch's song of praise to the women of his day, spurred on as they were by the spirit of the time, and rendered unconscionably presumptuous. Had it not come to pass in the nineteenth century that the Empress Josephine could send her Napoleon, who was in the act of winning the most extraordinary victories, such a note as this: "Please come home; I am tired of living in the Tuileries without you; a man belongs to his wife"? Were not the heroes of the age, Goethe and Heine, compelled to dwell in concubinage with women of lower standings? Nietzsche recommended concubinage. Girls might in this way be got rid of; the fear of losing their man made them obedient; they made no impertinent claims, nor impetuous judgments: what if they were not witty and educated?—they were what a woman should be, the inferior quarter and not the better half. Here was the foremost philosopher of his day advising prostitution as a remedy for civilization, putting concubinage above wedlock, condemning as deleterious the *matrona* once so esteemed at Rome; what had indeed become of the nineteenth century? Yet these bold excisions were the only means of assisting the stricken time to rise from its death-bed.

The human plant had shot up uncontrolled, rank, wild, and luxuriant amongst the herbage; above all it was calling for a ruthless gardener. "Thus may somewhat be accomplished, but not otherwise. In this world there are no problems, no Jewish, unemployed, or female questions. He who can, asks not, but does; also he prunes." "But we are suffering." "Suffering? How capital! Had you

suffered more betimes, had you lolled less, and been less smug, not contented yourselves with stuffing out your fat paunches, you would not have multiplied to this positively indecent extent, nor belittled yourselves to the uniformity and consistency of grains of sand, till you are come to resemble an anthill, and are in your own eyes an abomination. Ye, too, are aweary of your fellows. Then help me, who am your friend, to guide you out of this maze. Harden! Harden against yourselves and against others. Follow my wake, and strive to draw unto you men better than ye are; give over your wailings and groanings at the evil ye dwell in; limit your many for the sake of the few. Reckon no more on yourselves, for ye are rotten, rotten not through your fault,—for the offences of your fathers are avenged upon you; not their sin, but that they could neither do good nor ill is avenged on you, their children, down to the thousandth generation. Let your hope be in the time to come, and rear ye up the Overman . . ." Thus spake Zarathustra.

To Nietzsche contemporary man was only a link with a higher *genus homo* of heroes, such as in the past had accidentally been begotten. But, whereas at all times this Overman was only an exception, and in the age of Aristotle already enjoyed the privileges of the exceptional man, Nietzsche's teaching went further and aimed at the deliberate production of this sovereign race. The new Lycurgus held that the time had come for mankind to experiment on themselves; and in his lively fancy, nowise tainted with Christian vagueness, he imagined a nobler and diviner species of our kind. A new aristocracy had already

been Napoleon's ideal. The Emperor had intended to put new vigour and new life into the dynasties of Europe; thus the wishes of thinker and doer coincided. For the coming generations the philosopher's sword inscribed "all is free; nought is true" had been forged, although at a time of absolute anarchy it ran no slight risk of being sullied in use. Unlike the apostle Paul, whom he so intensely hated, Friedrich Nietzsche would not with his *πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν* include in his summons the filthy slaves and wrong-headed women of his time, but only the men of a greater future, the Caesars and Napoleons; and, in directest opposition to the apostle of the Heathens, he taught justification by birth and not by faith.

Once upon a time, man knew what was good and evil, and in Paradise all were made in the image of God after the eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Then the Lord feared him before his servant, who was so like unto him, and might perhaps rise up in rebellion. He drove him forth from the Garden of Eden, and bade him till the ground and labour long and sore, till he forgot what the serpent had taught him. For thousands of years man wandered aimless over the fall of the earth and had nor light, nor lead, nor hope. Then there uprose against God a mighty foe who conjoined to the wisdom of the serpent the strength of the lion, and he led hapless mankind back into Paradise, and showed to them the Tree of Knowledge, saying: "Eat thereof, and ye will become as God to know good and evil. Good is what springeth from strength, and evil what ariseth from weakness." The ancient God waxed angry at the intruder, and

the youth gazed at him with wrathful looks,—then both drew their swords from the scabbards and contended together. The ancient God sank to the ground, smitten with death. But the young god, too, soon died thereof from an evil humour, the which the zest of the combat had called forth, and with his last breath he cursed his foe, who already lay dead.

Nietzsche's Word was a curse, a life-long curse, a terrible indictment of Christianity, the severest ever pleaded, the only one seriously meant, the first that struck to the heart. In him the natural man, suppressed for two thousand years, found his vent with explosive force. Hence his style is rampant, violent, and gallops breathlessly and headlong. He fights like a savage with every weapon ; now boxing like a brutal English prize-fighter ; now delicately playing his foil like an experienced swordsman ; now dashing down on his opponent with rocks, like a Cyclops ; now pricking him all over with needles like a harridan ; now racking him with the formidable scourge of his sarcasm, like Juvenal or Dean Swift. Yet, whether it be the whip, the drug, the dirk, or the sword, he remains ever ruthless to his fallen foe ; he spurns and mocks and mutilates him : boundless in his revenge, foaming over with gall, manifesting a passionateness inconceivable at such a time as his. Never in the century of sighs had so manly a language been heard : never had that epoch seen a combination of like energy, wrath, skill, and courage. Once again had the passions arisen in their finest shape ; the accents of the Old Testament and heathendom were caught once more ; and once again was a Michael Angelo and prophet Ezekiel speaking, and threaten-

ing the Day of Doom and the damnation of every man. "Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their own heads, saith the Lord God." And throughout these outbreaks and these trumpetings, the anxiety of the warrior may be marked: his great task, the Redemption from the Redeemer, may fail; the discordant clamour of the mobs may outshriek the words of wisdom; the deluge of Christendom may have risen irreparably high and sucked the last friend of mankind downwards to death and oblivion. He strained his Titan's voice to rouse his fellows to a sense of the approaching flood: his philosophy hammered a stern monody at the doors of the bemused Philistines; the tocsin of his thunderous and awful aphorisms dinned the slumbering world out of their feather-beds. Engaged in this saviour's work, Nietzsche forgot to seek after his own happiness. He sacrificed himself, as in heathen days: pride and strength was it, not weakness and stupidity, that made him take up the cross of martyrdom. He, too, could not sustain its weight. The same jeopardy waits on all that is illustrious; mediocrity may die in bed with a hot-water bottle; desolate and alone must the cavalier falter and die on an alien soil; and police and consulates may inform his relations of a "regrettable incident."

V

SOUTHERNERS AND NORTHERNERS

IN the church of Santa Maria della Concezione at Rome there hangs a picture portraying a lordly angel in combat with a bestialized adversary. The issue is no longer doubtful; the hideous foe is overcome, lying prostrate and turning to the gazer his countenance seamed with brutal anguish. He is the devil. His conqueror is the archangel Michael; the patron saint of the Jewish people, which invented the devil in order to quell him with all their priestly lore; the first race to stab at its ego, to suspect the gold currency of heathen virtue, and exchange it for depreciated cheques on the bank of charity and bills drawn on a next world.

The function of the Jews was absolved: they had vanquished their conquerors, not in honourable battle or single combat, not arms in hand, but with the coward poison of their morality. Rome was no more. The devil lay prone, as pictured by Guido Reni. Yet the devil dies hard, despite his groans at his cudgellings; no fiend who, as a fact, came by a bad end has ever been heard of. One day, at the Renascence, he was ungyved: the lord of transgression was set loose once more; ambition, greed, the lust of fame, and the lusts of the heart were quick and

throbbed in the world: Rome once again was the scene of happiness and revelry, with their evil accompaniment of sin. Another nation thereupon stepped in and took up the inheritance of the first; they also claimed the patronage of the archangel Michael; their destiny was to be the Arch-Michael and exorcizers of devils in the modern world. The Semitic vanguard of the champions of morality had been dispersed: *res rediit ad triarios.* The Aryan battalion took the field; and the First Reserve Corps of the Jews stormed Rome. These were the Germans. Even as the Jews had hated ancient Rome, "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," so, too, the Germans loathed the newer city, that again "sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Wine and mirth it was, that divine cheer of great men, that pagan whole-heartedness that can permit itself more, because more full-blooded; this joyousness for ever was to repel the cold North and to occasion the hatred of the Germans against Rome. What could these foglings and forest-dwellers understand by "*dulce est desipere in loco*"? How should these heavy, slow-blooded Teutons make anything out of the lilt and the frolic of the Bacchanalia, the quaffing of the brimming loving-cup, the festival of the Italian rebirth? To their ears, dulled by the toll and knell of the Gospel, this bewildering concert of cymbals and psaltery and brazen horns must have been gruesome. Their primness was offended at the sight of short-skirted tabourers; for their own women, up to that

time, had, not unwisely, kept such details concealed. The barbarians disturbed the feast. Their clubs clattered mercilessly on the vine-crowned thyrsi; their plump hands fell upon the purple reins of the lion-chariot of the God Dionysus; the guttural accents of these dram-drinkers outyelled the soft-sounding music of the *Εὐοῖ Βάκχε*. The God and his gay ladies shrank back in dismay; only a few besotted, fat-bellied, shaveling, thick-lipped fauns remained behind, stamping for a while with their hooves, and warbling from their flutes melodies that ever became drearier and thinner, and ended in a Bach-like fugue, rounded off to a nicety and significantly sober. Whilst their tones were still audible, the good obtruders gave the lusty tipplers a long sermon on moderation, and in conclusion vouched for several medicaments, whereby the after-world has been made far more moral, and far more wearisome,—such as the milk of Christian charity, the soda-water of Puritanism, the sour cider of duty—all warranted non-intoxicants.

The German apostles of temperance, whose exhortations to fasting and renunciation had so marvellously succeeded, were named Martin Luther and Immanuel Kant.

