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ESSAYS & ADDRESSES

BY

GILBERT MURRAY

LL.D., D.Litt., F.B.A.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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DEDICO

PREFACE

SEVERAL of these papers have appeared in periodicals or been published in the proceedings of societies, and I have to thank the editors or the committees for the permission to reprint. Detailed acknowledgements will be found in the table of contents. One or two besides are published in separate volumes, the *Stoic Philosophy* by Messrs. Watts and Co., and others by Messrs. Allen and Unwin. As to these also the details are given elsewhere.

To make a collection even on a small scale of one's occasional writings on popular subjects throughout a long period of years is, I find, a matter of some anxiety. A man has generally little confidence in his past self. There is no knowing what it may have done, or what foolish things it may have thought or written, ten or twenty years ago. I confess that when I began to look through my papers with a view to the present selection I rather expected to find embarrassing self-contradictions or indiscretions of which I should now be ashamed. In this I was agreeably disappointed, but I did find what from the reader's point of view is perhaps worse, a good deal of repetition, or rather a constant attempt, by different means and in different contexts, to say very much the same thing.

This discovery has suggested the order in which the essays are now arranged. Popular essays—if I may venture to hope that these are in any sense popular—are normally written upon large and profound subjects about which neither the writer nor the reader can claim exact knowledge. That is inevitable and by no means blameworthy. Yet it does seem fair to ask that one who takes it upon him to advise his neighbours about uncertain and speculative things ought first to possess exact knowledge about something or other. It is not merely that he ought to know some little corner of the world before passing judgements on the world as a whole. He ought also to know the difference between knowing and not

knowing; he ought to have mastered, in some one subject, the method by which knowledge is acquired. And whatever his subject is, his experience of it will be an invaluable help to him in understanding matters outside it, and will probably here and there enable him to see some things which people with a different experience have failed to see. Of course it will also to some extent mislead him; that is inevitable. It will, in spite of all vigilance, give a bias or a colour to his conceptions.

For good and evil, the present writer is a "grammaticus" and in particular a Greek student. His special form of experience and the point of view to which it leads are given in the first paper, *Religio Grammatici*. Starting from some study of "letters" as the record made by the human soul of those moments of life which it has valued most and most longs to preserve, he makes his attempt to understand its present adventures and prospects. The next three essays deal more or less directly with Greek subjects, or rather with the light thrown by particular phases of Greek experience upon modern problems of society and conduct and literature. Then the connexion with Greece becomes slighter, and by the end of the book we are dealing directly with modern questions.

Most of the papers are recent. One only is twenty years old. The address on National Ideals has been included here after some hesitation because, in spite of a certain crudity and perhaps ferocity of tone, it seemed to me that its expression of the feelings of the Liberal minority during the Boer War afforded an interesting parallel to the feelings of the same minority twenty years later, at the close of the Great War. I will not lay stress on the similarities nor yet on the differences, except one: that now there is a League of Nations and then there was not. To a present-day reader the last half-desperate pages of that paper seem almost like a conscious argument for the foundation of a League of Nations; but of course at that time the name of the League had never been spoken nor the idea conceived except as a fantasy.

G. M.

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Essays and Addresses

I

RELIGIO GRAMMATICI [1]

THE RELIGION OF A "MAN OF LETTERS"

IT is the general custom of this Association to choose as its President alternately a Classical Scholar and a man of wide eminence outside the classics. Next year you are to have a man of science, a great physician who is also famous in the world of learning and literature. Last year you had a statesman, though a statesman who is also a great scholar and man of letters, a sage and counsellor in the antique mould, of world-wide fame and unique influence.[2] And since, between these two, you have chosen, in your kindness to me, a professional scholar and teacher, you might well expect from him an address containing practical educational advice in a practical educational crisis. But that, I fear, is just what I cannot give. My experience is too one-sided. I know little of schools and not much even of pass-men. I know little of such material facts as curricula and time-tables and parents and examination papers. I sometimes feel—as all men of fifty should—my ignorance even of boys and girls. Besides that, I have the honour at present to be an official of the Board of Education; and in public discussions of current educational subjects an officer of the Board must in duty be like the poetical heroine—"He cannot argue, he can only feel."

[1] Being a Presidential Address to the Classical Association on January 8, 1918.

[2] Sir William Osler and Lord Bryce.

I believe, therefore, that the best I can do, when the horizon looks somewhat dark not only for the particular studies which we in this Society love most, but for the habits of mind which we connect with those studies, the philosophic temper, the gentle judgement, the interest in knowledge and beauty for their own sake, will be simply, with your assistance, to look inward and try to realize my own Confession of Faith. I do, as a matter of fact, feel clear that, even if knowledge of Greek, instead of leading to Bishoprics as it once did, is in future to be regarded with popular suspicion as a mark of either a reactionary or an unusually feckless temper, I am nevertheless not in the least sorry that I have spent a large part of my life in Greek studies, not in the least penitent that I have been the cause of others doing the same. That is my feeling, and there must be some base for it. There must be such a thing as *Religio Grammatici*, the special religion of a "Man of Letters."

The greater part of life, both for man and beast, is rigidly confined in the round of things that happen from hour to hour. It is *ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς*, exposed for circumstances to beat upon; its stream of consciousness channelled and directed by the events and environments of the moment. Man is imprisoned in the external present; and what we call a man's religion is, to a great extent, the thing that offers him a secret and permanent means of escape from that prison, a breaking of the prison walls which leaves him standing, of course, still in the present, but in a present so enlarged and enfranchised that it is become not a prison but a free world. Religion, even in the narrow sense, is always seeking for *Sotêria*, for escape, for some salvation from the terror to come or some deliverance from the body of this death.

And men find it, of course, in a thousand ways, with different degrees of ease and of certainty. I am not wishing to praise my talisman at the expense of other talismans. Some find it in theology, some in art, in human affection; in the anodyne of constant work; in that permanent exercise of the inquiring intellect which is commonly called the search for Truth; some find it in carefully cultivated illu-

sions of one sort or another, in passionate faiths and undying pugnacities; some, I believe, find a substitute by simply rejoicing in their prison, and living furiously, for good or ill, in the actual moment.

And a Scholar, I think, secures his freedom by keeping hold always of the past and treasuring up the best out of the past, so that in a present that may be angry or sordid he can call back memories of calm or of high passion, in a present that requires resignation or courage he can call back the spirit with which brave men long ago faced the same evils. He draws out of the past high thoughts and great emotions; he also draws the strength that comes from communion or brotherhood.

> Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides,
> And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old,

come back to comfort another blind poet in his affliction. The Psalms, turned into strange languages, their original meaning often lost, live on as a real influence in human life, a strong and almost always an ennobling influence. I know the figures in the tradition may be unreal, their words may be misinterpreted. But the communion is quite a real fact. And the student, as he realizes it, feels himself one of a long line of torchbearers. He attains that which is the most compelling desire of every human being, a work in life which it is worth living for, and which is not cut short by the accident of his own death.

It is in that sense that I understand *Religio*. And now I would ask you to consider with me the proper meaning of *Grammatikê*, and the true business of the "Man of Letters" or "*Grammaticus*."

II

A very, very long time ago—the palaeontologists refuse to give us dates—mankind, trying to escape from his mortality, invented *Grammata* or letters. Instead of being content with his spoken words, ἔπεα πτερόεντα which fly as a bird flies and are past, he struck out the plan of making

marks on wood or stone, or bone or leather or some other material, significant marks which should somehow last on, charged with meaning, in place of the word that had perished. Of course the subjects for such perpetuation were severely selected. Infinitely the greater part of man's life, even now, is in the moment, the sort of thing that is lived and passes without causing any particular regret, or rousing any definite action for the purpose of retaining it. And when the whole process of writing or graving was as difficult as it must have been in remote antiquity, the words that were recorded, the moments that were so to speak made imperishable, must have been very rare indeed. One is tempted to think of the end of Faust; was not the graving of a thing on brass or stone, was not even the painting of a reindeer in the depths of a palaeolithic cave, a practical though imperfect method of saying to the moment "*Verweile doch, Du bist so schön*" ("Stay longer, thou art so beautiful")? Of course the choice was, as you would expect, mostly based on material considerations and on miserably wrong considerations at that. I suppose the greater number of very ancient inscriptions or *Grammata* known to the world consist either in magical or religious formulæ, supposed to be effective in producing material welfare; or else in titles of kings and honorific records of their achievements; or else in contracts and laws in which the spoken word eminently needed preserving. Either charms or else boasts or else contracts; and it is worth remembering that so far as they have any interest for us now it is an interest quite different from that for which they were engraved. They were all selected for immortality by reason of some present personal urgency. The charm was expected to work; the boast delighted the heart of the boaster; the contract would compel certain slippery or forgetful persons to keep their word. And now we know that the charm did not work. We do not know who the boaster was, and, if we did, would probably not admire him for the thing he boasts about. And the slippery or forgetful persons have long since been incapable of either breaking or fulfilling the contract. We are in each case only interested in some quality in the record which is different from that for which

people recorded it. Of course there may be also the mere historical interest in these things as facts; but that again is quite different from the motive for their recording.

In fact one might say to all these records of human life, all these *Grammata* that have come down to us, what Marcus Aurelius teaches us to say to ourselves: *ψυχάριον εἶ βάσταζον νέκρον*; each one is "a little soul carrying a corpse." Each one, besides the material and temporary message it bears, is a record, however imperfect, of human life and character and feeling. In so far as the record can get across the boundary that separates mere record of fact from philosophy or poetry, so far it has a soul and still lives.

This is clearest, of course, in the records to which we can definitely attribute beauty. Take a tragedy of Aeschylus, a dialogue of Plato, take one of the very ancient Babylonian hymns or an oracle of Isaiah. The prophecy of Isaiah referred primarily to a definite set of facts and contained some definite—and generally violent—political advice; but we often do not know what those facts were, nor care one way or another about the advice. We love the prophecy and value it because of some quality of beauty, which subsists when the value of the advice is long dead; because of some soul that is there which does not perish. It is the same with those magnificent Babylonian hymns. Their recorders were doubtless conscious of their beauty, but they thought much more of their religious effectiveness. With the tragedy of Aeschylus or the dialogue of Plato the case is different, but only different in degree. If we ask why they were valued and recorded, the answer must be that it was mainly for their poetic beauty and philosophic truth, the very reasons for which they are read and valued now. But even here it is easy to see that there must have been some causes at work which derived their force simply from the urgency of the present, and therefore died when that present faded away.

And similarly an ancient work may, or indeed must, gather about itself new special environments and points of relevance. Thucydides and Aristophanes' *Knights* and even Jane Austen are different things now from what they were

in 1913. I can imagine a translation of the *Knights* which would read like a brand-new topical satire. No need to labour the point. I think it is clear that in any great work of literature there is a soul which lives and a body which perishes; and further, since the soul cannot ever be found naked without any body at all, it is making for itself all the time new bodies, changing with the times.

III

Both soul and body are preserved, imperfectly of course, in *Grammata* or Letters; in a long series of marks scratched, daubed, engraved, written or printed, stretching from the inscribed bone implements and painted rocks of prehistoric man, through the great literatures of the world, down to this morning's newspaper and the MS. from which I am speaking; marks which have their own history also and their own vast varieties. And "the office of the art *Grammatikê* is so to deal with the Grammata as to recover from them all that can be recovered of that which they have saved from oblivion, to reinstate as far as possible the spoken word in its first impressiveness and musicalness." [1] That is not a piece of modern sentiment. It is the strict doctrine of the scribes. Dionysius Thrax gives us the definition; ἡ Γραμματική is ἐμπειρία τις ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τῶν παρὰ ποιηταις τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσι λεγομένων; an ἐμπειρία, a skill produced by practice, in the things said in poets and prose-writers; and he goes on to divide it into its six parts, of which the first and most essential is Reading Aloud κατὰ προσῳδίαν—with just the accent, the cadences, the expression, with which the words were originally spoken before they were turned from λόγοι to γράμματα, from "winged" words to permanent Letters. The other five parts are concerned with analysis; interpretation of figures of speech; explanation of obsolete words and customs; etymology; grammar in the narrow modern sense; and lastly κρίσις ποιημάτων, or, roughly, literary criticism. The first part is synthetic and in a sense creative; and most of the others are subservient

[1] Rutherford, *History of Annotation*, p. 12.

to it. For I suppose if you had attained by study the power of reading aloud a play of Shakespeare exactly as Shakespeare intended the words to be spoken, you would be pretty sure to have mastered the figures of speech and obsolete words and niceties of grammar. At any rate, whether or no you could manage the etymologies and the literary criticism, you would have done the main thing. You would, subject to the limitations we considered above, have recreated the play.

We intellectuals of the twentieth century, poor things, are so intimately accustomed to the use of Grammata that probably many of us write more than we talk and read far more than we listen. Language has become to us primarily a matter of Grammata. We have largely ceased to demand from the readers of a book any imaginative transliteration into the living voice. But mankind was slow in acquiescing in this renunciation. Isocrates, in a well-known passage (5, 10) of his Letter to Philip, laments that the scroll he sends will not be able to say what he wants it to say. Philip will hand it to a secretary and the secretary, neither knowing nor caring what it is all about, will read it out " with no persuasiveness, no indication of changes of feeling, as if he were giving a list of items." The early Arab writers in the same situation used to meet it squarely. The sage wrote his own book and trained his disciples to read it aloud, each sentence exactly right; and generally, to avoid the mistakes of the ordinary untrained reader, he took care that the script should not be intelligible to such persons.

These instances show us in what spirit the first Grammatici, our fathers in the art, conceived their task, and what a duty they have laid upon us. I am not of course overlooking the other and perhaps more extensive side of a scholar's work; the side which regards a piece of ancient or foreign writing as a phenomenon of language to be analysed and placed, not as a thing of beauty to be recreated or kept alive. On that side of his work the Grammaticus is a man of science or *Wissenschaft*, like another. The science of Language demands for its successful study the same rigorous exactitude as the other natural sciences,

while it has for educational purposes some advantages over most of them. Notably, its subject matter is intimately familiar to the average student, and his ear very sensitive to its varieties. The study of it needs almost no apparatus, and gives great scope for variety and originality of attack. Lastly, its extent is vast and its subtlety almost infinite; for it is a record, and a very fine one, of all the immeasurable varieties and gradations of human consciousness. Indeed, as the Grammata are related to the spoken word, so is the spoken word itself related to the thought or feeling. It is the simplest record, the first precipitation. But I am not dealing now with the Grammaticus as a man of science, or an educator of the young; I am considering that part of his function which belongs specially to *Religio* or *Pietas*.

IV

Proceeding on these lines we see that the Scholar's special duty is to turn the written signs in which old poetry or philosophy is now enshrined back into living thought or feeling. He must so understand as to re-live. And here he is met at the present day by a direct frontal criticism. "*Suppose, after great toil and the expenditure of much subtlety of intellect, you succeed in re-living the best works of the past, is that a desirable end? Surely our business is with the future and present, not with the past. If there is any progress in the world or any hope for struggling humanity, does it not lie precisely in shaking off the chains of the past and looking steadily forward?*" How shall we meet this question?

First, we may say, the chains of the mind are not broken by any form of ignorance. The chains of the mind are broken by understanding. And so far as men are unduly enslaved by the past it is by understanding the past that they may hope to be freed. But, secondly, it is never really the past—the true past—that enslaves us; it is always the present. It is not the conventions of the seventeenth or eighteenth century that now make men conventional. It is the conventions of our own age; though of course I would not deny that in any age there are always fragments

of the uncomprehended past still floating, like dead things pretending to be alive. What one always needs for freedom is some sort of escape from the thing that now holds him. A man who is the slave of theories must get outside them and see facts; a man who is the slave of his own desires and prejudices must widen the range of his experience and imagination. But the thing that enslaves us most, narrows the range of our thought, cramps our capacities and lowers our standards, is the mere Present—the present that is all round us, accepted and taken for granted, as we in London accept the grit in the air and the dirt on our hands and faces. The material present, the thing that is omnipotent over us, not because it is either good or evil, but just because it happens to be here, is the great Jailer and Imprisoner of man's mind; and the only true method of escape from him is the contemplation of things that are not present. Of the future? Yes; but you cannot study the future. You can only make conjectures about it, and the conjectures will not be much good unless you have in some way studied other places and other ages. There has been hardly any great forward movement of humanity which did not draw inspiration from the knowledge, or the idealization, of the past.

No: to search the past is not to go into prison. It is to escape out of prison, because it compels us to compare the ways of our own age with other ways. And as to Progress, it is no doubt a real fact. To many of us it is a truth that lies somewhere near the roots of our religion. But it is never a straight march forward; it is never a result that happens of its own accord. It is only a name for the mass of accumulated human effort, successful here, baffled there, misdirected and driven astray in a third region, but on the whole and in the main producing some cumulative result. I believe this difficulty about Progress, this fear that in studying the great teachers of the past we are in some sense wantonly sitting at the feet of savages, causes real trouble of mind to many keen students. The full answer to it would take us beyond the limits of this paper and beyond my own range of knowledge. But the main lines of the answer seem to me clear. There are in life two

elements, one transitory and progressive, the other comparatively if not absolutely non-progressive and eternal, and the Soul of man is chiefly concerned with the second. Try to compare our inventions, our material civilization, our stores of accumulated knowledge, with those of the age of Aeschylus or Aristotle or St. Francis, and the comparison is absurd. Our superiority is beyond question and beyond measure. But compare any chosen poet of our age with Aeschylus, any philosopher with Aristotle, any saintly preacher with St. Francis, and the result is totally different. I do not wish to argue that we have fallen below the standard of those past ages; but it is clear that we are not definitely above them. The things of the spirit depend on will, on effort, on aspiration, on the quality of the individual soul; and not on discoveries and material advances which can be accumulated and added up.

As I tried to put the point some ten years ago, in my Inaugural Address at Oxford, "one might say roughly that material things are superseded but spiritual things not; or that everything considered as an achievement can be superseded, but considered as so much life, not. Neither classification is exact, but let it pass. Our own generation is perhaps unusually conscious of the element of change. We live, since the opening of the great epoch of scientific invention in the nineteenth century, in a world utterly transformed from any that existed before. Yet we know that behind all changes the main web of life is permanent. The joy of an Egyptian child of the First Dynasty in a clay doll was every bit as keen as the joy of a child now in a number of vastly better dolls. Her grief was as great when it was taken away. Those are very simple emotions, but I believe the same holds good of emotions much more complex. The joy and grief of the artist in his art, of the strong man in his fighting, of the seeker after knowledge or righteousness in his many wanderings; these and things like them, all the great terrors and desires and beauties, belong somewhere to the permanent stuff of which daily life consists; they go with hunger and thirst and love and the facing of death. And these it is that make the permanence of literature. There are many elements in the work of Homer or Aeschylus

which are obsolete and even worthless, but there is no surpassing their essential poetry. It is there, a permanent power which we can feel or fail to feel, and if we fail the world is poorer. And the same is true, though a little less easy to see, of the essential work of the historian or the philosopher."

You will say perhaps that I am still denying the essence of human Progress; denying the progress of the human soul, and admitting only the sort of progress that consists in the improvement of tools, the discovery of new facts, the recombining of elements. As to that I can only admit frankly that I am not clear.

I believe we do not know enough to answer. I observe that some recent authorities are arguing that we have all done injustice to our palaeolithic forefathers, when we drew pictures of them with small brain-pans and no chins. They had brains as large and perhaps as exquisitely convoluted as our own; while their achievements against the gigantic beasts of prey that surrounded them show a courage and ingenuity and power of unselfish co-operation which have perhaps never since been surpassed. As to that I can form no opinion; I can quite imagine that, by the standards of the last Judgement, some of our modern philanthropists and military experts may cut rather a poor figure beside some nameless Magdalenian or Mousterian who died to save another, or, naked and almost weaponless, defeated a sabre-toothed tiger or a cave-bear. But I should be more inclined to lay stress on two points. First, on the extreme recentness, by anthropological standards, of the whole of our historic period. Man has been on the earth at least some twenty or thirty thousand years, and it is only the last three thousand that we are much concerned with. To suppose that a modern Englishman must necessarily be at a higher stage of mental development than an ancient Greek is almost the same mistake as to argue that Browning must be a better poet than Wordsworth because he came later. If the soul, or the brain, of man is developing, it is not developing so fast or so steadily as all that.

And next I would observe that the moving force in human progress is not widespread over the world. The uplifting

of man has been the work of a chosen few; a few cities, a few races, a few great ages, have scaled the heights for us and made the upward way easy. And the record in the Grammata is precisely the record of these chosen few. Of course the record is redundant. It contains masses of matter that is now dead. Of course, also it is incomplete. There lived brave men before Agamemnon. There have been saints, sages, heroes, lovers, inspired poets in multitudes and multitudes, whose thoughts for one reason or another were never enshrined in the record, or if recorded were soon obliterated. The treasures man has wasted must be infinitely greater than those he has saved. But, such as it is, with all its imperfections the record he has kept is the record of the triumph of the human soul—the Triumph or, in Aristotle's sense of the word, the Tragedy.

It is there. That is my present argument. The soul of man, comprising the forces that have made progress and those that have achieved in themselves the end of progress, the moments of living to which he has said that they are too beautiful to be allowed to pass; the soul of man stands at the door and knocks. It is for each one of us to open or not to open.

For we must not forget the extraordinary frailty of the tenure on which these past moments of glory hold their potential immortality. They only live in so far as we can reach them; and we can only reach them by some labour, some skill, some imaginative effort and some sacrifice. They cannot compel us, and if we do not open to them they die.

V

And here perhaps we should meet another of the objections raised by modernists against our preoccupation with the past. *"Granted, they will say, that the ancient poets and philosophers were all that you say, surely the valuable parts of their thought have been absorbed long since in the common fund of humanity. Archimêdes, we are told, invented the screw; Eratosthenes invented the conception of longitude. Well, now we habitually operate with screws and longitude, both in a*

greatly improved form. And, when we have recorded the names of those two worthies and put up imaginary statues of them on a few scientific laboratories, we have surely repaid any debt we owe them. We do not go back laboriously with the help of a trained Grammaticus, and read their works in the original. Now admitting—what is far from clear—that Aeschylus and Plato did make contributions to the spiritual wealth of the human race comparable to the inventions of the screw and of longitude, surely those contributions have been absorbed and digested, and have become parts of our ordinary daily life? Why go back and labour over their actual words? We do not most of us want to re-read even Newton's Principia."

This argument raises exactly the point of difference between the humane and the physical. The invention of the screw or the telephone is a fine achievement of man; the effort and experience of the inventor make what we have called above a moment of glory. But you and I when using the telephone have no share whatever in that moment or that achievement. The only way in which we could begin in any way to share in them would be by a process which is really artistic or literary; the process of studying the inventor's life, realizing exactly his difficulties and his data and imaginatively trying to live again his triumphant experience. That would mean imaginative effort and literary study. In the meantime we use the telephone without any effort and at the same time without any spiritual gain at all, merely a gain—supposing it is a gain—in practical convenience.

If we take on the other hand the invention, or creation, of *Romeo and Juliet*, it is quite clear that you can in a sense by using it—that is, by reading the play—recapture the moment of glory: but not without effort. It is different in kind from a telephone or a hot-water tap. The only way of utilizing it at all is by the method of Grammatikê; by reading it or hearing it read and at the same time making a definite effort of imaginative understanding so as to re-live, as best one can, the experience of the creator of it. (I do not of course mean his whole actual experience in writing the play, but the relevant and essential part of that experi-

ence.) This method, the method of intelligent and loving study, is the only way there is of getting any sort of use out of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is not quite true, but nearly true, to say that the value of *Romeo and Juliet* to any given man is exactly proportionate to the amount of loving effort he has spent in trying to re-live it. Certainly, in the absence of such effort *Romeo and Juliet* is without value and must die. It may stand at the door and knock, but its voice is not heard amid the rumble of the drums of Santerre. And the same is true of all great works of art or imagination, especially those which are in any way removed from us by differences of age or of language. We need not repine at this. The fact that so many works whose value and beauty is universally recognized require effort for their understanding is really a great benefit to contemporary and future work, because it accustoms the reader or spectator to the expectation of effort. And the unwillingness to make imaginative effort is the prime cause of almost all decay of art. It is the caterer, the man whose business it is to provide enjoyment with the very minimum of effort, who is in matters of art the real assassin.

VI

I have spoken so far of Grammatikê in the widest sense, as the art of interpreting the Grammata and so re-living the chosen moments of human life wherever they are recorded. But of course that undertaking is too vast for any human brain, and furthermore, as we have noticed above, a great mass of the matter recorded is either badly recorded or badly chosen. There has to be selection, and selection of a very drastic and ruthless kind. It is impossible to say exactly how much of life ought to be put down in Grammata, but it is fairly clear that in very ancient times there was too little and in modern times there is too much. Most of the books in any great library, even a library much frequented by students, lie undisturbed for generations. And yet if you begin what seems like the audacious and impossible task of measuring up the accumulated treasures of the race in the field of letters, it is curious how quickly in its main

lines the enterprise becomes possible and even practicable. The period of recorded history is not very long. Eighty generations might well take us back before the beginnings of history-writing in Europe; and though the beginnings of Accad and of Egypt, to say nothing of the cave-drawings of Altamira, might take one almost incalculably further in time, the actual amount of Grammata which they provide is not large. Thus, firstly, the period is not very long; and, again, the extension of literature over the world is not very wide, especially if we confine ourselves to that continuous tradition of literature on which the life of modern Europe and America is built. China and India form, in the main, another tradition, which may stimulate and instruct us, but cannot be said to have formed our thought.

If you take any particular form of literature, the limits of its achievement become quickly visible. Take drama; there are not very many very good plays in the world: Greece, France, England, Spain, and for brief periods Russia, Scandinavia, and Germany, have made their contributions; but, apart from the trouble of learning the languages, a man could read all the very good plays in the world in a few months. Take lyric or narrative poetry; philosophy; history: there is not so much first-rate lyric poetry in the world, nor yet narrative; nor much first-rate philosophy; nor even history. No doubt when you consider the books that have to be read in order to study the history of a particular modern period—say, the time of Napoleon or the French Revolution—the number seems absolutely vast and overwhelming, but when you look for those histories which have the special gift that we are considering, that is the gift of retaining and expressing a very high quality of thought or emotion—the number dwindles at an amazing rate. And in every one of these forms of literature that I have mentioned, as well as many others, we shall find our list of the few selected works of outstanding genius begin with a Greek name.

"*That depends,*" our modernist may say, "*on the principles on which you make your selection. Of course the average Grammaticus of the present day will begin his selected historians with Herodotus and Thucydides, just as he will begin*

his poets with Homer, because he has been brought up to think that sort of thing. He is blinded, as usual, with the past. Give us a Greekless generation or two and the superstition will disappear." How are we to answer this?

With due humility, I think, and yet with a certain degree of confidence. According to Dionysius Thrax the last and highest of the six divisions of Grammatikê was κρίσις ποιημάτων, the judgement or criticism of works of imagination. And the voice of the great mass of trained Grammatici counts for something. Of course they have their faults and prejudices. The tradition constantly needs correcting. But we must use the best criteria that we can get. As a rule any man who reads Herodotus and Thucydides with due care and understanding recognizes their greatness. If a particular person refuses to do so, I think we can fairly ask him to consider the opinions of recognized judges. And the judgement of those who know the Grammata most widely and deeply will certainly put these Greek names very high in their respective lists.

On the ground of pure intellectual merit, therefore, apart from any other considerations, I think any person ambitious of obtaining some central grasp on the Grammata of the human race would always do well to put a good deal of his study into Greek literature. Even if he were fatherless, like Melchizedek, or homeless, like a visitor from Mars, I think this would hold. But if he is a member of our Western civilization, a citizen of Europe or America, the reasons for studying Greek and Latin increase and multiply. Western civilization, especially the soul of it as distinguished from its accidental manifestations, is after all a unity and not a chaos; and it is a unity chiefly because of its ancestry, a unity of descent and of brotherhood. (If any one thinks my word "brotherhood" too strong in the present state of Europe, I would remind him of the relationship between Cain and Abel.)

VII

The civilization of the Western world is a unity of descent and brotherhood; and when we study the Grammata of

bygone men we naturally look to the writings from which our own are descended. Now, I am sometimes astonished at the irrevelant and materialistic way in which this idea is interpreted. People talk as if our thoughts were descended from the fathers of our flesh, and the fountain-head of our present literature and art and feeling was to be sought among the Jutes and Angles.

Paradise Lost and *Prometheus Unbound* are not the children of *Piers Ploughman* and *Beowulf*; they are the children of Vergil and Homer, of Aeschylus and Plato. And *Hamlet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* come mainly from the same ancestors, though by a less direct descent.

I do not wish to exaggerate. The mere language in which a book is written counts of course for much. It fixes to some extent the forms of the writer's art and thought. *Paradise Lost* is clearly much more English in character than Lucan's *Pharsalia* is Spanish or Augustine's *City of God* African. Let us admit freely that there must of necessity be in all English literature a strain of what one may call vernacular English thought, and that some currents of it, currents of great beauty and freshness, would hardly have been different if all Romance literature had been a sealed book to our tradition. It remains true that from the Renaissance onward, nay, from Chaucer and even from Alfred, the higher and more massive workings of our literature owe more to the Greeks and Romans than to our own un-Romanized ancestors. And the same is true of every country in Europe. Even in Scandinavia, which possesses a really great home literature, in some ways as noble as the Greek or the Hebrew, the main currents of literary thought and feeling, the philosophy and religion and the higher poetry, owe more to the Graeco-Roman world than to that of the Vikings. The movements that from time to time spring up in various countries for reviving the old home tradition and expelling the foreigner have always had an exotic character. The German attempts to worship Odin, to regard the Empire as a gathering of the German tribes, to expel all non-Germanic words from the language by the help of an instrument called—not very fortunately—a "Zentralbureau," have surely been symptoms of an error only not ridiculous

because it is so deeply tragic. The twisting of the English language by some fine writers, so that a simple Latin word like "cave" gives place to a recondite old English "stoney-dark"; the attempts in France to reject the "Gaulois" and become truly "Celtique," are more attractive but hardly in essence more defensible. There is room for them as protests, as experiments, as personal adventures, or as reactions against a dominant main stream. They are not a main stream themselves. The main stream is that which runs from Rome and Greece and Palestine, the Christian and classical tradition. We nations of Europe would do well to recognize it and rejoice in it. It is in that stream that we find our unity, unity of origin in the past, unity of movement and imagination in the present; to that stream that we owe our common memories and our power of understanding one another, despite the confusion of tongues that has now fallen upon us and the inflamed sensibilities of modern nationalism. The German Emperor's dictum, that the boys and girls in his Empire must "grow up little Germans and not little Greeks and Romans," is both intellectually a Philistine policy and politically a gospel of strife.

I trust no one will suppose that I am pleading for a dead orthodoxy, or an enforced uniformity of taste or thought. There is always a place for protests against the main convention, for rebellion, paradox, partisanship, and individuality, and for every personal taste that is sincere. Progress comes by contradiction. Eddies and tossing spray add to the beauty of every stream and keep the water from stagnancy. But the true Grammaticus, while expressing faithfully his personal predilections or special sensitivenesses, will stand in the midst of the Grammata, not as a captious critic, nor yet as a jealous seller of rival wares, but as a returned traveller amid the country and landscape that he loves. He will realize the amount of love and care which has gone to the making of the *Traditio*, the handing down of the intellectual acquisitions of the human race from one generation to another, the constant selection of thoughts and discoveries and feelings and events so precious that they must be made into books, and then of books so

precious that they must be copied and recopied and not allowed to die. The *Traditio* itself is a wonderful and august process, full no doubt of abysmal gaps and faults, like all things human, but full also of that strange half baffled and yet not wholly baffled splendour which marks the characteristic works of man. I think the Grammaticus, while not sacrificing his judgement, should accept the *Traditio* and rejoice in it, rejoice to be the intellectual child of his great forefathers, to catch at their spirit, to carry on their work, to live and die for the great unknown purpose which the eternal spirit of man seems to be working out upon the earth. He will work under the guidance of love and faith; not, as so many do, under that of ennui and irritation.

VIII

My subject to-day has been the faith of a scholar, *Religio Grammatici*. This does not mean any denial or disrespect toward the religions of others. A Grammaticus who cannot understand other people's minds is failing in an essential part of his work. The religion of those who follow physical science is a magnificent and life-giving thing. The *Traditio* would be utterly wrecked without it. It also gives man an escape from the world about him, an escape from the noisy present into a region of facts which are as they are and not as foolish human beings want them to be; an escape from the commonness of daily happenings into the remote world of high and severely trained imagination; an escape from mortality in the service of a growing and durable purpose, the progressive discovery of truth. I can understand also the religion of the artist, the religion of the philanthropist. I can understand the religion of those many people, mostly young, who reject alike books and microscopes and easels and committees, and live rejoicing in an actual concrete present which they can ennoble by merely loving it. And the religion of Democracy? That is just what I am preaching throughout this discourse. For the cardinal doctrine of that religion is the right of every human soul to enter, unhindered except by the limitation of its

own powers and desires, into the full spiritual heritage of the race.

All these things are good, and those who pursue them may well be soldiers in one army or pilgrims on the same eternal quest. If we fret and argue and fight one another now, it is mainly because we are so much under the power of the enemy. I sometimes wish that we men of science and letters could all be bound by some vow of renunciation or poverty, like monks of the Middle Age; but of course no renunciation could be so all-embracing as really to save us from that power. The enemy has no definite name, though in a certain degree we all know him. He who puts always the body before the spirit, the dead before the living, the *ἀναγκαῖον* before the *καλόν*; who makes things only in order to sell them; who has forgotten that there is such a thing as truth, and measures the world by advertisement or by money; who daily defiles the beauty that surrounds him and makes vulgar the tragedy; whose innermost religion is the worship of the Lie in his Soul. The Philistine, the vulgarian, the Great Sophist, the passer of base coin for true, he is all about us and, worse, he has his outposts inside us, persecuting our peace, spoiling our sight, confusing our values, making a man's self seem greater than the race and the present thing more important than the eternal. From him and his influence we find our escape by means of the Grammata into that calm world of theirs, where stridency and clamour are forgotten in the ancient stillness, and that which was in its essence material and transitory has for the most part perished, while the things of the spirit still shine like stars. Not only the great things are there, seeming to stand out the greater because of their loneliness; there is room also for many that were once in themselves quite little, but now through the *Grammata* have acquired a magic poignancy, echoes of old tenderness or striving or laughter beckoning across gulfs of death and change; the watchwords that our dead leaders and forefathers loved, *viva adhuc et desiderio pulcriora*.[1]

[1] "Living still and more beautiful because of our longing."

II

ARISTOPHANES AND THE WAR PARTY[1]

THERE is no commoner cause of historical misjudgement than the tendency to read the events of the past too exclusively in the light of the present, and so twist the cold and unconscious record into the burning service of controversial politics. And yet history is inevitably to a great extent a work of the imagination. No good historian is content merely to repeat the record of the past. He has to understand it, to see behind it, to find more in it than it actually says. He cannot understand without the use of his constructive imagination, and he cannot imagine effectively without the use of his experience. I believe it is one of the marks of a great historian, such as he in whose honour this annual lecture was established, such as he who now does us the honour of occupying the chair,[2] to see both present and past, as it were, with the same unclouded eye; to realize the past story as if it were now proceeding before him, and to envisage the present much in the same perspective as it will bear when it is one chapter, or so many pages, in the great volume of the past.

We know in Gibbon's case how much the historian of the Roman Empire learnt from the Captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers. And it would surely be folly to tell a man who had lived through the French or the Russian Revolution to forget his own experience when he came to treat of similar events in history. To do so is to fall into that great delusion that haunts the hopes of so many savants, the delusion of supposing that in these matters man can

[1] Being the Creighton Lecture, 1918.
[2] Dr. Mandell Creighton and Lord Bryce

attain truth by some sure mechanical process without ever committing himself to the fallible engine of his own personality.

Greek History has been, for reasons not difficult to unravel, constantly reinterpreted according to the political experiences and preferences of its writers. Cleon in particular, the most vivid figure of the Peloponnesian War, plays in the history books many varied parts. Heeren and Passow, writing under the influence of the French Revolution, treat him as a "bloodthirsty sans-culotte" who established a reign of terror. (Busolt, iii, 988 ff.) Mitford, a good English Tory reeling under the horror of the first Reform Bill, took him as a shocking example of what democracy really is and must be. Grote, on the contrary, saw him as a vigorous and much-abused Radical, and justified his war-policy for the sake of his democratic ardour at home. In our own day Mr. Grundy and Mr. Walker somewhat reinforce the position of Mitford, while Mr. Zimmern, following Beloch and Ferrero, sees in Cleon little more than the figurehead of a great social and economic movement. For my own part I would fain go back to the actual language of Thucydides and regard Cleon simply as "the most violent of the citizens, and at that time most persuasive to the multitude." We need bring in no nicknames of modern parties; that phrase tells us essentially what we need to know.

I propose to-day to consider the impression made on Athenian society by that long and tremendous conflict between Athens and Sparta which is called the Peloponnesian War, using the light thrown by our own recent experience. That war was in many respects curiously similar to the present war. It was, as far as the Hellenic peoples were concerned, a world-war. No part of the Greek race was unaffected. It was the greatest war there had ever been. Arising suddenly among civilized nations, accustomed to comparatively decent and half-hearted wars, it startled the world by its uncompromising ferocity. Again, it was a struggle between Sea-power and Land-power; though Athens, like ourselves, was far from despicable on land, and Sparta, like Germany, had a formidable fleet, and adopted the same terrorist policy of sinking all craft

whatsoever, enemy or neutral, which they found at sea. (*Thucydides* ii. 67.) It was a struggle between the principles of democracy and military monarchy; and in consequence throughout the Hellenic world there was a violent dissidence of sympathy, the military and aristocratic parties everywhere being pro-Spartan, and the democratic parties pro-Athenian. From the point of view of military geography, again, the democratic sea-empire of Athens suffered much from its lack of cohesion and its dependence on sea-borne resources, while the military land empire of the Peloponnesians gained from its compact and central position. It would perhaps be fanciful to go further and suggest that the Thracian hordes played something the same part in the mind of the Athenians as the Russians with some of us. And, when they failed, alas, there was no America to make sure that the right side won!

Again, in the commonplaces of political argument, we find in that part of the Peloponnesian War about which we have adequate information, a division of parties curiously similar to our own. There were no pro-Spartans in Athens, just as there are no pro-Germans in the proper sense of the word with us. There was roughly a Peace by Negotiation party, led by Nicias, and a Knock-out-Blow party, led by Cleon. The latter emphasized the delusiveness of an "inconclusive Peace" and the impossibility of ever trusting the word of a Spartan; the former maintained that a war to the bitter end would only result in the exhaustion of both sets of combatants and the ruin of Greece as a whole. And Providence, unusually indulgent, vouchsafed to both parties the opportunity of proving that they were right. After ten years of war Nicias succeeded in making a Peace treaty, which, however, the firebrands on both sides proceeded at once to violate; war broke out again, as the War party had always said it would, and after continuing altogether twenty-seven years left Athens wrecked and Sparta bleeding to death, just as the Peace party had always prophesied!

Of course such parallels must only be allowed to amuse our reflections, not to distort our judgements. It would be easy to note a thousand points of difference between

the two great contests. But I must notice in closing one last similarity between the atmospheres of the two wars which is profoundly pathetic, if not actually disquieting. The more the cities of Greece were ruined by the havoc of war, the more the lives of men and women were poisoned by the fear and hate and suspicion which it engendered, the more was Athens haunted by shining dreams of the future reconstruction of human life. Not only in the speculations of philosophers like Protagoras and Plato, or town-planners like Hippodamus, but in comedy after comedy of Aristophanes and his compeers—the names are too many to mention—we find plans for a new life; a great dream-city in which the desolate and oppressed come by their own again, where rich and poor, man and woman, Athenian and Spartan are all equal and all at peace, where there are no false accusers and—sometimes—where men have wings. This Utopia begins as a world-city full of glory and generous hope; it ends, in Plato's Laws, as one little hard-living asylum of the righteous on a remote Cretan hill-top, from which all infection of the outer world is rigorously excluded, where no religious heretics may live, where every man is a spiritual soldier, and even every woman must be ready to "fight for her young, as birds do." The great hope had dwindled to be very like despair; and even in that form it was not fulfilled.

The war broke out in 432 B.C. between the Athenian Empire, comprising nearly all the maritime states of Greece, on the one hand, and on the other the Peloponnesian Alliance led by Sparta. The first war lasted till 421; then followed the Peace of Nicias, interrupted by desultory encroachments and conflicts not amounting to open war till 418 when the full flood recommenced and lasted till the destruction of Athens in 404.

I wish to note first a few of the obvious results arising from so long and serious a war. The most obvious was the over-crowding of Athens due to the influx of refugees from the districts exposed to invasion. They lived, says Thucydides, in stuffy huts or slept in temples and public buildings and the gates of the city wall, as best they could.

(*Thucydides* ii. 52.) "You love the people?" says the Sausage-monger in Aristophanes' *Knights* to Cleon, "but here they are for seven years living in casks and holes and gateways. And much you care! You just shut them up and milk them." As every one knows, this over-crowding resulted in the great outbreak of a plague, similar to the Black Death, in 430, a point emphasized by Thucydides but not, if I remember rightly, ever mentioned by Aristophanes. I suppose there are some things which, even to a comic genius, are not funny.

There was great scarcity of food, of oil for lighting, and of charcoal for burning. "No oil left," says a slave in the *Clouds*: "Confound it," answers his master; "why did you light that drunkard of a lamp?" (*Clouds* 56.) "What are you poking the wick for," says an Old Man to his son in the *Wasps*, "when oil is so scarce, silly? Any one can see *you* don't have to pay for it!" (*Wasps* 252 ff.) But food was dearer still. "Good boy," says the same Old Man a little later, "I'll buy you something nice. You would like some knuckle-bones, I suppose?"

BOY. I'd sooner have figs, papa.

OLD MAN. Figs? I'd see you all hanged first. Out of this beggarly pay I have to buy meal and wood and some bit of meat or fish for three. And you ask for figs!" And the Boy bursts into tears.

I think the passage in the *Acharnians* where the hero, parodying a scene in a tragedy, threatens to murder a sack of charcoal, and the Chorus of charcoal-burners are broken-hearted at the thought, is perhaps more intelligible to us this winter than it was before the war.

The scarcity of food is dwelt upon again and again. It is treated almost always as a joke, but it is a joke with a grim background. Many places suffered far more than Athens. Melos had been reduced by famine. (*Birds* 186.) The much-ravaged Megara, an enemy so contemptibly weak and yet, for geographical reasons, so maddeningly inconvenient to the Athenians, was absolutely starving. Farce comes near to the border of tears in the scene of the *Acharnians* where the Megarian comes to sell his children in a sack, as pigs, and we hear how the fashionable amuse-

ment in Megara is to have starving-matches round a fire. (*Acharnians* 750–752.)

In Athens itself prices were high, as we saw in the scene from the *Wasps*. Everybody was in debt, like Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, like Peithetairos and Euelpides in the *Birds*. The King of the Birds, we hear, "had once been a human being, like you and me; and owed money, like you and me; and was thankful not to pay it, like you and me." (*Birds* 114 ff.) That was one of the reasons why, though Athens was certainly "a great and prosperous city and open to every one to spend money in," the heroes of that play determined to seek another home.

But the liveliest description of the general lack of food is in the *Knights*, in a scene of which the point has often been missed. Cleon is addressing the Council, thundering accusations of conspiracy and "the hidden hand," when the Sausage-monger resolves to interrupt him and bursts—quite illegally—in with the news that a shoal of sprats has come into the Piraeus and can be had cheap, extraordinarily cheap. The hungry and anxious faces suddenly clear. They vote a crown to the bringer of good tidings, and prepare to rush off. Cleon, to regain his ascendancy, proposes a vast sacrifice of kids, as a thank-offering. The Sausage-monger at once doubles the number, and proposes a still further extravagance of public feasting next day if sprats fall to a hundred the obol. The councillors accept the proposal without discussion and stream out. Cleon shrieks for them to wait: a herald has come from the Spartans to propose terms of Peace! At another time that would have held them. But now there are cries of derision. "Peace? Yes, of course. When they know that we have cheap fish. We don't want Peace! Let the war rip!" Cleon had taught them their lesson only too well. (*Knights* 625–680.)

Another effect of the war was the absence of men of military age from Athens. The place was full of women and *Gerontes*—technically, men over sixty. And the young men were being killed out. That explains such phrases, for example, as the remark that Argos was now powerful because she had plenty of young men. (Contrast *Hdt.* vi. 83.)

It explains too why the plots of three of our eleven extant Comedies, and quite a number of those only known from fragments, are based on suppositions of what the women might do if they held together. In the *Lysistrata*—the name means Dismisser of Armies—the heroine, determined on compelling both sides to make Peace, organizes a general strike of all wives and mistresses, both in Athens and Sparta. They seize the Acropolis, and dress themselves in their most bewitching clothes, but will not say a word to any husband or lover till Peace is made. And when the authorities are summoned to put the revolt down, alas, they amount to nothing but a crowd of scolding old gentlemen. It is much the same in the *Ecclesiazusae*, or Women in Parliament, only there they pack the Assembly disguised as men, carry a measure transferring the voting power from men to women and then introduce a socialist Utopia. The third woman-play, the *Thesmophoriazusae*, turns on literature, not on politics.

The evidence is not sufficient to show whether there really was any general movement for Peace among the women, or yet for Socialism. At the present time women probably feel the pinch of scarcity and the difficulties of housekeeping more than men do; and possibly they feel the deaths of the young men more than the old men do. But these are only two factors among an enormous number that are operating.

The third material result which seems worth specially mentioning was the dearth of servants, though this was due to a different cause from those which produce the same effect among us. It was that the slaves, who of course had no patriotism towards the city of their owners, deserted in vast numbers. At a certain moment we are told that more than 20,000 had escaped from Athens. Life no doubt was extra hard, and escape was easy. The master, if he was under sixty, was apt to be away on duty; and if you once got outside the town into the open country, where the enemy was in force, there was a good chance of not being pursued.

The slaves thus correspond to what is called the "international proletariate," or would correspond if such a class

really existed. They were a class without rights, without interests, without preference for one country or one set of masters over another. In modern Europe it seems as a rule to take an extraordinary amount of prolonged misery before an oppressed class loses its national feeling.

Now let us turn from the material effects of the war to a more interesting side of the subject, the effects upon political opinion. I think that on this point, owing to the exceptional vividness and richness of our sources, quite a good deal can be made out. We have not only the direct narrative of Thucydides, who writes at first hand of what he has himself observed and felt, and several speeches of contemporary orators, concerned with public or private suits. We have also the eleven Comedies of Aristophanes, representing the political opposition, and treating of public affairs with unusual freedom of speech and also, amid the wildest exaggerations, with a singularly acute perception of his opponent's point of view. The Greeks were not politicians and dramatists for nothing.

The first simple fact to realize is that the war was a long, hard, and evenly balanced war. Consequently each side, as usual, thought its own successes much greater than they really were, though of course much less than they ought to be. They could not understand why, considering their own moral and intellectual superiority to the enemy, they did not succeed sooner in completely crushing him. There arose a demand for energy, energy at any price, and then more energy. But why, even with energy, did things continue to go wrong? The mob became hysterical. Evidently there was a hidden hand; there were traitors in our midst! This was dreadful enough; but the fact that with the utmost vigilance it was impossible to discover any traitors, made it infinitely exasperating. Athens swarmed with informers and false accusers. The Old Comedy is full of hits at these public nuisances, and they have left their mark on the historians and even the non-political writers. In tragedy, for example, references to contemporary affairs are extremely rare, but Euripides

in the *Ion*, written in 415, alludes passingly to Athens as "a city full of terror." (*Ion* 601.)

In this state of things it became of course extremely difficult, if not dangerous, to work for Peace. Nicias no doubt wished for a peace on reasonable terms, to be followed by an alliance with Sparta and a loyal co-operation between the two chief states of Greece. And there was, as far as we can see, no particular reason to regard Sparta as in any special sense an outcast from Greek civilization, or congenitally incapable of loyal action. But though all our authorities agree in praising both the character and abilities of Nicias, there is a constant complaint of his slowness, his lack of dash, and his reluctance to face, or to encourage, the howls of the patriotic mob. When he was commander-in-chief, Plutarch tells us, he lost popularity by spending all his day working at the Stratêgion, or War Office, and then going straight home, instead of making himself agreeable to the orators and disseminators of news, or making speeches to "ginger" the Assembly.

As an offset to this rather gloomy picture, it is worth noting that Athenian civilization was hard to destroy. There were very few executions of citizens and no judicial murders even when passions ran most fiercely. And *pari passu* there were no assassinations. And though Aristophanes and the other Comedians speak a good deal of the danger they run in attacking Cleon, they seem to have exercised during the first ten years or so of the war a degree of freedom of speech which is almost without a parallel in history. If you can with impunity, in public, refer to the leading statesman of the day as "a whale that keeps a public-house and has a voice like a pig with its bristles on fire," you are somewhat debarred from denouncing the rigours of the censorship. (*Wasps* 35 ff.) In other Greek states, of which Corcyra is the standing example, there were civil wars, political proscriptions, and massacres. But it took a long time even for a war so deep-rooted and corrupting as the Peloponnesian to destroy the high civilization that had been built up in the Athens of Pericles. The only really atrocious acts which can be laid to the account of the war party at Athens are acts of ferocity to enemies

or quasi-enemies, like the treatment of Megara and Mêlos; monstrous severity to those parts of the Empire which showed disloyalty during the war, like the massacres of Mitylênê and Skiônê; and thirdly, unless I am mistaken, a pretty constant practice of harsh and unscrupulous exploitation of subject-allies, which at times amounted to absolute tyranny and extortion.

After these general considerations, let us proceed to reconstruct the definite political criticism passed by the moderates or "pacifists" on the government of Cleon. Of course such reconstruction is not quite easy. The criticism is hardly ever both directly and seriously expressed. In Thucydides it is serious but seldom direct; it has mostly to be gathered from implications. In the orators it is allusive and powerfully affected by the necessities of the particular cause which the speaker is pleading. In Aristophanes it is abundant and in one sense direct enough to satisfy the most exacting critic; but it is confused first by the wild and farcical atmosphere of the Old Comedy, which attains its end sometimes by exaggeration and sometimes, on the contrary, by paradox—I mean, by representing a public man in a character exactly the opposite to that for which he is notorious; and secondly, a point which is apt to be forgotten, by the subtle tact with which the poet has always to be handling his audience. To allow for these distorting media is not a question of scientific method; it is a question of familiarity with the subject and the language, of humour and of common sense. And it follows that one's interpretation can never be absolutely certain.

However, to take first the attitude of the Opposition towards the enemy. It is plain enough how the average Athenian citizen under the influence of war-fever regarded him. It was folly to speak of ever making any treaty with a Spartan, "who was no more to be trusted than a hungry wolf with its mouth open." (*Lysistrata* 629.) The Spartans are to blame for everything, everything that has gone wrong; they are creatures "for whom there exists no altar and no honour and no oath!" (*Acharnians* 308, 311.) The clergy, that is to say, the prophets and

oracle-dealers, are represented in Greek Comedy, just as they are later by Erasmus and Voltaire, as more ferocious in their war-passions than the average layman. For example, in the *Peace*, when that buried goddess has been recovered from the bowels of the earth and all the nations are rejoicing, the soothsayer Hierocles comes to interrupt the peace-libations with his oracles: "O miserable creatures and blind, not knowing the mind of the gods! Behold, men have made covenants with angry-eyed apes. Trembling gulls have put their trust in the children of foxes." And again, "Behold, it is not the pleasure of the blessed gods that ye cease from war until the wolf weds the lamb." Again, "Never shall ye make the crab walk straight; never shall ye make the sea-urchin smooth." (*Peace* 1049–1120.)

These prophets are never sympathetically treated by Aristophanes. Sometimes they are simply kicked or beaten at sight. Sometimes they are argued with, as in this scene. "Are we never to stop fighting?" asks the hero of the play. "Are we to draw lots for which goes to the Devil deepest, when we might simply make peace and together be the leaders of Hellas?" And a little later he retorts on the oracles which Hierocles quotes from the prophet Bakis with a better oracle from Homer: "Without kindred or law or hearthstone is the man who loves war among his people." (*Peace* 1096 ff.)

In the *Acharnians* the hero deliberately undertakes to argue that the Spartans—whom he duly hates, and hopes that an earthquake may destroy them, for he too has had his vineyard ravaged—were, after all, not to blame in everything; on the contrary, they have in some points been treated unjustly. It is a bold undertaking. In very few great wars can it have been possible for a man on the public stage to argue such a thesis on behalf of the enemy; and Dicaeopolis has to do it with a block ready for cutting his head off if he does not prove his point. His argument is that the cause of the war was the Athenians' tariff-war against Megara—a small Dorian state under the protection of Sparta. There was a deliberately injurious tariff against Megarian goods; and then, instead

of letting the tariff work in the casual happy-go-lucky way that was usual in antiquity, "a lot of wicked little pinch-beck creatures, degraded, falsely stamped and falsely born," made a trade of informing against Megarian woollen goods. And if ever they saw a pumpkin or a hare or a young pig or a head of garlic or some stray lumps of salt, "that's from Megara!" they shouted, and it was confiscated before nightfall. This led naturally enough to troubles on the frontier. Drunken young Athenians began making outrages across the Megarian border—the current form of outrage was to carry off a female slave; angry young Megarians made reprisals, till

> At last in wrath the Olympian Pericles
> Broke into thunder, lightning and damnation
> On Greece; passed laws written like drinking-songs,
> That no Megarian by land or sea
> Or sky or market should be left alive!

(The allusion is to a drinking-song beginning "Would that not by land or sea," etc.) The Megarians were reduced to starvation; Sparta, intervening, made a petition on behalf of Megara to have the decree rescinded. They pleaded many times and Athens refused; and then came the rattling of shields. "They ought not to have rattled their shields, you say? Well, what ought they to have done? Suppose a Spartan had sailed out in a skiff and confiscated a puppy-dog belonging to the smallest islander in your League, would you have sat still? God bless us, no. In a moment you would have had three hundred ships of war on the water," and so on, and so on.

The Chorus who listen to this bold pleading are shaken by it. Half go with the speaker, and half not. (*Acharnians* 496–561.)

Much the same account is given a few years later in the *Peace* (*Peace* 603–656). The hostile tariff against Megara was the first cause of the war; but the speaker here is more interested in what happened after. "Your dependencies, or subject-allies," he says, "saw that you and the Spartans were snarling at each other; so, in fear of the tribute you made them pay, they moved heaven and

earth to induce the chief men in Sparta to fight for their independence. And they, like the covetous curs and deceivers of strangers that they are, drove Peace with shame out of the world and grabbed at war." He goes on to show how most of the suffering fell on the tillers of the soil.

I will not discuss the truth of this account further than to observe that to my mind the only question is a question of proportion. The cruel tariff-war against Megara is a *vera causa*. It did exist, and it did act, as such tyrannies always act, as a cause of war. But how much weight it should be given among all the other causes is a question it would be futile at present to discuss. The object of Pericles' policy was, as far as we can judge, to compel Megara by sheer coercion to join the Athenian alliance, to which it seemed naturally to belong by geography and commercial interest, and give up the Spartan alliance, to which it belonged by race and sympathy.

The next point at issue between Aristophanes and Cleon is an interesting one. It is the treatment of the dependencies. Athens was the head of a great league, originally formed for defence against the Persians, and consisting chiefly of the Ionian islands and maritime states which had been under the Persian yoke. This league of equals had gradually transformed itself into an Empire, in which Athens provided most of the military and naval force and dictated the foreign policy, while the dependencies paid tribute for their protection.

These Ionian cities had been outstripped in power and wealth by Athens and the larger commercial units. But they had a tradition of ancient culture and refinement. Their language was still the authorized dialect of poetry and the higher prose. And, though most of them were now democratically governed, their old families had still much influence and wealth. Aristophanes, like Sophocles and other Athenian writers, had strong links of sympathy with Ionia. His policy would doubtless have been that of Aristides, whose arrangement of the tribute payable by the dependencies was accepted as a model of justice. The democratic war party took just the opposite view. There were remnants of the old aristocratic families still

in the islands; they must be taught a lesson. There was money: it must be extorted to provide pay for the Athenian populace. There was secret disaffection: it must be rooted out. There was occasionally an open rebellion: it must be met by wholesale executions. The islanders were all traitors at heart, and the worst they got was better than their deserts!

In the year 426, just before the earliest of his comedies that has come down to us entire, Aristophanes produced a play of extraordinary daring, called the *Babylonians*, in which he represented all the dependencies as slaves on a treadmill, watched by a flogging gaoler called Demos. One fragment describes soldiers demanding billets. Another shows some extortioner saying, "We need 200 drachmae." "How am I to get them?" asks the unhappy islander. "In this quart pot!" is the answer. There is mention of some soldier ordering a yoke of plough-oxen to be killed because he wanted beef. To make the insult to the Athenian Government greater, the play was produced at the Great Dionysia, in the summer, when visitors from the Ionian cities were present in large numbers in Athens. One can imagine their passionate delight at finding such a champion.

It was a little too much. Cleon brought a series of prosecutions against the poet, who remarks in a subsequent comedy (*Acharnians* 377 ff.):

> And how Cleon made me pay—
> I've not forgotten—for my last year's play!
> Dragged me before the Council, brought his spies
> To slander me, gargled his throat with lies,
> Niagaraed me and slooshed me, till—almost—
> With so much sewage I gave up the ghost!

His spirit was not quenched, however. His next play, the *Acharnians*, was a definite plea for Peace, and his next, the *Knights*, a perfectly exuberant and uncompromising attack on Cleon, now at the very height of his power.

It is noteworthy that in the *Knights* there is clear evidence of the terror that Cleon inspired. The character who represents him was not made up to look like him, and was not called by his name—at least not till the play was

more than half finished, and it was clear how the audience would take it. Furthermore, though I think the most burning cause of quarrel that Aristophanes had against Cleon was his treatment of the dependencies, or allies, these are not once mentioned by name till the last word of the last line of the play, when Cleon is removed from office and borne off to pursue his true vocation of selling cat's meat at the city gates, and exchanging " billingsgate " with the fish-sellers and prostitutes.

> Carry him high
> And show him to the Allies whom he wronged.

There are plenty of general references to extortion, however. Cleon stands on the Council rock watching the sea, like the look-out man watching for herrings or tunnies, ready to harpoon the tribute as it comes. (313.) He knows all the rich and harmless men who have held any office and are consequently open to prosecution and blackmail. (260 ff.) He saves money by not paying the sailors, but letting them live on the islanders instead. (*Knights* 1366 f.; *Acharnians* 161–163.) In any strait he demands war-ships for collecting arrears—there were probably always arrears of tribute due from some place or other—and sends them out to collect—with no questions asked. (1070–1078.) An informer in another play, the *Birds*, mentions with glee his own method, which is to go to an island and summon a rich islander to trial in Athens. Then, in the scarcity of ships, the islander cannot get a passage to Athens, while the informer is allowed to go in a man-of-war. The trial is brought on at once and the islander condemned in his absence. (*Birds* 1410–1468.)

Cleon's defence of his own policy is illuminating. The war meant vast expenditure and crippled production. The country population were driven for safety into the towns and ceased to produce wealth, while of course they had to be fed. Wealth and food must be got from somewhere, and Cleon undertook to get it. " When I was on the Council, O Demos," he says, " I produced a huge balance in the treasury. I racked these men and squeezed those and blackmailed the others. I cared not a jot for

any private person as long as I could make you happy." As Lysias, the respectable democratic orator, puts it, "When the Council has sufficient revenue it commits no offences; but when it is in difficulties it is compelled to accept impeachments and confiscations of property, and to follow the proposals of the most unprincipled speakers." (*Lysias* 30, 22.) Of course the art of popular extortion lies in choosing your victims. Rich Ionians could be robbed without the Athenian mob turning a hair; and when that supply failed it was fairly safe to attack rich Athenians suspected of "moderatism." "What will you do," asks the Sausage-monger of the reformed and converted Demos at the end of the *Knights*, "if some low lawyer argues to the jury that there will be no food for them unless they find the defendant guilty?" "Lift him up and fling him into the Pit," cries the indignant Demos, "with the fattest of the informers as a millstone round his neck." (*Knights* 1358–1363.) Such arguments were heard in the French Revolution, and are mentioned also by Lysias. (27, 1.)

Cleon's policy was to win, to win completely, at any cost and by any means. And, as in the French Revolution, such a policy became more and more repulsive to decent men. Nicias, the leader of Cleon's opponents, wanted a Peace of Reconciliation, but he seldom faced the Assembly. He was a good soldier, a good organizer, a skilful engineer; he devoted himself to his military work and increasingly stood out from politics. Our witnesses are unanimous in saying that from the time of Pericles onward there was a rapid and progressive deterioration in the class of man who acquired ascendancy in Athens. In part no doubt this alleged deterioration merely represented a change in social class; the traders or business men, the "mongers" as Aristophanes derisively calls them, came to the front in place of the landed classes and the families of ancient culture. But I hardly see how we can doubt that there really was a moral and spiritual degradation as well, from Pericles and Cimon to Hyperbolus and his successors.

The *locus classicus* is, of course, the scene in the *Knights* where the Sausage-man or Offal-monger is introduced as the only possible rival for Cleon, the tanner or Leather-

monger. In this scene the Paphlagonian slave, i.e. Cleon, has fallen asleep, and two of his fellow-slaves, representing Cleon's honest and disgraced rivals, Nicias and Demosthenes, succeed in stealing a book of oracles which he keeps under his pillow.

The two-thousand-year-old jests may strike us as sometimes coarse and sometimes frigid; and my translation is a rough one. But there is a passion in the scene that keeps it alive and significant. Demosthenes, I should explain, is a little drunk from the start. (*Knights* 125–225.) He holds the book of oracles.

DEMOSTHENES. You gory Paphlagonian, you did well
To keep this close! You feared the oracle
About yourself.
NICIAS. About himself? Eh, what?
DEMOSTHENES. It's written here, man, how he goes to pot.
NICIAS. How?
DEMOSTHENES. How? This book quite plainly prophesies
How first a Rope-monger must needs arise
The fortunes of all Athens to control. . . .
NICIAS. Monger the first! What follows in the roll?
DEMOSTHENES. A Mutton-monger next our lord shall be. . . .
NICIAS. Monger the second! What's his destiny?
DEMOSTHENES. To reign in pride until some dirtier soul
Rise than himself. That hour his knell shall toll.
For close behind a Leather-monger reels,
—Our Paphlagonian—lunging at his heels,
Niagara-voiced, a roaring beast of prey.
NICIAS. The Mutton-monger runs, and fades away
Before him?
DEMOSTHENES. Yes.
NICIAS. And that's the end? The store
Is finished? Oh, for just one monger more!
DEMOSTHENES. There is one more, and one you'd never guess.
NICIAS. There is! What is he?
DEMOSTHENES. Shall I tell you?
NICIAS. Yes!
DEMOSTHENES. His fall is by an Offal-monger made.
NICIAS. An offal-monger? Glory, what a trade! . . .
Up, and to work! That monger must be found!
DEMOSTHENES. We'll seek him out. [*They proceed to go seeking, when they see a man with a pieman's tray hanging round his neck, selling offal.*]
NICIAS. See! On this very ground,
By Providence!

DEMOSTHENES. O blessing without end!
O Offal-monger, friend and more than friend!
To us, to Athens, saviour evermore! . . .
This way!
OFFAL-MONGER. What's up? What are you shouting for?
DEMOSTHENES. Come here: come forward, and be taught by me
Your splendid fate, your rich felicity!
NICIAS. Here! Take his tray off! Pour into his head
The blessed oracles and all they've said.
I'll go and keep my eye on Paphlagon. [*Exit* NICIAS.]
DEMOSTHENES. Come, my good man, put all these gadgets down.
Kiss Earth thy Mother and the gods adore.
OFFAL-MONGER. There. What's it all about?
DEMOSTHENES. O blest and more!
Now nothing but to-morrow, Lord of All!
O Prince of Athens the majestical . . .
OFFAL-MONGER. Look here, gents, can't you let me wash my stuff
And sell the puddings? I've had mor'n enough.
DEMOSTHENES. Puddings, deluded being? Just look up.
You see those rows and rows of people?
OFFAL-MONGER. Yup.
DEMOSTHENES. You are their Lord and Master! You, heaven-sent.
To people, market, harbour, parliament,
To kick the Council, break the High Command,
Send men to gaol, get drunk in the Grand Stand. . . .
OFFAL-MONGER. Not me?
DEMOSTHENES. Yes—and you don't yet see it—you!
Get up on . . . here, your own old tray will do.
See all the islands dotted round the scene?
OFFAL-MONGER. Yes.
DEMOSTHENES. The great ports, the mercantile marine?
OFFAL-MONGER. Yes.
DEMOSTHENES. Yes! And then the man denies he's blest!
Now cast one eye towards Carthage in the west,
One round to Caria—take the whole imprint.
OFFAL-MONGER. Shall I be any happier with a squint?
DEMOSTHENES. Tut, tut, man! All you see is yours to sell.
You shall become, so all the stars foretell,
A great, great man.
OFFAL-MONGER. But do explain: how can
A poor little Offal-monger be a man?
DEMOSTHENES. That's just the reason why you are bound to grow,
Because you are street-bred, brazen-faced and low.

OFFAL-MONGER. You know, I don't know quite as I deserve . . .
DEMOSTHENES. You don't know quite? What means this shaken nerve?
Some secret virtue? No?—Don't say you came
Of honest parents!
OFFAL-MONGER. Honest? Lord, not them!
Both pretty queer!
DEMOSTHENES. Oh, happy man and wife!
To start your son so well for public life.
OFFAL-MONGER. Just think of the eddication I ain't had,
Bar letters: and I mostly learnt them bad!
DEMOSTHENES. The pity is you learnt such things at all.
'Tis not for learning now the people call,
Nor thoughtfulness, nor men of generous make.
'Tis brute beasts without conscience. Come and take
The prize that gods and prophets offer you.

. . . . .

OFFAL-MONGER. Of course I like them. But I can't see yet
How ever I shall learn to rule a state.
DEMOSTHENES. Easy as lying! Do as now you do,
Turn every question to a public stew;
Hash things, and cook things. Win the common herd
By sweet strong sauces in your every word.
For other gifts, you have half the catalogue
Already, for the perfect demagogue,
A blood-shot voice, low breeding, huckster's tricks—
What more can man require for politics?
The prophets and Apollo's word concur.
Up! To all Sleeping Snakes libation pour,
And crown your brow, and fight him!
OFFAL-MONGER. Who will fight
Beside me? All the rich are in a fright
Before him, and the poor folk of the town
Turn green and vomit if they see him frown.

You feel the tone. The bitter contempt, in part the contempt of the beaten aristocrat for the conquering plebeian, of the partisan for his opponent, of the educated man for the uneducated, but in part, I think, genuinely the contempt of the man of honest traditions in manners and morals for the self-seeker with no traditions at all. It recurs again and again, in all mentions of Cleon and his successor Hyperbolus, or their flatterers and hangers-on; priests and prophets, shirkers of military service, rich

profiteers with a pull on the government, and above all of course the informers, or false-accusers.

The informers rose into prominence for several causes. First, the war-fever and the spy-mania of the time; next, the general exasperation of nerves, leading to quarrels and litigation; next, the general poverty and the difficulty of earning a living. An informer if he won his case received a large percentage of the penalty imposed. By the time of the *Birds* (414 B.C.) and the *Ecclesiazusae* (389 B.C.) Aristophanes implies jestingly that it was the only way left of making a living, and every one was in it. (*Ecclesiazusae* 562.) In the *Plutus* an informer bursts into tears because, in the New World introduced by the *dénouement* of that play, a good man and a patriot, like himself, is reduced to suffering. "You a good man and a patriot?" "If ever there was one." . . . "Are you a tiller of the soil?" "Do you think I am mad?" "A merchant?" "H'm, that is how I describe myself when I have to sign a paper." "Have you learnt any profession?" "Rather not." "Then how do you live?" "I am a general supervisor of the affairs of the City and of all private persons." "What is your qualification?" "I like it." The informer scores a point later on. "Can't you leave these trials and accusations to the proper officials?" they say to him. "The City appoints paid judges to settle these things." "And who brings the accusation?" says the informer. "Any one who likes." "Just so. I am a person who likes." (*Plutus* 901–919.)

In the *Acharnians* (860–950), when the Bœotian farmer comes to market with his abundance of good things, there arises a difficulty about any export adequate to repay such imports. He wants something that is abundant in Athens but scarce in Bœotia. Fish and pottery are suggested, but do not satisfy him: when the brilliant idea occurs, Give him a live informer! At this moment an informer enters; his name by the way is Nikarchos, "*Beat-the-Government*"—a name formed like Nikoboulos, "*Beat-the-Council*"—and suggests that if Cleon on the whole encouraged and utilized the false accusers for the purpose of keeping his rivals out of power, they were sometimes too strong

for him himself. "He is rather small," says the Bœotian doubtfully. "But all of him bad," is the comforting retort. Nicarchus immediately denounces the Bœotian wares as contraband, and finding lamp-wicks among them, detects a pro-Spartan plot for setting the docks on fire. He is still speaking when he is seized from behind, tied with ropes, wrapped carefully in matting wrong side up, so as not to break—and carried off.

Besides the συκοφάνται and blackmailers, we hear a good deal about κόλακες, or flatterers of those in power, and a good deal about profiteers. There are the Ambassadors and people on government missions with their handsome maintenance allowances, young officers with "cushy jobs" (*Acharnians* 61–90, 135–137, 595–619), the people who profit by confiscations (*Wasps* 663–718), the various trades that gain by war (*Peace* 1210–1255): the armourers, crest-makers, helmet-makers, trumpet-makers; the prophets and priests, who gain by the boom in superstition; the geometers or surveyors, who survey annexed territory (*Birds* 960–1020), together with other colonially-minded profiteers. In the *Peace*, when that goddess is discovered buried out of human sight in a deep pit, all the Greeks start to drag her out, but some hinder more than help. There are soldiers who want promotion, politicians who want to be generals, slaves who want to desert, and of course there are munition-workers. As the work goes on it appears that the Bœotians, who have plenty to eat, are not pulling; the jingo General, Lamachus, is not pulling; the Argives, being neutral, have never pulled at all; they only grinned and got profit from both sides; and the unhappy Megarians, though they are doing their best, are too weak with famine to have any effect. Eventually all these people are warned off; so are the chief combatants, the Spartans and Athenians, because they do nothing but quarrel and make accusations against each other. Only the tillers of the soil are left to pull, the peasants and farmers of all nations alike. They are not politicians, and they know what it is to suffer. (*Peace* 441–510.) So the goddess is hoisted up, and the various cities, in spite of their wounds and bandages and

black-eyes and crutches, fall to dancing and laughing together for very joy.

It is a permanent count against Cleon that he has repeatedly refused Peace. "Archeptolemus brought us Peace, and you spilt it on the ground. You insulted every embassy from every city that invited us to treat, and kicked them out of town." (*Knights* 795 ff.) "And why?" answers Cleon. "Because I mean to give the Athenian Demos universal Empire over Hellas." "Bosh," answers the Sausage-man: "it is because the whole atmosphere of war suits you! The general darkness and ignorance, the absence of financial control, the nervous terror of the populace, and even their very poverty and hunger, which make them more and more dependent on you."

In the *Peace*, the god Hermes makes a speech to the Athenians. "Whenever the Spartans had a slight advantage," he says (211 ff.), "it was 'Now, by God, we've got the little Attic beasts on the run!' And when you Athenians had the best of it and the Spartans came with Peace proposals, 'It is a cheat,' you cried. 'Don't trust a word they say. They'll come again later, if we stick to our gains.'" "I recognize the style," says the Athenian who listens. No one in Athens dared to propose Peace. In a whimsical scene at the opening of the *Acharnians* an Archangel or Demi-god walks into the Assembly explaining that he is an Immortal Being, but the authorities will not give him a passport. "Why does he want one?" "The gods have commissioned him to go to Sparta and make Peace." Immediately there is a cry for the Police, and the Archangel is taught that there are certain subjects that even an immortal must not meddle with. (*Acharnians* 45–54.) And yet if Peace is not made—one would imagine that one heard the voice of a present-day Moderate speaking—it means the destruction not of Athens or Sparta alone but of all Hellas. God is sweeping Hellas with the broom of destruction. (*Peace* 59.) The devil of War has the cities in a mortar and is only looking for a pestle to pound them into dust. (*Peace* 228–287.) By good luck it happens that the Athenian pestle is just broken—Cleon killed in Thrace—and when War looks for the Spartan pestle it is

lost too—Brasidas, the Spartan general, also killed. So comes the chance for Peace, and for the policy of Nicias, which comprised an alliance between Athens and Sparta and a pan-hellenic patriotism. It is noticeable in the *Knights* that the pacifist Offal-monger retorts on Cleon the accusation of not possessing an "imperial mind." Cleon, in his war-hysteria, is for making Athens a mean city; making it hated by the allies, hated by the rest of Hellas, thriving on the misfortunes of others, and full of hatred against a great part—not to say the best part—of its own citizens. (*Knights* 817 f.) And when Cleon finally falls the cry is raised "Hellânie Zeu!—Zeus of all Hellas—thine is the prize of victory!" The Offal-monger, like Aristophanes himself, was "a good European."

The Peace of Nicias failed. The impetus of the war was too great. The natural drift of affairs was in Cleon's direction, and the farther Athens was carried the harder it became for any human wisdom or authority to check the rush of the infuriated herd. And since Nicias was too moderate and high-minded and law-abiding to fight Cleon with his own weapons, he lost hold on the more extreme spirits of his own party; so that at the end of the war the informers had created the very thing they had dreamed about and had turned their own lies into truth. There was at last an actual pro-Spartan group; there were real secret societies, real conspiracies; and a party that was ready to join hands with the enemy in order to be delivered from the corrupted and war-maddened mob that governed them.

One is tempted in a case like this to pass no judgement on men or policies, but merely record the actual course of history and try to understand the conflicting policies and ideals; instead of judgement, taking refuge in the *lacrimae rerum*—the eternal pity that springs from the eternal tragedy of human endeavour. When the soldiers of Nicias in Sicily, mad with thirst, pressed on to drink the water, thick with blood and mire, of the little stream where the enemy archers shot them down at leisure, it was not only an army that perished but a nation, and a nation that held

the hopes of the world. When we read that immortal praise of Athens which our historian puts into the mouth of Pericles, the city of law and freedom, of simplicity and beauty, the beloved city in whose service men live and die rejoicing as a lover in his mistress, we should notice that the words are spoken in a Funeral Speech. The thing so praised, so beloved, is dead; and the haunting beauty of the words is in part merely the well-known magic of memory and of longing. For Thucydides the dream of a regenerated life for mankind has vanished out of the future, and he rebuilds it in his memory of the past. The Peloponnesian war had ended wrong; and whatever the end might have been, it had already wrecked Hellas.

Our war has at least ended right: and, one may hope, not too late for the recovery of civilization. In spite of the vast material destruction, in spite of the blotting out from the book of life of practically one whole generation of men, in spite of the unmeasured misery which has reigned and reigns still over the greater part of Europe, in spite of the gigantic difficulties of the task before us; in spite of the great war-harvest of evil and the exhaustion of brain and spirit in most of the victorious nations as well as in the vanquished, our war has ended right; and we have such an opportunity as no generation of mankind has ever had of building out of these ruins a better international life and concomitantly a better life within each nation. I know not which thought is the more solemn, the more awful in its responsibility: the thought of the sacrifice we survivors have asked or exacted from our fellow-men; or the thought of the task that now lies upon us if we are not to make that sacrifice a crime and a mockery. Blood and tears to which we had some right, for we loved those who suffered and they loved us; blood and tears to which we had no right, for those who suffered knew nothing of us, nor we of them; misery of the innocent beyond measure or understanding and hitherto without recompense; that is the price that has been paid, and it lies on us, who live, to see to it that the price is not paid in vain. By some spirit of co-operation instead of strife, by sobriety instead

of madness, by resolute sincerity in public and private things, and surely by some self-consecration to the great hope for which those who loved us gave their lives.

"A City where rich and poor, man and woman, Athenian and Spartan, are all equal and all free; where there are no false accusers and where men"—or at least the souls of men—"have wings." That was the old dream that failed. Is it to fail always and for ever?

November 7, 1918.