Christendom had once stigmatized all human wishes and hopes as sinful, because born of self-love. In ancient days as well this teaching had caused most terrible conflict in St. Paul's conscience; his tempestuous and pulsating heart had to withstand a bewildered but inexorable personality, which thundered its tyrannical "No" to every positive longing of the heart. For a while, he tore his own being

asunder, and then solved it all by lighting on that death-dance of the perplexed soul, justification by faith. Had he utilized this drastic leechcraft for himself only, all had been well; but the apostle recommended it to the rest of the Christians, *i.e.* to the scum of the Roman Empire. The spark chanced upon a powder-magazine; fervent "belief" sprang up like mushrooms; this religion became firmer rooted in others, all the more because they had need of it, and first of all in those culprits who guzzled down the good message of Justification by Faith, but no doubt caught of these two words only the first. St. Paul, probably, rubbed his eyes in amazement at the efficacy on the Corinthians of his Gospel.

Fifteen centuries later the same comedy was enacted in the brain of the German peasant Martin Luther. Self-love was sinful. How could bliss be attained by a so vulgar and coarsely-sensual soul as that of this highlander? To help him, Luther found a fellow-sufferer in St. Paul, and, after that model, prescribed not only for himself, but for others as well, that same Pauline anodyne.

Identical were the results: the ruin of the Roman Empire, and the shattering of the German, where culture, commerce, unity, and art were effaced; and a pitiable exhibition of sub-divisions in the new religion, whilst all Europe was affected with the contagion of German polity.

German historians, since that day, have taken great pains to beautify and commend their barbarous Reformation. Nations, who could think out justification by faith, also manage to devise justification by history, true or veracious; both peoples proved

themselves very adept at this art. For instance, the Germans hit upon the word "individualism," so as to gloss over the rising of the peasants against all authority. The German—this was the tale to be swallowed by credulous descendants—were by nature, as contrasted with the more pliable Romance races, of an original disposition, self-willed, and freedom-loving, and hence bore the Roman yoke with great aversion. Foreign students of ethnic psychology pointed to these facts as substantiating the theory; and, if they could not avoid seeing that the adaptability of the German to all circumstances and foreign institutions betrayed a certain lack of character, and qualified him to be the cement rather than the stout and sturdy foundation-stone of the future Europe, they nevertheless helped themselves over this stile by asseverating that the German nature was extremely complex, full of unfathomed depths and profundities unexplored, a mass of contradictions, scarce compatible, and investing their wearer with enormous interest.

It must be admitted that this decent cloak of individualism, borrowed from the storehouse of virtue by the greatest German vice, was not ill-chosen, since for three hundred years it did veil the worst nakednesses. German individualism was of quite different origin from that of the Greeks. True, in every Greek there stirred a lively longing for freedom, a hungering for sovereignty, a mighty and life-long beckon from within "excelsior, excelsior." Every Greek contained a tyrant. But then the Greeks, while striving after the Tyrannis, did so in full consciousness of their powers. They were self-complete, knew their strength and how to steer. They were able to restrain

themselves, to keep silence, to watch their time, to outwit their foe, to lurk, at last to leap. Their conscience was calm ; they felt their call to empire, and endured not another's sway. It was his own liberty that the liberty-seeking Greek sought.

But among the Germans as individualists, on whose behalf Luther maintained the cause of Christian freedom, there was no sign of this spirit.

In Germany *ἀτελές τι*, something incomplete was aiming at power. Men without self-command wished to command others. The very founder of this sect was at pitiable strife with himself, and all his life long in doubt had he done right or wrong. In him nothing of Greek heartwholeness and self-pride, nothing of that natural kindness and friendly spirit, nor of the complacency and amiability, maybe born of disdain, which characterize great men like Themistocles, Alcibiades, or Napoleon. Only fanaticism, stiffneckedness, dogma, brutality, were to be found in him—qualities ascribed so readily by the peoples of the North to manly combativeness, but to the philosopher disclosing weakness. Such a man was of the lower order : the Emperor Charles V. was not far out, when, at the sight of this dilatory scribbler with his conscientious quibbles, he muttered : "It would want more than him to turn me heretic!" The German's words drew from him only a smile, like the one which may have played about the mouth of the Roman proconsul before whom New Testament Jews were pleading. Perhaps, too, the Emperor shook his head at the unconstraint with which this monk expatiated on God and the world, or knitted his brows at the Christian-German boldness, the

counterpart of the democratic individualism of the Jews, branded with which both these nations of morality and anarchy march arm in arm through the avenues of history.

Immanuel Kant, two hundred years later, became the philosophic man-servant of this Protestant individualism and anarchy. Every achievement, once established, gets its schoolmen. "If we just occupy Silesia quietly," Frederick the Great used to say, "we shall very soon have our bookworm to demonstrate the paper justice of our claim." "Put forward any idiocy," the founders of the Christian sects might have thought, "and soon enough our philosopher will come, take our words out of our mouths, and prove *urbi et orbi* what tremendous heroes we have been." In this way, Luther found his Kant. This philosopher appropriated Luther's and St. Paul's doctrine of the worthlessness of good works, from inclination, and own delight and satisfaction; and proclaimed aloud as "good" only deeds that had no fun in them, that went against the stomach and were wrung from self-denial, or proceeded from pure selfless respect and love for the moral code. Like Reformation ethics, Kant's, albeit differently expressed, only gain a meaning from the "faith" and "right spirit" that dwelt in him. Blessed, according to him, are the pure of heart. He rejects the hypocrisy that does not go any further than formal acts. At Königsberg, as at Wittenberg, the only topic of importance was the renewal of the soul; and this could only be attained by deadening the old Adam and revolutionizing the thoughts by crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts. This moral *consommé à la*

Luther and Kant reeked of magnanimity, and, as such, was prescribed to the hungry world as the fittest diet. It was not without grimaces that their patient gulped the sour brew down, served up, in Luther's witches' den of theology as "faith," and in Kant's soup-kitchen of philosophy as the "innate sense of duty." And the wretched guest might grumble, as he would, at the meagre German broth; the head cooks assured him it was very nourishing, very advantageous for their own and others' well-being and heal, for the oysters of self-indulgence (which the miserable eating-house had not in stock) might breed a moral typhoid.

The Commandments of Kant were based upon Christian charity or Jewish morals, on the principles of Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by, and Mrs. Be-done-by-as-you-did. But even this does not satisfy his conception of a good deed.

An act is not good in so far as it is innocuous, or only right; for the motive may still have been selfish. If one help one's friends from inclination, it is not virtuous. Kant and Luther's criterion was not the effect nor the deed, but the intention and the belief. And, to end the story, the last and worst morsel had to be swallowed, but this was the *pièce de résistance*, and the cooks congratulated themselves on it. No one but the individual could know whether his act was good or bad. Be a man justified, either according to Luther, by faith, or according to Kant by duteousness only, yet the self was judge, prosecutor, and master in its own cause. This was the meeting-point at which Judaism, Christianity, Protestantism, German philosophy, and anarchy all

clasped hands in the frightful *cancan* they led during the nineteenth century: the petty egos and consciences were thrust forward by all these many-titled doctrines, and every other authority outlawed. Christendom had run its cycle, and ended whence it had started, in socialism and anarchy.

It is interesting to observe the effect on Europe of this teaching at once so old and so new. It may be imagined that no nation acted more logically on this last phase of Christianity than the people amongst whom it came to light, or, in the language of its eulogizers, grasped the spirit of this religion with more exactitude. In conformity with their philosopher, and their old prejudices against anything beautiful, concrete, or idolized, the Germans now cast aside God himself, but not in the mood of the Italian whose failing sight was jarred by the crucifix and the form of the harrowed sufferer handed to him for his last kiss; on the contrary, it was in the greatest veneration that the divinity of Christ was rejected; it was due to a sincere devotion in order to gain a deeper apprehension of his teachings, in the hope that no illusion of sense might distract the mind from the sublimities of Christian morals. Somewhat like little Jack Horner, the German booby picked out and swallowed for sheer love this plum of Godhead. God disappeared; and in the Germany of that century in every paper and in every place a Christless Christianity was preached.

Yet this interiorized God lay heavy on the German's chest, and kept on humming his old Palestinian dirges in this new land, grumbling again about the sinfulness of this world. "But we know of a means of making

a terrestrial paradise. It is a radical cure ; but great evils are healed only by great remedies ; man must alter his nature. Do ye penance ; for ye must cast out of your soul her selfish yearnings. Then will the Kingdom of God be at hand, wherein every man shall love every man, and all shall dwell in fellowship and bliss together. The lion shall then munch straw and the yearling shall lie down beside him, and with trustful eye wink to him. Those who lack the most now, shall then make their way with three coats on them, for that none but deemeth it right to give his dress to his hungering neighbour. The great-souled among you shall run about with swollen cheeks, seeing that every man there strives to hold out unto his foe his cheek, and thereafter to forgive him that smote him. And beggars shall beg not for silver, but for kicks, and would yet requite a smaller alms with a mighty curse, so as thereon to bless those whom they curse.

" But, alas ! this ideal state of things is very distant," God sighed, and continued : " Above all the Pharisees and Sadducees, with their haughty court-manners do not respond at all willingly to our call to altruism, but they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost seats at feasts, and greetings in the markets. Also are they not content with one wife, like we poorer people, but occupy themselves with fornication and are adulterers. In fact, they seem now and then to have a little amusement on earth. But, in this vale of woe, none has a right to joy ; and any he have, he must atone in the hospital we have provided for his after-life, in lamentations and gnashings

of the teeth. 'Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.'

"The first requisite, however, is that they be stripped of their money. Wealth and private ownership are the causes of all their selfishness; commercial competition prevents men from feeling their brotherhood and actualizing the Kingdom of God. Hence we close the gates of Heaven on the rich, or admit them only as destitutes, so that when we, in the 'regeneration' we soon anticipate, 'shall sit upon the throne of our glory, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' we may gloat over their merited pangs. Hence, down with capital! We will go into the temple, and drive them forth; cast out all them that buy and sell, and overthrow the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sell doves. We will replace private ownership by proprietorship in common, and apply it for the general utility. Then society shall consist of men spiritually reborn, and there shall flourish true peace, true happiness, true righteousness, true charity, and true equality for all: 'Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy perfect commonwealth come. Amen!'"

Socialism was the name bestowed on Kant's Christless rationalized Christianity in nineteenth century Germany. No wonder then that this new superstition found most of its adherents in German territory: everything Christian had a fiendish attractiveness to the Teutons. Witchcraft and devil-worship and other Protestant aberrations had happed on their most fruitful soil there; it followed that this last penitential cramp should rage most in this suitable environment. No land was so soaked with

the belief in the need of a spiritual change as Germany. In none were the incitements of the self so systematically repressed. Nowhere else did the faith of the Roman province find subjects more consentaneous; in none were the trumpery sins of the upper classes, despicable for their very harmlessness, taken so seriously, and pilloried with so intensely religious zest. No realm approached the Messianic ideal more nearly. In none was forethought for the last amongst themselves become the first anxiety of the State. No government had carried the reformatory system so far; and nowhere did there exist more idiots to reform. No kingdom ever observed with more zeal the divine behest, to father its most sorrow-laden children in youth and old age, health and sickness, in the school and in life. Public opinion has never exacted as much from the State as in Germany: education, work, homes were not enough; assurance against twins and protection against disease was also demanded. "*Minima curat praetor*,"—the Government did and was expected to do everything. Never did administration take on itself so many functions, or show itself so adapted to the ready obedience of the helpless German. To this new Christian sect the German bureaucracy granted all that was required; and to maintain this great charitable institute, and further its ends, year by year electors trooped in their millions to the ballot-box.

And thus nowhere else were there as many socialists. Every German statesman was in his heart a socialist, and would willingly have been one in practice. They might indeed for their own, as against the socialists, claim the principles of conservatism;

but they were wrong. The mainstay of a Christian State, such as Germany was, consisted rather in the socialists than in the more tepid friends of "barrackades"; the then socialist was not a revolutionary. The revolutionary had no seat in the parliaments. He sat at home by his hearth, grim with hatred, but never letting a complaint escape his lips, or he betook himself to various capitals of Europe and stilled his anger by indulgence he held in disdain—women, gambling, the turf, and what not; or sought forgetfulness, distraction—or some atmosphere untainted by the miasma of equality, on the ocean-waves, or in the loneliness of the glaciers. He, the only true Unemployed of his civilization, and the only person really entitled to work, was audible neither in politics nor literature; for he held himself aloof from the company of his fellows, like Bellerophon in Homer, *ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων*, devouring his own heart. Once again it was only wraiths, like those in the Sagas, that the German statesman might see, when he harangued on revolution, its risks and its upholders. These speechifying socialists had neither power nor will to revolutionize. Men rebel against what they abhor, what is unlike to them, and not against their own doubles. The Ins and the Outs were attuned in unison, however discordant their counter-pipings: they all were for order, and sheep-folds. Even in Luther's lifetime, Rome used to say of all Germans, Protestant and Catholic, those in favour of order or of revolution, "they are all heretics." And this was true in the nineteenth century.

Yet Germany was mighty abroad. This vast machine was set in swift motion at a touch, and the

disciplined hordes obeyed an even unspoken direction, overwhelming their land-neighbours in three successful campaigns. Kantian Duty was interpreted, as might have been expected, rather in the sense of duty, forbearance, and subordination. The German soldier was Northern in his crassness, phlegma, docility, and disciplinability. His simplicity made him readily quiescent to the moral bogey. His desires were vague, and neither roused nor twinged him ; he liked offering his mite to the ideal, the party and the new faith, as he, on the one hand, was not discontented, and, on the other, was terrible in his German credulity. His selfness was not hot enough to feel as unpleasant the cold douche of altruism, and to revolt against it. He saluted at the Categorical Imperative command. The German of the nineteenth century was what his philosopher had been—a Christian and a socialist.

But the Italian? To this wondrous people's eternal glory, they never through all the ages of Christendom have taken Christianity seriously. The sun of the bright South seems to have dissipated the mystic vapours. In the Middle Ages, even, the worst fanatics and wildest heretics arose this side of the Alps. In the North were the believers ; chastising and tormenting, tearing one another asunder for fright and despair at the dawn of the Day of Doom. There a Saint Elizabeth in perfervid paroxysms shrieked aloud for her divine bridegroom ; there sat round a green table the business-like Christians, dictating a glowing prospectus of a strictly limited Kingdom of God. In Italy was none of this religious fire. There little men were not always founding

innumerable sects with a monopoly of Truth. In Italy, heaven was not deemed worth earthly buffetings, nor the Christian faith a dagger-thrust. The Italian stabbed to satisfy himself and not his God. His God he might satiate with ceremonies; a little consecrated water, if he went into a cool church on a summer day, was enough, for God was kind, and eternity afar. Leave the eternal over for others: sufficient for us the external! Let German bravoes have faith and charity and a clean spirit; let them quell their evil nature: barbarians, enfeebled by the Christian venom, are easy to rule. Let them have heresy in the bargain; it could not be otherwise. For a virus always brings undesired by-effects. So much the better for our sovereignty. Let them be heretics, we will be orthodox; they slaves, and we masters; let them be herded, and us be shepherds. Thus spoke in the Italians the imperial instinct, flowing in their veins from time immemorial.

The fact was that heathendom had never died out in Italy. When Rome might no longer send her legions to the provinces, she overcame the world by her fairy-tales, her wiles, and her dogmas. Who can withhold himself from admiring the civilization Roman energy re-erected? If it collapsed, were the Romans at fault? Rather, the shifting soil was to be blamed, and they had not selected it. Was Italy answerable for the swamp of Christendom? That a Petersburg, a St. Peter's, could be here constructed was a fact much more wonderful. The German bunglers, those true Christians, could never have built at all, never have driven in one pile. The German hated all art and worldliness, and all that was seductive, external,

real. Could any state-craft have been enlightened enough to foresee a people that should clamour for more wolf's-bane? The German detested Rome and the Church for not actualizing that impossible ideal of Christ's faith which was simmering in his dreamy brain; because the Church was not Christian enough to suit him. To the Italian the Church was either a matter of indifference, or, if of hatred, as to Macchiavelli, because, temporally and politically, she blocked the way to a united Italy, or, philosophically considered, because she was still too Christian. Never had this people's superb gift for realism let it bite at the fantastic lure of esoteric Christianity, and, like a cat, they always managed to walk round the frying-pan: it was the clumsy German only who tumbled into it.

Even in the nineteenth century, Italy did not present the picture of desolation to which the North had sunk, thanks to the humanizing effects of its well-wishers. Amongst the Teuton tribes, a solitude, called civilization, could be made; but in Italy, to her good luck, heathen passions have never been entirely uprooted. The knife of Christian surgery was there, but had to operate on a character *aere perennius*. Great offenders could still be found. Of crimes of larceny there were eight times less than in Scotland, but sixteen times more murders. Those transgressions, which in the North were deemed grave, were here regarded quite otherwise. "My father and brothers are in prison, sir," the traveller might be told by his Italian servant, "but they're all decent people; they're all in for murder, not for theft." And many of these homicides were deliberate, for, as a proverb of Florence has it, revenge is a joint that

should be eaten cold. Nowhere else were sentences more leisurely executed. Many crimes remained undiscovered; the prerogative of mercy was constantly exercised ; appeals were many and successful. Italian juries were very ready to add a rider to their verdicts of "*la forza irresistibile.*" Prison-life was extremely sluggish. The people sympathized with the convict; "The poor boy has had a piece of bad luck. He just stabbed some one three times. I am sorry for him." In no other land did poetry so abound. In the lowest houses better stories might be heard than on all the Northern stages. The Italian papers of the period were the only readable ones. Italian ladies alone seemed to be a reminiscence of the antique, although, or because, to them was not given that Anglo-Saxon liberty of turning their husbands round their little fingers.

But, it will be urged, the South has decayed politically and economically, and the North correspondingly risen to predominance. This, however, is only what would be expected. The climate of the Reformation, the winter of Northern thought, cruelly interrupted the sunshiny days of the rich Italian harvest. Owing to Christianity revived, the North now began to work at its best; under this change of climate, the genius of England and Germany could develop fully and was well able to translate its ideals into fact. These aims, of course, were somewhat less refined than those of Italy: we must remember they arose among Teutons and barbarians, and were the wishes and needs of countless masses; their realization, if lacking in beauty, consequently supplied this want in quantity.

Whilst the Renascence had endeavoured to satisfy the higher sensualities, the pangs of pride and power, the yearnings after ambition and sovereignty, the desire of fame and immortality—in short, all the nobler, rarer, and stronger passions of individual aristocrats —the new civilization aimed at fulfilling the desires of two whole peoples. These desires were intelligible enough, and in order to gratify them, a quite new fecundity came into being, the products of which were serviceable rather to the lower than the higher man. Heating by steam and electric light, articles machine-made by the million, and the ubiquitous water-closets for everybody, have now supplanted the Gobelins' art, the design in the smithies and the bold paintings in fresco. In the stead of Milan Cathedrals, we have suspension-bridges and sleeping-cars ; in place of the palaces of Venice commodious and genteel barracks with hot-water supply and artificial ventilation ; instead of the architect, who wasted his marble in magnificent columns and created architraves for eternity, we employ the jerry-builder, who uses practical bricks and is very glad if his hovels do not tumble down during his lifetime over the heads of their noble inhabitants. In this wise, the North has reached its goal, won the race, realized its innermost wishes and aims. It has, since Luther, created its art, typical, feminine, appreciable by every-body, the art for all, even for Germans and English-men—industry.

In this respect, the South was behindhand and powerless, like a lion, who sometimes cannot do the work of a mouse ; feeble, like a man as against a woman, who is short-sighted and sees the immediate

more clearly ; helpless, like the astronomer Tycho de Brahe, when wishing to direct his coachman home by the stars. The latter answered, "The heavens you may understand, sir, but on earth you are lost." The Italian, too, knew his stars and where was the celestial fire. For the third time this fearless Prometheus had fetched down the fire from heaven, in order to hand to straying mortals a torch to "light their dark road of life." He could clothe his storms of heart in words and music, could mould in brass the visions of his mind, could carve in marble his love of power and state. The highest architecture of all was his, to build on men, who are the noblest material ; he could devise the finest political theory and carpenter out states with the greatest proficiency. But his genius was too lofty for petty technical study of iron, steel, files, or pottery : he could not condescend to the exact sciences, so much beloved of England and America, or ape German doggedness in tracking out bacilli, or theorems of elements, chemistry or light ; he could not invent maxim-guns, steam-engines or milk-sterilizers.