III

THE BACCHAE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN CURRENTS OF THOUGHT IN THE FIFTH CENTURY[1]

OF the two dramas that make up the main part of this volume, the *Hippolytus* can be left to speak for itself. Its two thousand five hundred years have left little mark upon it. It has something of the stateliness of age, no doubt, but none of the staleness or lack of sympathy. With all the severe lines of its beauty, it is tender, subtle, quick with human feeling. Even its religious conceptions, if we will but take them simply, forgetting the false mythology we have learned from handbooks, are easily understood and full of truth. One of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of love tragedies, it deals with a theme that might easily be made ugly. It is made ugly by later writers, especially by the commentators whom we can see always at work from the times of the ancient scholia down to our own days. Even Racine, who wished to be kind to his Phèdre, has let her suffer by contact with certain deadly and misleading suggestions. But the Phaedra of Euripides was quite another woman, and the quality of her love, apart from its circumstances, is entirely fragrant and clear. The *Hippolytus*, like most works that come from a strong personality, has its mannerisms and, no doubt, its flaws. But in the main it is a singularly satisfying and complete work of art, a thing of beauty, to contemplate and give thanks for, surrounded by an atmosphere of haunting purity.

[1] Originally an introduction to a volume of translations of the *Hippolytus*, *Bacchae* and *Frogs* (vol. iii of *The Athenian Drama*. Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd.).

If we turn to *The Bacchae*, we find a curious difference. As an effort of genius it is perhaps greater than the *Hippolytus*, at any rate more unusual and rare in quality. But it is unsatisfying, inhuman. There is an impression of coldness and even of prolixity amid its amazing thrill, a strange unearthliness, something that bewilders. Most readers, I believe, tend to ask what it means, and to feel, by implication, that it means something.

Now this problem, what *The Bacchae* means and how Euripides came to write it, is not only of real interest in itself; it is also, I think, of importance with regard to certain movements in fifth-century Athens, and certain currents of thought in later Greek philosophy.

The remark has been made, that, if Aristotle could have seen through some magic glass the course of human development and decay for the thousand years following his death, the disappointment would have broken his heart. A disappointment of the same sort, but more sharp and stinging, inasmuch as men's hopes were both higher and cruder, did, as a matter of fact, break the hearts of many men two or three generations earlier. It is the reflection of that disappointment on the work of Euripides, the first hopefulness, the embitterment, the despair, followed at last by a final half-prophetic vision of the truths or possibilities beyond that despair, that will, I think, supply us with an explanation of a large part of *The Bacchae*, and with a clue to a great deal of the poet's other work.

There has been, perhaps, no period in the world's history, not even the openings of the French Revolution, when the prospects of the human race can have appeared so brilliant as they did to the highest minds of Eastern Greece about the years 470–445 B.C. To us, looking critically back upon that time, it is as though the tree of human life had burst suddenly into flower, into that exquisite and short-lived bloom which seems so disturbing among the ordinary processes of historical growth. One wonders how it must have felt to the men who lived in it. We have but little direct testimony. There is the tone of solemn exaltation that pervades most of Aeschylus, the high confidence of the *Persae*, the *Prometheus*, the *Eumenides*.

There is the harassed and half-reluctant splendour of certain parts of Pindar, like the Dithyramb to Athens and the fourth Nemean Ode. But in the main the men of that day were too busy, one would fain think too happy, to write books.

There is an interesting witness, however, of a rather younger generation. Herodotus finished his Histories when the glory was already gone, and the future seemed about equally balanced between good and evil. But he had lived as a boy in the great time. And the peculiar charm of his work often seems to lie mainly in a certain strong and kindly joyousness, persistent even amid his most grisly stories, which must be the spirit of the first Athenian Confederation not yet strangled by the spirit of the Peloponnesian war.

What was the object of this enthusiasm, the ground of this high hopefulness? It would, of course, take us far beyond our limits to attempt any full answer to such a question.[1] But for one thing, there was the extraordinary swiftness of the advances made; and, for another, there was a circumstance that has rarely been repeated in history —the fact that all the different advances appeared to help one another. The ideals of freedom, law, and progress; of truth and beauty, of knowledge and virtue, of humanity and religion; high things, the conflicts between which have caused most of the disruptions and despondencies of human societies, seemed for a generation or two at this time to lie all in the same direction. And in that direction, on the whole, a great part of Greece was with extraordinary swiftness moving. Of course, there were backwaters and reactionary forces. There was Sparta and even Aetolia; Pythagoras and the Oracle at Delphi. But in the main, all good things went hand in hand. The poets and the men of science, the moral teachers and the hardy speculators, the great traders and the political reformers—all found their centre of life and aspiration in the same "School of Hellas," Athens. The final seal of success was set upon the movement by the defeat of the Persian invasion

[1] A magnificent text for such a discussion would be found in the great lyric on the Rise of Man in Sophocles' *Antigone* (v. 332 ff.).

and the formation of the Athenian League. The higher hopes and ideals had clashed against the lower under conditions in which the victory of the lower seemed beforehand certain; and somehow, miraculously, ununderstandably, that which was high had shown that it was also strong. Athens stood out as the chief power of the Mediterranean.

Let us recall briefly a few well-known passages of Herodotus to illustrate the tone of the time.

Athens represented Hellenism (Hdt. i. 60). "The Greek race was distinguished of old from the barbarian as nimbler of intellect and further removed from primitive savagery (or stupidity). . . . And of all Greeks the Athenians were counted the first for wisdom."

She represented the triumph of Democracy (Hdt. v. 78). "So Athens grew. It is clear not in one thing alone, but wherever you test it, what a good thing is equality among men. Even in war, Athens, when under the tyrants, was no better than her neighbours; when freed from the tyrants, she was far the first of all."

And Democracy was at this time a thing which stirred enthusiasm. A speaker says in Herodotus (iii. 80): "A tyrant disturbs ancient laws, violates women, kills men without trial. But a people ruling—first, the very name of it is beautiful, Isonomiê (Equality in law); and, secondly, a people does none of these things."

"The very name of it is beautiful!" It was some twenty-five years later that an Athenian statesman, of moderate or rather popular antecedents, said in a speech at Sparta (Thuc. vi. 89): "Of course, all sensible men know what Democracy is, and I better than most, having suffered; but there is nothing new to be said about acknowledged insanity!"

That, however, is looking ahead. We must note that this Democracy, this Freedom, represented by Greece, and especially by Athens, was always the Rule of Law. There is a story told by Aeschylus of the Athenians, by Herodotus of the Spartans, contrasting either with the barbarians and their lawless absolute monarchies. Xerxes, learning the small numbers of his Greek adversaries, asks,

"How can they possibly stand against us, especially when, as you tell me, they are all free, and there is no one to compel them?" And the Spartan Demarâtus answers (Hdt. vii. 104): "Free are they, O King, yet not free to do everything; for there is a master over them, even Law, whom they fear more than thy servants fear thee. At least they obey whatever he commands, and his voice is always the same." In Aeschylus (*Persae* 241 *seqq.*) the speakers present are both Persians, so the point about Law cannot be explained. It is left a mystery, how and why the free Greeks face their death.

It would be easy to assemble many passages to show that Athens represented freedom (*e.g.* Hdt. viii. 142) and the enfranchisement of the oppressed; but what is even more characteristic than the insistence on Freedom is the insistence on Aretê, Virtue—the demand made upon each Greek, and especially each Athenian, to be a better man than the ordinary. It comes out markedly from a quarter where we should scarcely expect it. Herodotus gives an abstract of the words spoken by the much-maligned Themistocles before the battle of Salamis—a brief, grudging résumé of a speech so celebrated that it could not in decency be entirely passed over (Hdt. viii. 83): "The argument of it was that in all things that are possible to man's nature and situation, there is always a higher and a lower"; and that *they* must stand for the higher. We should have liked to hear more of that speech. It certainly achieved its end.

There was insistence on Aretê in another sense, the sense of generosity and kindliness. A true Athenian must know how to give way. When the various states were contending for the leadership before the battle of Artemisium, the Athenians, contributing much the largest and finest fighting force, "thought," we are told (Hdt. viii. 3), "that the great thing was that Greece should be saved, and gave up their claims." In the similar dispute for the post of honour and danger before the battle of Plataea, the Athenians did plead their cause, and easily won it (Hdt. ix. 27). But we may notice not only the moderate and disciplined spirit in which they promise to abide by Sparta's decision,

and to show no resentment if their claim is rejected, but also the grounds upon which they claim honour—apart from certain obvious points, such as the size of their contingent. Their claims are that in recent years they alone have met the Persians single-handed on behalf of all Greece; that in old times it was they who gave refuge to the Children of Heracles when hunted through Greece by the overmastering tyrant, Eurystheus; it was they who championed the wives and mothers of the Argives slain at Thebes, and made war upon that conquering power to prevent wrong-doing against the helpless dead.

These passages, which could easily be reinforced by a score of others, illustrate, not of course what Athens as a matter of hard fact *was*—no state has ever been one compact mass of noble qualities—but the kind of ideal that Athens in her own mind had formed of herself. They help us to see what she appeared to the imaginations of Aeschylus and young Euripides, and that "Band of Lovers" which Pericles gathered to adore his Princess of Cities.[1] She represented Freedom and Law, Hellenism and Intellect, Humanity, Chivalry, the championship of the helpless and oppressed.

Did Euripides feel all this? one may ask. The answer to that doubt is best to be found, perhaps, in the two plays which he wrote upon the two traditional feats of generosity mentioned above—the reception of the Children of Heracles, and the championing of the Argive Suppliants. The former, beautiful as it is, is seriously mutilated, so the *Suppliants* will suit our purpose best. It is, I think, an early play rewritten at the time of the Peace of Nicias (B.C. 421), about the beginning of the poet's middle period,[2] a poor play in many respects, youthful, obvious, and crude, but all aflame with this chivalrous and confident spirit.

[1] Thuc. 2, 43. "Fix your eyes on what she might be, and make yourselves her Lovers."

[2] Some critics consider that it was first written at this time. If so, we must attribute the apparent marks of earliness to deliberate archaism. There is no doubt that the reception of Suppliants was a very old stage subject, and had acquired a certain traditional stiffness of form, seen at its acme in the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus.

The situation is as follows: Adrastus, King of Argos, has led the ill-fated expedition of the Seven Chieftains against Thebes, and been utterly defeated. The Thebans have brutally refused to allow the Argives to bury their dead. The bodies are lying upon the field. Adrastus, accompanied by the mothers and wives of the slain chieftains, has come to Attica, and appealed to Theseus for intercession. That hero, like his son Demophon in *The Children of Heracles*, like his ancestor Cecrops in certain older poetry, is a sort of personification of Athens.

He explains that he always disapproved of Adrastus's expedition; that he can take no responsibility, and certainly not risk a war on the Argives' account.

He is turning away when one of the bereaved women, lifting her suppliant wreaths and branches, cries out to him:—

> What is this thing thou doest? Wilt despise
> All these, and cast us from thee beggar-wise,
> Grey women, with not one thing of all we crave?
> Nay, the wild beast for refuge hath his cave,
> The slave God's altar; surely in the deep
> Of fortune City may call to City, and creep,
> A wounded thing, to shelter.

Observe the conception of the duty of one state to protect and help another.—Theseus is still obdurate. He has responsibilities. The recklessness of Athens in foreign policy has become a reproach. At last Aethra, his mother, can keep silence no more. Can he really allow such things to be done? Can Athens really put considerations of prudence before generosity and religion?

> Thou shalt not suffer it, thou being my child!
> Thou hast heard men scorn thy city, call her wild
> Of counsel, mad; thou hast seen the fire of morn
> Flash from her eyes in answer to their scorn!
> Come toil on toil, 'tis this that makes her grand,
> Peril on peril! And common states that stand
> In caution, twilight cities, dimly wise—
> Ye know them; for no light is in their eyes!
> Go forth, my son, and help.—My fear is fled.
> Women in sorrow call thee and men dead!

To help the helpless was a necessary part of what we call chivalry, what the Greeks called religion. Theseus agrees to consult the people on the matter. Meantime there arrives a Theban herald, asking arrogantly, "Who is Master of the land?" Theseus, although a king, is too thorough a personification of democratic Athens to let such an expression pass—

> Nay, peace, Sir Stranger! Ill hast thou begun,
> Seeking a Master here. No will of one
> Holdeth this land; it is a city and free.
> The whole folk year by year, in parity
> Of service, is our King. Nor yet to gold
> Give we high seats, but in one honour hold
> The poor man and the rich.

The herald replies that he is delighted to hear that Athens has such a silly constitution, and warns Theseus not to interfere with Thebes for the sake of a beaten cause. Eventually Theseus gives his ultimatum :—

> Let the slain be given
> To us, who seek to obey the will of Heaven.
> Else, know for sure, I come to seek these dead
> Myself, for burial.—It shall not be said
> An ancient ordinance of God, that cried
> To Athens and her King, was cast aside!

A clear issue comes in the conversation that follows :—

> HERALD.
> Art thou so strong? Wilt stand against all Greece?
>
> THESEUS.
> Against all tyrants! With the rest be peace.
>
> HERALD.
> She takes too much upon her, this thy state!
>
> THESEUS.
> Takes, aye, and bears it; therefore is she great!

We know that spirit elsewhere in the history of the world. How delightful it is, and green and fresh and thrill-

ing; and how often it has paid in blood and ashes the penalty of dreaming and of τὸ μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν!

There is one other small point that calls for notice before we leave this curious play. Theseus represents not only chivalry and freedom and law, but also a certain delicacy of feeling. He is the civilized man as contrasted with the less civilized. It was a custom in many parts of Greece to make the very most of mourning and burial rites, to feel the wounds of the slain, and vow vengeance with wild outbursts of grief. Athenian feeling disapproved of this.

THESEUS.

This task
Is mine. Advance the burden of the dead!
[*The attendants bring forward the bodies.*]

ADRASTUS.

Up, ye sad mothers, where your sons are laid!

THESEUS.

Nay, call them not, Adrastus.

ADRASTUS.

That were strange!
Shall they not touch their children's wounds?

THESEUS.

The change
In that dead flesh would torture them.

ADRASTUS.

'Tis pain
Alway, to count the gashes of the slain.

THESEUS.

And wouldst thou add pain to the pain of these?

ADRASTUS (*after a pause*).

So be it!—Ye women, wait in your degrees:
Theseus says well.

This particular trait, this civilization or delicacy of feeling, is well illustrated in a much finer drama, the *Heracles*. The hero of that tragedy, the rudely noble Dorian chief, has in a fit of madness killed his own children. In the

scene to be cited he has recovered his senses and is sitting dumb and motionless, veiled by his mantle. He is, by all ordinary notions, accursed. The sight of his face will pollute the sun. A touch from him or even a spoken word will spread to another the contagion of his horrible blood-stainedness. To him comes his old comrade Theseus (*Heracles* 1214 ff.) :—

THESEUS.

O thou that sittest in the shade of Death,
Unveil thy brow! 'Tis a friend summoneth,
And never darkness bore so black a cloud
In all this world, as from mine eyes could shroud
The wreck of thee. . . . What wouldst thou with that arm
That shakes, and shows me blood? Dost fear to harm
Me with thy words' contagion? Have no fear;
What is it if I suffer with thee here?
We have had great joys together.—Call back now
That time the Dead had hold of me, and how
Thou camest conquering! Can that joy grow old,
Or friends once linked in sunshine, when the cold
Storm falleth, not together meet the sea?—
Oh, rise, and bare thy brow, and turn to me
Thine eyes! A brave man faces his own fall
And takes it to him, as God sends withal.

HERACLES.

Theseus, thou seest my children?

THESEUS.

Surely I see
All, and I knew it ere I came to thee.

HERACLES.

Oh, why hast bared to the Sun this head of mine?

THESEUS.

How can thy human sin stain things divine?

HERACLES.

Leave me! I am all blood. The curse thereof
Crawls. . . .

THESEUS.

No curse cometh between love and love!

HERACLES.

I thank thee. . . . Yes; I served thee long ago.

Heracles is calmed and his self-respect partially restored. But he still cannot bear to live. Notice the attitude of Theseus towards his suicide—an attitude more striking in ancient literature than it would be in modern.

HERACLES.

Therefore is all made ready for my death.

THESEUS.

Thinkest thou God feareth what thy fury saith?

HERACLES (*rising*).

Oh, God is hard; and I hard against God!

THESEUS.

What wilt thou? And whither on thine angry road?

HERACLES.

Back to the darkness whence my race began!

THESEUS.

These be the words of any common man!

HERACLES (*taken aback*).

Aye, thou art scathless. Chide me at thine ease!

THESEUS.

Is this He of the Labours, Heracles?

HERACLES.

Of none like this, if one dare measure pain!

THESEUS.

The Helper of the World, the Friend of Man?

HERACLES (*with a movement*).

Crushed by Her hate! How can the past assuage
This horror. . . .

THESEUS.

Thou shalt not perish in thy rage!
Greece will not suffer it.

The passage illustrates not only nobility of feeling in Theseus, but, in a way very characteristic of Euripides, the fact that this nobility is based on religious reflection, on genuinely "free" thought. Theseus dares the con-

tagion for the sake of his friendship. He also does not believe in the contagion. He does not really think for a moment that he will become guilty of a crime because he has touched some one who committed it. He is in every sense, as Herodotus puts it, " further removed from primitive savagery."

But this play also shows, and it is probably the very last of Euripides' plays which does show it, a strong serenity of mind. The loss of this serenity is one of the most significant marks of the later plays of Euripides as contrasted with the earlier. We must not overstate the antithesis. There was always in Euripides a vein of tonic bitterness, a hint of satire or criticism, a questioning of established things. It is markedly present even in the *Alcestis*, in the scene where Admêtus is denounced by his old father; it is present in a graver form in the *Hippolytus*. Yet the general impression produced by those two plays when compared, for instance, with the *Electra* and the *Troades*, is undoubtedly one of serenity as against fever, beauty as against horror. And the same will nearly always hold for the comparison of any of his early plays with any later one. Of course not quite always. If we take the *Troades*, in the year 415, as marking the turning-point, we shall find the *Hecuba* very bitter among the early plays, the *Helena* bright and light-hearted, though a little harsh, among the later. This is only natural. There is always something fitful and irregular in the gathering of clouds, however persistent.

There is one cloud even in the *Suppliants*, possibly a mark of the later retouching of that play. The Theban herald is an unsympathetic character, whose business is to say hard, sinister things, and be confuted by Theseus. These unsympathetic heralds are common stage characters. They stalk in with insulting messages and " tyrannical " sentiments, are surrounded by howling indignation from the virtuous populace, stand their ground motionless, defying any one to touch their sacred persons, and go off with a scornful menace. But this particular herald has some lines put in his mouth which nobody confutes, and which are rather too strongly expressed for the situation.

Theseus is prepared for his chivalrous war, and the people clamour for it. The herald says (v. 484):—

> Oh, it were well
> The death men shout for could stand visible
> Above the urns! Then never Greece had reeled
> Blood-mad to ruin o'er many a stricken field.
> Great Heaven, set both out plain and all can tell
> The False word from the True, and Ill from Well,
> And how much Peace is better! Dear is Peace
> To every Muse; she walks her ways and sees
> No haunting Spirit of Judgment. Glad is she
> With noise of happy children, running free
> With corn and oil. And we, so vile we are,
> Forget, and cast her off, and call for War,
> City on city, man on man, to break
> Weak things to obey us for our greatness' sake!

If it is true that the *Suppliants* was rewritten, that must be one of the later passages. Athens had had ten years of bitter war by the time the lines were actually spoken.

Let us again take a few typical passages from the historians to see the form in which the clouds gathered over Athens.

The first and most obvious will be from that curious chapter in which Herodotus, towards the end of his life, is summing up his conclusions about the Persian war, of which Athens was so indisputably the heroine. He observes (vii. 139): "Here I am compelled by necessity to express an opinion which will be offensive to most of mankind. But I cannot refrain from putting it in the way that I believe to be true. . . . The Athenians in the Persian wars were the saviours of Hellas." By the time that passage was written, apologies were necessary if you wished to say a good word for Athens!

The Athenian League, that great instrument of freedom, had grown into an Empire or Archê. Various allies had tried to secede and failed; had been conquered and made into subjects. The greater part of Greece was seething with timorous ill-feeling against what they called "The Tyrant City." And by the opening of the Peloponnesian war, Athens herself had practically ceased to protest against the name. It is strange to recall such words as,

for instance, the Spartans had used in 479, when it was rumoured, falsely, that Athens thought of making terms with Persia (Hdt. viii. 142): "It is intolerable to imagine that Athens should ever be a party to the subjection of any Greek state; always from the earliest times you have been known as the Liberators of Many Men." It is strange to compare those words with the language attributed to Pericles in 430 in attacking the "philosophic radicals" of that day (Thuc. ii. 63)[1]:—

"Do not imagine that you are fighting about a simple issue, the subjection or independence of certain cities. You have an empire to lose, and a danger to face from those whom your imperial rule has made to hate you. And it is impossible for you to resign your power—if at this crisis some timorous and inactive spirits are hankering after righteousness even at that price! For by this time your empire has become a Despotism ('Tyrannis'), a thing which in the opinion of mankind is unjust to acquire, but which at any rate cannot be safely surrendered. The men of whom I was speaking, if they could find followers, would soon ruin the city. If they were to go and found a state of their own, they would soon ruin that!"

It would not be relevant here to appraise this policy of Pericles, to discuss how far events had really made it inevitable, or when the first false step was taken. Our business, at the moment, is merely to notice the extraordinary change of tone. It comes out even more strongly in a speech made by Cleon, the successor of Pericles, in the debate about the punishment of rebel Mitylênê—a debate remarkable as being the very last in which the side of clemency gained the day (Thuc. iii. 37):—

"I have remarked again and again that a Democracy cannot govern an empire; and never more clearly than now, when I see you regretting your sentence upon the Mitylenaeans. Living without fear and suspicion among yourselves, you deal with your allies upon the same principle;

[1] These speeches were revised as late as 403, and may well be coloured by subsequent experience. But this particular point is one on which Thucydides may be absolutely trusted. He would not attribute the odious sentiments of Cleon to his hero Pericles without cause.

and you do not realize that whenever you make a concession to them out of pity, or are misled by their specious reports, you are guilty of a weakness dangerous to yourselves, and you receive no gratitude from them. You must remember that your empire is a Despotism exercised over unwilling subjects who are always conspiring against you. They do not obey in return for any kindness you do them; they obey just so far as you show yourselves their masters."

"Do not be misled," he adds a little later (iii. 40), "by the three most deadly enemies of empire, Pity and the Charm of Words and the Generosity of Strength!"

It is a change indeed! A change which the common run of low men, no doubt, accepted as inevitable, or even as a matter of course; which the merely clever and practical men insisted upon, and the more brutal "patriots" delighted in They had never loved or understood the old ideals!

Some great political changes can take place without much effect upon men's private lives. But this change was a blight that worked upon daily conduct, upon the roots of character. Thucydides, writing after the end of the war, has two celebrated and terrible chapters (iii. 82, 83) on that side of the question. Every word is apposite to our point; but we may content ourselves with a few sentences here and there.

"In peace and prosperity both states and men," he says, "are free to act upon higher motives. They are not caught up by coils of circumstance which drive them without their own volition. But War, taking away the margin in daily life, is a teacher who educates by violence; and he makes men's characters fit their conditions. . . ."

The later actors in the war "determined to outdo the report of those who had gone before them by the ingenuity of their enterprises and the enormity of their reprisals. . . ." The meaning of words, he notices, changed in relation to things. Thoughtfulness, prudence, moderation, generosity were scouted and called by the names of various vices: recklessness and treachery were prized. "Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. . . ."

"Neither side cared for religion, but both used it with enthusiasm as a pretext for various odious purposes. . . ."

"The cause of all these evils was the lust of empire, originating in avarice and ambition, and the party spirit which is engendered from such circumstances when men settle themselves down to a contest."

"Thus Revolution gave birth to every kind of wickedness in Hellas. The simplicity which is so large an element in a noble nature disappeared in a burst of derision. An attitude of mistrustful antagonism prevailed everywhere. No power existed to soften it, no cogency of reason, no bond of religion." . . . "Inferior characters succeeded best. The higher kinds of men were too thoughtful, and were swept aside."

Men caught up in coils of circumstance that drive them without their own volition; ingenious enterprises; enormous revenges; mad ambition; mistrust; frantic energy; the abuse of religion; simplicity laughed out of the world: it is a terrible picture, and it is exactly the picture that meets us in the later tragedies of Euripides. Those plays all, as Dr. Verrall has acutely remarked, have an extraordinary air of referring to the present and not the past, of dealing with things that "matter," not things made up or dreamed about. And it is in this spirit that they deal with them. Different plays may be despairing like the *Troades*, cynical like the *Ion*, deliberately hateful like the *Electra*, frantic and fierce like the *Orestes*; they are nearly all violent, nearly all misanthropic. Amid all their poetical beauty there sounds from time to time a cry of nerves frayed to the snapping point, a jarring note of fury against something personal to the poet and not always relevant to the play. Their very splendours, the lines that come back most vividly to a reader's mind, consist often in the expression of some vice. There are analyses or self-revelations, like the famous outburst of the usurping Prince Eteoclês in the *Phoenissae*:—

> These words that thou wilt praise
> The Equal and the Just,—in all men's ways
> I have not found them! These be names, not things.
> Mother, I will unveil to thee the springs
> That well within me. I would break the bars
> Of Heaven, and past the risings of the stars

Climb, aye, or sink beneath dark Earth and Sea,
To clasp my goddess-bride, my Sovranty!
This is my good, which never by mine own
Will shall man touch, save Eteoclês alone!

There are flashes of cruel hate like the first words of old Tyndareus to the doomed and agonized Orestes, whose appearance has been greeted by Menelaus with the words :—

Who cometh ghastly as the grave? . . .

TYNDAREUS.

Ah God,
The snake! The snake, that drank his mother's blood,
Doth hiss and flash before the gates, and bow
The pestilence-ridden glimmer of his brow.
I sicken at him!—Wilt thou stain thy soul
With speech, Menelaus, of a thing so foul?

Above all, there is what I will not venture to illustrate, the celebrated Euripidean "pathos," that power of insight into the cruelty of suffering: the weakness and sensitiveness of the creatures that rend one another; that piteousness in the badness of things which makes them half lovable. This is the one characteristic of Euripides' world which is not present in that of Thucydides. The grimly reticent historian seldom speaks of human suffering; the tragedian keeps it always before our eyes.

This gradual embitterment and exacerbation of thought in Euripides, as shown by the later plays compared with the earlier, is, I believe, generally recognized. I will choose in illustration of it a scene from the *Hecuba*, a tragedy early in date, but in tone and spirit really the first of the late series.[1]

The *Hecuba* deals with the taking of Troy, the great achievement in war of the heroic age of Greece. And the point in it that interests Euripides is, as often, the reverse of the picture—the baseness and, what is worse, the uninterestingness of the conquerors; the monstrous wrongs

[1] I am the more moved to select this particular scene because I find that the text and punctuation of my edition, which I owe to a remark of Dr. Verrall's, confirmed by a re-examination of the Paris MSS., has caused difficulties to some scholars.

of the conquered; the moral degradation of both parties, culminating in the transformation of Hecuba from a grave oriental queen into a kind of she-devil. Among the heroes who took Troy were, as every Athenian knew, the two sons of Theseus. The Athenian public would, of course, insist on their being mentioned. And they are mentioned—once! A young princess is to be cruelly murdered by a vote of the Greek host. One wishes to know what these high Athenians had to say when the villain Odysseus consented to her death. And we are told. "The sons of Theseus, the branches of Athens, made orations contradicting each other"—so like them at their worst!—"but both were in favour of the murder!" Small wonder that Euripides' plays were awarded only four first prizes in fifty years!

In the scene which I select (vv. 795 ff.), the body of Hecuba's one remaining son, Polydôrus, has just been washed up by the sea. He, being very young, had been sent away to the keeping of a Thracian chieftain, an old friend, till the war should be over. And now it proves that the Thracian, as soon as he saw that the Trojan cause was definitely lost, has murdered his charge! Hecuba appeals to her enemy Agamemnon for help to avenge the murder. The "King of Men" is, as usual in Euripides, a poor creature, a brave soldier and kindly enough amid the havoc he makes, but morally a coward and a sensualist. The scene is outside Agamemnon's tent. Inside the tent is Hecuba's one remaining daughter Cassandra, a prophetess vowed to virginity or to union only with the God; she is now Agamemnon's concubine!

Observe how the nobler part of the appeal fails, the baser succeeds. Hecuba shows Agamemnon her son's body, and tells how the Thracian slew him:—

> And by a plot
> Slew him; and when he slew him, could he not
> Throw earth upon his bones, if he must be
> A murderer? Cast him naked to the sea?
> O King, I am but one amid thy throng
> Of servants; I am weak, but God is strong,
> God, and that King that standeth over God,
> Law; who makes gods and unmakes, by whose rod

We live dividing the Unjust from the Just;
Whom now before thee standing if thou thrust
Away—if men that murder guests, and tear
God's house down, meet from thee no vengeance, where
Is Justice left in the world? Forbid it, thou!
Have mercy! Dost not *fear* to wrong me now? . . .
Hate me no more. Stand like an arbiter
Apart, and count the weight of woes I bear.
I was a Queen once, now I am thy slave;
I had children once; but not now. And my grave
Near; very old, broken and homeless. . . . Stay;
[Agamemnon, painfully embarrassed, has moved towards the tent.
God help me, whither dost thou shrink away? . . .
It seems he does not listen! . . .
. . . So, 'tis plain
Now. I must never think of hope again. . . .
Those that are left me are dead; dead all save one;
One lives, a slave, in shame. . . . Ah, I am gone! . . .
The smoke! Troy is on fire! The smoke all round!
[She swoons. Agamemnon comes back. Her fellow-slaves tend her. . . . She rises again with a sudden thought.
What? . . . Yes, I might! . . . Oh, what a hollow sound,
Love, here! But I can say it! . . . Let me be! . . .
King, King, there sleepeth side by side with thee
My child, my priestess, whom they call in Troy
Cassandra. Wilt thou pay not for thy joy?
Nothing to her for all the mystery,
And soft words of the dark? Nothing to me
For her? Nay, mark me; look on these dead eyes!
This is her brother; surely thine likewise!
Thou wilt avenge him?

This desperate and horrible appeal stirs him. He is much occupied with Cassandra for the moment. But he is afraid. "The King of Thrace is an ally of the Greeks, the slain boy was after all an enemy. People will say he is influenced by Cassandra. If it were not for that. . . ." She answers him in words which might stand as a motto over most of the plays of this period—as they might over much of Tolstoy:—

Faugh! There is no man free in all this world!
Slaves of possessions, slaves of fortune, hurled
This way and that. Or else the multitude

Hath hold on him; or laws of stone and wood
Constrain, and will not let him use the soul
Within him! . . . So thou durst not? And thine whole
Thought hangs on what thy herd will say? Nay, then,
My master, I will set thee free again.

She arranges a plan which shall not implicate him. The Thracian chieftain is allowed to visit her. On the pretence of explaining to him where a treasure is hidden, she entices him and his two children—"it is more prudent to have them present, in case he should die!"—inside the tent of the captive Trojan women. The barbarian women make much of the children, and gradually separate them from their father. They show interest in his Thracian javelins and the texture of his cloak, and so form a group round him. At a given signal they cling to him and hold him fast, murder his children before his face, and then tear his eyes out. Agamemnon, who knew that something would happen, but had never expected this, is horrified and impotent. The blinded Thracian comes back on to the stage, crawling, unable to stand. He gropes for the bodies of his children; for some one to help him; for some one to tear and kill. He shrieks like a wild beast, and the horrible scene ends.

We will not go farther into this type of play. More illustrations would, of course, prove nothing. It is the business of a tragedian to be harrowing. It is a dangerous and a somewhat vulgar course to deduce from a poet's works direct conclusions about his real life; but there is on the one hand the fact of progressive bitterness in Euripides' plays, and, on the other, as we have noticed above, there is the peculiar impression which they make of dealing with living and concrete things. But it is not really anything positive that chiefly illustrates the later tone of Euripides. It is not his denunciations of nearly all the institutions of human society—of the rich, the poor, men, women, slaves, masters, above all, of democracies and demagogues; it is not even the mass of sordid and unbalanced characters that he brings upon the scene—trembling slaves of ambition like Agamemnon; unscrupulous and heartless schemers like Odysseus; unstable compounds of

chivalry and vanity like Achilles in the second *Iphigenia;* shallow women like Helen and terrible women like Electra in the *Orestes*—a play of which the Scholiast naïvely remarks that "the characters are all bad except Pylades," the one exception being a reckless murderer who was at least faithful to his friends. It is not points like these that are most significant. It is the gradual dying off of serenity and hope. I think most students of Euripides will agree that almost the only remnant of the spirit of the *Alcestis* or the *Hippolytus*, the only region of clear beauty, that can still be found in the later tragedies, lies in the lyrical element. There are one or two plays, like the *Andromeda*, which seem to have escaped from reality to the country of Aristophanes' Birds, and read like mere romance; and even in the *Electra* there are the songs. Euripides had prayed some twenty years before his death: "May I not live if the Muses leave me!" And that prayer was heard. The world had turned dark, sordid, angry, under his eyes, but Poetry remained to the end radiant and stainless.

It is this state of mind and a natural development from it which afford in my judgement the best key to the understanding of *The Bacchae*, his last play, not quite finished at his death. It was written under peculiar circumstances.

We have seen from Thucydides what Athenian society had become in these last years of the death-struggle. If to Thucydides, as is possible, things seemed worse than they were, we must remember that to the more impulsive nature and equally disappointed hopes of Euripides they are not likely to have seemed better. We know that he had become in these last years increasingly unpopular in Athens; and it is not hard, if we examine the groups and parties in Athens at the time, to understand his isolation.

Most of the high-minded and thoughtful men of the time were to some extent isolated, and many retired quietly from public notice. But Euripides was not the man to be quiet in his rejected state. He was not conciliatory, not silent, not callous. At last something occurred to make his life in Athens finally intolerable. We do not know exactly what it was. It cannot have been the destruction of his estate; that had been destroyed long before. It

cannot have been his alleged desertion by his wife; she was either dead or over seventy. It may have been something connected with his prosecution for impiety, the charge on which Socrates was put to death a few years after. All that we know is one fragmentary sentence in the ancient *Life of Euripides*: "He had to leave Athens because of the malicious exultation over him of nearly all the city."

Archelaüs, King of Macedon, had long been inviting him. The poet had among his papers a play called *Archelaüs*, written to celebrate this king's legendary ancestor, so he may before this have been thinking of Macedonia as a possible refuge. He went now, and seems to have lived in some wild retreat on the northern slopes of Mount Olympus, in the Muses' country, as he phrases it:—

> In the elm-woods and the oaken,
> There where Orpheus harped of old,
> And the trees awoke and knew him,
> And the wild things gathered to him,
> As he sang amid the broken
> Glens his music manifold.

The spirit of the place passed into his writings. He had produced the *Orestes* in 408. He produced nothing, so far as has been made out, in 407. He died in 406. And after his death there appeared in Athens, under the management of his son, a play that held the Greek stage for five centuries, a strange and thrilling tragedy, enigmatical, inhuman, at times actually repellent, yet as strong and as full of beauty as the finest work of his prime.

Two other plays were produced with it. Of one, *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, we know nothing characteristic; the second, *Iphigenîa in Aulis*, is in many ways remarkable. The groundwork of it is powerful and bitter; in style it approaches the New Comedy; but it is interspersed with passages and scenes of most romantic beauty; and, finally, it was left at the poet's death half finished. One could imagine that he had begun it in Athens, or at least before the bitter taste of Athens had worn off; that he tried afterwards to change the tone of it to something kindlier and more beautiful; that finally he threw it aside and began a quite new play

in a different style to express the new spirit that he had found.

For *The Bacchae* is somehow different in spirit from any of his other works, late or early. The old poet chose a severely traditional subject, the primitive ritual-play of Dionysus from which Greek tragedy is said to have sprung. The young god born of Zeus and the Theban princess, Semelê, travelling through the world to announce his godhead, comes to his own people of Thebes, and—his own receive him not. They will not worship him simply and willingly; he constrains them to worship him with the enthusiasm of madness. The King, Pentheus, insults and imprisons the god, spies on his mystic worship, is discovered by the frenzied saints and torn limb from limb, his own mother, Agâvê, being the first to rend him.

Now it is no use pretending that this is a moral and sympathetic tale, or that Euripides palliates the atrocity of it, and tries to justify Dionysus. Euripides never palliates things. He leaves this savage story as savage as he found it. The sympathy of the audience is with Dionysus while he is persecuted; doubtful while he is just taking his vengeance; utterly against him at the end of the play. Note how Agâvê, when restored to her right mind, refuses even to think of him and his miserable injured pride:—

AGÂVÊ.

'Tis Dionyse hath done it. Now I see.

CADMUS.

Ye wronged him! Ye denied his deity.

AGÂVÊ.

Show me the body of the son I love!

Note how Dionysus is left answerless when Agâvê rebukes him:—

DIONYSUS.

Ye mocked me being God. This is your wage.

AGÂVÊ.

Should God be like a proud man in his rage?

DIONYSUS.

'Tis as my sire, Zeus, willed it long ago.

A helpless, fatalistic answer, abandoning the moral standpoint.

But the most significant point against Dionysus is the change of tone—the conversion, one might almost call it —of his own inspired *Wild Beasts*, the Chorus of Asiatic Bacchanals, after the return of Agâvê with her son's severed head. The change is clearly visible in that marvellous scene itself. It is emphasized in the sequel. Those wild singers, who raged so loudly in praises of the god's vengeance before they saw what it was, fall, when once they have seen it, into dead silence. True, there is a lacuna in the MS. at one point, so it is possible that they may have spoken; but as the play stands, their Leader speaks only one couplet addressed to Cadmus, whom the god has wronged:—

> Lo, I weep with thee. 'Twas but due reward
> God sent on Pentheus; but for thee . . . 'tis hard!

And they go off at the end with no remark, good or evil, about their triumphant and hateful Dionysus, uttering only those lines of brooding resignation with which Euripides closed so many of his tragedies.

Such silence in such a situation is significant. Euripides is, as usual, critical or even hostile towards the moral tone of the myth that he celebrates. There is nothing in that to surprise us.