The Southerner could sate noble longings ; to gratify Tom, Dick, and Harry, littler natures were better adapted. A machine demands machine-made men, whether employers or employees. Such a being must be precise, exact, placid, and punctilious ; must settle down to work at 8 a.m. sharp, and at seven o'clock arrive home and give his wife the conjugal kiss, must be a man of lamb-like innocence, with no imagination, nor ever think of setting the Thames on fire. He must be calm, continent, monogamous, and must be a Protestant. Macaulay was quite right

in ascribing England's greatness to the new faith: the moot point was the kind of greatness—in this case of a low order; the fact stands that Protestantism and the civilization of machines and automata go very well together.

Protestantism, democracy, industry — all three intimately connected, as we have seen—have nowadays conquered the world. The Teutons have triumphed all along the line. With a contemptuous smile upon their lips, they point their fingers at disorder and anarchy in other countries, while theirs is developing every decade into higher prosperity. But this pride will soon be humbled, for they will have to realize that prosperity under a democratic order is by itself a sure sign of inferiority; that to succeed under conditions unfavourable to genius may be due to lack of higher qualities; that want of discipline and obedience amongst their despised neighbours may be a sign of higher intellectuality and less thick-skinned temperament. The longer the mechanical treadmill of our civilization goes on, the more it will be seen that the poor, pale, passionate Italian is superior to the law-abiding German in his fat prosperity, and that Mr. Shaw's Irishman, who was reproached with the difficulty of governing his people compared with the orderly English, retorted truly enough: "It is no use muzzling sheep." But if they are easy to govern, it is very difficult to find a governor amongst them, to detect in their midst any real greatness, any exceptional individuality. This has been Italy's speciality in the past, too suddenly checked by the advent of the northern, Christian faith, in politics, philosophy, theology. This creed,

preached by Luther and Kant, Locke and Bentham, has pervaded the whole world, the South as well as the North, but it has hemmed in the South, as much as it has benefited the North. For the North is the country of the millions, the South is the fruitful soil of aristocratic genius. The North can be disciplined; the South can command. The North is feminine; the South is masculine. But Individuality and Aristocracy are rare plants, which can only grow under very favourable conditions. The weather had turned cold, and the harvest of genius that sprung up during the Renascence withered from Italy: her own occasional rime and frost had chilled her native sun. In Italy, as in the North, nothing but the mob survived. Yet even in these dregs, of Germans and Italians, the profound difference of the two nations was discernible. The one laid more stress on the duty in Kant's consciousness of duty and became the craven socialist; the other, the Italian, on the consciousness, on the subjective feeling that justifies every act by faith alone: forgetting the necessary self-change, the *μετάνοια* of St. Paul. Thanks to his self-reliant, energetic, and vigorous nature, the Italian became the accomplisher of Luther and Kant's teaching, the indispensable dot on the "I" of Christendom, the courageous socialist—the anarchist of the nineteenth century.

VI

GERMANY WEIGHED

THE Kantian Gospel, with its accentuation of that pitiable duty and moral sense, was suited only to slaves. In itself this were not to blame: there must be some slavish ethics. But it aimed at universality, at people who were not slaves, at averaging down all that was great, because it forbade egoism. The highest types are always egoistic. Greatness, as Goethe says, thinks only of enhancing its own worth. Greatness loves itself, and all healthy instincts decline to flagellate themselves daily with the whip of altruism. What is great must will to do more than its mere duty; it must give, make others happy, and, be it at the cost of itself, its own wellbeing, its own money or life, it must will to pour forth its blessing over others, to the extent even of self-sacrifice—but not, as Christianity demands, from unegoistic motives; the impulse must come from a sense of pleasure, from overflowing energy, from need of bloodletting, so as to unburden the full heart. All acts then derived from conscience and duty, or done with a wry countenance out of obedience to the Categorical Imperative, seem to the great man, from his point of view, through this very fact contemptible, even as he has an unsurmountable prejudice against

men and nations who are always prating of those words, conscience and duty. But he who is to give must have the wherewithal; to enhance one's own worth, one must be egoistic, and desirous and capable of rule, conquest, and ransacking. And this was the very attitude the nineteenth century disallowed. It wanted to have its omelettes without breaking any eggs; to have sunshine and no shadow; great men who were not egoists.

Napoleon once rejoined, when rebuked for egoism and ambition: "Yes, I love power, but I love it like an artist; as a musician loves his violin, in order to draw from it my melody, my chords, and harmonies." But his contemporaries deprived the musician of his instrument: consequently, great instrumental music became dumb. Not all, but only good music ceased. Petty egoism Luther and Kant could not extirpate; and the notes of mean selfishness might still be heard; during the nineteenth century there was no end of the whistling of common street-arabs.

Then, ambition had become defined as inviting journalists to supper so as to read their song of adoration in to-morrow's paper, or patiently waiting for the superior's decease in the Civil Service; piety, talking big of Christianity, eschewing all direct discussion, and once a year going to Communion; honour consisted in inability to lie or overreach, or paring the gold currency so cautiously as to escape the notice of God on high and the judge on earth. Friendship lapsed into mutual loans of money in case of need; love into the social security of a good match; enthusiasm was turned into haranguing the mob patriotically. A man was wise if heavy and tardy,

like all phlegmatic temperaments; learned if he wrote books with one eye on the public and the other on his colleagues; pride was the refusal of a decoration, and the gazetting of the fact.

Such were the results of four hundred years of predominance of German theology and philosophy, and the revival of Christianity and its ethics: everywhere men yawned for weariness and discontent. Even the women then cried out for a deed; even they became dissatisfied, although they, as the weak element, were always on the side of Christianity, in this thunderous air, which never an egoistic levin flashed through. "Oh, for a storm of some sort," was their inward murmur; "anything to get out of this stifling atmosphere." But the tempest did not come; the lightning could not break forth; mankind could only lounge and sweat. Sin had been really uprooted, for the minds of men had become too enfeebled to transgress.

Into such a den of country-cousin and doting virtues the few great men of the nineteenth century were cast forth. It is easy to understand that, beside and beyond their dislike of their fellow-countrymen, they felt an especial prejudice and rancour against the Germans as the "*auctores huius mali*." Our generation will find it diverting and instructive to glance over these men's condemnations of the Germans, and to recall to mind the bills of indictment, yellowed with age like the paper on which they are printed, and full of scathing criticism.

Napoleon once remarked, when speaking of his Russian campaign: "What right have people to reproach me for it? A few hundred thousand men

I certainly did lose; but a large proportion were Germans." He had heard of Kant, and had an extract from his philosophy made for him, read it and said: "All this stuff of Kant's is as unpractical as Cagliostro's or Swedenborg's devices." And Stendhal's anger too burst forth against German civilization in more elemental manner. Hate as he might his own people, his contempt for Germany was unbounded. Everywhere in his works, often quite gratuitously, his persuasion of the utter contra-naturalness of all Teutonism can be read between the lines. "*Ces gens ne sont pas naturels*," he used to say. "I lived several years among them and have forgotten their language out of sheer scorn." He thought them servile. "The High Temple of Servility," he once wrote, "is in Germany. Humility may be more avowed in Rome or Naples; but the haughty Germans practise self-negation; it is as though they were born on their knees." German erudition of his time he held in little esteem. "They go to work like galley-slaves," was his charge. "They do not write on a theme because inspired; but the theme comes first, and with assiduous and laborious study they hope to evolve something brilliant out of it." The discoveries and observed facts he condoned; Goethe scoffingly called these petty products worms the German sage delighted in finding. But Stendhal entered his protest against any deductions being drawn from the base facts the German scientist unearthed. "They should serve up their dishes, in the same way as in France turbot is brought up to table. Fish in one plate, and the sauce separate; then one could have the fish without having to swallow their sauce of

transcendentalism as well." Stendhal was the first man to cry halt to the Kantian philosophy which had flooded all Europe. "Kant and his school are sending Germany mad, as the Bible and Methodism have already turned England insane." And once he said jeeringly: "St. Boniface of old preached Christendom to Germany in Latin: they were converted in mass, although they understood not a whit. In our day Kant has performed the same miracle." Ever and again, his lips vented forth Aristophanes' gibe at the decadent Euripides that "the ether was his pasturage." He was always upbraiding German philosophers for their airy flights to Laputa, and their disregard of experience. "Condillac's philosophy is always harking back to experience; German thought rejects experience, and damns it with the name of empiricism, falling back on the moral sense. If you tell them, "I feel no such moral sense," they reply, "God has created you imperfect." One only of his sayings can rouse a smile: "that the Germans are poor thinkers, and therefore great translators." For Stendhal himself, the greatest philosopher of his time, never, throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, was to have the honour of a German version, which was awarded to every scientific Transylvanian grubber. The Germany which, as intermediary and interpreter of European ideas, spoke every language, rode in every saddle; the Germany that could swallow anything (like a well-known omnivorous animal) is only now beginning to appreciate Stendhal. This becomes clearer from the mean spirit of the century. It was an age in which men who knew not their own selves could not endure

blame. The sounder attitude "who tells a truth, does us a service; who lies to us, leaves us indifferent," was then almost unknown to mankind.

Goethe was more cautious in expressing his opinion of the people amongst whom he was forced to live; his real judgment was that of Stendhal's. Often he complained, that since returning from Italy he had not a single happy day or hour. From Milan he wrote to Knebel: "The scent of mountain-air and Germany is already in my nostrils, and I do not altogether relish it." In the Protestant God's acre at Rome he once said to a Swede: "To lie buried here would be beautiful, much more beautiful than to live in Germany." Even when advanced in years, he would have liked to emigrate to Paris. He was constantly advising men of an artistic disposition not to come back to Germany, for fear of feeling out of place in so democratic a country. Those who observed him from near describe him as moody and out of tune with his surroundings, and a French diplomatist, seeing him for the first time, remarked that his features were those of a man who had had a great deal of pain in his life.

During his life Goethe suffered much at the hands of the Germans. He was afraid of the nation that had the gift of methodizing and popularizing madness. He recognized that in many a German there lurked a Luther or Kant; that is, a champion of rigidly misdirected reason, who would rather declare all existence non-existent than his own thoughts valueless. He feared this "*vis consili expers*," which so readily "*sua ruit mole*." He knew the character of the Teutonic races: he thought that the English-

man only observed without generalizing, whilst the German generalized without observing—in a word, Germans were bad poets, but Englishmen none. He saw that the inability of the German reformer to cope with the devil was typical of his nationality. He realized why the Faust legend had become national. He grasped the fact that, of all nations, the Germans had always been struggling with the fiend, but never able to ride him: from the lack of this diabolical element they had been endowed by other nations with the reproach of stupidity. This attribute was, really, a somewhat ancient heirloom of the Teutonic race, for, even in the bestiaries of the Middle Ages, all the finer animals conversed in French, but the coarse ones, such as the wolf, or donkey, always employed their "beloved German speech." Goethe desired, like all truly great, patriotic, and moral poets, to better his people; his Faust was meant to show them how man can become more devilish and evil, and therefore better and diviner. But the Germans did not understand. In reality this weakling of a Faust had the pretensions of a Titan and the capacity of a government clerk; the constitution of his conscience was so poorly that he required a devil in order to seduce a girl, and after the first meeting had a pitiable fit of rue-matism. And this Don Quixote, with his barren and aimless enthusiasm, the Germans greeted as their ideal type, and decried Mephistopheles, that superior power who found grace in the eyes of God and Goethe, as a deceiver, a Frenchman or a Jew! At such perverse criticism the poet's wrath at his fellow-countrymen flared up. Henceforth, praise him or blame him as they might, he cared not—except

in so far as their approval hurt him, for he knew whatever his Germans might exalt must be something cheap and made up, inartistic or nonsensical. "I curse," he writes, "my Tasso and my Iphigenia; in a word, all that my public in any sense accepts. I should like, but that I am too old, to compose something that successive generations of Germans for fifty or a hundred years might inveigh against heartily, and calumniate on all occasions and at every time. That would delight me. That would needs be a magnificent work, to call forth such demonstrations from a public so naturally disposed to perfect indifference. Hatred, at all events, shows character. Could we but begin to manifest some little force of character in anything, be it what it may, we should be half-way towards being a nation. Generally speaking, most of us can neither hate nor love."

How could the author of these sentences have been proclaimed the national hero? A glance at the manners of the time gives us the clue. The people knew nothing whatever of Goethe. They had heard something, but at second hand for the most part; and these informants either did not understand Goethe themselves, as he complained, or, if they did, kept their knowledge to themselves, so as not to rake up any trouble. Unpleasantnesses would have been the outcome of raising into relief Goethe's scorn for his countrymen. The very announcement of the fact would have been difficult. The papers, which grovelled before the sovereign people, felt their obligation of doing allegiance to their new unwashed lords. But for this thick-skinned adulation, not one of the upstart masters of public opinion would have

taken the paper in. Further, it was more practical to tax this kill-peace with deception than, after Goethe's view, to denounce newspaper-readers as dolts. In the book-market the same prejudice obtained. "I am very sorry, but cannot bring out your book," a publisher would answer: "the German reading-public would not look at it." "I suppose because it is an attack on them," the author might falteringly reply; "but it is the truth, and I wrote it with my heart's blood." "Oh no! If your book could only offend the German people, I should be too happy to undertake the publication. A book that gives offence is bought up. But you don't imagine that you could offend the German people? Or that you could bring off what the greatest Germans of the nineteenth century failed to do? The German people cannot be offended. No nation in the world has ever been so much abused by its great men as the German—and they have never taken it in evil part. For a complete offending two elements are requisite: the doer and the feeler of the offence. You are exaggerating your own powers. But, really, I am very sorry." And thus, in the eyes of the nineteenth century, literature and art assumed a secondary and utilitarian rank. The principal problems were political, and dealt with the relations between the twenty European territories, and their little animosities. They touched upon questions of social or national economy, on hygiene, and expatiated on the best drainage, on the cure of cancer, the amelioration and cheapening of railways, of the labourer with three acres and a cow. The ideals of the masses, now for the first time at the top of the social pyramid, consisted in their individual

welfare, in having their purses clinking with silver, in running no personal risks, in being happy, healthy, and comfortable, in the policy of peace and plenty. They idolized, not the poet or philosopher, but their grandmotherly statesman, their doctor who healed them, their sanitary engineer. Yet this cheap hedonism did not wholly put men at their ease. A feeling still lurked in them that man was born for something higher. Hence, they chattered of art and Kantianism and Goethe, as though thus to exorcize the seven devils of materialism ; yet understanding of art and philosophy as much as the medieval necromancer of his barbaric charms.

VII

A PARALLEL

AFTER Goethe's death the darkest of nights overpalled German civilization. No star illumined the darkness, the gleam of which could have survived long. One man only, Heinrich Heine, earned European renown, which still lives on—and he was not a German. True, at this time, men of the most various types were extolled with the usual clamour; but these were mostly German provincial celebrities, unknown abroad; or any European fame they might have was ephemeral and soon drowned in Lethe. Civilization, which is always the work of the few, if not of one man, sank to the lowest depths. Political victories superinduced the Germans to believe that it was their spirit, their culture, and superiority that had conquered peoples less gifted; just as though, since the Reformation, the rule had not held good that the commoner fellow wins. So infatuatedly certain were men that they were on the road of salvation that no one ventured to thrust himself in the way of the misled people. At last one such person did come; and his welcome was the repugnance, ignorance, and scoffing of the cultured classes.

For "Culture" was an expression on which the

greater part of the nation liked pluming themselves. If it be asked whence this culture came, the significant reply is: from the State. That gruff but fair-minded barrack-inspector, the State, not only always had the equal weal of all in view, but also was a schoolmaster, and took anxiously precautions against the ideals of equality and average comfort being prejudiced by any higher intelligence. With this object he enacted that the only route to promotion and honour in his barracks, the only way of becoming a caretaker or sergeant, should lie through a breaking-in establishment of his own, called school. At this institution children were cut down to measure by paid officials, themselves previously schooled, and, though belonging to middle-class surroundings, entrusted with the future of the young generation. The scholastic profession was honourable though not quite gentlemanly; the masters were therefore somewhat humble in demeanour, mean-spirited, often bad-tempered; but the initiated pardoned them, as other office-holders, for the many bitter morsels which *hoc genus omne* had to gulp down in the patient exercise of their function. Only the freshness of the young might not endure the countenances of these grey-eyed, bespectacled dry-as-dusts with their ill-boding gaze, who seemingly did not know that the greatest man of their century could not spell, but for all that could do much that a schoolmaster could not. Children there were instructed in numbers, and this, too, intentionally: the object was to preserve mediocrity and rub smooth the angles of talent. A kind of Procrustean bed was invented to shorten the tall and stretch the short. And as stretching is a more

troublesome operation than shortening, and sometimes impossible, it was more convenient to level down, and not up. The modern educational rack thus consisted of the shortening-machine; and, to this end, the poor children were cuffed out of their natural sense by conscientious trainers of youth. It was mother-wit that the State, and the Society it represented, most of all feared: nor without reason. To these, the poor in spirit and spiritless, what use should the heaven prove which their God had erstwhile promised, if, on earth, there were still to be some few folk gadding about with some intellect, and with this inconvenient acquirement setting others their own tune, disturbing those others' fool's paradise and robbing them of their daily bread-and-butter? This exhausting goose-step of petty crafts which were there taught either put the children's patience to a breaking-test—and this the brighter of them underwent with tear-glistening eyes—or crippled their innate energy, and assimilated them to the method of instruction. Only those thus tailored were pronounced morally and intellectually ripe, and were allowed to gain position, titles, or honours, or become useful members of the society, which they then in their turn proceeded to catalogue, purge, and stunt in the same fashion. The secret discontent of parents in those days might often be heard: "once my boy was so clever," or, "out of the many clever children how does one get this frightful number of stupid grown-ups?" But it was they who were responsible for stultifying their children. In the ancient world, when freemen's sons were still educated privately, a father once complained to a pedagogue: "The figure you name for

my boy's training is too high ; I could buy a slave for the sum." "Do so," was the reply, "and you will have two slaves." But the modern fathers felt no qualms at mercilessly handing over their children to the educational care of those cheap *servi publici.*

Thus the State ensured that the human hedgerow should be trimmed uniform and clean, and then, not without a sarcastic smile, proclaimed liberty of teaching and learning. For the universities, those conservatories of the higher mind, the gardeners could choose sproutlings from that well-pruned hedge, on whom to construct a fresh cultural realm in honour of Lady Science. These universities enjoyed greater freedom from Government interference than the folk-schools ; for the State knew it had small cause to fear them, and might laugh, like the ambitious Queen of the Amazons, at the male progeny, already maimed at birth. This fact explains how it was that not one name among the university professors, though in their days on everybody's lips, could survive, and that only the two antagonists, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who turned disdainful backs on them, were to have after-fame.

With all these premisses the tragedy of Nietzsche's life becomes intelligible. The reasons of his being ignored and calumniated and refused a hearing ; why he could not find a publisher ; why only the lees of the people ran after him ; why the half-blind invalid had to sojourn in foreign lands with naught but his staff and knapsack, "without any solace, or the milk of human kindness, or a word of love"—as he who so vaunted himself on his sufferings once wailed—all this makes itself clear. The enmity of his time some-

times embittered him, and he might cry, "Did they understand me, I should despair of myself"; but despondence and dreariness often followed close on moments of eagle-like flight and divine soarings above transitory things. In learned and unlearned journals the thinker was often depicted as eccentric, hypochondriac, or a fit object for pathology. Perhaps Democritus' fate consoled him. Did he know the story? Once the greatest citizen of Abdera, Democritus, like Friedrich Nietzsche, retired into solitude. The Abderites misdeemed him mad, and sent for the famous physician Hippocrates from the Isle of Cos to come and graciously heal the sufferer. Hippocrates came, visited Democritus, had a conversation with him, and roundly pronounced: "Men of Abdera, Democritus is the only sane man amongst you. Pray let me prescribe the hellebore for you."