Some critics have even tried to imagine that Pentheus is a "sympathetic" hero; that he is right in his crusade against this bad god, as much as Hippolytus was right. But the case will not bear examination. Euripides might easily have made Pentheus "sympathetic" if he had chosen. And he certainly has not chosen. No. As regards the conflict between Dionysus and Pentheus, Euripides has merely followed a method very usual with him, the method, for instance, of the *Electra*. He has given a careful objective representation of the facts as alleged in the myth: "If the story is true," he says, "then it must have been like this." We have the ordinary hot-tempered and narrow-minded tyrant—not very carefully

studied, by the way, and apparently not very interesting to the poet; we have a well-attested god and suitable miracles; we have a most poignant and unshrinking picture of the possibilities of religious madness. That may be taken as the groundwork of the play. It is quite probable that Euripides had seen some glimpses of Dionysus-worship on the Macedonian mountains which gave a fresh reality in his mind to the legends of ravening and wonder-working Maenads.

But when all this is admitted, there remains a fact of cardinal importance, which was seen by the older critics, and misled them so greatly that modern writers are often tempted to deny its existence. There is in *The Bacchae* real and heartfelt glorification of Dionysus.

The "objectivity" is not kept up. Again and again in the lyrics you feel that the Maenads are no longer merely observed and analysed. The poet has entered into them, and they into him. Again and again the words that fall from the lips of the Chorus or its Leader are not the words of a raving Bacchante, but of a gentle and deeply musing philosopher.

Probably all dramatists who possess strong personal beliefs yield at times to the temptation of using one of their characters as a mouthpiece for their own feelings. And the Greek Chorus, a half-dramatic, half-lyrical creation, both was and was felt to be particularly suitable for such use. Of course a writer does not—or at least should not—use the drama to express his mere "views" on ordinary and commonplace questions, to announce his side in politics or his sect in religion. But it is a method wonderfully contrived for expressing those vaguer faiths and aspirations which a man feels haunting him and calling to him, but which he cannot state in plain language or uphold with a full acceptance of responsibility. You can say the thing that wishes to be said; you "give it its chance"; you relieve your mind of it. And if it proves to be all nonsense, well, it is not you that said it. It is only a character in one of your plays.

The religion of Dionysus as Euripides found it, already mysticized and made spiritual, half-reformed and half-

petrified in sacerdotalism, by the Orphic movement, was exactly that kind of mingled mass which lends itself to dramatic and indirect expression. It was gross as it stood; yet it could be so easily and so wonderfully idealized! Euripides seems to have felt a peculiar and almost enthusiastic interest in a further sublimation of its doctrines, a philosophic or prophet-like interpretation of the spirit that a man might see in it if he would. And meantime he did not bind himself. He let his Bacchanals rave from time to time, as they were bound to rave. He had said his say, and he was not responsible for the whole of Dionysus-worship nor yet of Orphism.

Dionysus, as Euripides takes him from the current conceptions of his day, is the God of spring and youth: and thus of all high emotion, inspiration, intoxication. He is the patron of poetry, especially of dramatic poetry. He has given man Wine, which is his Blood and a religious symbol. He is the clean New Year, uncontaminated by the decay of the past, and as such he purifies from Sin. It is unmeaning, surely, to talk of a "merely ritual" purification as opposed to something real. Ritual, as long as it fully lives, is charged with spiritual meaning, and can often express just those transcendent things which words fail to utter—much as a look or the clasp of a hand can at times express more than a verbal greeting. Dionysus purified as spiritually as the worshipper's mind required. And he gave to the Purified a mystic Joy, surpassing in intensity that of man, the Joy of a god or a free wild animal. The Bacchanals in this play worshipped him by his many names (vv. 725 ff.):—

> "Iacchos, Bromios, Lord,
> God of God born"; and all the mountain felt
> And worshipped with them, and the wild things knelt,
> And ramped and gloried, and the wilderness
> Was filled with moving voices and dim stress.

That is the kind of god he celebrates.

Euripides had lived most of his life in a great town, among highly educated people; amid restless ambitions and fierce rivalries; amid general scepticism, originally caused, no doubt, in most cases, by higher religious aspira-

tions than those of the common man, but ending largely in arid irreligion; in an ultra political community, led of late years by the kind of men of whom Plato said that if you looked into the soul of one of them you could see "its bad little eye glittering with sharpness"; in a community now hardened to the condition described in the long passage quoted above from Thucydides. Euripides had lived all his life in this society; for many years he had led it, at least in matters of art and intellect; for many years he had fought with it. And now he was free from it!

He felt like a hunted animal escaped from its pursuers; like a fawn fled to the forest, says one lyric, in which the personal note is surely audible as a ringing undertone (vv. 862 ff.):—

> Oh, feet of a fawn to the greenwood fled
> Alone in the grass and the loveliness,
> Leap of the Hunted, no more in dread . . .

But there is still a terror in the distance behind him; he must go onward yet, to lonely regions where no voice of either man or hound may reach. "What else is wisdom?" he asks, in a marvellous passage:—

> What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavour
> Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
> To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
> To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
> And shall not loveliness be loved for ever?

He was escaped and happy; he was beyond the reach of Hate. Nay, he was safe, and those who hated him were suffering. A judgment seemed to be upon them, these men who had resolved to have no dealings with "the three deadly enemies of empire, Pity and the Charm of Words and the Generosity of Strength"; who lived, as Thucydides says in another passage (vi. 90), in dreams of wider and wider conquest, the conquest of Sicily, of South Italy, of Carthage and all her empire, of every country that touched the sea. They had forgotten the essence of religion, for-

gotten the eternal laws, and the judgment in wait for those who " worship the Ruthless Will " ; who dream—

> Dreams of the proud man, making great
> And greater ever
> Things that are not of God.—(vv. 885 ff.)

It is against the essential irreligion implied in these dreams that he appeals in the same song :—

> And is thy faith so much to give ?
> Is it so hard a thing to see,
> That the Spirit of God, whate'er it be,
> The Law that abides and falters not, ages long,
> The Eternal and Nature-born—these things be strong ?

In the epode of the same chorus, taking the ritual words of certain old Bacchic hymns and slightly changing them, he expresses his own positive doctrine more clearly :—

> Happy he, On the weary sea,
> Who hath fled the tempest and won the haven ;
> Happy, whoso hath risen, free,
> Above his strivings !

Men strive with many ambitions, seethe with divers hopes, mostly conflicting, mostly of inherent worthlessness ; even if they are achieved, no one is a whit the better.

> But whoe'er can know, As the long days go,
> That *to live is happy*, hath found his Heaven !

Could not the wise men of Athens understand what a child feels, what a wild beast feels, what a poet feels, that to live—to live in the presence of Nature, of Dawn and Sunset, of eternal mysteries and discoveries and wonders —is in itself a joyous thing ?

" Love thou the day and the night," he says in another place. It is only so that Life can be made what it really is, a Joy : by loving not only your neighbour—he is so vivid an element in life that, unless you do love him, he

will spoil all the rest—but the actual details and processes of living. Life becomes like the voyage of Dionysus himself over magic seas, or rather, perhaps, like the more chequered voyage of Shelley's lovers:—

> While Night,
> And Day, and Storm and Calm pursue their flight,
> Our ministers across the boundless sea,
> Treading each other's heels unheededly—

the alternations and pains being only "ministers" to the great composite joy.

It seemed to Euripides, in that favourite metaphor of his, which was always a little more than a metaphor, that a God had been rejected by the world that he came from. Those haggard, striving, suspicious men, full of ambition and the pride of intellect, almost destitute of emotion, unless political hatreds can be called emotion, were hurrying through Life in the presence of august things which they never recognized, of joy and beauty which they never dreamed of. Thus it is that "the world's wise are not wise" (v. 395). The poet may have his special paradise, away from the chosen places of ordinary men, better than the sweetness of Cyprus or Paphos:—

> The high still dell Where the Muses dwell,
> Fairest of all things fair—

it is there that he will find the things truly desired of his heart, and the power to worship in peace his guiding Fire of inspiration. But Dionysus gives his Wine to all men, not to poets alone. Only by "spurning joy" can men harden his heart against them. For the rest—

> The simple nameless herd of Humanity
> Hath deeds and faith that are truth enough for me!

It is a mysticism which includes democracy as it includes the love of your neighbour. They are both necessary details in the inclusive end. It implies that trust in the "simple

man" which is so characteristic of most idealists and most reformers. It implies the doctrine of Equality—a doctrine essentially religious and mystical, continually disproved in every fresh sense in which it can be formulated, and yet remaining one of the living faiths of men.

It is at first sight strange, this belittling of "the Wise" and all their learning. Euripides had been all his life the poet militant of knowledge, the apostle of progress and enlightenment. Yet there is no real contradiction. It is only that the Wise are not wise enough, that the Knowledge which a man has attained is such a poor and narrow thing compared with the Knowledge that he dreamed of. In one difficult and beautiful passage Euripides seems[1] to give us his own apology (vv. 1005 ff.):—

> Knowledge, we are not foes!
> I seek thee diligently;
> But the world with a great wind blows,
> Shining, and not from thee;
> Blowing to beautiful things,
> On amid dark and light,
> Till Life through the trammellings
> Of Laws that are not the Right,
> Breaks, clean and pure, and sings
> Glorying to God in the height!

One feels grateful for that voice from the old Euripides amid the strange new tones of *The Bacchae*.

It is not for us to consider at present how far this doctrine is true, nor even how far it is good or bad. We need only see what the essence of it is. That the end of life is not in the future, not in external objects, not a thing to be won by success or good fortune, nor to be deprived of by the actions of others. Live according to Nature, and Life itself is happiness. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you—here and now. You have but to accept it and live with it—not obscure it by striving and hating and looking in the wrong place.

[1] I say "seems," because the reading is conjectural. I suggest *ἀέντων* (="let them blow") in place of the MS. *ἀεὶ τῶν*. The passage is generally abandoned as hopelessly corrupt.

On one side this is a very practical and lowly doctrine—the doctrine of contentment, the doctrine of making things better by liking and helping them. On the other side, it is an appeal to the almost mystical faith of the poet or artist who dwells in all of us. Probably most people have had the momentary experience—it may come to one on Swiss mountains, on Surrey commons, in crowded streets, on the tops of omnibuses, inside London houses—of being, as it seems, surrounded by an incomprehensible and almost intolerable vastness of beauty and delight and interest—if only one could grasp it or enter into it! That is just the rub, a critic may say. It is no use telling all the world to find happiness by living permanently at the level of these fugitive moments—moments which in high poets and prophets may extend to days. It is simpler and quite as practical to advise them all to have ten thousand a year.

It is not necessary to struggle with that objection. But it is worth while to remark in closing that historically the line here suggested by Euripides was followed by almost all the higher minds of antiquity and early Christianity. Excepting Aristotle, who clung characteristically to the concrete city and the dutiful tax-paying citizen, all the great leaders of Greek thought turned away from the world and took refuge in the Soul. The words used accidentally above—Live according to Nature—formed the very foundation of moral doctrine not only for the Stoics, but for all the schools of philosophy. The Platonists sought for the Good, the Stoics for Virtue, the Epicureans for Pleasure; but the various names are names for the same End; and it is always an End, not future, but existing—not without or afar, but inside each man's self.

The old devotion to Fifth Century Athens, to that Princess of Cities, who had so fearfully fallen and dragged her lovers through such bloodstained dust, lived on with a kind of fascination as a symbol in the minds of these deeply individual philosophers of later Hellenism and early Christianity. But it was no longer a city on earth that they sought, not one to be served by military conquests, nor efficient police, nor taxes and public education. It was

"the one great city in which all are free," or it was the city of Man's Soul. "The poet has said," writes a late Stoic, who had an exceptionally large and difficult city of his own to look after, "The poet has said: O Beloved City of Cecrops: canst thou not say: O Beloved City of God?"

IV

THE STOIC PHILOSOPHY[1]

I FEEL a peculiar pleasure in being asked to give this address in commemoration of Moncure D. Conway. I knew Mr. Conway but slightly. But when I was a boy and struggling with religious difficulties his books were among those which brought me both comfort and liberation. And all those who in our generation are stirred either by their doubts or their convictions to a consciousness of duties not yet stamped by the approval of their community, may well recognize him as one of their guiding beacons. His character is written large in the history of his life. Few men of our time have been put so clearly to the test and so unhesitatingly sacrificed their worldly interests to their consciences. This strain of heroic quality, which lay beneath Mr. Conway's unpretentious kindliness and easy humour, makes, I think, the subject of my address this evening not inappropriate to his memory.

I wish in this lecture to give in rough outline some account of the greatest system of organized thought which the mind of man had built up for itself in the Græco-Roman world before the coming of Christianity with its inspired book and its authoritative revelation. Stoicism may be called either a philosophy or a religion. It was a religion in its exalted passion; it was a philosophy inasmuch as it made no pretence to magical powers or supernatural knowledge. I do not suggest that it is a perfect system, with no errors of fact and no inconsistencies of theory. It is certainly

[1] The Moncure Conway Memorial Lecture, delivered at South Place Institute, March 16, 1915, William Archer in the chair. Published separately by Watts & Co., 2s. 3d. and 2s. 6d.

not that; and I do not know of any system that is. But I believe that it represents a way of looking at the world and the practical problems of life which possesses still a permanent interest for the human race, and a permanent power of inspiration. I shall approach it, therefore, rather as a psychologist than as a philosopher or historian. I shall not attempt to trace the growth or variation of Stoic doctrine under its various professors, nor yet to scrutinize the logical validity of its arguments. I shall merely try as best I can to make intelligible its great central principles and the almost irresistible appeal which they made to so many of the best minds of antiquity.

From this point of view I will begin by a very rough general suggestion—viz., that the religions known to history fall into two broad classes, religions which are suited for times of good government and religions which are suited for times of bad government; religions for prosperity or for adversity, religions which accept the world or which fly from the world, which place their hopes in the betterment of human life on this earth or which look away from it as from a vale of tears. By "the world" in this connection, I mean the ordinary concrete world, the well-known companion of the flesh and the Devil; not the universe. For some of the religions which think most meanly of the world they know have a profound admiration for all, or nearly all, those parts of the universe where they have not been.

Now, to be really successful in the struggle for existence, a religion must suit both sets of circumstances. A religion which fails in adversity, which deserts you just when the world deserts you, would be a very poor affair; on the other hand, it is almost equally fatal for a religion to collapse as soon as it is successful. Stoicism, like Christianity, was primarily a religion for the oppressed, a religion of defence and defiance; but, like Christianity it had the requisite power of adaptation. Consistently or inconsistently, it opened its wings to embrace the needs both of success and of failure. To illustrate what I mean—contrast for a moment the life of an active, practical, philanthropic, modern Bishop with that of an anchorite like St. Simeon

Stylites, living in idleness and filth on the top of a large column; or, again, contrast the Bishop's ideals with those of the author of the Apocalypse, abandoning himself to visions of a gorgeous reversal of the order of this evil world and the bloody revenges of the blessed. All three are devout Christians; but the Bishop is working with the world of men, seeking its welfare and helping its practical needs; the other two are rejecting or cursing it. In somewhat the same way we shall find that our chief extant preachers of Stoicism are, the one a lame and penniless slave to whom worldly success is as nothing, the other an Emperor of Rome, keenly interested in good administration.

The founder of the Stoic school, Zeno, came from Cilicia to Athens about the year 320 B.C., and opened his School about 306. His place of birth is, perhaps, significant. He was a Semite, and came from the East. The Semite was apt in his religion to be fierier and more uncompromising than the Greek. The time of his coming is certainly significant. It was a time when landmarks had collapsed, and human life was left, as it seemed, without a guide. The average man in Greece of the fifth century B.C. had two main guides and sanctions for his conduct of life: the welfare of his City and the laws and traditions of his ancestors. First the City, and next the traditional religion; and in the fourth century both of these had fallen. Let us see how.

Devotion to the City or Community produced a religion of public service. The City represented a high ideal, and it represented supreme power. By 320 B.C. the supreme power had been overthrown. Athens, and all independent Greek cities, had fallen before the overwhelming force of the great military monarchies of Alexander and his generals. The high ideal at the same time was seen to be narrow. The community to which a man should devote himself, if he should devote himself at all, must surely be something larger than one of these walled cities set upon their separate hills. Thus the City, as a guide of life, had proved wanting. Now when the Jews lost their Holy City they had still, or believed that they had still, a guide left. "Zion is taken from us," says the Book of Esdras; "nothing is

left save the Holy One and His Law." But Greece had no such Law. The Greek religious tradition had long since been riddled with criticism. It would not bear thinking out, and the Greeks liked to think things out. The traditional religion fell, not because the people were degenerate. Quite the contrary; it fell, as it has sometimes fallen elsewhere, because the people were progressive. The people had advanced, and the traditional religion had not kept pace with them. And we may add another consideration. If the Gods of tradition had proved themselves capable of protecting their worshippers, doubtless their many moral and intellectual deficiencies might have been overlooked. But they had not. They had proved no match for Alexander and the Macedonian phalanx.

Thus the work that lay before the generation of 320 B.C. was twofold. They had to rebuild a new public spirit, devoted not to the City, but to something greater; and they had to rebuild a religion or philosophy which should be a safe guide in the threatening chaos. We will see how Zeno girded himself to this task.

Two questions lay before him—how to live and what to believe. His real interest was in the first, but it could not be answered without first facing the second. For if we do not in the least know what is true or untrue, real or unreal, we cannot form any reliable rules about conduct or anything else. And, as it happened, the Sceptical school of philosophy, largely helped by Plato, had lately been active in denying the possibility of human knowledge and throwing doubt on the very existence of reality. Their arguments were extraordinarily good, and many of them have not been answered yet; they affect both the credibility of the senses and the supposed laws of reasoning. The Sceptics showed how the senses are notoriously fallible and contradictory, and how the laws of reasoning lead by equally correct processes to opposite conclusions. Many modern philosophers, from Kant to Dr. Schiller and Mr. Bertrand Russell, have followed respectfully in their footsteps. But Zeno had no patience with this sort of thing. He wanted to get to business.

Also he was a born fighter. His dealings with opponents

who argued against him always remind me of a story told of the Duke of Wellington when his word was doubted by a subaltern. The Duke, when he was very old and incredibly distinguished, was telling how once, at mess in the Peninsula, his servant had opened a bottle of port, and inside found a rat. "It must have been a very large bottle," remarked the subaltern. The Duke fixed him with his eye. "It was a damned small bottle." "Oh," said the subaltern, abashed; "then no doubt it was a very small rat." "It was a damned large rat," said the Duke. And there the matter has rested ever since.

Zeno began by asserting the existence of the real world. "What do you mean by real?" asked the Sceptic. "I mean solid and material. I mean that this table is solid matter." "And God," said the Sceptic, "and the soul? Are they solid matter?" "Perfectly solid," says Zeno; "more solid, if anything, than the table." "And virtue or justice or the Rule of Three; also solid matter?" "Of course," said Zeno; "quite solid." This is what may be called "high doctrine," and Zeno's successors eventually explained that their master did not really mean that justice was solid matter, but that it was a sort of "tension," or mutual relation, among material objects. This amendment saves the whole situation. But it is well to remember the uncompromising materialism from which the Stoic system started.

Now we can get a step further. If the world is real, how do we know about it? By the evidence of our senses; for the sense-impression (here Stoics and Epicureans both followed the fifth-century physicists) is simply the imprint of the real thing upon our mind-stuff. As such it must be true. In the few exceptional cases where we say that "our senses deceive us" we speak incorrectly. The sense-impression was all right; it is we who have interpreted it wrongly, or received it in some incomplete way. What we need in each case is a "comprehensive sense-impression" (*καταληπτικὴ φαντασία*). The meaning of this phrase is not quite clear. I think it means a sense-impression which "grasps" its object; but it may be one which "grasps" us, or which we "grasp," so that we cannot doubt it. In

any case, when we get the real imprint of the object upon our senses, then this imprint is of necessity true. When the Sceptics talk about a conjuror making "our senses deceive us," or when they object that a straight stick put half under water looks as if it were bent in the middle, they are talking inexactly. In such cases the impression is perfectly true; it is the interpretation that may go wrong. Similarly, when they argue that reasoning is fallacious because men habitually make mistakes in it, they are confusing the laws of reasoning with the inexact use which people make of them. You might just as well say that twice two is not four, or that 7×7 is not 49, because people often make mistakes in doing arithmetic.

Thus we obtain a world which is in the first place real and in the second knowable. Now we can get to work on our real philosophy, our doctrine of ethics and conduct. And we build it upon a very simple principle, laid down first by Zeno's master, Crates, the founder of the Cynic School: the principle that Nothing but Goodness is Good. That seems plain enough, and harmless enough; and so does its corollary: "Nothing but badness is bad." In the case of any concrete object which you call "good," it seems quite clear that it is only good because of some goodness in it. We, perhaps, should not express the matter in quite this way, but we should scarcely think it worth while to object if Zeno chooses to phrase it so, especially as the statement itself seems little better than a truism.

Now, to an ancient Greek the form of the phrase was quite familiar. He was accustomed to asking "What is the good?" It was to him the central problem of conduct. It meant: "What is the object of life, or the element in things which makes them worth having?" Thus the principle will mean: "Nothing is worth living for except goodness." The only good for man is to be good. And, as we might expect, when Zeno says "good" he means good in an ultimate Day-of-Judgement sense, and will take no half-measures. The principle turns out to be not nearly so harmless as it looked. It begins by making a clean sweep of the ordinary conventions. You remember the eighteenth-century lady's epitaph which ends: "Bland,

passionate, and deeply religious, she was second cousin to the Earl of Leitrim, and of such are the kingdom of heaven." One doubts whether, when the critical moment came, her relationships would really prove as important as her executors hoped; and it is the same with all the conventional goods of the world when brought before the bar of Zeno. Rank, riches, social distinction, health, pleasure, barriers of race or nation—what will those things matter before the tribunal of ultimate truth? Not a jot. Nothing but goodness is good. It is what you are that matters—what you yourself are; and all these things are not you. They are external; they depend not on you alone, but on other people. The thing that really matters depends on you, and on none but you. From this there flows a very important and surprising conclusion. You possess already, if you only knew it, all that is worth desiring. The good is yours if you but will it. You need fear nothing. You are safe, inviolable, utterly free. A wicked man or an accident can cause you pain, break your leg, make you ill; but no earthly power can make you good or bad except yourself, and to be good or bad is the only thing that matters.

At this point common-sense rebels. The plain man says to Zeno: "This is all very well; but we know as a matter of fact that such things as health, pleasure, long life, fame, etc., are good: we all like them. The reverse are bad; we hate and avoid them. All sane, healthy people agree in judging so." Zeno's answer is interesting. In the first place, he says: "Yes; that is what most people say. But the judges who give that judgement are bribed. Pleasure, though not really good, has just that particular power of bribing the judges, and making them on each occasion say or believe that she is good. The Assyrian king Sardanapalus thinks it good to stay in his harem, feasting and merry-making, rather than suffer hardship in governing his kingdom. He swears his pleasure is good; but what will any unbribed third person say? Consider the judgements of history. Do you ever find that history praises a man because he was healthy, or long-lived, or because he enjoyed himself

a great deal? History never thinks of such things; they are valueless and disappear from the world's memory. The thing that lives is a man's goodness, his great deeds, his virtue, or his heroism."

If the questioner was not quite satisfied, Zeno used another argument. He would bid him answer honestly for himself: "Would you yourself really like to be rich and corrupted? To have abundance of pleasure and be a worse man?" And, apparently, when Zeno's eyes were upon you, it was difficult to say you would. Some Stoics took a particular instance. When Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the liberators of Athens, slew the tyrant Hipparchus (which is always taken as a praiseworthy act), the tyrant's friends seized a certain young girl, named Leaina, who was the mistress of Aristogeiton, and tortured her to make her divulge the names of the conspirators. And under the torture the girl bit out her tongue and died without speaking a word. Now, in her previous life we may assume that Leaina had had a good deal of gaiety. Which would you sooner have as your own—the early life of Leaina, which was full of pleasures, or the last hours of Leaina, which were full of agony? And with a Stoic's eyes upon them, as before, people found it hard to say the first. They yielded their arms and confessed that goodness, and not any kind of pleasure, is the good.

But now comes an important question, and the answer to it, I will venture to suggest, just redeems Stoicism from the danger of becoming one of those inhuman cast-iron systems by which mankind may be brow-beaten, but against which it secretly rebels. *What is Goodness?* What is this thing which is the only object worth living for?

Zeno seems to have been a little impatient of the question. We know quite well. There are the four cardinal virtues, Courage, Temperance, Wisdom and Righteousness, and their derivatives. Everybody knows what Goodness is, who is not blinded by passion or desire. Still, the school consented to analyse it. And the profound common sense and reasonableness of average Greek thought expressed the answer in its own characteristic way. Let us see in

practice what we mean by "good." Take a good boot-maker, a good father, a good musician, a good horse, a good chisel; you will find that each one of them has some function to perform, some special work to do; and a good one does the work well. Goodness is performing your function well. But when we say "well" we are still using the idea of goodness. What do we mean by doing it "well"? Here the Greek falls back on a scientific conception which had great influence in the fifth century B.C., and, somewhat transformed and differently named, has regained it in our own days. We call it "Evolution." The Greeks called it *Phusis*, a word which we translate by "Nature," but which seems to mean more exactly "growth," or "the process of growth."[1] It is Phusis which gradually shapes or tries to shape every living thing into a more perfect form. It shapes the seed, by infinite and exact gradations, into the oak; the blind puppy into the good hunting-dog; the savage tribe into the civilized city. If you analyse this process, you find that Phusis is shaping each thing towards the fulfilment of its own function—that is, towards the good. Of course Phusis sometimes fails; some of the blind puppies die; some of the seeds never take root. Again, when the proper development has been reached, it is generally followed by decay; that, too, seems like a failure in the work of Phusis. I will not consider these objections now; they would take us too far afield, and we shall need a word about them later. Let us in the meantime accept this conception of a force very like that which most of us assume when we speak of evolution; especially, perhaps, it is like what Bergson calls *La Vie* or *L'Élan Vital* at the back of *L'Évolution Créatrice*, though to the Greeks it seemed still more personal and vivid; a force which is present in all the live world, and is always making things grow towards the fulfilment of their utmost capacity. We see now what goodness is; it is living or acting according to Phusis, working with Phusis in her eternal effort towards perfection. You will notice, of course, that the

[1] See a paper by Professor J. L. Myres, "The Background of Greek Science," *University of California Chronicle*, xvi. 4.

phrase means a good deal more than we usually mean by living "according to nature." It does not mean "living simply," or "living like the natural man." It means living according to the spirit which makes the world grow and progress.

This Phusis becomes in Stoicism the centre of much speculation and much effort at imaginative understanding. It is at work everywhere. It is like a soul, or a life-force, running through all matter as the "soul" or life of a man runs through all his limbs. It is the soul of the world. Now, it so happened that in Zeno's time the natural sciences had made a great advance, especially Astronomy, Botany, and Natural History. This fact had made people familiar with the notion of natural law. Law was a principle which ran through all the movements of what they called the *Kosmos*, or "ordered world." Thus Phusis, the life of the world, is, from another point of view, the Law of Nature; it is the great chain of causation by which all events occur; for the Phusis which shapes things towards their end acts always by the laws of causation. Phusis is not a sort of arbitrary personal goddess, upsetting the natural order; Phusis is the natural order, and nothing happens without a cause.

A natural law, yet a natural law which is alive, which is itself life. It becomes indistinguishable from a purpose, the purpose of the great world-process. It is like a foreseeing, forethinking power—*Pronoia*; our common word "Providence" is the Latin translation of this *Pronoia*, though of course its meaning has been rubbed down and cheapened in the process of the ages. As a principle of providence or forethought it comes to be regarded as God, the nearest approach to a definite personal God which is admitted by the austere logic of Stoicism. And, since it must be in some sense material, it is made of the finest material there is; it is made of fire, not ordinary fire, but what they called intellectual fire. A fire which is present in a warm, live man, and not in a cold, dead man; a fire which has consciousness and life, and is not subject to decay. This fire, Phusis, God, is in all creation.

We are led to a very definite and complete Pantheism. The Sceptic begins to make his usual objections. "God in worms?" he asks. "God in fleas and dung-beetles?" And, as usual, the objector is made to feel sorry that he spoke. "Why not?" the Stoic answers; "cannot an earthworm serve God? Do you suppose that it is only a general who is a good soldier? Cannot the lowest private or camp attendant fight his best and give his life for his cause? Happy are you if you are serving God, and carrying out the great purpose as truly as such-and-such an earthworm." That is the conception. All the world is working together. It is all one living whole, with one soul through it. And, as a matter of fact, no single part of it can either rejoice or suffer without all the rest being affected. The man who does not see that the good of every living creature is his good, the hurt of every living creature his hurt, is one who wilfully makes himself a kind of outlaw or exile: he is blind, or a fool. So we are led up to the great doctrine of the later Stoics, the *Συμπαθεία τῶν ὅλων*, or Sympathy of the Whole; a grand conception, the truth of which is illustrated in the ethical world by the feelings of good men, and in the world of natural science. . . . We moderns may be excused for feeling a little surprise . . . by the fact that the stars twinkle. It is because they are so sorry for us: as well they may be!

Thus Goodness is acting according to Phusis, in harmony with the will of God. But here comes an obvious objection. If God is all, how can any one do otherwise? God is the omnipresent Law; God is all Nature; no one can help being in harmony with him. The answer is that God is in all except in the doings of bad men. For man is free. . . . How do we know that? Why, by a *katalêptikê phantasia*, a comprehensive sense-impression which it is impossible to resist. Why it should be so we cannot tell. "God might have preferred chained slaves for his fellow-workers; but, as a matter of fact, he preferred free men." Man's soul, being actually a portion of the divine fire, has the same freedom that God himself has. He can act either with God or against him, though, of course, when he acts against him he will ultimately be overwhelmed.

Thus Stoicism grapples with a difficulty which no religion has satisfactorily solved.

You will have observed that by now we have worked out two quite different types of Stoic—one who defies the world and one who works with the world; and, as in Christianity, both types are equally orthodox. We have first the scorner of all earthly things. Nothing but goodness is good; nothing but badness bad. Pain, pleasure, health, sickness, human friendship and affection, are all indifferent. The truly wise man possesses his soul in peace; he has no desires or fears; he communes with God. He always, with all his force, wills the will of God; thus everything that befalls him is a fulfilment of his own will and good. A type closely akin to the early Christian ascetic or the Indian saint.

And in the second place we have the man who, while accepting the doctrine that only goodness is good, lays stress upon the definition of goodness. It is acting according to Phusis, in the spirit of that purpose or forethought which, though sometimes failing, is working always unrestingly for the good of the world, and which needs its fellow-workers. God is helping the whole world; you can only help a limited fraction of the world. But you can try to work in the same spirit. There were certain old Greek myths which told how Heracles and other heroes had passed laborious lives serving and helping humanity, and in the end became gods. The Stoics used such myths as allegories. That was the way to heaven; that was how a man may at the end of his life become "not a dead body, but a star." In the magnificent phrase which Pliny translates from a Greek Stoic, God is that, and nothing but that; man's true God is the helping of man; *Deus est mortali iuvare mortalem.*

No wonder such a religion appealed to kings and statesmen and Roman governors. Most of the successors of Alexander—we may say most of the principal kings in existence in the generations following Zeno—professed themselves Stoics. The most famous of all Stoics, Marcus Aurelius, found his religion not only in meditation and reli-

gious exercises, but in working some sixteen hours a day for the good practical government of the Roman Empire.

Is there any real contradiction or inconsistency between the two types of Stoic virtue? On the surface certainly there seems to be; and the school felt it, and tried in a very interesting way to meet it. The difficulty is this: what is the good of working for the welfare of humanity if such welfare is really worthless? Suppose, by great labour and skill, you succeed in reducing the death-rate of a plague-stricken area; suppose you make a starving country-side prosperous; what is the good of it all if health and riches are in themselves worthless, and not a whit better than disease and poverty?

The answer is clear and uncompromising. A good bootmaker is one who makes good boots; a good shepherd is one who keeps his sheep well; and even though good boots are, in the Day-of-Judgment sense, entirely worthless, and fat sheep no whit better than starved sheep, yet the good bootmaker or good shepherd must do his work well or he will cease to be good. To be good he must perform his function; and in performing that function there are certain things that he must "prefer" to others, even though they are not really "good." He must prefer a healthy sheep or a well-made boot to their opposites. It is thus that Nature, or Phusis, herself works when she shapes the seed into the tree, or the blind puppy into the good hound. The perfection of the tree or hound is in itself indifferent, a thing of no ultimate value. Yet the goodness of Nature lies in working for that perfection.

Life becomes, as the Stoics more than once tell us, like a play which is acted or a game played with counters. Viewed from outside, the counters are valueless; but to those engaged in the game their importance is paramount. What really and ultimately matters is that the game shall be played as it should be played. God, the eternal dramatist, has cast you for some part in his drama, and hands you the rôle. It may turn out that you are cast for a triumphant king; it may be for a slave who dies of torture. What does that matter to the good actor? He can play either part; his only business is to accept the rôle given

him, and to perform it well. Similarly, life is a game of counters. Your business is to play it in the right way. He who set the board may have given you many counters; he may have given you few. He may have arranged that, at a particular point in the game, most of your men shall be swept accidentally off the board. You will lose the game; but why should you mind that? It is your play that matters, not the score that you happen to make. He is not a fool to judge you by your mere success or failure. Success or failure is a thing he can determine without stirring a hand. It hardly interests him. What interests him is the one thing which he cannot determine—the action of your free and conscious will.

This view is so sublime and so stirring that at times it almost deadens one's power of criticism. Let us see how it works in a particular case. Suppose your friend is in sorrow or pain, what are you to do? In the first place, you may sympathize—since sympathy runs all through the universe, and if the stars sympathize surely you yourself may. And of course you must help. That is part of your function. Yet, all the time, while you are helping and sympathizing, are you not bound to remember that your friend's pain or sorrow does not really matter at all? He is quite mistaken in imagining that it does. Similarly, if a village in your district is threatened by a band of robbers, you will rush off with soldiers to save it; you will make every effort, you will give your life if necessary. But suppose, after all, you arrive too late, and find the inhabitants with their throats cut and the village in ruins—why should you mind? You know it does not matter a straw whether the villagers' throats are cut or not cut; all that matters is how they behaved in the hour of death. Mr. Bevan, whose studies of the *Stoics and Sceptics* form a rare compound of delicate learning and historical imagination, says that the attitude of the Stoic in a case like this is like that of a messenger boy sent to deliver a parcel to someone, with instructions to try various addresses in order to find him. The good messenger boy will go duly to all the addresses, but if the addressee is not to be found

at any of them, what does that matter to the messenger boy? He has done his duty, and the parcel itself has no interest for him. He may return and say he is sorry that the man cannot be found; but his sorrow is not heartfelt. It is only a polite pretence.

The comparison is a little hard on the Stoics. No doubt they are embarrassed at this point between the claims of high logic and of human feeling. But they meet the embarrassment bravely. "You will suffer in your friend's suffering," says Epictetus. "Of course you will suffer. I do not say that you must not even groan aloud. *Yet in the centre of your being do not groan!* *Ἔσωθεν μέντοι μὴ στενάξῃς.*" It is very like the Christian doctrine of resignation. Man cannot but suffer for his fellow-man; yet a Christian is told to accept the will of God and believe that ultimately, in some way which he does not see, the Judge of the World has done right.

Finally, what is to be the end after this life of Stoic virtue? Many religions, after basing their whole theory of conduct on stern duty and self-sacrifice and contempt for pleasure, lapse into confessing the unreality of their professions by promising the faithful as a reward that they shall be uncommonly happy in the next world. It was not that they really disdained pleasure; it was only that they speculated for a higher rate of interest at a later date. Notably, Islam is open to that criticism, and so is a great deal of popular Christianity. Stoicism is not. It maintains its ideal unchanged.

You remember that we touched, in passing, the problem of decay. Nature shapes things towards their perfection, but she also lets them fall away after reaching a certain altitude. She fails constantly, though she reaches higher and higher success. In the end, said the Stoic—and he said it not very confidently, as a suggestion rather than a dogma—in the very end, perfection should be reached, and then there will be no falling back. All the world will have been wrought up to the level of the divine soul. That soul is Fire; and into that Fire we shall all be drawn, our separate existence and the dross of our earthly nature

burnt utterly away. Then there will be no more decay or growth; no pleasure, no disturbance. It may be a moment of agony, but what does agony matter? It will be ecstasy and triumph, the soul reaching its fiery union with God.

The doctrine, fine as it is, seems always to have been regarded as partly fanciful, and not accepted as an integral part of the Stoic creed. Indeed, many Stoics considered that if this Absorption in Fire should occur, it could not be final. For the essence of Goodness is to do something, to labour, to achieve some end; and if Goodness is to exist the world process must begin again. God, so to speak, cannot be good unless he is striving and helping. Phusis must be moving upward, or else it is not Phusis.

Thus Stoicism, whatever its weaknesses, fulfilled the two main demands that man makes upon his religion: it gave him armour when the world was predominantly evil, and it encouraged him forward when the world was predominantly good. It afforded guidance both for the saint and the public servant. And in developing this two-fold character I think it was not influenced by mere inconstancy. It was trying to meet the actual truth of the situation. For in most systems it seems to be recognized that in the Good Life there is both an element of outward striving and an element of inward peace. There are things which we must try to attain, yet it is not really the attainment that matters; it is the seeking. And, consequently, in some sense, the real victory is with him who fought best, not with the man who happened to win. For beyond all the accidents of war, beyond the noise of armies and groans of the dying, there is the presence of some eternal Friend. It is our relation to Him that matters.

"A Friend behind phenomena," I owe the phrase to Mr. Bevan. It is the assumption which all religions make, and sooner or later all philosophies. The main criticism which I should be inclined to pass on Stoicism would lie here. Starting out with every intention of facing the problem of the world by hard thought and observation, resolutely excluding all appeal to tradition and mere

mythology, it ends by making this tremendous assumption, that there is a beneficent purpose in the world and that the force which moves nature is akin to ourselves. If we once grant that postulate, the details of the system fall easily into place. There may be some overstatement about the worthlessness of pleasure and worldly goods; though, after all, if there is a single great purpose in the universe, and that purpose good, I think we must admit that, in comparison with it, the happiness of any individual at this moment dwindles into utter insignificance. The good, and not any pleasure or happiness, is what matters. If there is no such purpose, well, then the problem must all be stated afresh from the beginning.

A second criticism, which is passed by modern psychologists on the Stoic system, is more searching but not so dangerous. The language of Stoicism, as of all ancient philosophy, was based on a rather crude psychology. It was over-intellectualized. It paid too much attention to fully conscious and rational processes, and too little attention to the enormously larger part of human conduct which is below the level of consciousness. It saw life too much as a series of separate mental acts, and not sufficiently as a continuous, ever-changing stream. Yet a very little correction of statement is all that it needs. Stoicism does not really make reason into a motive force. It explains that an "impulse," or ὁρμή, of physical or biological origin rises in the mind prompting to some action, and then Reason gives or withholds its assent (συγκατάθεσις). There is nothing seriously wrong here.