Whether the mad Abderites took the advice of Hippocrates is not extant. Certain it is, however, that the nineteenth-century Abdera refused the proffered help of its only leech. Nietzsche's time lay tossing in the delirium of charity, and thrust back the hand that would fain have poured a cooling draught into the parched throat. "People are mostly sane, but peoples mostly insane," this Samaritan murmured. And the insanest of all was the German nation, *more maiorum.* Nietzsche had looked for his first welcome from the man whose language he spoke, and never forgave the nation of poets and thinkers—who unfortunately poetized reason, and rationalized poetry—for discountenancing their greatest man. His contempt for their civilization, as with Stendhal and Goethe, was limitless. It is always breaking out.

Now he will speak of the "imbecile, decayed, and mendacious" German spirit; now of the "stultification office in Germany with its many branches"; or again of the "swampiness, crassness, and fog" extending its sway in that country. His disgust was the greater when he observed foreign countries taking some heed of him, whilst in Germany "not a sound was heard." At Florence he met an old astronomer who was a star-gazer of quite German perseverance, but, for all that, not blind to a new comet going up on earth: on his desk lay a well-thumbed copy of Nietzsche's 'untimely commentaries.' St. Petersburg, New York, Vienna, began to understand him, but never the great alluvial plain of Germany. "I am now forty-five years old; have published about fifteen books, but in Germany not even one of them has been tolerably reviewed." The most trenchant gibe ever cast in the teeth of the Germans was his: "I now know why Napoleon once said, on seeing Goethe, '*voilà un homme*'—he had been expecting a German."

Especially German erudites grated on Nietzsche. Their crustacean hearts jarred the artist in him, their manners the man of the world, and their specialism the philosopher. At one time he deserted their ranks, and, like Heraclitus, sought refuge from the market-cries of these endowed Ephesian professors; and just as Heraclitus preferred to play at dice with little children to talking politics with his countrymen, so, too, his heir set a higher value on "globe-trotting, love-adventures, and life's sport and joy," than on the more modest range of his colleagues' respective faculties. Later on the renegade met again with the more faithful bodyguards of German wisdom.

Silz Maria, his country home in the Engadine, was a professorial meeting-place. There he encountered once more the cosy tenants of the German University armchairs (as he sneeringly once called them), "I shall here have to receive the current run of things, and a very quick run I shall make, as far as German University interests are concerned." Once more he was sitting in the circle of hair-splitters, statisticians, text-worms, antiquity-snatchers, performing spaniels and lumbering bears, who could neither laugh nor dance ; who knew nothing of the *gai saber*, the wisdom blithesome, and, like owls, saw nothing by day, and by night hunted mice. And his gorge may ofttimes have risen at the no-sidedness of these his inferiors, whom the people so revered. He was right ; for whilst the artists in the world began to listen to him, this guild, out of which Nietzsche himself had once emerged, had not produced, either in his day or long after his death, one man capable in the least degree of comprehending him. As to the journalists, those gutter-boys who peeped into the work-shop of the spirit through the key-holes, in order to communicate to their fellow-urchins what they thought they had seen, them Nietzsche scarcely reproached ; as antagonists, they stood too far beneath him. But the few master-craftsmen he could not condone for giving forth the shavings from their carpenters' benches as works of art, and carefully utilizing them to cover over only others' masterpieces.

The behaviour of the State *savants* in these days naturally could not arouse either mirth or indignation. Still the German professors were only addressing a

German public, and the warning which the wrathful Goethe once gave Satan,

> Prate not thus to ears divine, I pray ;
> It sounds so like what German professors say,

was wholly superfluous. Honest Michael had no divine ears, not even a human nose : *non cuique datum est habere nasum.* Not that he was unaware of his lack : he endeavoured to make up for his national failing with all his might by assiduous study, conscientious self-testing, and German thoroughness ; an incidental result was that he unhappily laughed too late. When the present generation is descending to Hades, probably this *esprit d'escalier* will break out at the most unsuitable time ; they may all then burst out laughing at the humour of the nineteenth-century situation. Then they may understand how funny it was that the learned contemporaries of Nietzsche proudly rejected his teaching, and yet professed so great veneration for its direct source. This source was Goethe.

To their hero Goethe all the men of that time had intoned their ceaseless homage in word and screed. Every one of them would have bowed his head reverentially at the mere name. Their study of him was unremitting ; his every line had been turned inside out and scanned with the eagle eyes of connoisseurs. His sources they knew. Archives, journals, societies had been established ; dictionaries and concordances and literary histories composed. With a fool's meekness Goethe's bungled lines and meaningless phrases had been worshipped, and in them a non-existent pithiness surmised : for the

German of that date used to deem the unintelligible deep and the luminous flat. These pedants of the pen might be compared to the boor who is taken into a king's palace, and at once makes his curtsey to a gold-laced lackey, but turns his back on Majesty who approaches him simple and austere. Thus in the second part of *Faust*, Goethe's gorgeous palace of philosophy, the Germans bent low before the mysterious busybodies and the strange arabesques and flamboyant flourishes of allegoric shadow-pictures, whilst the sunshine and clearness of the constructive idea went unnoticed. Commentators, too, had not been lacking. A pyramid might have been built up out of one copy each of the German works on Faust; and an eloquent German emperor might have incited his myrmidons with Napoleon's words: "Soldiers, from this gigantic pyramid a whole century of German thought is looking down on you." But the Germans had never understood *Faust* aright, and had gone utterly wrong from 1866 onwards, the time they became a great power. The victory won by the German schoolmaster at Sadowa was dearly purchased at the price of German individuality. The German had been drilled to death. The German clock ceased to strike and tell the hours: it only whirred and quivered and snarled out dull sickly notes, out of tune and without resonance; and only marked time, until it forgot even these tones and its mainspring broke. And this was at the end of the nineteenth century, when sea-girt England was adding to her possessions with renewed vigour and greater success. Yet all her political prowess was as nothing in comparison with the moral conquests she was

making on the Continent; for Germany, the very heart of Europe, was infused with the English spirit. The German had been anglicized; he soon left off even playing at idealism, and was only pretending to be a thinker. It was not to be long, and they had the impertinence to scoff at philosophy openly, whilst still making a show of their enthusiasm for Goethe by writing books on him, in order to conceal their emptiness of thought about him.

The *dies irae* burst over these charlatans when the ancient greatness they revered came down amongst them in new guise. When Majesty (which even the peasant at last learns to recognize and respect) makes his appearance in a new, strange uniform, the rank and file forget their accustomed vociferation; all the sentry-goes of literature go on in the canteen with their small-talk; no drum beats its salvo; no stentorian "Prresent Arrms" rings out; perhaps a few curious street-boys wait about and throw their ragged caps in the air. And when the King has passed by, some one may rub his sleepy eyes and ask: "Was that he?" It had been the Man; in Nietzsche's person Goethe's majesty had passed away for ever.

The germs of Nietzsche's philosophy are cognizable everywhere in Goethe, but especially in the second part of *Faust*, where the hero treads the scene, healed, manly, and superhuman, with the devil as his useful thrall. Faust is a man; no longer can his mind strive after contentment and happiness and comfort; he has learnt to rise superior to the little festivities round the parish-pump, as to the petty pleasures of lust; he has grasped that "enjoyment vilifies," and

his exalted spirit yearns for deeds and sovereignty and might :

> This little round of earth still yields
> Me space and strength for some great deed ;
> In wondrous prowess to succeed
> In patient bravery on fresh fields.
> To rule, to own, is all my aim !
> To do is all. What matters fame ?

And here, into his *Faust*, Goethe had buried deep down his seedling, to burgeon in still concealedness, that some descendant might one day gather its blossom ; carefully he had netted it around with a veil of phantastic symbolism, so as to guard his tiny plant from the rough and untoward season ; he had assigned to sphinxes and gryphons, psyllae and marsi, norse and heathen emblems of terror, the defence of the Garden from the trampling feet of the *profanum vulgus* ; erected an impenetrable magic thorn-hedge of lifeless briars about his treasure, on which the uninitiate might prick and wound their presumptuous hands. And then he passed away with this last hope in his great heart, that some keen and noble eye might discover his delicate treeling and rear up this his legacy to posterity.

His hope was not in vain. Those unqualified remained afar from his *Faust*, and no German ever could understand it. It was Nietzsche who first revealed Goethe's Tree of Knowledge ; he fostered and nurtured it, and plucked its precious fruit.

To understand Nietzsche, we must understand *Faust*. In *Faust* Nietzsche's words "God is dead" were already enounced. There, too, we have anti-democratic reaction, disapproval of the rapid increase

of the people, blame of the blear-eyed forethought for the material and spiritual weal of the Many; whereby only what was bad, worthless, and diseased could multiply, and only discontent and rebellion flourish.

> Can I commend this, deem it well?
> Should I be glad these folk increase,
> Are fed and nourished as they please,
> Trained, educated for their ease?
> The slaves, once raised, will but rebel.

And that sound great Jesuitical maxim was re-hallowed that the end justifies the means, after having been almost reversed by the petty Jesuits of the day:

> No! Might is right! And every one
> Should ask but what, not how it's done.

This is already Nietzsche's immoralism; in the very middle of the humanitarian period, with its zeal for the liberation of slaves, here we may detect the beginning of the war against judicial equality. Thus Faust the builder has become hard on himself and on others. He sternly orders his Mephistopheles to press workmen and slaves into his great work. He has no fellow-feeling with the weak, the sore, and the laden. In the Christian superstition as to the value of every human soul, there is no longer any ghost of belief; and, proud at his honourable will and might, he is readily consoled at the death of that aged couple Philemon and Baucis—even at the slaughter of the innocents, who are sacrificed to his designs. In *Faust* all the problems of Nietzsche's lifetime are anticipated · there an attempt is made to create a race of sturdier men; the solution of the difficulty is

also there, that only danger and fighting can beget happiness and freedom, but not the overrated security of life and property. There Nietzsche's expedients are already forecast, for conferring on men more strength and mirth, namely, through more suffering; that the feeble may go to the wall and the strong find either slaves they can command or opponents worthy of them, on whom to steel and test their strength. There, even, from his Pisgah, Goethe saw Nietzsche's fairy-land, the Canaan of the New Renascence, where there was very little talk of milk and honey and other cheap commodities.