Other criticisms, based on the unreality of the ideal Wise Man, who acts without desire and makes no errors, seem to me of smaller importance. They depend chiefly on certain idioms or habits of language, which, though not really exact, convey a fairly correct meaning to those accustomed to them.

But the assumption of the Eternal Purpose stands in a different category. However much refined away, it remains a vast assumption. We may discard what Professor William James used to call "Monarchical Deism" or our own claim to personal immortality. We may base

ourselves on Evolution, whether of the Darwinian or the Bergsonian sort. But we do seem to find, not only in all religions, but in practically all philosophies, some belief that man is not quite alone in the universe, but is met in his endeavours towards the good by some external help or sympathy. We find it everywhere in the unsophisticated man. We find it in the unguarded self-revelations of the most severe and conscientious Atheists. Now, the Stoics, like many other schools of thought, drew an argument from this consensus of all mankind. It was not an absolute proof of the existence of the Gods or Providence, but it was a strong indication. The existence of a common instinctive belief in the mind of man gives at least a presumption that there must be a good cause for that belief.

This is a reasonable position. There must be some such cause. But it does not follow that the only valid cause is the truth of the content of the belief. I cannot help suspecting that this is precisely one of those points on which Stoicism, in company with almost all philosophy up to the present time, has gone astray through not sufficiently realizing its dependence on the human mind as a natural biological product. For it is very important in this matter to realize that the so-called belief is not really an intellectual judgment so much as a craving of the whole nature.

It is only of very late years that psychologists have begun to realize the enormous dominion of those forces in man of which he is normally unconscious. We cannot escape as easily as these brave men dreamed from the grip of the blind powers beneath the threshold. Indeed, as I see philosophy after philosophy falling into this unproven belief in the Friend behind phenomena, as I find that I myself cannot, except for a moment and by an effort, refrain from making the same assumption, it seems to me that perhaps here too we are under the spell of a very old ineradicable instinct. We are gregarious animals; our ancestors have been such for countless ages. We cannot help looking out on the world as gregarious animals do; we see it in terms of humanity and of fellowship. Students of animals under domestication have shown us how the

habits of a gregarious creature, taken away from his kind, are shaped in a thousand details by reference to the lost pack which is no longer there—the pack which a dog tries to smell his way back to all the time he is out walking, the pack he calls to for help when danger threatens. It is a strange and touching thing, this eternal hunger of the gregarious animal for the herd of friends who are not there. And it may be, it may very possibly be, that, in the matter of this Friend behind phenomena, our own yearning and our own almost ineradicable instinctive conviction, since they are certainly not founded on either reason or observation, are in origin the groping of a lonely-souled gregarious animal to find its herd or its herd-leader in the great spaces between the stars.

Still, it is a belief very difficult to get rid of.

NOTE.

Without attempting a bibliography of Stoicism, I may mention the following books as likely to be useful to a student: (1) Original Stoic Literature. Epictetus, *Discourses*, etc.; translated by P. E. Matheson, Oxford, 1915. Marcus Aurelius, *To Himself*; translated by J. Jackson, Oxford, 1906. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, collected by Von Arnim, 1903–1905. (2) Modern Literature. *Roman Stoicism* (Cambridge, 1911), by E. V. Arnold; a very thorough and useful piece of work. *Stoics and Sceptics*, by Edwyn Bevan (Oxford, 1913); slighter, but illuminating. The doctrine of the things which are "preferred" (*προηγμένα*), though not "good," was, I think, first correctly explained by H. Gomperz, *Lebensauffassung der Griechischen Philosophie*, 1904. Professor Arnold's book contains a large bibliography.

V

POESIS AND MIMESIS[1]

A DISTINGUISHED woman of letters, long resident abroad, came lately to a friend of mine in London and explained her wish to learn how "the young" in England were now thinking. She herself had always been advanced in thought, if not revolutionary, and was steeled against possible shocks. My friend dauntlessly collected a bevy of young and representative lions, and the parties met. Unfortunately I know only the barest outline of what took place. The elderly revolutionary fixed on the most attractive and audacious-looking of the group and asked him what author had now most influence with the rising generation of intellectuals. He said without hesitation, "Aristotle"; and the chief reason he gave for Aristotle's supreme value was that, in his greatest philosophical and æsthetic effects, he never relied on the element of wonder. I believe the evening was not on the whole a success.

However, the story sent me back to the first chapter of the *Poetics* as a subject for this lecture, which your kindness has called upon me to deliver in memory of the honoured and beloved name of Henry Sidgwick. I always felt, if I may say so, the presence of something akin to Aristotle in Professor Sidgwick's mind, the same variety of interest yet the same undistracted and unwavering pursuit of what was true, and I think also the same high disdain, where truth was the object sought, of arousing the stimulant of wonder.

Aristotle, as we all know, lays it down at the very opening of his work that: "Epic poetry and tragedy, comedy

[1] The Henry Sidgwick Lecture for 1920, delivered at Cambridge, 1920.

also and dithyrambic poetry, and the music of the flute and the lyre in most of their forms, are all in their general conception modes of imitation." The statement, I venture to think, appears to most English readers almost meaningless; and so far as it has any meaning, I believe most of them will think it untrue. And both impressions will be deepened when a page or two later the philosopher explains that "tragedy is an imitation of good men" and comedy "of bad men."

Let us try the experiment which is so frequently helpful in dealing with the classics when they puzzle us: let us be literal and exact, and entirely disregard elegance. And let us remember to begin with that *poein* means "to make" and *poêsis* "making." The passage then becomes:

"Epos-making and the making of tragedy, also comedy and dithyramb-making and most fluting and harping, in their general conception, are as a matter of fact (not makings but) imitations."

The thought seems to me to become much clearer. A poet, or maker, who makes a Sack of Troy or a Marriage of Peleus does not make a real Sack or a real Marriage, he makes an imitation Sack or Marriage, just as a painter when he "paints Pericles" does not make a real Pericles but an imitation or picture of Pericles. It perhaps troubles us for a moment when Aristotle says the painter "imitates Pericles" or the poet "imitates the Sack of Troy" instead of saying that he "makes imitations." But that is a mere matter of idiom: a maker of toy soldiers would be said in Greek "to imitate soldiers with tin." The point is that the artist being a "maker" does make something, but that something is always an imitation.

Let me illustrate this point of view by two or three examples. You may say that the poet, or maker, does make one perfectly definite and real thing; he makes his poem, or, to put it more concretely, his verses. Quite true. In Greek you can say equally that Homer "makes hexameters" or "makes the wrath of Achilles." But it is significant that Aristotle objects to what he calls the current habit

of classing poets according to the verses they make. To call them "hexameter-makers" or "iambic-makers" is a shallow and unimportant statement; they must, according to him, be classed as "makers" by the kind of thing they imitate, or the kind of imitation they make.

Again, why does Aristotle repeatedly and emphatically say that the most imitative of all Arts is Music, and (*Pol.* 1340a 18) that the *homoiomata* or likenesses produced by music are most exactly like the originals, for example the imitations of anger or mercy or courage? It seems very odd to us to say that a tune is more like anger than a good portrait of Pericles is like Pericles. But if we think of the musician as a "maker" making imitation "anger" or imitation "love," surely that imitation anger or love which he makes in a sensitive listener is most extraordinarily like the real emotion—more closely like than any imitation produced by another art? Again, following this clue we can see why Aristotle, though living in a great architectural age, never classes architecture among the imitative arts which with him are equivalent to the "fine arts." The architect makes real houses or real temples; he does not make imitations.

I hope we see also a more important point: that it is a mere error, an error born from operating with imperfectly understood texts, when critics blame Aristotle for not appreciating the "creative power" of art. So far from ignoring it, he starts with it. He begins by calling it *poesis*, "making" or "creation," and then goes on to observe that it is not quite like ordinary creation. Nor is it. It is a making of imitations.

Let us follow him a little further. What objects does his poet imitate or make imitations of? "Characters, emotions, and *praxeis*"—how shall we translate the last word? Most scholars translate "actions," as if from πράττω, "to act." But I cannot help thinking that Professor Margoliouth is right in taking it from the intransitive πράττω, "to fare," though in that case we have no exact noun to translate it by. Poetry shows the "farings" of people, how they fare well or ill. It is not confined to showing "actions."

Poetry differs from history in that history makes imitations of what did happen, and poetry of what might happen. Which difference makes poetry deeper and more philosophic than history. And lastly there is a great difference between tragedy, epic and high poetry on the one hand, and comedy, satire and low poetry on the other, that "makers" in the high style make better people than ourselves, and makers in the low style make worse people. This causes a difficulty to some readers. They do not admit that Milton's Satan, Shakespeare's Macbeth, Aeschylus's Clytemnestra are "better" than the average man. For my own part I feel no difficulty in regarding them all as my betters. If I met them I should certainly feel small and respectful. But it seems as if in our language the word for "good" had become more sharply moralized than its Greek equivalents, and perhaps one ought to say instead of "better," "higher" or "greater."

Poetry, then, creates a sort of imitation world, a world of characters, passions and "ways of faring," which may be indefinitely "better" than those we know, as well as worse; its details need not be imitations of any particular things that ever existed, but are so far limited by the existing world that they ought to present "things that might exist" or, as Aristotle explains it in another passage, "things that look as if they might exist." (We might add, if it were necessary, that for psychological reasons the subjects of poetry must be in some sense taken from the real world, because there is no other place from which to take them.) And the value to us of this imitation world according to Aristotle is simply that we contemplate it with delight; though almost every other Greek writer lays more stress on a further claim, that this contemplation makes us better men.

If I have made clear this Aristotelian conception of poetry I should like to compare it with the famous claim made by Matthew Arnold in his Essay on the Study of Poetry, published in 1880 as a general introduction to Ward's English Poets. He there argues that the chief function of poetry is the criticism of life.

"Our religion," he says, "parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being: what are they but the shadows and dreams and false show of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize the 'breath and finer spirit of knowledge offered to us by poetry.' . . . 'More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.'" And a little further on, "The consolation and the stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life."

Poetry as the creation of an imitation world and poetry as the criticism of life: how are the two conceptions related to one another? Are they contradictory or compatible? They are quite compatible, I think. They differ only in their points of emphasis or their angle of vision. For to make an imitation of "characters, passions and ways of faring" necessarily implies a criticism upon life, inasmuch as the imitator must select the things that strike him as most interesting and characteristic and must say something about them. The chief difference between Aristotle and Matthew Arnold is a difference about the true purpose of poetry, and curiously enough in this controversy almost all our Greek authorities are on the side of Matthew Arnold and almost all our modern critics loudly agree with Aristotle. Aristotle says the aim of poetry is to give delight; Arnold says it is to help us to live better. I will not dwell on this difference. It too is only a difference of emphasis, for Arnold expressly admits the element of mere delight as one of the aims of poetry, and Aristotle's own Hymn to Virtue might have been written to illustrate Arnold's doctrine. It is a lyric of considerable beauty and charm, but the whole weight of its effort is in the direction that Arnold requires. It seeks to draw from the world of poetry help for mankind in the heavy task of living. If I had to suggest in a few words the reason why Arnold demands so much from poetry and

Aristotle so little, I would point out that the modern writer expressly begins by saying that our religion and philosophy have failed us, and therefore we must go to Poetry for the things which they have promised but not provided, while Aristotle was remarkably well furnished both with Ethics and with Metaphysics. If Aristotle ever felt " weary of himself and sick of asking," he never thought of going to Homer and Hesiod for his answer. He went to them for poetry and for story-telling. Arnold's generation, being poorly off for religious belief and almost beggared in philosophy, tended to put on to poetry all the work that ought to be done by those defaulting Muses; while on the other hand Aristotle, being almost destitute of prose fiction, where we roll and roll in inexhaustible and stifling abundance, makes poetry take the place of the novel. The result is that Aristotle treats poetry as the natural vehicle for story-telling, while we are always demanding of it doctrines about psychology and the art of life. And consequently we are establishing a new conventional canon of what is poetical and what not. It is very significant, for instance, that when Aristotle wants to give an instance of a work in metre which is so essentially prosaic in character that it cannot be called poetry, he chooses the philosophic poem of Empedocles; whereas almost every English reader who comes across Empedocles feels his breath catch at the sheer beauty of the poetry. On the other hand there were probably many narrative poems which entirely pleased Aristotle but would instantly strike a modern critic as the sort of thing that would be better in prose. Every generation has its blind spots.

Let us notice how the elements of criticism and mimesis vary in degree in different poems. And first of all let us consider whether a perfectly direct practical criticism of life can be poetry. Some people deny it, but I think they are clearly wrong. It has certainly been felt as poetry in past ages. The Psalms are full of it. So are the Greek anthologies; and the passages quoted from poets in antiquity are *gnômæ*, or direct criticisms of life, more often than anything else. If you take the Essay to which I have referred you will find that Matthew Arnold takes a

number of lines from Homer, Milton, Dante and Shakespeare as typical of the very highest poetry and capable of acting as touchstones of criticism. Nearly all of them are direct criticisms of life, and suggestions for living. But let us clinch the matter. Take one of the greatest and best known of modern sonnets:

The World is too much with us; late and soon,
  Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
  Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
  The winds that will be howling at all hours
  And are upgathered now, like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune.
It moves us not. Great God, I'd rather be
  A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
  Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Catch sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
  Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn!

Perfectly direct criticism and advice, yet undoubtedly poetry.—I wonder if doubt will be felt about another passage of criticism, in a style now out of fashion:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan:
The proper study of mankind is man;
Placed on this isthmus of the middle state,
A being darkly wise and rudely great,
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between, in doubt to move or rest,
In doubt to deem himself a God or beast,
In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his nature such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of thought and feeling all confused,
Still by himself abused—and disabused,
Created half to rise and half to fall,
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all:
Sole judge of truth, through endless error hurled,
The glory, jest, and riddle, of the world!

Unless we are to interpret the word "poetry" in some esoteric sense of our own, I do not see how we can doubt that this too is poetry. If people now are bored by it, or see nothing in it, I do not think I should draw the moral that this is not poetry; I should prefer to conclude, with all deference, that the Lord had made the heart of this people fat and made their ears heavy, and shut their eyes lest they turn again and be healed. However, if people do reject it from the range of poetry, it will not be because it is criticism. It is criticism just as much as the Wordsworth sonnet and no more. But the burden of its criticism is different. Wordsworth criticizes life for not being more permeated by the spiritual imagination; Pope criticizes man as being such a frail thing, contradictory and uncertain. Wordsworth's remedy is to live with more imagination and reverie; Pope's remedy is prudence and moderation, Sophrosyne and *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*, that rule which seemed to the ancients to lie near the heart of poetry and to most people now appears only suitable to prose.

Next, in this poetry of direct criticism, is there any imaginative creation? Do these two poems, in Aristotle's phrase, "imitate" anything at all? I think they do. Pope's man is a real picture. We can ask, "Is that like the men we know?" And Wordsworth's world, and his life that would be so different if the world did not interrupt it, are imitations in the Greek sense. Still these two poems seem to give a maximum of criticism and a minimum of mimesis.

Direct criticism is one pole and mere mimesis the opposite pole; poetry ranges from one to the other, while some of the greatest poetry combines both. Some of the greatest creators are also the most vehement critics. Among the moderns Shelley in his larger efforts lives habitually in a world of vision and can scarcely breathe at peace except in its atmosphere; yet he is always bringing it into competition with the real world; insisting that it is in fact what this actual world ought to be and is trying to be, and is, perhaps, even now on the verge of becoming. Among the ancients Aeschylus and Euripides are both magical creators and earnest critics. I can hardly imagine a more

profound criticism of life than the Oresteia or one more poignant than the Trojan Women. Yet both move in the realms of inspired lyrical mimesis. The Homeric poets make a world extraordinarily consistent and alive; people may differ about the amount of deliberate criticism of this world which it contains, but for my own part I agree with the common Greek opinion that it is a great deal. About Milton I am less clear. The power of creative mimesis is tremendous; and we know from the rest of Milton's work that he was a copious and somewhat opinionated critic. But my own feeling is that, in the main, his imagined world is almost nothing to him but a place of beauty, a sanctuary and an escape. Virgil is a great and profound critic. His consummate poetical power is curiously little dependent on any gift of mere mimesis. If we seek examples of almost unmixed mimesis we shall look to those poets who have created great imitation worlds with a coherence and a character of their own. I think we must also say, with a wide range of territory and a large population. William Morris and Spenser and Chaucer among modern English writers are the names that occur at once; creators of large worlds of phantasy with very little element of criticism, except that which is implicit in every act of selection.

But the type and prophet of this uncritical mimesis, I would almost call him the martyr of this faith; a man who seems hardly to have lived at all except in the world of his imagination; who tells us that even as a boy he could scarcely speak without falling into verse; who sprang straight to a perfection of form which remained the unchallenged model of all similar poetry for centuries after; who poured forth his imaginative creations, his "copies of life," with such copiousness that the poets of the middle age and the renaissance went to him as to an inexhaustible quarry from which to build their houses and streets and cities; a man of unexampled popularity in his own day and of almost unexampled influence afterwards; Ovid is one towards whom the present generation has resolutely turned its blind spot. If he were archaic, or uncouth, or earnest, or nobly striving after ideals he cannot reach;

if he were even difficult or eccentric, so as to make some claim upon us; we should doubtless be attracted to him and read him with our imaginations alert. But he does his work too well, he asks no indulgence; he is neat and swift and witty and does not need our help; consequently we have no use for him. I suspect we are wrong. "My work is done," he writes at the end of the *Metamorphoses*:

> My work is done: which not the All Father's ire
> Shall sweep to nothingness, not steel, nor fire,
> Nor eating Time.—Come when thou wilt, O Hour,
> Which save upon my body hast no power,
> And bring to its end this frail uncertainty
> That men call life. A better part of me
> Above the stars eternal shall, like flame,
> Live, and no death prevail against my name.

He was a poet utterly in love with poetry: not perhaps with the soul of poetry—to be in love with souls is a feeble and somewhat morbid condition—but with the real face and voice and body and clothes and accessories of poetry. He loved the actual technique of the verse, but of that later. He loved most the whole world of mimesis which he made. We hear that he was apprenticed to the law, but wrote verses instead of speeches. He married wives and they ran away or died and he married others. He had a daughter and adored her, and taught her verses. He was always in love and never with anyone in particular. He strikes one as having been rather innocent and almost entirely useless in this dull world which he had not made and for which he was not responsible, while he moved triumphant and effective through his own inexhaustible realm of legend. He came somehow under the displeasure of the government, and by a peculiar piece of cruelty was sent with all his helpless sweetness and sensuousness and none of the gifts of a colonist, to live in exile in that dreadful region

> Where slow Maeotis crawls, and scarcely flows
> The frozen Tanais through a waste of snows.

Where, like an anodyne for a gnawing pain, he tried to forget himself in verses and yet more verses, until he died.

What a world it is that he has created in the *Metamorphoses*! It draws its denizens from all the boundless resources of Greek mythology, a world of live forests and mountains and rivers, in which every plant and flower has a story, and nearly always a love story; where the moon is indeed not a moon but an orbèd maiden, and the Sunrise weeps because she is still young and her belovèd is old; and the stars are human souls; and the Sun sees human virgins in the depths of forests and almost swoons at their beauty and pursues them; and other virgins, who feel in the same way about him, commit great sins from jealousy and then fling themselves on the ground in grief and fix their eyes on him, weeping and weeping till they waste away and turn into flowers; and all the youths and maidens are indescribably beautiful and adventurous and passionate, though not well brought up, and, I fear, somewhat lacking in the first elements of self-control; and they all fall in love with each other, or, failing that, with fountains or stars or trees; and are always met by enormous obstacles, and are liable to commit crimes and cause tragedies, but always forgive each other, or else die. A world of wonderful children where nobody is really cross or wicked except the grown-ups; Juno, for instance, and people's parents, and of course a certain number of Furies and Witches. I think among all the poets who take rank merely as story-tellers and creators of mimic worlds, Ovid still stands supreme. His criticism of life is very slight; it is the criticism passed by a child, playing alone and peopling the summer evening with delightful shapes, upon the stupid nurse who drags it off to bed. And that too is a criticism that deserves attention.

We have spoken of one side of Poetry; the side particularly meant by Aristotle when he says that poets are only makers "by imitation"; makers, that is, of imitation persons and imitation worlds, which may or may not involve criticism upon our existing life. He dissented, we remember, from the view of those who thought that a poet was principally a maker because he made verses. But after all there is obviously something in their view, and in a later part of the *Poetics* Aristotle pays a good deal of attention to

them. There is something which a poet really makes as much as a weaver makes his cloth. He makes the actual texture of his verses. He makes his own poems.

Here again we find our vision full of blind spots. Some people would say our ears deaf to particular qualities of sound. Of course we can all see that poetical style develops and decays in various countries. In England the eighteenth-century poets learnt to write much smoother heroic couplets than Shakespeare or Ben Jonson could write, while they lost much of the art of writing blank verse; Dryden in the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* achieved effects which were thought remarkable at the time but would have argued mere incompetence in any writer later than 1820. We have seen many changes of technique in our own day. That is all obvious. But the point that I wish now to illustrate is the extraordinary diversity of style and of aim which results naturally from the use of different languages. Words are the bricks or stones with which you build. And Latin words, Greek words, French words, English words, have to be used in very different ways, and each language has its own special effects. The English can do trisyllabic and even quadrisyllabic metres, it seems to me, incomparably better than other modern nations. A poem like Swinburne's *Dolores* is probably impossible in any European language but its own; still more so the extraordinary beauty and exactitude of "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept." I think the cause of this great advantage is twofold; first, we have a very marked and clear system of stress accents, and secondly, our culture has been largely in the hands of people who knew and even wrote Latin and Greek verse. French has no system of stress accents except the slightly iambic rhythm which pervades every sentence, whatever the words may be. Consequently French is almost incapable of any purely metrical beauty. German has a stress accent like ours, but, if my ear is to be trusted, it has scarcely attempted the finest lyrical effects of English verse. On the other hand we cannot approach the effects produced in French verse by their wonderful diphthongs and nasals

and long syllables. Our wretched indeterminate vowel, our tendency to pronounce clearly only one syllable in every polysyllabic word or word-group, cuts us off from such effects as

> Comme c'est triste voir s'enfuir les hirondelles:

or

> Puisque j'ai vu tomber dans l'onde de ma vie
> Une feuille de rose arrachée à tes jours.

A language which talks of "Jezebel" as "Jezzuble" cannot produce the same effects as one which says "Jé-za-bel" with each syllable distinct: Et venger Athalie Achab et Jézabel.

But the point which I wish specially to illustrate is, I think, another of our blind spots: the special style produced in Latin poetry—it is less marked in Greek—by the necessities of the language and the metre. I assume that to-day nearly all intelligent young men and women despise Latin poetry and think of its characteristics as somewhat odious and markedly unpoetical. And I would begin by recalling that all through the middle ages and the renaissance, down to the later part of the eighteenth century, Latin poetry was the central type and model of all poetry. When you spoke of poetry you meant first and foremost the Latin poets. It gives us a shock when Marlow (whom we respect) in the most tragic moment of Dr. Faustus makes his hero quote Ovid (whom we despise), and we hardly notice the passionate beauty of the line—slightly altered—which he quotes :—

> O lente lente currite, noctis equi!

But Marlow was doing the natural thing. Ovid was to him what he was to his predecessors and contemporaries and followers. It is we who are odd.

Let me, if I can, try to describe the beauty which our ancestors found in the conventional Latin style. It is a beauty entirely dependent on the inflectional character of the language; we speakers of an uninflected language

are shut off from it. We express the relations of our words to one another not by inflections but by their order in the sentence. Consequently we are tied up to one everlasting cast-iron order of words, and all those innumerable delicate beauties which Latin and Greek find in the order of their words in the sentence are debarred to us. The difference is heightened by the respective treatment of metre in ancient and modern tongues. Their metres were very marked. They were a delight in themselves and had rules which a poet never broke. Our metres are mostly inconspicuous: as a rule they are only types to which we approximate with as much or as little exactitude as we find convenient. Our poetry is apt to slip out like a stream of wet mud or concrete; theirs was built and fitted, chip by chip, block by block, of hard marble.

Take an average Ovidian couplet: the first two lines of one of the *Heroides*, imaginary letters written by legendary damsels to absent lovers. This is Phyllis, a princess of the wild Thracian mountains, writing to Demophoon of Athens.

Hospita, Demophoôn, tua te Rhodopêia Phyllis,
Ultra promissum tempus abesse queror.

"I, Phyllis of Rhodopê, O Demophoon, your late hostess, complain that you are absent beyond the time promised." That I flatter myself is a blameless translation. Not a single iota of poetry or of character either is left in it.

Now let us try to see what we have left out, and to conceive the effect of the order of the words in Latin. "Hospita" first: it is the feminine of "stranger," "strange woman." Demophoon opens the letter and the first word is "The strange woman." What strange woman will it be? The next word is merely the vocative "O Demophoon"; then "tua te," "thine to thee" or strictly "thine thee," the "thee" being object to the verb. Why cannot we say, "thine to thee?" Are not the words sudden and poignant? Then follows the name, Rhodopeia Phyllis; Phyllis, "She of the Phylla or waving leaves," Rhodopeia, from the mountains of Rhodope; all the magic of old Greek romance

and much of the music comes with those two words. The mountains and the forest leaves and she who is his own: How does the sentence go on? Ultra promissum—long syllable after long syllable, quite naturally and not with any strain, adding to the words "beyond the promised time" a slow ache and a sense of long waiting. Then simply "abesse queror," "you are absent, and I complain."

> Hospita, Demophoôn, tua te Rhodopêia Phyllis,
> Ultra promissum tempus abesse queror.

That is *Poesis*. That is the way to build your line if you work in an inflected language.

It seems then as if this theory, not explicitly Aristotle's but implicit in his language and based upon it, will practically work as a description of the function of Poetry, and of the other arts which Aristotle groups with poetry. It is Poêsis, a Making, but in one large respect the Poêsis is Mimêsis, so that poetry is *Poesis* plus *Mimesis*, a making or manufacture based upon an imitation. And it can be judged in two ways: either by the skill shown in the making, the beauty of texture, the quality and shape of the stones chosen and the way in which they are laid together in the architecture; or else by the sort of things which the poet has selected out of the infinite and all-coloured world in order to make his imitation. Of course the two proceed quickly to run together in practice. The subject of any poem is very hard to separate from its style; for every change of a word or phrase, which is a change in style, alters in some degree the whole mimesis, which is the subject; and suggestions that you can express a noble thought in ignoble language or *vice versa* are open to the same difficulties as the idea that you can express a clear thought in muddled language or a confused thought in lucid language. I do not wish to raise these speculative questions. But I do venture to suggest that the conception of Art as mimesis, though rejected by almost all recent critics, has a justification and may even show a real profundity of insight. Mimesis is, I suspect, not only an essential element in all art, but also our greatest weapon both for explaining and for understanding the world.

For these purposes the choice lies between mimesis and definition; on the one hand the instinctive comprehensive method of art, the attempt to understand a thing by making it, to learn a thing by doing it, and on the other the more exact but much narrower method of intellectual analysis, definition and proposition. Each has its proper sphere. Mimesis is not much use in mathematics or scientific discovery, except in the form of diagrams. But if a mere "grammaticus" may learn by looking on at the august battles of philosophers, I observe that some of these are now saying that the greatest advance made during the last century has been the discovery that there are degrees in truth. Others of course maintain that any given proposition is either true or false and that there are no degrees possible. It is not a bit "more true" to say that $7 \times 7 = 48$ than to say that it equals a million. Now I speak under correction, but it seems probable that the belief in degrees of truth implies a belief in mimesis rather than definition or assertion as the best method for expressing, and doubtless also for reaching, truth. The mimesis is never exact; it is always more or less adequate, more or less complete. It is essentially a thing of degrees. And its advantage over the intellectual method of definition or proposition is merely that it is much more fruitful and solid and adequate and easily transmitted; its disadvantage that it is more elusive, deceptive and incapable of verification. But I think it is true of all art and of all human conduct, though not true of purely scientific facts, that the best way to understand them is in some sense or other to go and do likewise.

My friend and colleague Dr. Geoffrey Smith, killed on the Somme, held a view about human progress which I wish he had lived to express with the exactitude and great knowledge which belonged to him. It was, as I understood him, that in the biological or physiological sense Man had not made any advance worth speaking of since the earliest times known to us; but that our ancestors, from their arboreal days onward, stood out from all other animals by their extraordinary power of mimesis. When they met with a sort of conduct which they liked, they had the

power of imitating it, and of course also the power of selecting for imitation the particular elements in it that appealed to them most. Sometimes they imitated badly and chose the wrong things; sometimes they seem, like our poor relations in the Zoological Gardens to-day, to have imitated without any coherent plan or choice at all. But on the whole there has been a coherence in the main stream of human mimesis; we have imitated the things we admired, and our admirations have developed further on more or less similar lines. We have formed ideals, and our ideals have guided us. It is this power of idealism, this curious power of seeing what we like or admire and then trying to imitate it; seeing things that were beautiful and trying to make others like them; seeing things that roused interest or curiosity and trying by the mimetic imagination to get inside them and understand them; that has been the great guiding force in the upward movement of humanity. The direction we take depends on the things we choose to imitate; and the choice depends on the sort of persons we really are: and what we are, again, depends on what we choose to imitate. By mimesis we make both ourselves and the world. The whole art of behaviour, or conduct itself, is a poesis which is also a mimesis. For every act we perform is a new thing made, a new creation, which has never been seen on earth before; and yet each one is an imitation of some model and an effort after some aim. And thus we proceed, so far as our life is voluntary and not mechanical, towards an end which can never be attained and is always changing as we change, but which is in its essence the thing which at each successive moment we most want to be. We cannot define it more. "Infinite beauty in art, infinite understanding in knowledge, infinite righteousness in conduct" . . . such words all ring false because they are premature or obsolete attempts to define, and even to direct, wants that are often still subconscious, still unformed, still secret, and which are bearing us in directions and towards ends of aspiration which will doubtless be susceptible of analysis and classification when we and they are things of the past, but which for the present are all to a large extent experiment, explora-

tion, and even mystery. But we can be sure with Plato that the two things that determine the way of life for each one of us are, as he puts it, " The road of our longing and the quality of our soul " (*Laws* X., p. 904c). That is our Mimesis and our Poesis, our choice of subject and our execution.

VI

LITERATURE AS REVELATION[1]

THE first time I met Dr. Spence Watson and heard him speak was at a great meeting in the St. James's Hall, London, held to congratulate the Irish leader, Parnell, on the collapse of the criminal charges made against him by *The Times* newspaper. Some of you will remember the occasion. The charges were based on certain letters which *The Times* published in facsimile and scattered broadcast over England. These were shown to be forgeries which *The Times* had bought at a very high price; the forger himself, a man called Pigott, was discovered and convicted; he confessed and fled and blew his brains out. The whole situation was intensely dramatic —as well as extremely instructive. The meeting, addressed by Parnell himself and by two famous Newcastle men, Dr. Spence Watson and Mr. John Morley, was one of the most thrilling I have ever attended. And I remember still how Dr. Spence Watson's short speech ended in a ringing call of "God save Ireland."

There are some people to whom politics seem a kind of magnificent game, a game of much skill and of not much scruple. There are some again who regard political life as a kind of arena in which different parties and different classes and different trading corporations struggle and intrigue for their respective interests. But to those two men I have mentioned politics formed neither a pleasant game nor an exciting intrigue, far less an indirect way of pursuing your own interest. To them politics came as

[1] The Robert Spence Watson Lecture, delivered to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, October 1, 1917.

a revelation and a duty. They saw, or believed they saw, one or two fundamental truths on which the whole life and *moral* of the nation depended; and, those truths once seen, it became an unquestioned duty, through fair weather or foul, through good report or evil report, to pursue them and to live for them. I always felt with Dr. Spence Watson that his political principles had much of the quality of a religion. They threw light all round them upon the non-political parts of life; and, though he was a vigorous fighter, I believe that, like most good religions, his strong principles rather increased than lessened his general human charity.

It was the thought of Dr. Spence Watson's attitude towards politics that suggested to me the subject of this lecture. For, though the parallel is not exact in detail, there are among lovers of literature, as among lovers of politics, some who like it for all sorts of other reasons, and some who demand of it nothing less than a kind of revelation. Most people of culture, I believe, belong to the first class. They like literature because they like to be amused, or because the technique of expression interests them and rouses their strongest faculties, or because a book stands to them for society and conversation, or because they just happen to like the smell and feel of a book and the gentle exercise of cutting pages with a paper-knife. Or they like to study the varieties of human nature as shown in books, and to amass the curious information that is to be found there. Those are the really cultured people. You will find that they like Lamb's *Essays* and *Lavengro*, and Burton's *Anatomy*, and Evelyn's *Diary*, and the *Religio Medici*, and the *Literary Supplement*. And the other class—to which I certainly belonged all through my youth and perhaps on the whole still belong—does not really much like the process of reading, but reads because it wants to get somewhere, to discover something, to find a light which will somehow illumine for them either some question of the moment or the great riddles of existence. I believe this is the spirit in which most people in their youth read books; and, considering their disappointments, it is remarkable, and perhaps not altogether discreditable,

how often they cling to this hope far on into the region of grey hairs or worse than grey hairs.

Now, in putting before you the case for these over-sanguine or over-youthful people, I believe, as I have said, that I shall have the persons of culture and the connoisseurs against me; but the artists and writers themselves will be really on my side. Almost all the writers—and they are pretty numerous—whom I have known intimately are, I believe, subject to a secret sadness when they are praised for being amusing or entertaining or readable or the like. What really delights them, especially the novelists and writers of light comedy, is to be treated as teachers and profound thinkers. Nobody is quite content to think that the serious business of his own life makes merely the fringe and pastime of other people's. There is a well-known story of an essay written on the poet Keats by a stern young Nonconformist at a certain university, in which he said that after all the important question to ask was whether Keats had ever saved a soul. He answered it, I regret to say, in the negative, and condemned Keats accordingly. Now this essayist is generally ridiculed by persons of culture for having set up for the poor poet a perfectly absurd and irrelevant test. "Keats," says the man of culture, "was no more trying to save souls than to improve railway locomotives. He was simply trying to write beautiful poetry, which is an entirely different thing."

Now I do not believe that the man of culture is right. I suspect that the young Nonconformist was perfectly correct in the test he applied; that a really great poet ought to save souls and does save souls; and, furthermore, that he will not be at all grateful to you if you tell him that souls are not his business, and he can leave them to the parson. I think, if the essayist went wrong—and if he concluded that Keats was a bad poet I take it as certain that he did go wrong—it was partly that he took the saving of a soul in too narrow and theological a sense, and partly that he had not really sunk himself deep enough into Keats's thought to know whether he could save a soul or not. That is, in the first place I would have asked him

to consider whether it is not in some sense " saving a soul " to enable a living man to rise up above himself and his personal desires, and to see beauty and wonder in places where hitherto he had seen nothing; in the second place, I would have asked him whether, before condemning Keats, he had really considered and really understood what Keats meant when, for example, in the climax of one of his greatest poems, he sums up the message to mankind of the Grecian Urn:

> " Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

I do not say that that message is true. I do not myself fully understand what Keats meant by it. But I am sure that to him, and to many people who learnt it from him, that thought has come as a revelation.

Let me speak of another case in my own experience. I remember when I was a boy of fifteen in Paris, sitting down on a bench in the garden of the Tuileries with a copy of Rousseau's book on the *Contrat Social*, which I had just bought for twopence-halfpenny. I knew it was a celebrated book, and sat down in a sober mood to read it, partly from a sense of duty. And the first sentence of the first chapter ran: " Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains."

" Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains." I remember the thrill with which I read and re-read those words. As a matter of fact, I quite misunderstood their place in Rousseau's argument. But so did other people, and I can realize now the thrill with which, when they were first published, they ran through Europe, awakening, unforgettable, stirring the seeds of fire that blazed out in the Great Revolution.

Take a third instance, the passage in Milton's great pamphlet pleading for the freedom of the Press, where Milton seems gradually, with increasing intensity, to realize what a book really at its best is, something greater than a living man: how to kill a man is, of course, a sin. It is to slay God's image; but to kill a good book is to kill the very essence of a man's thought, " to slay God's image,

as it were, in the eye." For the particular man is but human and will in any case die before long; "but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, treasured up for a life beyond life." When you take in your hand some of the great immortal books of the past, how that sentence comes back to your mind and illumines them! My thoughts turn naturally to some of those Greek tragedies on which I especially work; the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, say, or the *Trojan Women* of Euripides. What is it, that one should read it and re-read it now, two thousand odd years after it was written? What is it, that it should still have the power to stir one's whole being? That is the answer: it is simply what Milton has said, nothing more and nothing less, "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, treasured up for a life beyond life."

I have taken three instances of the kind of writing that has an element of what I venture to call "revelation," but before going further I will stop to answer some criticisms about them. In the first place, the person of culture, to whom we were a little disagreeable at the beginning of this lecture, will interpose. "You appear," he will say, "to be basing your admiration of Keats on the truth of one exceedingly obscure and questionable proposition about Beauty being the same as Truth. Personally, I do not care a straw whether it is true or not; I only care whether it is suitable in its place in the poem; but even supposing it is true, it is only one tiny fragment of Keats's work. What about all the rest of his work, which, to his credit be it said, contains hardly any of these dogmatic sentences which you choose to describe as revelation? Is Keats's greatness to rest on the very few apophthegms about life which his work contains—they are far more numerous and probably more true in Martin Tupper or Ella Wheeler Wilcox—or is it to rest frankly on the sheer beauty of the mass of his work? You know quite well it must rest on the latter."