> Within, the airs of Paradise to breathe ;—
> Without, unto its verge bid torrents seethe ;
> Howe'er, by stealth or force, floods fain would reach
> The realm, all hands are swift to fill the breach.
> Yea, to this feeling now I freely give
> Myself ; no more can wisdom rede :
> He only earneth freedom, earns to live,
> Who daily wrests his right by deed,
> Who passes girt with danger and with strife
> Young, grown, and aged, years of useful life.
> And glad I were to see such throngs, to stand
> Amidst a people free in a free land.
> Then might I to the moment say,
> "Tarry awhile, thou art so fair."
> The tokens of my earthly day
> No æons ever can impair.
> I, of this highest bliss presentient,
> In this my highest moment, am content.

Faust, in his misery and distraughtness, had once repaired to the civilization of antiquity to be healed and enlightened. Nietzsche, quaffing this same elixir, had rescued himself from Schopenhauer and Christianity. Germany, even, thirsting after culture,

heard the chiming of the bells, and surmised she might here profit somewhat. In the minutes of smug self-complacency she had even boasted of her intellectual kinship with the Greeks : all the rich have so many poor relations. To German schools and universities the ancient outlook on the world was handed down ; true, emaciatedly, and at third hand, with much adulteration of consecrated water ; but still this teaching was preservable. Not a German was there who would not have hymned the ancients and their exalted mode of life. But it was only lip-worship. The *dies irae, dies illa* on which the sun of Nietzsche was to dazzle these groping troglodytes, revealed the hollowness of their reverence. For the second time, when the old rose up garbed anew, when the spirit of the cultured heathen reappeared amongst them, and their awe for classic times was to be tested,—for the second time the German watch forgot the password. The liege troops did not keep the oath they had made to their honoured Queen Antiquity. The soldier of learning had sworn, as did the militia of that day (which also, unlike the warriors of old, largely consisted of slaves), and mechanically mumbled the prescribed formula. They had, like certain devout persons, only murmured their Latin prayers, but long jabbering of them had made them forget their meaning. Phrases like the "humanities" and "classical ideas" evidently came pat to the lips of the men of the same caste, who, like Mandarins, recognized one another by the peacock-feather and red top-knot. But what the aristocratic civilization of Rome and Greece had meant, only those greater minds, Goethe and Nietzsche, grasped : but to none

were those feelings of manly vigour more unintelligible than to the womanish armageddon of serfs of the nineteenth century ; to none less clear than to those unnatural products of that unnatural time, the learned men.

The erudite was the absolute converse of the pagan positive. He studied the ancients because he could not feel them. He had less kith with them than a layman ; otherwise, he would not have become learned. Him research injuriously affected : *un sot savant est plus sot qu'un autre.* What it was that induced this decidedly non-Apolline being, bespectacled and self-maimed, to chase the classical Daphne is an eternal riddle. But the tremor of the brave nymph is comprehensible when she flees her pursuer and cries unto the gods :

Qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram !

And the gods were kind and vouchsafed to the hapless maiden her request. Daphne's body thinned down into a stem ; and the German professor was embracing, not classical beauty, but a piece of wood, a wooden fetish ; was enthusiastically praising and with awe kissing this stick :

Oscula dat ligno, refugit tamen oscula lignum.

But not to all did antiquity remain dry and lifeless. Nietzsche lighted upon the slumber-bound beauty, and awoke her to new life, and released her from the arm of her unloved wooer. "I thank thee who hast freed me from my great foe, Judaea," Paganism resurrected murmured to him, "and, yet more, for that thou hast withdrawn me from the arms of my

friend, the classical philologer. For, lo, unto him was I as wood ; but thou take the laurel into which erst-while was I transformed ; it is his meed who unbinds the enchanted princess." Then the technical lover was wroth : was not his claim stronger and older than that of the froward leman ? And, in his anger, he went unto the assembly of the enemies. Nietzsche lived to see those nominal worshippers, the humanists of the nineteenth century, the classically educated Germans, take up the side of Judaea against Rome. Gods might have laughed out loud at the fools' comedy of this age. Proud Aryans were contending for the Semites and yet professing the deepest hatred of them ; and for Nietzsche there were entering the lists some descendants of Daphne's most virulent opponents of old : these were the Jews.

VIII

THE JEWS

HOW could that people, the laughing-stock of every superior race of old, the *despectissima pars servientium* of Persians, Medes, and Assyrians—those superstitious Orientals whom Cicero had stigmatized as born to serve, those moles, tricksy, fanatic, who shunned the daylight and from their catacombs undermined Rome—how could the Jews have ranged themselves under Nietzsche's banner? They were the society to which Christ belonged, whence Christianity sprang up; and they were offering libations to the true Antichrist. How should they, who made black white, transvalued the world of antiquity, and pronounced all wisdom folly, now nod approval to the sage who was vituperating their people, declaring that He who brought balsam to the world had brought venom, and that His message of good was a message of bane? How might the Jews support him who had pointed his finger at their greatest exploit as a stain, and the worst pollution of mankind?

This is the explanation. These Jews were Jews no more. Their ancient converts, Jews to the third power, the Christians, were the real Jews. The history of the Jews is that of a people whose chord

of life was once overstrained, and rang to the note of Christianity. In retribution, Mistress Nature forthwith awarded them blows and torture, and utterly quenched them to sobriety with chilly showers of grievous pain and long suffering. Their annals are like the medieval tale of the murderer whom his sin ever recalls to its ancient scene; whom conscience, nor that alone, but also experience as well, torment and eternally perplex with the thought of whether he had done right, whether the fair Pagana he had killed was really evil, whether his offspring was not uglier than hers; who knew not why he brought Rome low. Restless, the Wandering Jew might traverse all the ages—derided, despised, persecuted, spurned, and exiled; yet he recked little thereof, for those who were scoffing at him were his own flesh and blood, were Jews, if not racially, yet, what was worse, in spirit. If only he had not committed murder, and craftily poisoned the great heathen goddess, who conceived so differently of good and evil! Perhaps she was right after all. Terrible had it been to sacrifice to one's loathing a nobody, despicable, and indifferent—that might be forgotten: but what of offering up one greater, nobler, superior—maybe, knowing good and evil? And when Christians hounded him down with stones, clenched fists, and hatred-darting eyes, it was only his teaching, his religion, his transvaluation, his civilization, his Good. Had he made a mistake? had God blinded him? had a madness for a thousand years befogged his brain? For he was the father of this insanity; the spreader of this plague; the deadly foe of all the truly good; the leader of the rabble that pursued and vilified and

spat at him. His energy sapped with doubt and rage, the eternal Jew sank down on his lonely path, holding aloof from all peoples, upon a mile-stone, and his staff fell from his weary hand; his careworn forehead rested on his palm for support, and in his mind, with the majesty of sorrow of Michael Angelo's Jeremiah, he still brooded, "What is good? what is evil?"

Such were the questions that already engaged all the finer brains during the night of Christendom, and were answered by all others from the Christian point of view. But they had not been whipped into wakefulness, like the Jews; no danger, that stern mother of great warriors and deep thinkers, had menaced them, nor had the persecution blessed them that had hammered the Jews hard. The Christians lacked the sufferings of their forefathers, which might benefit the issue; no floods washed around them to train them like the Venetian lagoon-dwellers to be lords of the world. None had harshly bidden them "misreckon not; if thou speculate wrong, all is over." They had not been taught by example, by stripes and aches, which the Jew had experienced after propagating the Christian revelry of love. Thus was it, that, even in the Middle Ages, the great discussions were treated more humanly by Jewish thinkers, and more in conformity with Western and Pagan ideas, than by the offspring of the Greeks and Romans, and that Jewish philosophers had long found the road to Hellenic salvation by way of Arabic, whilst the Aryans still meandered despairingly in the enchanted garden of the East. Nietzsche had very well recognized this heathen feature of Jewish thought.

But all this, naturally, applied only to those Jews who were Jews imbued with the living spirit of ancient parts of the Old Testament, and not to those characterless nonentities, the nineteenth century so called. What should be meant by "people"? A nation should be one in the ancient sense of the term, excluding the slaves, the serfs of commerce and agriculture, archaeologists and members of parliament. It should embrace only the free. But the nineteenth century knew nought of this distinction; universal democracy identified people and race, and never reflected that, however important a tree's roots be, it is judged only by its fruits. The Jews, as a people, had always been, on the average, a very mediocre race. Nietzsche indeed believed he could see much in them that was praiseworthy—for the *consensus populorum* on anything, and therefore on the Jews, could never be right: so he declared that they had been persecuted for their virtues, which men set down as vices, and that amongst Germans to meet a Jew was a boon. Perhaps he agreed with Goethe:

> What boots your everlasting prating?
> Belittle not this devil of mine.
> A fellow worthy so much baiting
> Is something fine.

Yet the impression is irresistible that this *advocatus diaboli* was too generous, and that the Jewish virtues were those of everybody; that there was little to choose between the plebs of Judaism and Christianity, and that of the Elect People few only were elect enough to speculate on good and evil.

The most of them speculated in a different coin,

the good and evil of which exacts less narrow scrutiny. Mammon was become their second God; he had been introduced by them in the Middle Ages, when their first was evidently to be subject to the ruthless resistance of some unbelievers. The second conversion by the Jews proceeded faster and more thoroughly than the first, until its influence wholly extinguished every atheist. In the nineteenth century pelf was the universal faith. Everything was chaffered over. The State had been turned into a sort of chartered company, occupying itself with the spread of its business, finding outlets for its home-output, and using diplomatists as foreign commercial residents. Seldom did countries come to blows—they preferred bargaining; and whenever a conflict did arise, the conqueror was too weak to make full use of his victory, and a peace was somehow compromised. Haggling with foreign commercial nations went on in ministerial palaces, and in the parliaments with the people itself. The Jews might have had cause for self-congratulation at the eminent success of both their missionary efforts; but pride at their conquest could have little vogue, as the ungrateful world spared her applause of her benefactors: Jewish gods, but not the Jews themselves, were honoured. It might be thought that they, who were so oppressed from without, would have welcomed any sign of intelligence from within. On the contrary: like other peoples, the Jews never sided with their great men, but thwarted them to the utmost of their power Nietzsche might have said:

> Above and below but rabble in view;
> To-day all's one, be it Christian or Jew.