How are we to answer this? Well, in the first place we must explain that I only chose those isolated sentences for convenience' sake. It was easier to explain what I meant by revelation if I could find it expressed in a single

sentence. But as a rule the writers who have most of the element of revelation about them do not crystallize their revelation into formulae. It is something that radiates from all their work, as in practical life there is generally far more inspiration radiating from the example of a man's whole activity than from the moral precepts that he happens to utter. Shelley is simply bursting with this power of revelation. To a man who has once read himself into Shelley, the world never looks the same again. The same is true of Goethe, the same is emphatically true of certain Greek poets, like Aeschylus and Euripides. But it would be hard to select any particular sentences from their works as summing up the essence of their doctrine. Even Tolstoy, who has this power of revelation to an extraordinary degree, and who was always trying, trying consciously and intensely, to put into clear words the message that was burning inside him, even Tolstoy never really gets it expressed. He lays down, in his religious books, lots and lots of rules, some of them sensible, some of them less so, some of them hopelessly dogmatic and inhuman, many of them thrilling and magnificent, but never, never getting near to the full expression of the main truth he had discovered about the world and was trying to teach. The message of Keats, whatever it is, lies in all Keats, though by accident a great part of it may be summed up in a particular sentence. The message of Plato is in all Plato, the message of Tolstoy in all Tolstoy. There is a beautiful passage in Renan's *Life of Jesus* where he points out that when Jesus Himself was asked what His doctrine was, what exact new dogmatic truth He had to declare, He could give no direct answer. He certainly could not produce a series of doctrinal texts; He could only say "Follow me." The message a man has to give radiates from him; it is never summed up in a sentence or two.

So, if we go back to Keats and the person of culture, we will say to him not in the least that the greatness of Keats depends on the truth or importance of one or two statements he made; but that it does depend very greatly on a certain intense power of vision and feeling which runs through the whole of his work and which happens to express

itself almost in the form of a religious dogma in one or two places—say in the opening passage of *Endymion* and the last stanza of the *Ode to a Grecian Urn.*

Now let me notice another curious thing about these revelations in literature. They are never statements of fact. They are never accurately measured. I am not sure that you might not safely go further and say they are never really discoveries; they are nearly all of them as old as the hills, or at least as old as the Greek philosophers and the Book of Job. Their value is not in conveying a new piece of information; their value lies in their power of suddenly directing your attention, and the whole focus of your will and imagination, towards a particular part of life. "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains." That is only true to a limited extent; and so far as it is true it is not in the least new. Everybody knew it, as a bare fact. But Rousseau expressed it more vividly, perhaps felt it more keenly, believed it to be more important, than other people had. What is more, he meant to draw conclusions from it; and I think what thrills one especially in reading or thinking of the words is the thought of those conclusions that are to be drawn. They are not defined; they are left vague; that makes them all the more tremendous.

Think of life as a vast picture gallery, or museum; or better, perhaps, as a vast engineering workshop. It is all those things, among others. Then think of oneself walking through it. You know how the average man walks through a museum or a workshop when he knows nothing particular about it. You try hard to be intelligent; failing in that, you try to conceal your lack of intelligence. You would like to be interested, but you do not know what is interesting and what is not. Some of the specimens strike you as pretty; some of the engines seem to you very powerful; you are dazzled and amused by the blaze of the fires, you are secretly interested in the men and wish you could talk to them. But in the main you come out at the other end tired and rather dispirited and having got remarkably little out of it. That is the way a stupid and uneducated man, with no one to help him, goes through life.

Next, suppose you go through the same museum, or the same workshop, with a thoroughly competent guide. In the museum he knows what all the specimens are, which are rare and which ordinary, and why they are interesting; he makes you look at things; makes you understand things; makes you see a hundred details, every one of them significant, that you would never have noticed by yourself. In the workshop, he shows how the various machines work, tells how they were invented and what difference their invention made; he takes you to see a particularly skilled workman and makes you realize where his skill comes in; he makes you feel the cleverness and the beauty of the machinery. That is like going through life with the help and guidance of a proper average educator, what one calls a person of culture.

Now thirdly, suppose on the day of your visit the ordinary guide is not available. Instead you are taken by a man who is not a regular guide to the institution but is working, so they tell you, at certain parts of it. And you find very likely as you go with him that there are large parts that he does not know or at least has nothing to say about, but when you get to his particular subject he tells you not only what the other guide told, but also various things which the other guide thought not worth mentioning, but which, as now explained to you, seem searching and deep and new; and you gradually realize that you are talking to a man who has made, or is on the point of making, a great discovery. In the museum he takes specimens that seemed to have nothing to do with each other and shows that when you put them together there comes a sudden flood of suggestion, a stream of questions never yet asked, but when once asked sure to find an answer. And you go away not so much filled with knowledge, but all alive with interest and the sense of movement; feeling that your feet have been set on a road into the future. You have seen some one thing or set of things with an intensity that has revealed what was before unsuspected and made, as it were, an illumination in one part of life. That, I think, is like going through under the guidance of the sort of literature that gives inspiration.

The great difference, intellectually speaking, between one man and another is simply the number of things they can see in a given cubic yard of world. Do you remember Huxley's famous lecture on *A Piece of Chalk*, delivered to the working men of Norwich in 1868, and how the piece of chalk told him secrets of the infinite past, secrets of the unfathomed depths of the sea? The same thing happens with a book. I remember once picking up a copy of *Macbeth* belonging to the great Shakespearian scholar, Andrew Bradley, and reading casually his pencilled notes in the margin. The scene was one which I knew by heart and thought I understood; but his notes showed me that I had missed about half a dozen points on every page. It seems to me that the writers who have the power of revelation are just those who, in some particular part of life, have seen or felt considerably more than the average run of intelligent human beings. It is this specific power of seeing or feeling more things to the cubic yard in some part of the world that makes a writer's work really inspiring.

To have felt and seen more than other people in some particular region of life: does that give us any sort of guarantee that the judgments which a man passes are likely to be true? Not in the least. Suppose a man has seen and experienced some particular corner of, say, the Battle of the Somme and can give you a thrilling and terrific account of it, that is no particular reason for expecting that his views about the war as a whole will be true. It is on the whole likely that he will see things in a wrong proportion. The point in his favour is only that he does really know *something*, and, whatever his general views are, he can help you to know something. I will confess my own private belief, which I do not wish anyone to share, that of all the books and all the famous sayings that have come as a revelation to human beings, not one is strictly true or has any chance of being true. Nor, if you press me, do I really think it is their business to be strictly true. They are not meant to be statements of fact. They are cries of distress, calls of encouragement, signals flashing in the darkness; they seem to be statements in the indicative mood, but they are really in the imperative

or the optative—the moods of command or prayer or longing; they often make their effect not by what they say but by the tone in which they say it, or even by the things they leave unsaid.

Do you remember Garibaldi's speech to his men when his defence of Rome had proved fruitless, and the question was whether to make terms with the Austrians or to follow him? "Let those who wish to continue the War against the stranger come with me. I offer neither pay nor quarters nor provisions. I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death."[1] The force of that appeal was in what he did not say. He obviously offered them something else too; something so glorious that as a matter of fact most of them followed him; but he did not mention it.

Sometimes the word of revelation is a metaphor; the speaker knows he cannot attain exact truth, he can only, as it were, signal in the direction of it. There is a wonderful story in a little-read Saxon historian, who wrote in Latin, the Venerable Bede, about the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity. The King was debating whether or no to accept the new religion, and consulted his counsellors. And one old Pagan warrior said: "Do you remember how last midwinter King Edwin held festival in the great hall, with brands burning and two huge fires on the hearths, while outside there was storm and utter darkness? And the windows by the roof being open, a bird flew suddenly from the darkness outside into the warm and lighted place and out on the other side into the outer darkness. Like that bird is the life of man."[2]

Or what again shall we say of the following? A message sent many years ago by the famous Russian revolutionary, Katherine Breshkovsky—the grandmother of the Revolution as she is called; a message smuggled out of prison and sent to her friends and followers bidding them not to despair or to think that nothing was being accomplished. "Day and night we labour; instead of meat, drink and sleep we have dreams of Freedom. It is youth calling to youth through prison walls and across the world." It

[1] *Garibaldi's Defence of Rome*, G. M. Trevelyan, p. 231.
[2] *Bede's Chronicle*, Bk. 2, cap. 14.

seems like a series of statements, statements which it is hard to describe as either true or not true. Yet I doubt if it is really a statement; it is more like a call in the night.

Or take the saying of one of the ancient rabbis after the fall of Jerusalem, when the heathen had conquered the holy places and to a pious Jew the very roots of life seemed to be cut: "Zion is taken from us; nothing is left save the Holy One and His Law." Nothing is left save the Holy One and His Law. Does it not seem at the same time to say two things: that nothing is left, and that everything is left that really matters? All is lost, and nothing that matters is lost. The message has just that quality of self-contradiction which shows that it is not saying all it means, that it is pointing to something beyond itself, calling the hearer's attention not to a fact but to a mystery.

Or take one of the greatest and simplest of all these burning words, the word of a Greek philosopher of a late and decadent period, who has nevertheless made a great stir in the world: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am but a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Who can analyse that into a statement of fact?

By now, I think, we have reached a point where we can formulate a further conclusion about these words of inspiration or revelation. They never are concerned with direct scientific fact or even with that part of experience which is capable of being expressed in exact statement. They are concerned not with that part of our voyage which is already down in the Admiralty charts. They are concerned with the part that is uncharted; the part that is beyond the mist, whither no one has travelled, or at least whence no one has brought back a clear account. They are all in the nature of the guess that goes before scientific knowledge; the impassioned counsel of one who feels strongly but cannot, in the nature of things, prove his case. This fact explains three things about them: their emotional value, their importance, and their weakness. Their weakness is that they are never exactly true, because

they are never based on exact knowledge. Their importance is that they are dealing with the part of the journey that is just ahead of us, the hidden ground beyond the next ridge which matters to us now more than all the rest of the road. Their emotional value is intense just because they are speaking of the thing we most long to know, and in which the edge of the emotion is not dulled by exact calculations. A good Moslem believes in Mohammed far more passionately than any one believes in the multiplication table. That is just because in the case of the multiplication table he *knows* and is done with it; in the case of Mohammed he does not *know*, and makes up for his lack of knowledge by passionate feeling.

The same consideration explains why young people in each generation are so specially fond of the writers who have this quality of revelation about them. Young people, if they are normally ambitious and full of vitality, as one expects them to be, are always on the look out for a revelation. For purely physical or biological reasons, they are hopeful; they expect that the time coming, which will be their own time, is sure to be much better than the present, in which they hardly count, or the past, in which they did not count at all. (It is amusing to note in passing that, when there is a difference of opinion between young and old, each tends to reject the other for the same reason—because he seems to represent the superseded past. The young man listens impatiently to the old, thinking: Yes, of course; that is what they thought when people wore whiskers, in the time of Queen Victoria. And the old man listens impatiently to the young, thinking: Yes, of course; that is just the sort of nonsense I used to talk when my whiskers were just sprouting, in the reign of Queen Victoria.) I am inclined to think in general that the typical attitude of a young man—a fairly modest and reasonable young man—towards his elders is to feel that they evidently know a great deal and have read a surprising quantity of books, but how strangely they have contrived to miss the one thing that matters! And the one thing that matters, where will he find it? Clearly in some teacher whom his elders have not heard, or have

not listened to. It may be a personal acquaintance whose conversation inspires him. It may be a new writer with a message, or an older writer whom his elders might have read but did not. It may even be some quite ancient writer, in whom a new message has been discovered. There are two requirements only for the prophet—or rather for entrance to the competition for rank as a prophet. You must have been neglected by the last generation, and you must have the prophetic style. You must have some strong conviction, however vague and however disproportionate, about those parts of life which are imperfectly charted and immediately interesting, and you must represent something unknown or at least untaught by our uncles and our schoolmasters.

I do not think that there has been any general failure in Europe, or indeed in America, to appreciate what I have called the literature of revelation. Quite the contrary. The last century has been particularly fruitful in that sort of writing, both the genuine sort and the various popular imitations. The demand has been enormous and has naturally created a supply. The demand has been uncritical and the supply consequently indiscriminate.

If you ask the cause why this demand and supply have been so great of late years, as compared for example with the eighteenth century, when there was probably more actual originality of thought, I would suggest two main causes. First, the spread of education and the rise of democracy. The reading public, formerly very restricted, has been constantly reinforced by new social classes with new demands and new expectations. Secondly, the change in our treatment of the young, the much greater stress laid on encouragement and the general avoidance of repression in education. We have trained—or at least permitted—the young to be far more self-confident and adventurous, and naturally they have gone forth in quest of new ideas and new prophets. One should also notice that, apart from any change in quality, the mere size of the present reading public has had an effect on literature. In old days a book in order to succeed had to please a majority of its readers. Now it need not. It is calculated

that if an English writer of the present day was hated and despised or utterly ignored by 90 per cent. of his possible readers in the English-speaking world, tolerated but not read or bought by another 5 per cent., rather liked but still not bought by 2½ per cent., and bought by only the remaining 2½, his circulation would be something hitherto unparalleled and he would be one of the richest and most brutally successful men in the country. It is exactly like a picture in a too large gallery competing with several thousand other pictures; it must shriek or it will not be seen. Such a situation obviously encourages such qualities as over-statement, paradox, violence, and the search for novelty at any price. Novelty is not revelation; not in the least. But sometimes people confound them.

I remember my predecessor at Oxford, Professor Bywater, telling me how, when he and his friends were students, they had two great prophets, "John" and "Thomas." On every important question the thing was first to find out what John said and what Thomas said. (John's surname, as you may have guessed, was Ruskin, and Thomas's, Carlyle.) My own generation at College thought little of John and detested Thomas. But the demand for prophets has continued and increased.

The general movement of thought and society in Europe has been, of course, towards democracy and emancipation. And the most successful prophets have naturally been on the revolutionary side.

First came the great revolutionaries of 1848, Victor Hugo and Mazzini, and their disciples, such as Swinburne and Browning. Then came the less political revolutionaries, aiming at the dethronement not of kings, but of more internal and spiritual potentates. Ibsen and the dethronement of all convention; Dostoievsky and the dethronement of human reason; Strindberg and the dethronement of love; Tolstoy and the dethronement of all the glories of the world, all pleasure, all desire, save the search for truth and the love of Christ; Nietzsche and the dethronement of good and evil, and of all that was not mere vitality and force. I will not speak of my own English contemporaries; and among the European writers

I mention only the best, or at least the most conspicuous; but behind these, in every country of the world, are scores of less influential prophets, journalists, accidental celebrities, deliberate boomsters and stray impostors; cliques with new theories of poetry, new theories of painting, new theories of morals, education, diet, cookery, clothing; theories how to live without hats, or without boots, or without washing, or without self-denial or without work.

I suppose we have at the present day an extraordinary harvest of false prophets. I doubt if the Court of Ahab in its flower could compete with us. There was a certain degree of truth in a queer reactionary book written by one Max Nordau in the early nineties, and dedicated to the German Emperor. It was called *Degeneration*; and it argued that, if ever a new book or new theory had a startling success, it meant that the author probably suffered from some very slight but widespread form of mental disease. He was slightly mad in a particular way; and all the people throughout the world who were mad in the same way were perfectly delighted with him. If he had real luck his fellow-sufferers might amount to millions.

There is a fragment of truth in that theory, no doubt. And no doubt at any moment most of our hot gospellers and speakers of revelation will, if severely tested, prove to be false. It is certainly true that, as the generations pass, the fashionable teachers are all or almost all rejected, one after another.

> They are thrust
> Like foolish prophets forth; their words to scorn
> Are scattered and their mouths are stopped with dust.

And others take their place to form new sects of followers and to share sooner or later in the same fall.

Ought that to discourage us? Why no; because we have all the time left out of account most of the silent factors in the situation. We have forgotten especially the enormous and almost incredible number of decent honest men and women who are on the whole working well and making for progress; we have forgotten the considerable number of fine workers or writers, men with

intellectual or moral greatness in them, who do not advertise. When I am disposed, as I suppose all of us sometimes are, to despair of modern civilization and to think that the world has gone mad, I always counteract the impression in one way. I turn from contemplating vast masses of life, which one cannot fully survey and cannot possibly divide into elements and add up into totals, and take some one particular branch of human activity. Ask the various specialists and they will generally tell you that, though the world as a whole is very likely going to the dogs, the particular part they know about has improved. Ask the engineer; he will tell you of the enormous advance made in engineering; the schoolmaster, he may complain that education does not advance faster, but he has no doubt that it is advancing; the doctor, he thinks the world is in a very poor state because it does not attend sufficiently to medical men, but medicine itself is improving hand over hand; the sociologist or social reformer, he will denounce the present state of things as heartily as any one could wish, but he will generally admit that in detail everything that has been worked at has been made rather better.

And after all, if most of our pilots in these strange waters sooner or later turn out mistaken and have to be left behind or even thrown overboard, why should any reasonable person be surprised at that? It is all in the bargain. It is all in the ordinary bargain that man perforce makes with life. There is no finality. There is no full and exact statement, even about those parts of experience which are already reduced to order and marked down on the charts. And meantime Man is moving always, every hour, forth into the uncharted; into the region, not of knowledge and certainty, but of experiment, and guesswork, and daring and wisdom. I believe with all my heart in human progress. But progress is not an advance along a straight path; it is the groping of people with darkness ahead of them and light behind; the questing this way and that of men climbing an unknown precipice; the search for good paths through an unexplored bog, where the best way of advance is no doubt generally discovered by guides who have studied the ways and

habits of bogs but may sometimes be hit upon by a child. And the popular prophets, the speakers of burning words, are generally those who at least believe that they have seen some path, and cry to us some advice that seems to them the one thing most needed at the moment.

At the moment their words seem to be of extreme importance; and when the moment has passed, as a rule, their advice has passed too. Only there still remain—and this is perhaps the greatest difference, next to differences in sincerity, between the various breeds of prophet—there still remain some whose words seem to apply not only to the moment for which they spoke them but to the permanent or constantly recurrent needs of humanity. These are the men for whom we scholars seek in the literature of diverse and widely removed ages. They are the people who have felt most profoundly and expressed most poignantly those facts about life which are always important and always easily overlooked, those visions and aspirations in which the human race is always afresh finding its calm in the midst of storm, its "deliverance from the body of this death"; and their words stay with us as something more than literature, more than mere art of writing or pleasant help for the passing of leisure hours: "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, treasured up for a life beyond life."

VII

THE SOUL AS IT IS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT[1]

I

IN Tolstoy's novel, *The Cossacks*, there is a scene where a man swimming is shot dead and drifts to the shore, while his slayer swims over the flooded river to get him and crouches down exhausted at his side. There the two lie, looking almost the same. But one is full of a turmoil of desires and aspirations, mingled feelings of pride and misery; and the other is dead. And the only sign of difference is a light steam rising from the body of the living man.

So small a sign, and yet all the difference that can be!

A distinguished anthropologist, Dr. Elliot Smith, has suggested to us the kind of speculation that would go on in the mind of a primitive man if he found a dead body preserved, as it might be, for instance, in the dry Egyptian sand—the phenomenon that led up to the practice of embalmment. What is wrong with that body in the sand? What is it that it lacks? First of all, it does not breathe. There is no breath in it; that strikes our Egyptian; so he gives it breath as best he can, burning incense under its nostrils, so that the breath may enter in, warm like the breath of the living, and fragrant to correct the smell of the corpse. Again, it is all dry, there is no blood in it: and our Egyptian knows that the blood is the life, because he has seen wounded men die as their blood ebbed away. So he pours libations of blood into the grave, that the dead may get their life again. Some of us will remember the weird

[1] Reprinted from the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1918.

passage in the Eleventh Book of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus sees the ghosts of the departed, like puffs of wind made visible, as it were; ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον, "a breath and an image," and no more; with no life nor power of thought till they have drunk the blood that he has poured out for them.

If you start thus from the dead body, it seems as if the life or soul lay in some breath or spirit that has departed. Most of our words for the soul show that origin. The word "soul" itself is of doubtful derivation; but "ghost" means "breath," "spirit" means breath. In Latin *spiritus* and *animus* and *anima* are simply breath or wind; in Greek ψυχὴ is wind, and πνεῦμα breath, and θυμὸς smoke or vapour. All the words are metaphors; naturally and inevitably so. For whenever mankind notices a new fact and wants to find a name for it, he must needs search about for something like it among the facts he already knows and has names for. The new fact does not come with a name ready written upon it.

The word "life," oddly enough, means "body." I think that comes from another line of thought, in which mankind, when trying to express the thing we call soul or life, started not from the dead body but from a dream-image or phantom. A dream-image, a shape seen in hallucination, a reflection in water or a looking-glass: what is wrong with them, and how are they lacking in the life of the living? Why, they are like those ghosts in Homer. There is "a breath and an image," but no heart or blood or solidity. They are not real. If they could drink of blood and grow solid, if they could get themselves a body, that would be life.

Another mode of thought which started from the dream-image conceived that that image itself was the soul or life; that it moved out of the body in sleep, and sometimes in waking time; moved out and drifted far away at its will and pleasure, with always the possible danger of losing its way and not being able to return to the body. That mode of thought explains the curious pictures in ancient times of the soul as a little human being, sometimes with wings and sometimes without, who lives inside the ordinary body and

keeps it alive. There is a common phrase in Homer describing death: "the life left the bones." The word for life there is *thumos*, the word that means smoke or vapour; but the old vase-paintings which depict that kind of death show not a smoke but a beautiful little winged human figure springing out from the body as it falls, and rising heavenward.

II

What does all this amount to? What conclusion can we draw from these stumbling efforts of instinctive man to describe or name or depict this thing within us, which no man has ever seen or heard or touched, and yet which makes the greatest of all differences, the difference between the living and the dead?

I think we can conclude just thus much, that there is something really there, and that man's powers of thought and language, trained as they are on the experience of the material world, have been unable to define or comprehend it. Our modern phraseology is practically all derived from the Greeks, and the Greeks went on using metaphors to the end. If the indescribable thing was not a breath or a wind, then it was a spark of fire; but not ordinary fire, which destroys and perishes; rather the celestial fire of which the stars are made, the stars which neither consume nor are consumed. Or is it a fragment, as it were, of God Himself prisoned in our earthly material, imperfect because fragmentary, yet in some way akin to the Most High? No need to trouble with further attempts at such description; the main result that remains from these broken speculations, on which the world has been living ever since, is the profound conviction of Greek philosophy that man, in some unexplained way, consists of two parts, of which one is living and one dead. "What art thou?" said the Emperor Marcus Aurelius to himself. "*A little soul carrying a corpse.*"

Plato, the earliest author who discusses and supports with argument the great doctrine that the soul is immortal—that the soul is life, and therefore cannot die—is fond of metaphors about the soul. He is unconsciously founding

a new science, that "science of the soul" which we call psychology. His first division of the soul is a very fruitful and interesting one. How is it that the soul shows itself in action? In other words, how is it that a man shows he is really alive? There are three ways, says Plato, desire and anger and reason; or—since it is hard to get words simple and large enough to express the Greek, by Lusting, Fighting and Thinking. There are things it craves for, and things it hates and rejects; but above the craving and rejecting there is a power of judging, of distinguishing between good and evil and shaping its own course. This power, which he calls reason and we moderns mostly call "will," is the very soul itself. The lusting and fighting, though they may serve the soul, and are forms of life, are mere functions of the live body. A man's soul, he says in another fine passage, is like a charioteer upon a chariot with two horses. One of the horses is sluggish, lazy, tending always downward; the other fierce, but of generous nature and full of courage; and the man who drives them has to master the two of them, keep them abreast, and above all choose for himself the path he means them to take. The charioteer is the real soul.

"*A little soul carrying a corpse*": what is there wrong about that description, or rather, what would be wrong with it if it were ever meant to be literally and exactly true? It is that it separates the body and soul too sharply. That is the mistake in all these primitive conceptions with which we have been dealing, and consequently in a great deal of our own current language, which of course is descended, as all language is, from the philosophy of earlier times. If you have a lump of hot iron, the thought of primitive man will probably regard it as made up of two separate things, heat and a lump of iron. Just as we have certain pictures by savages—and I believe also by children—in which an angry man is shown by drawing first a man, and second his anger, seated inside him or sticking out of his head. Just as in primitive poetry a man constantly holds conversations with his own heart or his own thought, as if it were a separate thing. It was another Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who cleared that matter up.

You meet angry men, not first anger and then men; you meet live persons, not first a life or soul and then a body which it is carrying about. But with that passing caution against possible misunderstanding we shall find it simpler to use the ordinary language, and speak as if the body and the breath or soul inside it were entirely different things.

"A little soul carrying a corpse": the modern writer who has made that old Stoic phrase most clear to the average reader is, I think, M. Bergson. To him man consists of a body which is so much matter, governed by the law of gravitation and all the other laws of dead matter, governed also by the laws of biology or animate matter; and a soul or will—Plato's charioteer—which is free and moves of itself. How the will can be free, of course, is one of those problems which no one can satisfactorily explain. It seems impossible to understand how it can be free; yet almost more impossible to imagine that it is not free. It is an old problem, perhaps an eternal one. But M. Bergson's special contribution to it, if I understand him aright, is this.

The body is of course subject to mechanical and biological law. Throw it up in the air, it will fall down again. Hit it hard enough, it will break. Starve it, and it will suffer and die. And the exact strain necessary in each case can, within limits, be calculated. Furthermore, for much the greater part of life the will—that is, the man himself—acts automatically, like a machine. He is given bad coffee for breakfast, and he gets cross. He sees his omnibus just going, and he runs. He sees in one advertisement that X's boot polish is the best, and on another that Y's boot polish is the best, and he accepts both statements. He does not criticize or assert himself. He follows steadily the line of least resistance. The charioteer is asleep, and the two horses jog along without waking him.

But, says M. Bergson, you will sometimes find that when you expect him to follow the line of least resistance he just does not. The charioteer awakes. He can resist, he can choose; he is after all a live and free thing in the midst of a dead world, capable of acting against the pressure of matter, against pain, and against his own desires.

Whether this doctrine is exactly true or not, I do not

pretend to judge; but it certainly is fruitful. It is just what one feels in one's ordinary experience: a constant tendency to behave like dead matter, to fall into habits, to become by slow degrees—as the ancients put it—"a chained slave." You are chained by your own standard of comfort; by your conception of what is necessary for you; by your meal-times and the conventions you live among; by the things that you always say or always do or always have. Bergson has for middle-aged men added a new terror to life. He makes you watch yourself becoming mechanical; moving in conformity to outside stimulus; growing more and more dependent on your surroundings—as if the little soul carrying the corpse had found it too heavy and was letting it lie, or perhaps roll, while the soul itself fell half asleep. Fortunately from time to time it wakes, and when it does wake its strength is amazing. A friend of mine wrote to me from amid the heaviest fighting on the Somme, describing the strange impression he received from that awful experience of the utter difference between man's soul and body; the body is so weak and frail a stuff, so easily broken, scattered, torn to rags, or trodden indistinguishably into mire; and the soul so resolute, so untouched and unconquerable.

III

Untouched and unconquerable: those, I think, were my friend's words, and that was the impression which he received. The German shells and bombs and bullets tore men's bodies to pieces without any trouble, but they could not touch the men's souls or change their will. I do not wonder that he received that impression. Yet, is the impression absolutely true? Can we really, without qualification, believe the common, comfortable doctrine that persecution always fails, that the blood of martyrs is always the seed of the Church, that the soul is really unconquerable? The average man does not believe it, much less the ordinary tyrant. In every country he treats such doctrines as mere sentiment, and is perfectly confident that if you give him a free hand with rifle, bayonet and cat-o'-nine-tails he can

stamp out any inconvenient doctrine which puts its trust in nothing more substantial than the soul of man. And I fear the tyrant is not always wrong. Why are there no Protestants in Spain? Not because of the persuasiveness of Spanish theology, but because the Spanish Inquisition did its work. Why are there no descendants of the Albigenses in France? Because they were massacred.

No. We must not delude ourselves into believing that the path of the human soul or conscience when protesting against the world is a safe path, or a path that must in the end lead to victory. It is neither. It leads for certain through suffering and humiliation; and it may also, it may ultimately, end in defeat. There is no certainty for the protesting soul anywhere; except the certainty of a great uncertainty, of a great battle of unknown issue, in which the odds are by no means as they appear. The big battalions of the world on one side, and the one little soul or group of souls on the other—they are not so unevenly matched after all. The little soul starts indeed with one great handicap against it—it has first to carry its own corpse, and then fight. But if it can do that, if it can get comparatively free from that burden and those entangling chains, get rid of desire and ambition, and hatred and even anger, and think of nothing but what it wills as right, then it is, I will not say unconquerable, but one of the most formidable fighting forces that exist upon this earth.

The doctrine that the persecutor is always defeated and the martyr always triumphant is, I think, little more than mere comfort-seeking, a by-form of the common vulgar worship of success. We can give great strings of names belonging to the martyrs who were successful, who, whether living or dead, eventually won their causes, and are honoured with books and statues by a grateful posterity. But what of the martyrs who have failed—who beat against iron bars, and suffered and were conquered, who appealed from unjust judges and found no listeners, who died deserted and disapproved by their own people, and have left behind them no name or memorial? How many Belgians, and Serbs, and Poles, how many brave followers of Liebknecht in Germany itself, have been murdered in silence for obeying

their consciences, and their memory perhaps blasted by a false official statement, so that even their example does not live? In ancient Athens there was, beside the ordinary altars of worship, an altar to the Unknown God. There ought to be in our hearts, whenever we think with worship and gratitude of the great men who have been deliverers or helpers of the human race, an altar to the unknown martyrs who have suffered for the right and failed.

IV

But let us stop a moment. When the soul of man thus stands up against the world, is it necessarily always in the right? Because a man holds a belief so firmly that he will submit to prison and death rather than forswear it, does it follow that the belief is true? Obviously not in the least. In every great moral conflict of history you have had martyrs on both sides. Christians and Pagans, Arians and Trinitarians, Catholics and Protestants, have killed each other and died themselves for their respective beliefs, and more particularly for those particular parts of them which most directly contradicted the beliefs of the other side. Martyrs are not always right. Indeed, I am not sure that if you took the whole faith for which a particular martyr suffers—the whole mass of passionate beliefs by which he is really at the time actuated—I am not sure you would not find that martyrs were almost always considerably wrong. A man does not usually reach the point where he is willing to die for a cause without getting his passions strongly interwoven with his beliefs; and when a belief is mixed with passion, as we all know, it is almost certain to deviate from truth. If you ever wish, as we all sometimes do, to punish someone who differs from you, and to go on punishing him till he agrees with you, it is no good arguing that your victim is not a martyr because he is wrong or even wicked in his beliefs; a great many martyrs have been wrong, and their persecutors have always thought them both wrong and wicked. It is still more irrelevant to condemn the martyr for being

inconsistent: for two reasons. First, there is no person known to history, neither priest nor philosopher, nor statesman, nor even mathematician, who has yet succeeded in building a complete theory of life which has no inconsistencies in it. The best we can do is to be consistent in some little corner of life, or in dealing with some immediate practical problem. And further, it would be absurd to say that a man must not take any step until he had made sure that the whole of his life was consistent with it. If a man wants to behave in some respect better than he has behaved before, it is practically certain that the new and better part of his life will not be consistent with all the other parts of it which he is not attending to. To reproach such a man for inconsistency is equivalent to asking him to remain always at the lowest level of which he is capable—though as a matter of fact he would not attain consistency even then.

You must not be surprised then at a martyr being wrong, and you must not dream of expecting him to be in all of his beliefs consistent.

What can you expect of him, then? I think all you can expect is sincerity of belief and purity of motive. If he is a fool, if he is prejudiced, if he is muddle-headed, if he is misled, if he is exasperating, even if he has certain grave faults of character in other respects, he can still be a martyr, and be entitled to a martyr's reward. But if he is insincere, if he is lying; if, when professing to suffer for the right and the truth, he is really seeking his own advantage, and saying things which he does not believe, then he is done for; there is nothing more to be said about him; he is not a martyr, but a mere ordinary humbug. And no doubt one of the troubles of a Government which has to deal with people who of set purpose and principle defy a particular law, is to make out which are martyrs and which humbugs. And this is a matter of more consequence than may at first appear. For it is a very dangerous thing to allow people by mere cunning and obstinacy and self-advertisement in breaking the law to rise into public fame and to undermine that fabric of mutual agreement which holds society together; a nation in which any well-organized rebels could safely

defy the law would soon almost cease to be a free nation. And, on the other hand, a nation in which the Government seems to be forcing men into sin against their conscience, so that good people instinctively respect the prisoner and condemn the judge, has already ceased to be a free nation. You remember the old words of Gamaliel: "Lest haply ye be found to be fighting against God." It is a serious thing for any organ of material power to be found fighting against the human soul.

V

Let me take a present-day instance of this battle between a soul and a Government, a very curious instance, because it is almost impossible without more knowledge than most people in England possess to say who was wrong and who right.

About the year 1889 a young Indian student, called Mohandar Karamchand Gandhi, came to England to study law. He was rich and clever, of a cultivated family, gentle and modest in his manner. He dressed and behaved like other people. There was nothing particular about him to show that he had already taken a Jain vow to abstain from wine, from flesh, and from sexual intercourse. He took his degrees and became a successful lawyer in Bombay, but he cared more for religion than law. Gradually his asceticism increased. He gave away all his money to good causes except the meagrest allowance. He took vows of poverty. He ceased to practise at the law because his religion—a mysticism which seems to be as closely related to Christianity as it is to any traditional Indian religion—forbade him to take part in a system which tried to do right by violence. When I met him in England, in 1914, he ate, I believe, only rice, and drank only water, and slept on the floor; and his wife, who seemed to be his companion in everything, lived in the same way. His conversation was that of a cultivated and well-read man with a certain indefinable suggestion of saintliness. His patriotism, which was combined with an enthusiastic support of England against Germany, is interwoven with his religion, and aims

at the moral regeneration of India on the lines of Indian thought, with no barriers between one Indian and another, and to the exclusion as far as possible of the influence of the West, with its industrial slavery, its material civilization, its money-worship and its wars. (I am merely stating this view, of course, not either criticizing it or suggesting that it is right.)

Oriental peoples, perhaps owing to causes connected with their form of civilization, are apt to be enormously influenced by great saintliness of character when they see it. Like all great masses of ignorant people, however, they need some very plain and simple test to assure them that their hero is really a saint and not a humbug, and the test they habitually apply is that of self-denial. Take vows of poverty, live on rice and water, and they will listen to your preaching, as several of our missionaries have found; come to them eating and drinking and dressed in expensive European clothes—and they feel differently. It is far from a perfect test, but there is something in it. At any rate I am told that Gandhi's influence in India is now enormous, almost equal to that of his friend the late Mr. Gokhale.

And now for the battle. In South Africa there are some 150,000 Indians, chiefly in Natal; and the South African Government, feeling that the colour question in its territories was quite sufficiently difficult already, determined to prevent the immigration of any more Indians, and if possible to expel those who were already there. This last could not be done. It would have violated a treaty; it was opposed by Natal, where much of the industry depended on Indian labour; and it was objected to by the Indian Government and the Home Government. Then began a long struggle. The whites of South Africa determined to make life in South Africa undesirable, if not for all Indians, at least for all Indians above the coolie class. Indians were specially taxed, were made to register in a degrading way; they were classed with negroes; their thumb-prints were taken by the police as if they were criminals. If, owing to the scruples of the Government, the law was in any case too lenient, patriotic mobs undertook to remedy the defect. Quite early in the struggle the Indians in South Africa asked

Mr. Gandhi to come and help them. He came as a barrister in 1893; he was forbidden to plead. He proved his right to plead; he won his case against the Asiatic Exclusion Act on grounds of constitutional law, and returned to India. The relief which the Indians had expected was not realized. Gandhi came again in 1895. He was mobbed and nearly killed at Durban. I will not tell in detail how he settled down eventually in South Africa as a leader and counsellor to his people; how he founded a settlement in the country outside Durban, where the workers should live directly on the land, and all be bound by a vow of poverty. For many years he was engaged in constant passive resistance to the Government and constant efforts to raise and ennoble the inward life of the Indian Community. But he was unlike other strikers or resisters in this: that mostly the resister takes advantage of any difficulty of the Government in order to press his claim the harder, whereas Gandhi, when the Government was in any dangerous difficulty, always relaxed his resistance and offered his help. In 1899 came the Boer War; Gandhi immediately organized an Indian Red Cross unit. There was a popular movement for refusing it and treating it as seditious. But it was needed. The soldiers wanted it. And it served through the war, and was mentioned in despatches, and thanked publicly for its skilful work and courage under fire. In 1904 there was an outbreak of plague in Johannesburg, and Gandhi had a private hospital opened before the public authorities had begun to act. In 1906 there was a Native rebellion in Natal: Gandhi raised and personally led a corps of stretcher-bearers, whose work seems to have proved particularly dangerous and painful. Gandhi was thanked by the Governor in Natal—and shortly afterwards thrown into jail in Johannesburg. Lastly, in 1913, when he was being repeatedly imprisoned, among criminals of the lowest class, and his followers were in jail to the number of 2,500, in the very midst of the general strike of Indians in the Transvaal and Natal there occurred the sudden and revolutionary railway strike which endangered for the time the very existence of organized society in South Africa. From the ordinary agitator's point of view the game was in

Gandhi's hands. He had only to strike his hardest. Instead, he gave orders for his people to resume work till the Government should be safe again. I cannot say how often he was imprisoned, how often mobbed and assaulted, or what pains were taken to mortify and humiliate him in public. But by 1913 the Indian case had been taken up by Lord Hardinge and the Government of India. An Imperial Commission reported in his favour on most of the points at issue, and an Act was passed according to the Commission's recommendations, entitled the Indian Relief Act.

My sketch is very imperfect; but the story forms an extraordinary illustration of a contest which was won, or practically won, by a policy of doing no wrong, committing no violence, but simply enduring all the punishment the other side could inflict until they became weary and ashamed of punishing. A battle of the unaided human soul against overwhelming material force, and it ends by the units of material force gradually deserting their own banners and coming round to the side of the soul!

Persons in power should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy—because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul.

VI

In Gandhi's case the solution of the strife between him and the Government was particularly difficult, because he was not content to be let alone. He thought it his duty, God helping him, to compel a Government backed by the vast majority of the nation to change their policy. And no Government could yield, or ought to yield, to such coercion. The best it could do was probably somewhere near that which, by the advice of General Smuts, it eventually did propose to do: to purge its policy as far as possible of all elements which were not essential to its own

conviction and which did particular violence to the convictions of others.

In the next case I wish to lay before you the issue is much simpler. It is the case of the persecution of an Englishman of saintly life, Mr. Stephen Hobhouse. I say deliberately of saintly life, and I say no more; not for a moment that his views are right, or his theory of life socially convenient, or his example one that should be followed. As we have noticed before, it often happens that the saints are wrong and the children of this world right; but they are not often right when they begin treating the saints as criminals.

Stephen Hobhouse was the son of rich parents; he was a scholar of Eton, afterwards an undergraduate at Balliol; he won First Class Honours in Moderations, and Second Class Honours in Greats, after which he obtained a post in the Board of Education. He was rich and well connected; he was clever and successful, and had every prospect of a brilliant career. But from early life he had a conscience more exacting than the consciences of most of us. He was religious with a touch of mysticism. He wanted to follow Christ. He eventually formulated the goal at which he aimed as "self-identification with the oppressed." To help the poor and suffering was not enough; he must be one with the poor and suffering. He could not do this as a rich man. So he began by renouncing his position as heir to his father's estate and stripping himself of the prospect of inherited wealth. He had already joined the Quakers, and was an occasional speaker in their meeting-house. (They have no ordained ministers.) He went with his wife, who shares his religion, to a workman's flat in East London, where the two continued to live as friends and neighbours to all about them, ministering to those in need and seeking "self-identification with the oppressed." Their life, I need hardly say, was reduced to the most drastic simplicity. Let me give one small illustration.

A friend of mine calling on Mrs. Hobhouse the other day noticed a clothes-line hanging across the room and asked some question about it. It appeared that when they first moved into the flat, living of course without a servant, Mrs. Hobhouse sent her washing out to a laundry. The

work of suddenly living without a servant was, for two delicately nurtured people, hard enough. But they noticed that the families living round them did not send their washing out; they did it at home in the living-room. "Self-identification with the oppressed" pointed the road clearly, and they tied the clothes-line across the living-room and did the washing at home.

Stephen had adopted the Tolstoyan view of war when he was an undergraduate at Oxford and resigned from the volunteers. He had been a Quaker, and a Quaker of the strictest sort, for five years before 1914. He knew by experience what war was; for during the war in the Balkans, having previously resigned his post in the Board of Education, he had gone to Constantinople to nurse the refugees of various nations who were lying, largely untended, in the mosques and outlying cemeteries of the city. Of his work there I know only by hearsay, but the stories of it have a certain unmistakable note. Creeds and religious organizations clash against one another; but true saintliness, the quality of the soul that has really mastered the corpse it carries, is much the same in all religions, and breaks the barriers of creeds. Stephen's interpreter, a pious Moslem, who was accustomed probably to think of all Christians as dogs, felt the spirit that radiated from this Christian. He joined him in prayer, and consented at a time of danger to give up the revolver he was carrying.

The present war came and was followed by conscription, embodied in an Act which allowed complete exemption to those who on conscientious grounds, however mistaken, refused to take part in slaying their fellow-men. If conscription was necessary, as I am inclined to think it was, that was a generous Act, and one worthy of the traditions of English tolerance. It was well known that Stephen, as a strict Quaker, considered it a sin to partake in war, and there was not the smallest glimmer of a doubt to be cast on the sincerity of his objection.

By an act of angry and uncomprehending injustice his tribunal disallowed his conscientious objection and sent him to serve with the Friends' Ambulance Unit. This order he could not accept on two grounds: the Unit was

now auxiliary to the Army, so that even as a free agent he would not have joined it; and in any case he would not accept an order that made him a conscript. He did not appeal against the sentence, because many of his friends and fellow-Quakers were already being sent to prison, and "self-identification with the oppressed" forbade his deserting them. He refused to obey military orders. He was court-martialled and sentenced to various military punishments, culminating in 112 days' hard labour. When that was over he was taken out and the order repeated; of course he still disobeyed, and is now [1] undergoing two years' hard labour. The renewed sentences bring with them conditions more severe than those of continuous penal servitude.

And one point more. Every one interested in prison reform knows that one of the most severe strains upon human nature involved in prison life is the eternal silence—one of the most severe and, many people hold, the most corrupting and injurious to mind and character next to solitary confinement itself. In every prison the rule of silence is apt to be somehow evaded. It is a thing which human nature in the long run will not bear, and by hook or by crook, by sundry unedifying artifices, the prisoners do manage to snatch a few words of conversation with one another from day to day. Stephen at first did talk by these secret methods, then he decided that it was wrong. He writes to his wife: "The very night of your last visit I was smitten with a sense of shame for the habits of concealment verging on deception which this life seems to force on all of us. For a fortnight I wrestled day and night with this feeling. . . . It seemed so hard to give up the only outward ways of expressing love." He confessed to the governor that he had been breaking the rule of silence, and refused to promise to obey it in the future. And the result is that, in order to make sure he does not break that rule, and at the same time to avoid the constant repetition of special punishments, this man is in solitary confinement for the indefinite future.

I believe in this case that the Government has broken

[1] August 1918.

the law. I am clear that the original sentence of the tribunal was wrong. But for the moment I am dealing with another aspect of this case. Apart from the rightness or wrongness of the prisoner's views about war, apart from the technical legality or illegality of the Government's action, you have here a deliberate conflict between the massed power of Government and the soul of one righteous man. There are about a thousand men in the same position.

I do not know who will win. I make no prophecy. It is quite easy for a huge engine like the War Office to crush any one man's body, to destroy his reason by perpetual solitude, or put an end to his life. But I do not think that a Government which sets out to prosecute its saints is a wise or a generous Government; I do not think a nation which cannot live in peace with its saints is a very healthy or high-minded nation.[1]

VII

I have not attempted to answer the question with which we started, to define what the soul is or what life is, or where the difference comes between the mere physical life that makes a man move his limbs and desire his food, and the soul itself or central guiding principle, which the ancients called reason and the moderns think of as will. The question is perhaps still beyond human powers of analysis. I have only tried to consider with the help of examples the actual working of the soul in shaping a man's life, and sometimes bringing him into conflict not only with his own apparent interest, but with the general stream of will in the society around him. And I have tried, first, to suggest that a wise ruler will be very circumspect, a conscientious ruler will be very tender, before challenging the lowliest of human souls to battle on the soul's own ground, or setting about the task of compelling the humblest of his subjects by torment and violence to do that which he definitely believes to be wrong. So much for action between man and man. And secondly, within our own hearts, I

[1] Stephen Hobhouse was unconditionally released soon after this.

would say that the main lesson to each man of us is to see that his own soul does not die. It will sometimes stagger under the weight of the corpse it carries; that is inevitable. Only let it not fall into the power of the corpse. The weight of dead matter seems, at times like the present, to increase upon us. Our whole being is dulled. We do more and more things because we are driven, fewer and fewer because we choose them and love them; we cease even to suffer as we should suffer, or to pity as we should pity. In our own great war we tend to forget what we ourselves owe to the higher causes for which our friends have died as martyrs, to forget because the deaths are by now so common and the martyrdom has lasted so long. We tend to shrink from the higher emotions because they are difficult, to sink into the round of lower and more commonplace emotions because they make less disturbance in our daily business. The power of death is abroad over the world. It has taken lives innumerable, and better lives than ours. Let those of us whose bodily life is still spared make sure that the soul within us shall not die.

VIII

NATIONAL IDEALS; CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS[1]

IF I had one remark and one only to make about National Ideals, it would be this: that the conscious and professed ideals are as straws in the wind; the unconscious or concealed ideals are the real forces that govern mankind. Some philosopher, I think it was Herbart, has compared the unconscious part of human character to the submerged part of an iceberg at sea. The great bulk of the iceberg is under water, invisible and unnoticeable: what we call the iceberg is only the cluster of towers and pinnacles that reach up into the light. The great bulk of human character lies below the water-line of consciousness. We breathe, digest, preserve our balance, without thinking of it: we seek what we like and shun what we dislike without thinking of it: we devise the ways of getting or of shunning, we plot, scheme, flatter, slander, bribe and threaten—without thinking of it, without knowing it, without reason or conscience having a hearing on the subject.

The awakened, reasonable, conscious Man is the topmost tower of the whole great structure. But it is the instinctive and unconscious Man that supplies both the mass and the momentum. It is this submerged self, this self which, to use the mediæval phrase "slumbers beneath the threshold," that counts for most in the movements of masses and of nations. The instinctive man is not, of course, necessarily wicked; he is the source of good as well as of evil, of love as well as of hate. But it is well to observe him: for if ever you cease to observe him, he will deceive you.

[1] *The International Journal of Ethics*, October 1900.

It must have struck every student of History who at the same time cares about contemporary politics, that there is one strange discrepancy between the record of politics in the past and his own consciousness of politics in the present. When he thinks over his political views, makes a speech or argues, he is constantly appealing to ideals, such as Justice, Liberty, Christian principles, patriotism, and he believes that these ideals guide both him and his party. When he reads a good history, he will find the differences of parties and of nations expressed almost exclusively by divergences of interest. The interests of France clashing with the interests of Austria; the interests of the landed classes, the interests of the manufacturers, the interests of the Church—these come in history not as occasional factors in the life of nations habitually guided by Justice, Liberty and the rest of it: they come as permanent factors, as the main roots of action. It gives one a shock, this apparent cynicism of History. But the facts bear it out; and more, our own instinctive comments show that we expected it. From the beginning of the world till now it has been the same: farmers have always wanted corn to be dear; manufacturers have wanted labour to be cheap; slave-owners have always thought well of slavery; liquor sellers have always admired an increased consumption of liquor; aristocracies have always approved of their own privileges; leather-sellers have always held that more articles should be made of leather. The slave-owner produces a number of arguments explaining that slavery is a blessing to all concerned in it. The farmer writes pamphlets and books to show that Free Trade in corn will wreck the bases of society. "These," says the one, "are the reasons why I object to emancipation." "Those," says the other, "are the considerations that make me a protectionist."

History turns an amused glance at their reasons and observes, "The slave-owners naturally resisted emancipation. The farmers were, of course, protectionists." And we are not in the least surprised at her tone. If we find a slave-owning emancipationist or a farmer who believes that even if he loses by it, poor men ought to have cheap

bread, we either suspect his motives or we frankly admire him as a noble and exceptional man. Fortunately, amid the clash of interests, such men have often very great power. They act with the disinterested classes, and the disinterested classes can often save a country.

Still the unconscious ideals are what mainly guide mankind. And among the unconscious ideals there is one especially that is vast and permanent: the very centre of the Ego is stirred by it: the ideal of the man's own prosperity, success, expansion. "I love the thing that makes me great and rich and admired. I hate the thing that pulls me down and makes me small and of no account." And if you argue to me that the first thing is bad and the second good, do you suppose that the quivering centre of ambitious life within me will not cry in passionate denial: "No, the thing that hurts me is bad, cruel, treacherous: the thing that soothes and helps me is good." Do you suppose it will not reach out its feelers north, south, east and west for weapons to help it and arguments to slay your arguments?

Self-interest—in no high philosophical sense, but in its ordinary acceptation—is a vast factor in private, in everyday life. But in private life it is strongly and vividly counteracted by social and moral forces which are almost powerless in politics. A farmer who could let his own labourer starve to death before his eyes rather than part with a slice of bread would be a monster. Men are prevented from doing such things by all kinds of natural instincts. But the landed classes who caused thousands to die of famine in 1842 and 1846, in order to keep up their incomes, were very good people indeed. Is that not a fair way of putting it? I think it is. True, they did not say they supported the Corn Laws in order to keep up their income: they said it was because they believed in certain arguments. But why did they believe these arguments? Why did all farmers enthusiastically believe all arguments—whether they understood them or not—that tended one way, while all starving artisans believed the contrary arguments? The farmers believed their arguments because

they wanted good incomes: the artisans believed theirs because they valued cheap bread.

Mere straightforward self-interest, then, takes us a very long way in the explanation of politics. But obviously not the whole way. There are other instinctive elements. There is especially one other; this same growing and aspiring centre of life within us, the thing that in a baby or in Alexander the Great claims the whole world as its own, has other claims than the merely physical. When it has grasped all it can hold or hope for, when it is for the moment wearied with self-assertion, it likes to be stroked and praised, it likes to reflect upon its nobleness, justice and generosity. Consider the fowls of the air. A very pretty small bird, the Great Tit, when hungry, will lift up its beak, split open its brother's head and proceed to eat his brains. It might then be satisfied, think you? Not at all! It has a moral nature, you must please to remember, which demands to be satisfied as well as the physical. When it has finished its brother's brains, it first gets very angry and pecks the dead body; then it flies off to a tree and exults. What is it angry with and why does it exult? It is angry with the profound wickedness of that brother, in consequence of which it was obliged to kill him: it exults in the thought of its own courage, firmness, justice, moderation, generosity and domestic sweetness. That song is its equivalent—poor innocent thing—of a patriotic leading article in the *Kreuz Zeitung* or the *Daily Telegraph* or the *Petit Journal.*

Human nature cries aloud for self-approval: it winces and shudders at the first touch of self-reproach or self-contempt. There are obviously two ways of avoiding self-reproach. The tiresome and precarious way of not doing what you suspect to be wrong or contemptible: and the bold and comparatively safe way of always admiring whatever you yourself happen to do. With the bird above mentioned, this course seems to be easy: he can admire himself all alone. Man, weakened by his increased self-consciousness, has not only to praise himself, but must get others to praise him: must persuade them, argue with them, cajole them, bribe them, frighten them, till at last,

amid the applause of all his immediate friends and associates, his sensitive and anxious soul can rest in peace. Hence comes hypocrisy, the deep unconscious hypocrisy that governs nations and satisfies man's craving for praise.

"This noble spectacle," to quote the phrase of a famous general about war, "has, after all, an unpleasant side to it." "Never forget," said a Greek sophist to a Greek tyrant, "never forget to slander those you have wronged." He need not have said it. There was a silent and eternal sophist, one may be sure, below the threshold of consciousness, who could be trusted to teach that tyrant, and every tyrant, to slander those whom he had wronged or meant to wrong. "If they are good men," his heart cried within him, "I must be bad! And that I will never be! They are not good men: they are vile and wicked, and they hurt me; and I wish I could kill them over again!" The whole vast force of the unconscious self will, we may be sure, be exerted before all else in these three directions: he will insist on his own satisfaction: he will insist on his own goodness, and he will slander restlessly and ruthlessly those who make him feel sore.

Progress, moral advance, the upward movement of humanity consists mainly in the constant subjugation and direction of the unconscious self by the conscious. On the one hand we gain more power of knowing ourselves: on the other hand the unconscious beast below the threshold itself becomes changed; our actual instincts become a little civilized. This is obvious: it is generally taken for granted. What is not taken for granted is the extreme precariousness and superficiality of the process. If you scratch a Russian, it is said, you find a Tartar. And I dare say if you scratch any civilized European pretty deep, you will find something much the same. Nay, sometimes when the deeps of primitive passion are stirred, you may look deeper still, and get glimpses of that wonderful creature on whom our being is based, the great Ape that differed from other apes by its upright posture, its intelligence, its ambition, its exquisite sensitiveness to suffering, and by the fact that alone of the ape tribe it was a ravening beast of prey.

It pains us, of course, to be reminded of the beast's existence. A certain shock was felt the other day in the House of Commons when a Cabinet Minister [1] drew a distinction between Honourable Members and Honourable Men. Yet no one can possibly deny that it is a real distinction. O'Connell in 1838 said it was "horrible to think that a body of gentlemen—men who ranked high in society, who were themselves the administrators of the law, and who ought, therefore, to be above all suspicion—should be perjuring themselves in the (Election) committees of the House of Commons." Now as a matter of fact they were perjuring themselves. It was well known. The leader of the Opposition knew it. The Government admitted it. The Law Officers of the Crown had remarked upon it. But the political instincts of the Great British nation objected utterly to having such a thing mentioned in public—especially by an Irishman. O'Connell was condemned, reprimanded and very nearly sent to Newgate. It is the first maxim of Parliamentary debate, as it is the first maxim of decent society, that the existence of the beast within us should be concealed. It is the first necessity of all honest striving for self-improvement, as it is of all true philosophic study, to remember that the beast is there.

We are remaining below ground a very long time; yet once more, before we emerge above the threshold into full consciousness, let us consider one great semi-conscious clash of different ideals and differently constituted minds. On the one side we find the moderate and sensible statesmen, Liberal or Conservative, the Peels, Liverpools, Cannings, Palmerstons—I wish to avoid for obvious reasons the politicians of the present day—on the other side you have a class that is difficult to name; *The Times*, when wishing to be lenient, would call them extremists and faddists or "mere intellectuals." But these qualities are not sufficiently distinctive. They are, in the main, the people who think for themselves and lack the spirit of the herd. The former are the stuff of which Cabinet Ministers are made; they are sagacious, moderate, statesmanlike: they com-

[1] Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

mand the attention of the House of Commons. They know what is possible and what not. They understand the conditions of free government in a nation consisting of many millions: they know that he who wishes to govern must persuade a majority of the many millions to agree with him, and consequently must never depart too far from their beliefs. They run their heads against no stone walls. They never touch a new cause until it is becoming popular. They never fight for an old one when the battle is certain to be lost. They tend on the whole to avoid ruining their country; they flourish under constitutional governments and they are especially prolific and prominent in England.

Members of the other class may be brilliant, they may be conscientious, well-informed, honourable; but they are not statesmen, and they are distrusted by the House of Commons. They do not study what is possible. They are lacking in the gregarious instincts and get "out of touch" with their fellow-men. They press for what they personally believe; and they do not carry their Bills. You find them urging new causes that nobody will listen to; defending desperately old causes that are known to be hopeless. It is only in such moments that you notice these people at all; for as long as the old cause was defensible, our statesmen of the first class were defending it; as soon as the new cause is likely to prevail, our statesmen will take it up and carry it to a glorious issue, while its faddist author will be reduced to his normal obscurity.

Let me illustrate what I mean. The most characteristic English statesman, perhaps the greatest statesman, of the last hundred years, was Sir Robert Peel. The good work he did was prodigious. He carried Catholic Emancipation and Free Trade; he reformed the Currency, the Banking System and the Criminal Code. It is a most magnificent record doubtless; but let us examine where the magnificence lies.

Everybody knows that when he carried Catholic Emancipation he had been put in office as an anti-Catholic; just before he carried Free Trade he was the leader of the Protectionists. I do not wish to accuse him of inconsistency

or dishonesty. All sensible men are inconsistent; and as for honesty—it is too difficult a quality to define. What I am aiming at is the actual political process by which these reforms were carried.

In the year 1800 a Mr. Boyd proposed the reform of the currency by a gradual return to cash payments. Various economists supported him. Eleven years afterwards Horner proposed the measure in the House of Commons and was defeated. Nineteen years afterwards, the conditions being in all essentials unchanged, a large number of people had begun to understand what the economists had been telling them all that time. The Liverpool Government appointed a committee with Peel as chairman to consider the question, and Peel covered his name with glory by reporting in favour of Horner's proposal. Up to that time he had opposed it.

The case of the Criminal Code is the most instructive of all. The old English code, as we all know, was exceptionally savage and exceptionally imbecile. A man could be hanged for picking a pocket; hanged for stealing five shillings from a shop; hanged for stealing a fish, for robbing a rabbit-warren, for injuring Westminster Bridge, for cutting a hop-vine, for wounding a cow, for maliciously cutting a piece of serge, or for charitably harbouring a smuggler; and for some two hundred other offences. (Of course in practice the extreme sentences were seldom or never passed.) Bentham began his attack on this system about 1776. In 1808 the first bill to deal with the subject was brought into the House of Commons by Romilly. He was opposed by the Government and defeated. He renewed his attempt in 1810, in 1811, in 1812, in 1813. Then, discouraged, he waited three years. He tried again in 1816; again in 1818. Then he died. (It is very important that innovators should not have too much encouragement!) Sir James Mackintosh took up the cause. He succeeded in getting a committee of inquiry appointed in 1819; then he worked on year after year till 1823. Several of the smaller bills had passed the House of Commons during this time, but were thrown out by the Lords. In 1822 Mackintosh obtained a decisive majority in favour of a

complete revision of the law. Now comes the statesman's moment; observe what he does. The Government realized that opposition to the reform was no longer safe. They had to give way. And they realized at the same moment that really, now one came to think of it, they had never had any particular objection to the measure at all. At the same time it was not desirable that an opponent like Mackintosh should have the credit of passing it. Peel rallied his supporters; promised a bill of his own; triumphantly defeated Mackintosh's resolutions. Then he proceeded to earn the gratitude of posterity and the name of a wise and liberal statesman by accepting at one swoop practically all the Criminal Law Reforms that he had been opposing for the last fifteen years, though the change was not really effective till after the Reform Bill of 1832.

Do not suppose that I am hinting at dishonesty on the part of Peel. He was remarkably honest. When he said he had changed his mind, he had really changed it. And when he changed his mind, he generally confessed that he had. What I want to know is: what was it that made Peel great, and led the House of Commons to honour and to trust him—to trust him as they never trusted Mackintosh, as they would never have dreamed of trusting Romilly, much less poor Bentham? Was it, perhaps, that the statesman was a practical man, and the Reformers unpractical idealists? Not in the least. There is nothing unpractical in showing what ought to be done to improve the Currency and the Criminal Law: and nothing practical in refusing to do it when you are told how. Horner and Romilly and Mackintosh were the practical men: Peel the unpractical. Was it any question of prudence and compromise? Was it that Peel himself desired the Reforms, but understood those difficulties and dangers which the Reformers failed to see? Not in the least. He frankly disliked and feared the Reforms, and never pretended anything else.

You might suppose again that the reason lay merely in the fact that the philosophers and faddists were "before their time." That implies some such account of the matter as this. Bentham saw a certain truth before any one else

that we know of. It took over twenty years for that truth to penetrate the quickest minds in the nation and eventually reach the doors of the House of Commons. By that time Romilly understood it, and probably Mackintosh. They then proceeded patiently to explain it to Peel and others. They explained persistently for thirteen years, and then Peel began to understand, and so did the majority of the House of Commons. Some had understood it more rapidly, in five or ten years. They were flighty and tinged with faddism. Others never saw it at all; they were a little stupid and fossilized. But Peel's was a mind of exactly the right degree of density; he was just sufficiently slow without being absolutely impervious to reason. If he had understood it in ten years, he would have been abandoned by his powerful friends. If he had not understood it for sixteen years he would have been defeated by the Whigs. As it was, he took just thirteen years, and that was exactly the right time.

"How splendid," said the House of Commons to itself, "to have a leader whose mind moves so precisely at the right rate of speed. What wisdom! What solidity!"

This, no doubt, is all true. But there is something more subtle in the matter than mere difference of time. It is a question of instinct. Doubtless all the rational arguments in favour of Catholic Emancipation, of Free Trade and of Reform which Peel had heard repeated for so many years, did in course of time begin to affect him. But the decisive moment in each case came, not from his reason, but from his gregarious instincts. The majority of the House or the nation was at last definitely veering round in the new direction. The great bell-wether felt the inarticulate stirrings of the flock and strode suddenly forward. And the self beneath the threshold in the House of Commons had confidence in the self below the threshold in Peel. Instinct cried out to instinct and was at once understood. "I want the same things as you: I hate the same things as you. I am the stronger and subtler; follow me!" Peel stated his reasons, of course, in an elaborate speech, and said that the reasons had convinced him. People voted with him and said that the reasons had convinced them.

But the reasons had very little to do with it. Men like Bentham or like Bishop Berkeley might be convinced by reasons. The instinctive Man distrusts and despises such persons. After all, there are generally mistakes in any long chain of reasoning. And then where are you? If a man is liable to be convinced by mere rational arguments, and follow them out consistently, there is no saying what may happen to him to-morrow. He may be an Anarchist or an Atheist. He may be harmless like Berkeley or pernicious like Robespierre. "In any case," cries instinct, "he is foreign and incomprehensible. He is not a member of my tribe. He does not like what I like and hate what I hate. He may be wanting something that I do not understand; something horrible, which would hurt me. Let nobody trust him!"

The classes who followed Peel felt that his instincts were theirs; that was why they trusted him.

So far we have contrasted Peel with the Reformers. The same lesson comes out if we contrast him with the consistent Tories. Croker retired from public life rather than be soiled by the contamination of a reformed Parliament and a purified corporation. Newcastle disobliged his leader and disobeyed his king rather than cease fighting against a measure he believed to be wrong. The learned and kindly old Lord Eldon, balked of his right to hang gipsies, to persecute Dissenters and Roman Catholics, and to send his political opponents to Botany Bay, still fought on for every single privilege or corruption or abomination that his soul loved; the majority might sweep past him, but a majority does not make wrong right; nor are the sentiments that were once applauded by a whole House of Commons necessarily ridiculous now, because they are only advanced by one tottering old gentleman, courageous and alone.

The advantage of Eldon or Romilly over Peel is that each had a real thing to say. They believed in something definite, and no gregarious instincts or political necessities could drive them out of believing what they believed. If one of them was wrong, the other was very likely right. But Peel could never be right. Was it that he had con-

tradictory beliefs, or was it perhaps that he had no belief at all, only the statesman's instinct for the right Parliamentary move, which seems, in some statesmen, to take the place of real convictions, just as in Thackeray's supposed anatomy of George IV, " waistcoats and then more waistcoats " took the place of a heart ?

On the other hand, a government of Eldons would certainly have led to revolution ; and Romilly could not carry his reforms. Peel carried Romilly's reforms, and averted Eldon's revolution. That is the sort of place the world is!

In the eyes of a philosopher the statesman is very deficient in reasoning power. In the eyes of the moralist he has an elastic and callous conscience. In the eyes of the religious man he has no soul. The thing that he has, and he alone, is the power of drawing his flock after him, the technique of persuading parliaments and nations.

We have hitherto been considering our Unconscious Ideals, and the conditions, often arduous and even ruinous, which they impose upon national progress or well-being. I should like to use the brief remainder of this paper in considering two, especially, of the ideals which we consciously profess.

Our two great political parties adopted, after the Great Reform Bill, the names Liberal and Conservative, respectively, both of them most engaging names. Now it is not for a moment desirable to analyse what these parties really are, except for one remark in passing. The Liberal party has since the last century professed to be two things —progressive and democratic. The two things have gone together with us, because the progress of the country since 1815 has been in a democratic direction. But, of course, progress need not be democratic. In the east of Europe at the present day it is aristocratic ; in Servia and Greece and to some extent in Russia the Progressives or Liberals are in direct opposition to the Democrats (in Servia called Radicals), who represent the artisans and peasants and object to new-fangled ways.

That is a digression. But, dismissing any consideration

of what the two parties really are, let us make out the ideals which by their self-given party-names they claim to represent. The basis of conservatism is not to lose what we have laboriously acquired; to safeguard as a precious thing our Constitution, our national character, our social organization. That is to say, the basis of conservatism is a great appreciation of the results of progress in the past, and a fear of losing the ground that we have gained, by any mistakes or acts of rashness. What is the basis of Liberalism? Exactly the same, with a slight difference of emphasis. The Conservative says, "We have progressed through the ages to a very high, though perhaps imperfect, condition; let us be careful not to lose what we have won." The Liberal replies: "We have progressed through the ages to a very high, though certainly imperfect, condition; let us proceed further in the same direction."

There is no direct contradiction here. Nay, there is real agreement about nine-tenths of the subject, and only a difference of emphasis about the other tenth. The Conservative is ready to progress if only you will be cautious. The Liberal is ready to be cautious if only you will jog on. This fundamental basis of agreement is one of the causes why English party politics have been on the one hand so sane and successful, and on the other hand so seldom thrilling to the imagination. There was so much agreement that the two parties could always understand one another and make tolerable compromises. There was so much agreement that politics often looked more like a game between Ins and Outs than a serious contest between believers in opposing principles.

But, after all, what opposition of principle is possible? Both parties represent different stages of the same Ideals, the Ideals of Progress and Order. What party represents the opposite? Is it the Radicals? "We have both a Conservative Government and a Conservative Opposition," exclaimed Grote in 1838, and shook the dust of Westminster from his feet. Yet Grote, a typical Radical, was not essentially opposed in his principles to Lord John Russell, or even to Peel. He was bolder, perhaps more far-seeing, but his aims were not different.

The opposite ideal to that of Liberal and Conservative is represented by the man who is prepared to say: "We have progressed through the ages to a state that is worse than our first state! We must shatter this bad social order to pieces and go back to simplicity." Most of us have not much patience with this sort of man. "Back to simplicity!" we answer him. "What exactly is your model of simple life: the Red Indian, or the Negro, or the divers royalties of the Cannibal Islands?" "Not any of them," the Revolutionist may reply: "intellect and moral nature do not depend on a complicated social system. Thoreau and Emerson and Tolstoy and Walt Whitman and Rousseau and Plato and Epicurus did not become debased in mind because they turned their backs on civilization and tried to return to simplicity. If modern man ever breaks through his prison of convention and capitalism and wins his way back to simple life, he will bring to it the powers of intellect and character that he now possesses. He will not forthwith believe in Mumbo Jumbo or execute his wife for witchcraft whenever he has rheumatism. But suppose we accept your challenge," our Revolutionist may continue: "suppose in destroying this present social fabric we fell at once to the level of the savage, what then? We know all you say about the horrors that are incidental to savage life,—especially when the White Man's helmet has once appeared above the horizon. But we remember what you perhaps forget, that almost all travellers, except those sent out for purposes of annexation, from Herodotus and Tacitus to Mungo Park and Livingstone and Selwyn, have with one voice dwelt upon the light-heartedness and the personal dignity of the normal life of uncivilized man. The normal life of the poor of Europe is not light-hearted and dignified, nor yet that of the rich. There are more and more things without which we are miserable, and with which we are not a whit happier. There are more and more possibilities of human suffering to be endured; more and more screens to hide the sight of the suffering from the authors of it. We civilized men are caught in a great trap; we mean no harm, but our every movement may bring torment to some fellow-man. We buy this teapot

rather than that, prefer one box of matches to another; we cease to buy some old article of commerce because there is a new one we like better; and the result is that great numbers of men, women and children whom we have never seen or heard of are forced by other people, equally unknown to us, to work themselves into diseases, to become prostitutes or thieves, to starve for want of work, or at best to maintain a stunted life by incessant and meaningless drudgery. It is no one's fault. It is only Order and Progress.

"Again, in a simple society people had at least a chance of enjoying their daily work. Under Order and Progress every worker as a normal thing is engaged in doing work which he cannot possibly enjoy, but has to do, ultimately, because he would starve if he did not. He spends his day watching a machine make an enormous number of fractions of a pin all alike; or in adding up columns and columns of pounds, shillings and pence which do not belong to him; or in teaching people whom he does not wish to teach and who would prefer not to be taught; or in a thousand other ways, but always, except in a few odd cases, he spends his days in doing something he does not want to do because he is paid to do it. Nay, there is another thing," this captious rhetorician will continue: "the man is not only doing what he does not like, but is generally doing things or making things that nobody else likes. No one is a whit happier for those millions and billions of pinheads; nor for being taught things he does not want to know; nor for having all the machine-made furniture and clothes and foreign foods and newspapers and cheap cigars. It supports a large population? Of course it does. And is it better for a country to be supporting forty million discontented and degraded human beings than to have only four million 'light-hearted and dignified'?"

Revolution has few adherents in Europe, fewest of all in England. We are a prosperous nation, a prudent nation; and perhaps live in more widespread comfort than any nation in history. If we are essentially less happy than simpler societies, which is possible, we are not likely to see it. The very essence of the trap of material civilization

is that the animal caught cannot draw back, but must go further and further in. If you compare Sir Gorgius Midas with the wildest Gaelic-speaking gillie of his remotest shooting-box, you may strongly suspect that in every true sense of the words the master is poorer, lower, stupider, unhappier and worse than his man. But you may be absolutely sure that Sir Gorgius will not consent to change places with him.

And in the second place, it is probably also true that, of all the great writers who have preached a return to simplicity, from Diogenes to Tolstoy, not one has really shown us any road that leads there.[1]

If there is one ideal more than another characteristic of this century in Europe it is what we may crudely describe by the one word Philanthropy. Philanthropy is not only a vaunted motive like fairness, impartiality, desire for justice and the like: it is a really active force. Now of course, in saying that philanthropy as a professed public force is new and characteristic of this century, one does not for a moment mean that the thing itself is new. It is based on primeval instincts: the being below the threshold himself is full of sympathy: he is a member of a herd: and men have cared for their suffering fellow-men ever since human society began. The really remarkable thing about modern philanthropy is, I venture to think, that it has become secular and motiveless. Both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages there was a great deal of charity in various forms; but it was all associated with religion or patriotism or the like, and its apparent unselfishness and "irrationality" explained away. It is one of the strongest characteristics of human nature to try earnestly, by hook or by crook, to explain its own unselfish actions—as well as its selfish or malignant actions—by some so-called rational theory. It is a great advance in self-consciousness that we have, in private life at least, accustomed ourselves to the idea that it is quite natural for a man strongly to

[1] Of course this argument would be very differently phrased if written in 1921, after the bloody failures of so many revolutions: but I leave the passage as it stood in 1900.

dislike the notion of other men suffering pain, and gladly to pay money or take trouble to prevent their doing so.

It is then an ideal held, and largely acted upon, by many people, to keep looking out always for extreme cases of human suffering and to spend their lives in alleviating them. It is perhaps the noblest, perhaps also the most fruitful, ideal now acting in public life. It is so powerful that it is often attacked; constantly of course counterfeited. Its dangers are the dangers of all generous emotion, lack of knowledge and lack of discretion. For instance, one particular form of this spirit has lately been prominent, the desire for active crusades in relief of distressed or oppressed communities under foreign governments. It is by no means a thing to sneer at, this generous enthusiasm. There is vastly more danger to humanity from lack of sympathy than from excess of sympathy; and if these movements are sometimes to be condemned, it must be not for caring too much about the oppressed people, but for not caring sufficiently about something else. It is not the too vivid imagination; it is the lack of imagination, here as elsewhere, now as always, that makes mischief. However, I have noted down a list—probably incomplete—of those nations which I have seen condemned in English newspapers during the last few years, as deserving for various reasons an immediate crusade against them. These nations are Turkey, Greece, Venezuela, the Afghans, Italy, Spain, the Cubans, the Chinese, Morocco, the Kafirs, Russia, France, Germany and the United States of America! It is perhaps due to oversight that I have found no one just at present who wishes to make war on Austria. The rage felt by divers persons was in some cases mere patriotic "Hooliganism": in most cases, I should say, it was a really generous emotional force backed by masses of false information. It is so easy to get false information about any foreign Power; we get reams of it every day about France; and so enormously difficult to get true information or even the preliminary knowledge that makes true information valuable. For instance, one of the chief causes of the proposed crusades against the French has been that we did not know the system on which evidence is given in

a French court. Our English system is to give the witness as little scope as possible; to allow him merely to answer direct and strictly relevant questions from a friendly lawyer, and then to let loose a hostile lawyer to confound him. The French plan is to encourage the witness to say all that is in his mind, to draw him out and not to frighten him; and to have all questions asked by the mouth of the impartial President of the Tribunal. I have no power of comparing the effectiveness and fairness of the two systems; but in every single French trial that is reported in England at any length, several of our newspapers go into hysterics because the witnesses are not examined by counsel. And when English trials are reported in France, my French friends tell me, there is equal indignation, first because the questions are asked by people who are not impartial, and secondly—this is an odd point—because the Judge and not the counsel for the defence has the last word before the jury retire.

This rather commonplace fact is one reason why crusading philanthropy is so often the cause of harm; another is that philanthropy alone cannot start a crusade. It is only when the crusade coincides with the material interest of some influential group of people that it can be carried out. If financiers and officials disapprove, it is powerless. Let us look at this point closer. The passion of philanthropy, the hatred of oppression, provides throughout the country a great mass of people ready to take fire rapidly at a tale of wrong; ready also, one must confess, to believe the tale of wrong without much sifting of evidence. This is dangerous, but it might not do much harm except for one circumstance. Who is it who have the power of telling these tales of wrong and so stirring up the country? Who can criticize or expose such stories if they are false? Obviously the newspapers—the newspapers which support opposite political parties or are the property of rival capitalists. It is often a fortunate thing that rival capitalists are apt to hate one another! As long as this opposition goes steadily on, newspapers exercise a great deal of mutual criticism and bring out, both intentionally and unintentionally, a vast quantity of trustworthy in-

formation. But if ever the party system fails, or if ever the handful of men who own all the great Dailies happen to coincide in their interests or their prejudices, then Heaven help the nation that is dependent upon them for its facts!

Even in the most favourable circumstances, when proprietors and wire-pullers slumber and no sinister influences are at work, how far in general is a newspaper calculated to keep a nation reasonable or informed of the truth? About as well as loose cannon on a ship's deck are calculated to serve the ship for ballast. When the ship is steady all is well. At the first heel to port, the cannon charge at the port bulwarks: if she veers to starboard, back to starboard run the guns.

Consider the essence of what a newspaper is. It is a great financial concern, with say £250,000 of capital, depending for its very life on its advertisements, while its advertisements depend on its circulation. It is bound every morning to say things that please some 500,000 people (or more, if possible), and if it fails to please them it dies! What a tremendous undertaking that is! To please 500,000 different people every morning: and to please them, too, better than any other paper at the same price. It is difficult to conceive how the thing is done. Only one part of it appears obvious: that if you are lucky enough to see some subtle prejudice, some wave of unreasoning passion growing and spreading among the public that you appeal to, then your chance has come; you know what your public will like to read. But if you miss that chance, if you try to correct their passions and contradict their errors—why who will pay you money for the pleasure of being corrected and contradicted every day at his breakfast?

From *The Times* and the *Journal des Débats* to the *Libre Parole* and *Daily Mail* the conditions of financial life for a newspaper are essentially the same. Let us analyse a favourable instance. *The Times* is an English paper costing 3d.; the *Journal des Débats*, a French paper costing 2d. Only rich people, as a rule, will pay 3d. or 2d. for a daily paper. So, as the *Journal des Débats* has to please

rich French people *The Times* is bound to please rich English people. It must confirm their faith in their own good qualities, it must praise the statesmen that they admire. It must find arguments to support what rich English people think, and to bring to pass what rich English people want. It must hurt the feelings and damage the reputations of rich English people's opponents, it must delay or prevent the Reforms which might make rich English people less rich. Besides this, of course, the man who pays 3d. for his newspaper will expect an exceptionally good newspaper. It must have a special abundance of information, of two sorts: accurate information on the things where its public will be pleased with *bona fide* knowledge: carefully doctored information where the naked facts are damaging or unpalatable. There must be correspondents and a complete organization all over the world, to publish those facts which rich English people would on the whole like published, to conceal, twist or ignore the facts which rich English people do not care to be told.