Happiness, marriage, family, calm, contentment, and comfort were the desires of all peoples, the Jews included.

Even persecution did not advantage the Jews of the nineteenth century to any extent. Their opponents might be impelled by the Christian spirit to benefit their enemies and with a charming innocence do their best to foster a strange people to greatness—for their baiting was neither severe enough to cripple nor so slight as not to gall. But it was all in vain. The hobbling Jewish nag could not be spurred on into a gallop, however savage his antisemitic rider. The Jews jogged on through the world and were perhaps a little livelier than their comrades; but their loathings and bile only vented themselves in usury and extortion. The noble Jews, the true sons of Jehovah, the Shylocks who disdained gold and demanded revenge, have ever been the exception. The Jews were no whit better than other races, and yet had more occasion to be. Until the beginning of the twentieth century their condition was peculiarly fortunate: they were barred from State service and yet tolerated. Formerly, in Spain, they had also been pariahs, but had been expelled: the states of later times were too weak for this measure. In the nineteenth century the administration was too nerveless to be tolerant, and too tolerant to thrust them fanatically out. Thus the Jews enjoyed comparative quiet; were not forced to undergo too much of the official thumb-screw. They could march light, whilst votaries of other beliefs had to drag their mill-stones in their knapsacks. They might, like Turkish Armenians, have to pay taxes; were not, unlike these

last, exempt from the military, but only from the civil service. Should not they have been grateful for this privilege? Surely, individuality might have emerged from amongst them with more ease than from amidst those poorest of the poor, who had to walk with the loaded manacles of State service on their feet. But no; the frightful purblindness of the popular ideal of that age was branded on the Jews as well, who thronged and strove after the seats of the departmental mighty. To this Moloch they offered up their children in the furnaces of school and university, and would not have been loth to give up their grown sons as well. At this time their pushfulness was often cast in their teeth; but can those who are so modest as to yearn for officialdom be justly termed ambitious?

Their unceasing clamour then was—tolerance. "Be Christian and gentle and tolerant," was their request to the nations under whose flags they lived. If any of their own kin stood up and told them that these governments would be right in ridding themselves of the Jews, they denounced him for a monster. And should this monstrosity go on with an exposition that tolerance springing only from neglect is an insult (as was that of the Romans towards the Jews), that hatred is preferable to contempt, then they stared him blankly in the face, and would have delighted in blowing their holy horn, the Shofar, in order to drive out of the community of Israel this "unworthy brother, who befouls his own nest." But their instinct, as that of their foes, had worsened in the nineteenth century; no longer did the rabbi proclaim in the synagogue to the trumpeting of the horn, in

front of the opened ark, that formidable ban, once pronounced over their greatest thinker :

" After the counsel of the Angels and the declaration of the Holy Ones, be he banned, exiled, thrust forth, and cast out ! Be he accursed by the will of God and His congregation ; by this Torah with its six hundred and thirteen laws; in the name of the Archangel Michael ; in the name of Him who appeared unto Moses in the thorn-bush ; in the name of the Lord of Hosts, who dwelleth above His Cherubim ! The anger of the Lord and a grievous storm light upon the head of this godless man ! Be he accursed, wheresoever he stand, whithersoever he wend his way ! May his soul depart from him in terror ! may he die by the strangling of his neck ! God chastise him with affliction of his lungs, with fever, fire, and burning, with the sword, the drought, and the mange ! The Lord wipe out his name from Heaven, and sever him off for the Evil One from all the tribes of Israel ! Amen ! "

And yet in this man, Baruch Spinoza, on whose devoted head fell all these devout spells, the whole of the thousand-year-old tragedy of the Jewish people had ripened ; the tragedy of knowing " we have gone astray ; retrace, retrace your steps." Baruch Spinoza was the first Jew, since the days of Alexandria, who was hellenized anew ; the first heathen spirit to awaken of the Reformation epoch ; the first to abandon the decrepit house of his faith and to lay the foundations for an edifice sublimer, more beauteous and joyous, for the kingly home of Nietzsche's philosophy.

IX

A FORECAST

BUT so great poetic justice Jehovah did not vouchsafe the world as to give this last hero of his self-misled people, Baruch Spinoza, strength enough, "only this once" (as Samson prayed), to take Samson's vengeance of the Philistines for his two eyes. The Messiah was not to come of the house of David, as the Israelites had always hoped. The hands of the poor consumptive Portuguese Jew were too weak to overturn the pillar of the temple of Altruism; it only burst asunder, and, if somewhat damaged, still stood upright with its previous defiance. The Redeemer for whom the Jews were biding their time, who should befree them and their Christian co-religionists from the Ghetto, was not to spring from the seed of Abraham.

His arms were strong, unlike Spinoza's; the vengeance of Samson was to be his, and, like Samson, he bowed himself with all his might and the house fell upon the Philistines and himself. Over the ruins Aryans and Semites, Romans and Germans, Hellenes and Christians will clasp brotherly hands and be reconciled after their two thousand years of contest. Not that the millennium will have arrived. On the contrary, albeit Christianity brought us to the very

brink of this perilous abyss. But whenever the yearning to fight stirs in men again, and it must and will, they will do so with a good conscience. Wars will lose their Christian stamp, nor any longer have to be condoned as defensive, which would, to a statesman, seem a slur. Contests will not be merely humanitarian and designed to kill off the best without any purpose ; they will not be waged with kid gloves nor be indecisive : they will be again the life-and-death struggles of the pagan world, that must end with the utter weakening of the vanquished and allow the victors to renew the world according to their ideas. For man's true nature, fiendish and aggressive, which was so cruelly calumniated by the out-worn creed, shall once more emerge from the depths ; and aristocratic virtues again be in good odour : in the stead of dons, clerks, or the Dorcases of peace societies, Bayards *sans peur et sans reproche* from amongst all people shall nod to one another in friendship, or, may be, in chivalrous enmity. Then all the dwarfs of Philistine bourgeoisie commercial and political, whom the nineteenth century overfreely pampered, will retire, at the appearance of the rising sun, to their nether clefts.

For there had been too many of them, even though thousands came by their death when the temple fell in ; millions remained. One Samson perishes more easily than innumerable Philistines, self-preserved by their foresight and weakness from the danger of collapse or downfall. So most of them kept their beds ; scarcely felt curiosity enough to heed the tune of a blind Samson ; in fact, they were not fond of new melodies and exciting music (which they had so often been promised before—and it turned out the

same old harp). Besides, they were afraid that the quickened pulse of life might imperil their health and cut short their valuable existence, which they treasured "for their children's sake"; they were not unaware, that, at home, by their snug hearth and with their true-hearted wives, they were safer than outside, where the combat raged, and Titans were contending with the ancient gods, boulders flying in the air, Pelion piling itself upon Ossa. So they put wax into their ears, sipped small beer in order to deaden themselves, crawled fearsomely under their bed-clothes, so as to let delicious oblivion screen them from the untoward weather. While Samson was playing his part in the Temple, they lay wrapt in soundest sleep.

So deep was their apathy that they never even noticed the great happening of their lifetime, the perdition of an ages-old temple, the resurrection of the Balder once killed by Loki; they never observed the ascendancy in the firmament of a new irreligion and a new faith. And thirty years after Nietzsche's death the Philistine will rub his eyes and ask himself where he is. He will peer around dazed; will feel his aching limbs, and his heavy head, and say to himself, "I believe I have been very ill." And he will be right. His leaden slumber, his want of susceptibility, his deafness to all that is true and great will be excusable on the score of a delirious fever.

And after the refreshing thunderstorm, that will create for us a new aristocracy, the world will brighten anew; men become more redeemed, more guiltless; no longer shall the patient mien, the sweat and drops of blood on the Crucified One, satisfy their feelings. The hospital moans of the nineteenth century shall

silently cease and be hushed, and with them shall disappear the vulgar din and forced frolic of the Christian witches' Sabbath, which had piped forth its shrill tune of a bad conscience to the groaning bass of pessimism. Heaven then becomes light, and the lark shall trill her sweetest songs in celebration of the rising sun of mankind healed. Men are again laughing their own ingenuous laugh of nobility and precious freedom, for the curse of sin has been lifted from off them. Wine pearls in the goblet; the air is clean, rustling with gentle breezes and fragrant with scents of spring. The music of joy is ringing out, and the heart shall dance ere the foot can follow; and the foot will lief follow, for erstwhile it had so oft to dance without the heart thereto:

> Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
> pulsanda tellus.

Such, in the eyes of the after-time, will be the merit of their nineteenth-century ancestors. Though the picture of our civilization will seem to them a figurement of sickness, oppression, mutilation, and loathsomeness, they will not fail to render us our great due of gratitude. For necessary it was to lead man to the very brink of the pit in order to rouse him; and advisable that he should see behind the specious rose-bush of philanthropy the lowering eyes of the dragon socialism and anarchy; and blessed was he in that this baleful portent bit him in his trustfulness, and gave him so marked a scar that the sight of it alone were enough to deter him for ever from becoming a Christian again.

Thus will our more fortunate great-grandchildren,

with a child's love and grateful spirit, lay their wreath on the tomb of the evil days of their fathers, the anguish of which has turned to their good. For it was the nineteenth-century civilization, that weary and despairing mother, hunted and despondent, that bore, in her pangs and because of her pangs, a great son—even as that great Corsican woman, though chased through the rocks and clefts of her wild island-home, gave us her Napoleon—a mighty son who was destined to lead mankind out of democracy and Christianity to realms higher and brighter.

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