On the other hand, living as it does in great publicity, and appealing to a highly educated class, it must be in general a well-written and well-behaved journal; and it ought never to be so grossly inaccurate or unfair or inconsistent as to create an obvious and damaging scandal or to shock the feelings of its own partisans. The *man* who writes is, of course, every bit as good and as conscientious as the man who makes boots or who preaches sermons. But the newspaper is different from the journalist. The man has his own beliefs and his sense of honour: he can remain silent when he will, can feel shame, can face unpopularity or money loss. But the Thing has no beliefs nor sense of honour, and if it does not make money it dies. If Brown's views, as printed yesterday, gave displeasure; let Jones's opposite views be printed to-morrow. The paper will not turn pink because it has changed!

You can think of exceptions to all these sayings. One knows of newspapers that have preached unpopular causes, that have taken their readers to task and made them face unpleasant facts, that have been willing to lose money and to endure persecution. That is only to say—and this is

the thought that I fain would close with—that in the teeth of all material opposition, in defiance of all the subterranean influences of instinct there are men who work and suffer for things they believe to be good. They may be right in their beliefs and they may be wrong. It is absurd to say that the world is wicked, and that those against the world are sure to be right. "When in temper and where his own interest was not concerned," it was said of a famous Lord Chief Justice, "When in temper and where his own interest was not concerned, my Lord Jeffreys became the Bench with uncommon dignity." Much the same compliment can be paid to the public voice of masses of men. If they know the main facts and are disinterested, the verdict of the majority will be just. But on nearly all questions that stir men's hearts or try their mettle, questions where a class judges between itself and another class, still more where a nation judges between itself and another nation, in such tribunals we must not look for a disinterested verdict. One of the litigants is absent; the court is crowded with counsel denouncing him: and the voices under the threshold are bitter and tyrannous and strong. The voices are a little nobler in the case of a nation than they are in the case of a man: in the case of a nation struggling for its freedom or claiming only such rights as are compatible with the same rights in other nations, the voices may be almost entirely noble. At the worst they say "*we*" instead of "*I*," and that is a great difference. But that very advantage makes them more dangerous, plausible and reckless in their essential claims. The man whose self-consciousness could be on the alert against his own selfish instincts, has often no suspicion of the injustice of his national instincts. In every nation of Europe from England and France to Russia and Turkey, in almost every nation in the world from the Americans to the Chinese and the Finns, the same whisper from below the threshold sounds incessantly in men's ears. "We are the pick and flower of nations: the only nation that is really generous and brave and just. We are above all things qualified for governing others: we know how to keep them exactly in their place without weakness and without cruelty. Other nations may have fine characteristics

but we only are normal and exactly right. Other nations boast and are aggressive, we are modest and claim only what is our barest due, though we cannot help seeing our own general superiority, and every unprejudiced observer admits that our territories ought to be enlarged. We are above all things reasonable. The excellence of our rule abroad is proved in black and white by the books of our explorers, our missionaries, our administrators and our soldiers, who all agree that our yoke is a pure blessing to those who bear it. It is only envious faddists and lying foreigners who dare to dispute the fact." Expansionists, Nationalists, Chauvinists, Irredentists, Pan-slavists, German Colonials,—how absurd they seem to us in every country but our own. Yet in every country they form, backed by the undercurrents of national life, a strong and persistent force, valuable if controlled, dangerous if gratified, and fraught with all the elements of explosion when other danger is in the air.

There is also—not perhaps in every country, but in most countries of Europe, a small party which does not believe in the supra-normal rights of its own countrymen, which values goodwill more than glory, and judges of national honour by standards approaching those by which it judges of personal honour; which believes in international morality, in the co-operation of nations for mutual help, in the ultimate Fraternity of Mankind.

A poor and despised class these in every community—dreamers, sentimentalists, doctrinaires, hypocrites, traitors, "friends of every country but their own"—they have at least one advantage over the ultra-patriots. It is an old rule of logic that "truth by truth is never contradicted." But the "patriots" of one country by the "patriots" of every other are contradicted always in every item of their creed. Those who are called "friends of every country but their own" are at least friends of almost all humanity, and in practice are often the best friends of their own country also. And they agree with one another. In every country of Europe they are pleading on the whole for the same causes and upholding the authority of the same tribunal—

the disinterested judgment of each man's conscience in the first place; and, as a Court of Appeal, whenever it is attainable, not the voice of one class, not the voice of one nation, but the disinterested verdict of civilized Humanity.

Few in each separate country, they are many in all countries taken together. And they will need that thought to comfort them; for in their own homes they will have little popular support or official recompense. They will need often to search their hearts and to steel their courage; and often to remember that famous statesmen and writers and preachers are not necessarily blessed when all men speak well of them; for so did their fathers to the false prophets.[1]

[1] See Preface, p. 7.

IX

ORBIS TERRESTRIS[1]

§ 1.

ALL those of us who have listened to the voices of the great philosophers of antiquity are familiar with their famous conception of the universe as One Great City of Gods and Men. That conception became the formative principle of most of the higher thought of the Roman Empire. It lay at the centre of their ethics, interpreting the duty of man towards all creation as identical with the duty of a patriotic citizen towards the city or country in whose love and service he lives. At the centre of their religion, inasmuch as God was the King and Founder of this City, and His will both the cause of its being and the force which guided it towards its good. At the centre of their political theory, since the good governor was he who, losing all thought of his own special interests, made himself the instrument of the divine world-purpose, the "minister of the providence of God," *ὑπουργὸς τῆς θείας προνοίας*. It held the educated world at the time of the beginnings of Christianity, and for the most part passed without much change into the shell of the new religion, at least on its more philosophic side. The greater number of our common religious metaphors are apparently derived from it: for instance, the use of 'high' and 'low' in a metaphorical sense, of 'Providence,' 'Free Will,' 'conscience,' 'humanity,' 'compassion,' and the like.

For this great ethical conception was accompanied, as most philosophies are, by a certain orthodox or generally accepted theory of the physical universe. And Mr. Edwyn

[1] A Lecture delivered to the Geographical Association, 1920.

Bevan (*Stoics and Sceptics*, pp. 109–118) has pointed out how beautifully the two theories fitted one another. We should probably say that, speaking roughly, the moral theory was true, whereas the physical theory was demonstrably false. But all the same they fitted.

It was a delightfully clear and definite and intellectually manageable universe which formed the One Great City. The earth was the physical centre, and man was the moral centre, directly related to God inasmuch as his soul was an effluence or emanation of God. The planets went round and round, on courses which were mathematically worked out on a highly complicated hypothesis with an extremely small margin of error. The primitive conceptions of "up" and "down" had not been disturbed: Heaven was up above. You could see it shining on a clear night, the place where the pure souls, purged of grossness and therefore naturally grown lighter, have risen to the height which corresponded with their specific gravity, and pass their age-long beatitude in contemplating the orbits of the stars, hearing the inexpressible music of the spheres in their courses, and enjoying the infinite beauty of God and the works of His creative thought. For God and His love was in all the material world, though perhaps not equally in every part; all the Kosmos was alive and sentient and united in its service of Him; and no evil could befall any one remote living creature but it vibrated through the whole; and the blessed ones were sad and the stars shivered in "*compassio*," or *συμπαθεία*, with the suffering of the smallest and meanest of their brethren. Such a universe was, in the old phrase, *ἐνσύνοπτον*—capable of being seen all together, or contemplated as one. And in such a world it was comparatively easy for man to see his own place and his neighbour's place, to realize their common duty, and to contemplate with confidence rather than terror the before and after of his conscious life.

"It was not the triumph of Christianity," says Mr. Bevan, "which was fatal to this view of the world," which he connects especially with the name of Posidonius. "Perhaps indeed the view never had more splendid expression than in the great Christian poem which came from

the heart of mediaeval Italy. What was fatal to it was the triumph of Copernicus. Man, if he limited his view to the material world, was once more a mote in an unfathomable universe. *'Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinies m'effraie.'* It was a few generations after Copernicus that Pascal wrote that. For centuries man had held in his hands a certain chart of the world which gave him assurance and comfort. And now that chart was discovered to be no good."

I will not attempt to follow the terrific consequences which, from the point of view of a mediaeval Christian or an ancient Stoic, flowed from the disestablishment of this anthropocentric universe. If Copernicus and Galileo were right, Man was not the centre of things, not the child or effluence of God; he was a species which had done well in a local struggle with other species: his history, as Mr. Balfour has phrased it, "a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meaner planets." He was an item of little account in the whole. That was not Heaven which he saw on the clear nights. It was a bottomless void. There was no higher and lower, there was no up and down. And in the vast scheme of biological evolution, where it was possible to descry what elements of conduct made for success and survival, they certainly did not seem to be, on the face of it, those recommended by the sages or the saints. I will not develop this line of thought or even criticize it, except to suggest that the really surprising thing seems to be that so utter a revolution in fundamental beliefs made so little difference, if any, in human conduct.

§ 2.

The thought which I do wish to pursue is quite a different one. I trust it will not appear merely fanciful. If we turn from a contemplation of the universe to that of the earth, and content ourselves with that limited though extensive field of knowledge, I am inclined to suggest that within recent times a process has taken place in our attitude towards the earth which is the exact opposite

to that which I have described in our ancestors' attitude towards the whole universe. Of course their belief was erroneous, and ours, we hope, is based on real knowledge. But, apart from that, I think it is fair to say that, while our ancestors were through scientific discovery deprived of their well-charted intelligible and righteous anthropocentric universe, and cast out naked into a blinding immensity, in the course of the last few generations civilized man has passed through a reverse process with respect to the Earth. The earth has become comparatively small, limited, well ascertained and, I may almost say, rational. Man is no longer a wanderer on the face of a globe full of unknown and unimagined spaces, inhabited by strange and unintelligible beings with whom he has nothing in common and who may unexpectedly destroy him. He is at home in the earth, as the old Stoic imagined himself to be at home in the universe. Our claim is a more modest one; but it looks as if, amid many failures and drawbacks, we were really accomplishing it. We have explored not the whole surface of the globe, but at least so much of it that we can be certain that there are no very great surprises awaiting us; nothing, for instance, greater than the surprises produced by Sir Aurel Stein from Eastern Turkestan. We know the stuff the earth is made of, its various strata, their qualities and their comparative age, we see the rivers and the mountain ranges in terms of intelligible processes. We are beginning to understand the type of human being likely to be turned out by a particular environment, and the sort of social customs and ways of behaviour that it produces. Our geography reaches at one end to geology and at the other to social anthropology. To use Aristotle's word again, we tread an Earth which is *εὐσύνοπτον*, capable of being conceived as one whole. We members of the modern civilized world cannot indeed, like the ancient Stoic, imagine ourselves an integral element in the life of the stars, so that our soul is of the same fire that makes them shine, while its suffering flecks them with darkness; but we can, and I think do, regard ourselves as acting over large parts of the earth as "*ὑπουργοὶ τῆς θείας προνοίας*," ministers of the Divine Providence, and I hope that we

can at the same time begin to say in a clearer sense than was possible to the ancients, *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto.*

Of course, in pursuing this line of thought, I do not forget that I am for the moment talking of mankind as if it consisted of philosophers or intellectuals or geographers. I do not forget that the earth is full of what Nietzsche calls " backward-thinking men " and of men in whose life thought plays altogether a negligible part. They are the majority. It may be that they govern us in real life; but we need not let them interrupt our thoughts.

We are becoming at home in the world. If you look back in history you find at every epoch or in every society that there is a sort of precinct within which the world is understood or at least understandable, and outside of which rage the unknown heathen. There is the Hellenic world, within which there are doubtless many wicked and hateful persons, but still they are Hellenes and have customs upon which you can calculate. Their speech may be unintelligible to you, but at least it is a proper language. Outside are the *barbaroi* making noises like birds, and capable of anything. Many of them, no doubt, very wise and virtuous, but somehow not ever people that you can be at home with. A philosopher like Plato tries to humanize the usages of war; a publicist like Isocrates tries to establish a general international concord. But both of them stop at the limits of the Hellenic world, and know that, for practical purposes, it is no good talking about such things with barbarians. To the men of the Middle Ages the precinct was Christendom; within reigned, ideally at least, though subject to infinite allowances for the difficulties of real life, the law of Christ; outside were Jews and infidels, whose ways no one could understand or wished to understand. And we know that at the present day a Neapolitan who is rebuked for cruelty to animals defends himself at once on the ground that *Non sono Cristiani* . . . a point on which the northern nations as a rule do not agree with them.

Of course it would be absurd to pretend that there was only one precinct with a sharp edge, outside which were only the rejected. There were always no doubt several: nowa-

days there are very many precincts indeed, which shade insensibly one into another. But this multiplication of minor precincts, I think, is the way in which the original primitive barrier breaks down. Not so very long ago a man in England who trespassed outside the bounds of his native village had to blow a horn as he went to give fair warning, unless he wished to be killed at sight. As that sharp barrier breaks and a man obtains knowledge of the next village, the next county, then of people who speak a different language, wear different clothes, have a different religion or a different colour to their skin, there may remain plenty of conscious differences and repugnances, but—with thoughtful men at least—there will not come a definite line beyond which are outlaws, between whom and yourself there are no human bonds and no moral obligation.

The essential mark of the foreigner as such, of the *barbaros*, of the heathen, is a difference which is not understood and does not explain itself. I remember, as a boy, loathing a certain man, a Frenchman, who had a particular kind of pouch under his eyes. It seemed to me to connote some indescribable wickedness. Then some one told me that it was a swelling of the lacrymal gland produced by exposure to a tropical sun; and I loathed him no more. Why does an "uncircumcized Philistine" seem such a sinister being? Why in Campbell's mention of

> The whiskered Pandour and the fierce Hussar,

does it seem at least as reprehensible of the Pandour to be whiskered as it is of the Hussar to be fierce, if not more so? Why in general is it some superficial and harmless characteristic that is generally in literature seized upon in a foreigner as a ground for shuddering at him? It is, I think, that by a process of unconscious reasoning you feel that he is doing something that you would not do without a very strong motive, and that his motive is unknown. With increased knowledge of the world we get to see the reasons for the differences of custom, and they cease to be so upsetting. It is the same with physical characteristics. Europeans are often conscious of the smell of negroes, and

dislike negroes accordingly. But a very little anthropology teaches us that all human beings smell; we may find, as a friend of mine did, that a Japanese waiting maid is apt to fall in a faint at the smell of a number of Europeans and Americans sitting at dinner. That alters the state of the case. When knowledge and understanding come in, the peculiar sense of horror connected with the unknown vanishes.

Observe, it is not a question of hating and loving. All really vigorous hatred is directed towards your neighbours, relatives and rivals, whom you know and constantly rub against; and the same is true of vigorous affection. We are considering now merely the question of a precinct within which the moral law holds, and an outer darkness in which it does not. The case is put very clearly in an interesting passage of the philosopher Porphyry, who bases all duty and righteousness on the Logos—the Word or Reason—and deduces quite directly that a man has a complete system of duties towards all beings which share in the Logos, but no duty at all, and no power of being just or unjust, towards those which do not. It is that fence which, I think, our increase of geographical knowledge has, I will not say, merely broken down, but, as far as human beings are concerned, removed off the edges of the map of the world.

§ 3.

At this point a critic may point out certain facts which seem to give to my reasoning the lie direct. At the present moment there are more precincts or ring fences set up in the world, with fellow creatures inside and mere vermin outside, then there have been for a great many centuries. In mere pig-headed bestial rejection of the foreigner, this country and most others have of late sometimes sunk to a point of degradation which would tempt our more enlightened grandfathers to disown us if they knew of it. That may be true enough. It is, of course, due to the war. The strain of being allies in a long war is generally more than human nature can support. And though the contrary

strain of being official enemies tends, in the actual fighter, to produce a reaction of kindliness, still the sufferings and cruelties of this last war were so far beyond common anticipation that they have left a legacy of hate behind them. This condition, I would say, is altogether exceptional and will pass.

Yet that answer to my supposed critic is not sufficient. For the fact is that inter-racial contempt and dislike were on the whole growing and not diminishing in the century or century and a half before the war.

Think of Sir Joshua Reynolds' noble picture of the Prince of Otaheite, now in the National Gallery, and compare it with our current conception of a South Sea Islander to-day. Think of the romance and majesty with which the mediaeval travellers endow the rulers of Cathay or the Indies, and the respect almost amounting to awe with which they speak of Arabian science. Think of the romantic poems written in the eighteenth century about African princes treacherously enslaved. Or, to take one specific contrast, consider on the one hand the eloquent pages about Africa in Condorcet's famous little book, *Esquisse du Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, written in the midst of the French Revolution. Condorcet has been discussing the infinite obstacles put in the way of human progress by the complicated inheritances of old societies, in which prejudice and injustice are so deeply rooted that they cannot be removed without a dangerous surgical operation. He expatiates on the great possibilities of advance that there would be if statesmen or educators with the enlightenment of the revolutionary age in their minds were to set to work upon an unspoiled people in a state of nature. And there, he says, is Africa waiting! Let all the nations of Europe recognize their joint responsibility. Let them take Africa "as a sacred trust for civilization"—the phrase is not his, but it exactly expresses his idea—and see what heights the backward but unspoilt natives can attain. He believes that it can and will be done. All that is necessary is firmly to exclude from Africa the speculator, the trader, the soldier, and—I fear he also added—the priest.

That is one side of the contrast; the other is the history

of Africa as it has really been since Condorcet's day. It is described for instance in Mr. Leonard Woolf's *History of Empire and Commerce in Africa*; and Mr. Woolf, I should say, was a man who almost entirely agreed with Condorcet's general views. If ever one were tempted to accept Mr. Balfour's description of the life-history of the human race as "a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meaner planets," it would be when one reads of the dealings of the white races with the coloured races.

How shall we sum up the process and explain this puzzling and reactionary change that seems to have taken place? I think in the Middle Ages there was no clear superiority in the strength and material resources of the Western nations as compared with the Eastern. In science, indeed, the Arabs were definitely our superiors. When it came to a fight the power of the West was by no means certain of victory. Even in the sixteenth century it is not certain who would have won the fight if it had come. There was an embassy in the time of Elizabeth led by Sir Thomas Rowe to the Court of the Great Mogul, and we possess Rowe's account of it. I think it would be true to say that the Elizabethan is struck by the strangeness of the Mogul culture, and deplores its lack of Christian doctrine, but he treats it consistently with respect, and the respect seems to be largely due to the formidable military power at the disposal of the Great Mogul. It reminds a classical scholar of that other embassy to an earlier Mogul potentate, Attila, the Hun, described in the famous fragments of the Byzantine Priscus, and epitomized in the 34th chapter of Gibbon. Priscus despised the Huns as barbarians; he put them outside the pale as heathens. He loathed them for their devastating cruelty. But one can see an element of awe tinging his curiosity, and eventually a deep involuntary reverence for his terrific entertainer.

What was it that chiefly altered the balance between West and East, between the white Christian European culture and that of the East, of the coloured people, of the Moslem and the Pagan, of Asia and Africa? Roughly speaking, it was mechanical invention and the industrial revolution. The wars of the last half of the eighteenth

century had a great effect. They showed how easily troops with Western arms could beat those without. And by the end of the nineteenth it is taken for granted that white troops with artillery and machine guns can deal with ten times their number of coloured troops who have not had access to the arsenals of the West. That is obvious; but I think it would probably be true to conjecture that an economic change had also taken place as powerful in its effect as the change in military efficiency. Certainly in the eighteenth century and earlier it was a common experience for Western imaginations to be dazzled by the riches of the East. And we know how the first generation or two of Nabobs, heavy with the spoils of the pagoda tree, upset the course of politics in England. Whereas at present it is the English or American traveller who dazzles the Eastern peoples with his rich apparatus and his power of drawing cheques. The wealth which imposes upon the imagination is not in the East, but as far west as London, or even as New York or Chicago. This change of proportion has been brought about chiefly by a process of adding to one side while leaving the other alone. But there has been also a definite depression of the trade of the East. We hear little of it, for obvious reasons. But here and there we find small pieces of evidence. Dr. E. D. Clarke, a Scotch physician, who published his travels in the Near East in 1801, mentions his visit to a large village called Ampelaki on Mount Olympus, which was a centre for the making and dyeing of Turkey Red. It used to do a thriving trade with Central Europe, but when he passed through business had almost ceased. The local handworkers had been hopelessly undercut by the machines of Lancashire. There must have been a very widespread impoverishment of the non-European centres of culture from causes of this sort.

The White Man of the late nineteenth century had reached, except in a few places, a position of absolutely towering superiority over the coloured man. A white man with a machine gun or a bombing aeroplane cannot be expected to take quite seriously the most strong and skilful swordsman of Asia, so long as he has nothing but his sword. And

a member of a big English or American firm, with vast credits at his command, cannot help smiling at dignified Eastern or African elders whose whole fortune would not buy the contents of the smallest suit-case which he takes for week-ends. And he feels justified in his consciousness of superiority, because after all the people are not Christians, and have no bathrooms or trains.

It is no longer a case of fighting; not of hard fighting nor yet of easy fighting. It is a case of eating. It sometimes seems as if the West, like some enormous Saurian, some alligator of antediluvian magnitude, had fixed its gaze upon the coloured civilizations in various parts of Africa and the East, till its slow brain gradually rose to the conception that it was hungry and they were good to eat. Then the great masticators set to their work. Of course, in saying this I am leaving out of account a very important element in the intercourse of West and East, or of white man and coloured. I am leaving out the work of missionaries, the work of independent philanthropists, and, most important of all, the work of good Government servants. These last have often been in the full Stoic sense "Ministers of the Divine Pronoia." They have always checked and modified this process; sometimes they have completely transformed it. I am thinking for the moment of the process as it would be if these influences of conscience and reason were not working, or as it has been in places where they were not brought into play.

§ 4.

Now I realize that, as the President, even the very temporary and unworthy president, of a learned society, I ought at this point to say that I will not speculate about the future. But, unfortunately, that is just what I want to do. I cannot help doing it, and I must merely ask you to excuse me until you obtain a more prudent president. The question is which of these two contrary tendencies which I have described, both greatly strengthened by recent events, is going chiefly to prevail? The one is the

economic exploitation of the helpless territories and nations by the strong ones, a process which has enormous historical impetus behind it and is at this particular moment stimulated by the exceptional economic hunger of the European world; the other is that consciousness of the Earth as One Great City, and that acceptance of duty towards our fellow-man which, if my opening observations were justified, may now be normally expected of a civilized and educated man. This latter conception is well on its way to be an integral part of British public opinion, though of course in particular people its intensity will vary with their power of imagination, and its geographical limits perhaps with their degree of knowledge. I have not the smallest doubt that for some time there will be an attempt to run the two together. The determined money-hunter, who forms such an immensely powerful element in modern civilization, knows very well how to gild with moral and religious phrases the projects that promise the largest dividends. But that attempt cannot last. The conflict is too sharp between the two principles. Indeed the lists are already set and the issue joined.

Out of that strange chaos of passions which possessed the world at the close of the Great War, producing at the same time and through the same human agents the blockade of the ex-enemy Powers in time of peace and the Covenant of the League of Nations, the most startling object which emerged was Article XXII of the Covenant, the Article on Mandates. It reminds me of a phrase used by Byzantine bishops, in an excess of humility, to describe themselves as elevated to their Bishoprics, not by Divine Providence, but "by divine inadvertence." There must have been a good deal of inadvertence, I will not say in heaven, but perhaps on the earth and under the earth, when Article XXII slipped through the Peace Conference. At a moment when the appetite of our great Saurian was whetted to the utmost, when the prey lay ready before it to be devoured, Article XXII swept in like the Harpies, and seemed to snatch the food out of its jaws.

An agreement which might have been drawn up by the most wholehearted idealists in Great Britain, which might

have been drafted in Exeter Hall and corrected by the Aborigines' Protection Society, which would not at that time have had a ghost of a chance of passing into law in any British, French, German, Italian, or American Parliament, has been signed by the representatives of forty-eight nations, and is part, we may almost say, of the statute law of the world. Of course it directly affects only the new territories transferred in consequence of the war. It will act on the other territories only by way of example. But in the new territories the idea of possession is definitely abolished and that of trusteeship substituted; the well-being and even the development of the native races is recognized as a "sacred trust for civilization." The Mandatory is debarred from making personal gain out of his trust. Not only the slave trade, but even the arms traffic and the liquor traffic are forbidden; the military training of the natives, except for local police purposes, is forbidden. And, by another clause, even the trade and commerce of the territories must be open on equal terms to all members of the League, which will probably include, if not the whole world, at least the principal trade rivals of the Mandatory. And, to clinch the matter, an annual report must be sent in to the League of Nations to show how each Mandatory is carrying out his trust, and submitted to the scrutiny of a special Mandates Committee of the League.

Will this wonderful Article be sincerely and honestly carried out by all the Mandatory Powers? Well, probably not quite. The interested parties will exercise overpowering pressure to prevent anything of the sort. As a matter of fact, the Great Powers, while remaining firmly in military possession of the territories, have spent the last two years in refusing to accept any draft Mandates proposed to them. The League, disheartened, at last asked them to draw up their own Mandates and submit them to it for approval. This also they refused. And the League eventually asked them to draw up their own Mandates and act upon them, without submitting them to anybody, subject only to the Annual Report. This they accepted, but did not carry out. By the time the Assembly met, no draft mandates

were ready. Then came an unanswerable protest from America; a protest equally unanswerable from Germany; an indignant series of letters from the Mandates Sub-Committee of the Assembly. And eventually Great Britain produced two Mandates, for Palestine and Mesopotamia, and France one, for Syria . . . which were laid before the Committee with the express stipulation that no public comment should be made upon them! Perhaps they are not documents of which their authors are proud. The public will know all about them in time. And then the fight will come.

The interesting point of the situation is that the protest on behalf of the natives is no longer left to small and unpopular bodies, chiefly in England, consisting of a few missionaries and Quakers and ex-officials and stray philanthropists. It is definitely taken up by the Assembly of the League, which has not only passed a severe censure on the conduct of the Great Powers, but has laid down unanimously two principles which the Powers were and are specially seeking to evade: that no Mandatory may use its position to acquire monopolies and special economic advantages, and that no Mandatory may increase its own military strength by means of its mandated populations. The reports have to be sent in to the League before next September.

There are the lists set. There is the fight that is coming; and I hope it will be a handsome one. I once in Australia lived in the house of a man who kept a bulldog, and who received a present of a small native bear. I was present at the scene of their introduction to one another. The owner explained carefully that they must be friends. He stroked them together, he gave them food together, he took them together for exercise in the garden. And all went well. The bulldog had a high sense of obedience and duty. But at the end, when it retired to its basket, it gazed miserably and long at the bear, with tears running in streams down its cheeks. It was so very hard not to kill him and eat him. That is how our Saurian will feel if the better elements in the Great Powers, backed by all the disinterested opinion in the rest of the world, succeed ultimately in imposing their will, like a bond of conscience,

on the forces of uncontrolled and irresponsible covetousness which otherwise will plunder the world.

§ 5.

For the Geographer the interesting point is that not merely are the Great Powers, by means of their increased geographical discoveries, able to make, and indeed forced to make, decisions about the whole Orbis Terrarum. The Orbis Terrarum itself is meeting in committee, and has enough mutual knowledge among its parts to be able to make at least a beginning of deciding about its own future. It is not merely that you and I can, in contemplation, survey the world from China to Peru. China and Peru are both members of the Assembly of the League, and have shown themselves useful members.

There is a motive for which I do not know the exact psychological name—let us call it professional interest—which is very powerful in human affairs. It is the motive which makes a man or a committee interested in the success of the job at which they are working. If once a man becomes a detective, he will be eager to track down law-breakers. He may start with no ill-will whatever against the particular breach of the law concerned, or indeed against any breach of the law, but he will soon be working keenly at his chase. It is a common experience in municipal and other bodies, that a man who is dangerously energetic in spending money if he is on a spending committee, will often be a ferocious economizer if he is put in charge of the accounts. If I remember rightly, there is a letter of Sir Robert Peel's describing what anguish it was to him to see badly managed a department which he had organized, or knew how to organize, well. Now, I venture to say that no one can read the debates in the recent Assembly of the League at Geneva without realizing that we have there—for the first time in history—a representative assembly of able men drawn from all quarters of the globe united by a professional interest in the welfare, concord, and wise guidance of the world as a whole. Some few individuals

may have seemed to have a subcurrent of national feeling which they never forgot; but for the most part, the persons speaking about typhus, or the arms traffic, or the traffic in women and children, or the prevention of various wars, really had their minds devoted to the thing they were talking about. They were really thinking internationally. They were genuinely interested in the public good of the world. And this, not because they were all more high-minded men than are normally elected to national parliaments, but because the common good of the world was the business on which they were employed, and had set up in them the normal stimulus of professional interest. The same phenomena can be detected, though not in such glaring colours, in the ordinary work of the Secretariate. We have there, set up in the heart of Europe, a large body of able men, drawn from all nations, but united by the fascination of a common cause and a common professional interest, which is the securing of co-operation between the nations and the maintenance not only of peace but of goodwill.

All causes which depend for their success on the continuous operation of lofty motives are foredoomed to failure. Good government consists largely in so arranging matters that the great serried masses of ordinary everyday motives reinforce the good ones. In a well-governed society a certain decent level of social behaviour is generally maintained because things are deliberately so arranged that it is easier to maintain it than not, except when the pressure of passion or temptation to the square inch is unusually great.

Now if the future treatment of Africa and the East were merely dependent on a struggle between two forces, the desire of the exploiter to exploit and the desire of disinterested third parties, on ideal grounds, that he should not do so, the outlook would not be doubtful. The first is a full-blooded and intense passion, and the second a pale and ineffective one. But the struggle is not going to be so simple as that. Political and moral contests are not to be worked out as a mere parallelogram of forces. Or if they are, we must allow for such an infinite number of forces, pushing, pulling, inhibiting, suggesting, appealing

to so many different elements in human nature, that the parallelogram becomes too complicated to construct. Now it seems to me that, under its present constitution, the League has succeeded to a remarkable degree in mobilizing for the cause of justice and good government a very strong phalanx of ordinary work-a-day motives, of the kind that rule an ordinary man in daily life. It has its secretariate permanently sitting and professionally devoted to the cause in question. It has the Assembly, which is led by every motive of professional interest and *amour propre*, to see that it is not made a fool of, and that the principles of the Covenant, of which it is the supreme guardian, are carried out. And many a Government which has hitherto been worried by strong private interests into conniving, against its better instincts, in various methods of semi-slavery or expropriation or industrial exploitation of its subject peoples, will in future find itself turned in the opposite direction by the still greater and more searching worry of having to explain under cross-examination before the eyes of an unsympathetic commission representing fifty nations why it has omitted to perform various duties to which it was pledged, and why it has done various discreditable things which it had solemnly promised not to do. The world has not yet sounded or measured the immense power of mere publicity. I do not mean advertisement in newspapers; I mean the mere knowledge that your actions are to be known and discussed, and particularly that you will have to answer questions about them face to face with your questioner. Publicity is the only new weapon which the League possesses, but if properly used it may well prove to be about the most powerful weapon that exists in human affairs.

On the whole I think it looks as if we were moving in the direction of realizing upon the earth something like the One Great City of Gods and Men. It will have, like other cities, its bad citizens as well as its good. But with the progress of knowledge, assisted by certain special lessons which have been lately learned at considerable cost, I think it will become within a measurable time almost impossible for a decent and intelligent statesman to profess absolute

indifference to the welfare or suffering of other parts of the human race. To prove the point, one need only read the report of the recent International Financial Conference summoned at Brussels by the League of Nations, in which a number of bankers and business men and financial experts representing many different nations lay down, for practical reasons, a theory of international duty and a scheme of international co-operation which, ten years ago, would have been thought extreme in a club of radical idealists. I think we shall achieve some approach to the One Great City: that is, I think that some consciousness of ultimate solidarity among the peoples of the earth has really begun to penetrate the minds of ordinary practical politicians; and secondly, that a sense of the moral duty of the strong and advanced nations to help the weak and backward, instead of being confined to disconnected groups of unimportant people in various countries, is now definitely and comprehensively recognized in a great public treaty, to which all the most interested Governments have attached their signatures, and will be regularly supported and asserted by the greatest existing organ of international opinion.

Let us not look to force. Force is against us: and there is no sillier spectacle than the sight of the weak appealing to force against the strong. We have no force. We have only the power of putting facts and questions before the public opinion of the world. Then the world, that is to say, chiefly, the electorates of the great nations, will be able to say whether they wish their Governments to do justly or unjustly, to be world-plunderers or world-builders.

I have read in the last few days two documents. One was the Report of a Commission on the territory which used to be German New Guinea, and which is now mandated to the Australian Commonwealth. There were two reports; one signed by a majority of the commissioners, showing how the natives could be made to work, and the territory developed like an estate, and the profits all diverted to Australian firms; the other, signed by the Chairman, showing how very differently the colony must be administered if it was desired to fulfil the spirit of Article XXII of the Covenant and the best traditions of Australian

policy. I cannot guess which side will win.[1] But at least the lists are set.

The other document was the Report of Committee 6 of the Assembly of the League, the Committee which deals with Mandates, its correspondence with the Council, and its remarks upon the conduct pursued hitherto by certain great Powers.

There, too, the lists are set. At present no doubt the forces of reaction are far the stronger; but they are uneasy and alarmed. They do not like dishonouring their signatures in public. They do not like the remarks of outsiders, such as Germany and America. They do not like the thought of facing the Assembly or any Commission which represents the Assembly's point of view with duties obviously unperformed and promises broken. Yet sooner or later the Assembly must be faced.

I make no prophecy about the issue. I do not even feel sure that on the particular point about which the first battle will rage the great exploiting Powers will certainly be in the wrong and the idealist critics in the right. But I do think we may expect to see, in a very few years, a political conflict of extraordinary interest and world-wide range, which will outwardly take the form of a lawyer's or politician's discussion as to the exact meaning and application of Articles VIII, XXII, and XXIII of the Covenant, but will really raise the problem whether all mankind are to be citizens of the One Great City, or whether some are still animals *ferae naturae*, which may legitimately be hunted for their skins.

[1] The majority won.

X

SATANISM AND THE WORLD ORDER[1]

IN an old novel, still famous and once widely popular, the writer, oppressed with the burden of evil in the world, gives to her heroine the name Consuelo, "Consolation," and makes her half-mad hero a descendant of a strange sect. He is one of those Bohemian Lollards who, despairing of any sympathy from God, threw themselves into the protecting arms of their fellow-outcast, fellow-sufferer, fellow-victim of persecution and slander, the Devil. Their word of salutation was: "The Injured One give you greeting," or "The Injured One give you blessing." And they made of the Injured One a figure rather resembling the suffering Christ, a champion of the poor and lowly, a Being more than persecuted, more than crucified, but differing from Christ inasmuch as he was no friend of Pope, priest or Emperor, and therefore presumably no friend of God; he was still unconquered and unreconciled. If the belief seems to us bizarre or even depraved, it can only be for a moment. The clue to it is that it is a belief of the persecuted and helpless, who know their own innocence and deduce the wickedness of their rulers. To these pious and simple mountain peasants, followers first of John Huss and Zyska, and then of leaders more ignorant and fiery, the world became gradually a place dominated by enemies. Every person in authority met them with rack and sword, cursed their religious leaders as emissaries of the Devil, and punished them for all the things which they considered holy. The earth was the Lord's, and the Pope and Emperor were the vicegerents of God upon the earth.

[1] The Adamson Lecture, delivered at Manchester University, October 1919.

So they were told; and in time they accepted the statement. That was the division of the world. On one side God, Pope and Emperor and the army of persecutors; on the other themselves, downtrodden and poor, their saintly leaders hunted like beasts, and, above all, their eternal comforter and fellow-rebel, that exiled Star of the Morning, cast into darkness and torment like his innocent children. Let them be true to him, and surely his day must come!

Satanism in this sense is perfectly intelligible, and may be strongly sympathetic. We need pay no attention to the mere name of Satan or Lucifer; the name is a mythological accident. The essence of the belief is that the World Order is evil and a lie; goodness and truth are persecuted rebels. In other forms the belief has been held by many Christian saints and martyrs, and notably by the author of the Apocalypse. But we should notice that it is diametrically opposed to the teaching of almost all the great moral philosophers. Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Kant and J. S. Mill, and Comte and T. H. Green, all argue or assume that there exists in some sense a Cosmos or Divine Order; that what is good is in harmony with this Order, and what is bad is in discord against it. I notice that one of the Gnostic schools in Hippolytus the Church Father (vii. 28) actually defines Satan as "The spirit who works against the Cosmic Powers"; the rebel or protestant who counteracts the will of the whole, and tries to thwart the community of which he is a member. Ancient philosophers are particularly strong on this conception of evil, and on the corresponding conception of human goodness as being the quality of a good citizen. The world or the universe is one community, or, as they call it, one city; all men, or perhaps all living things, are citizens of that city, and human goodness consists in living for its good. God's providence or foresight consists in providing the future Good of the Universe; and it is our business to be to the best of our powers ὑπουργοὶ τῆς θείας προνοίας, servants or ministers of the divine foresight. Thus goodness becomes identical with loyalty, or with what some of the persecuted Christians called πίστις, faithfulness. There is an army

of God, and there is an enemy. And the essential sin is rebellion or treason.

Loyalty is thus the central and typical virtue; but loyalty to what? So far we can only say it is loyalty to the Cosmic Process, or the Purpose of God, or the good of the whole, as representing that purpose. But in practice, for the ordinary human being who has no oddities or idiosyncrasies of belief, this central virtue takes the form of loyalty towards the most important active whole of which he is a member.

In practice, the good of any large society is accepted as sufficiently near to the Good of the Universe to justify a man's devotion to it. A man whose life was really devoted to the welfare of New York, assuming, of course, that his idea of the welfare of New York was reasonably adequate and sensible, would certainly count as a good man. It is speculatively possible that the good of the universe may demand the misery and degradation of the inhabitants of New York, but it is one of those possibilities which need not, in ordinary opinion, be taken seriously. *A fortiori*, a man who really devoted his life to the welfare of all the inhabitants of America or of the British Empire, or all the inhabitants of the German Empire, or, still more, the inhabitants of the ancient Roman Empire, would be accepted as a good man leading a good life by all but the eccentric or prejudiced. If a person of this type is blamed—such as Cecil Rhodes or Bismarck, or William II or Augustus—there is always an implication that his conception of what constituted the welfare of his whole was wrong. He professed, and perhaps thought, that he was promoting the welfare of his great society, whereas he was really doing something quite different: inflaming its ambitions, or flattering its vices, or the like.

The point of interest comes when one of these vast wholes begins to identify its own good with something which incidentally involves the evil of another whole, whether small or great. We most of us, for instance, look upon the late German Empire as an organization so hostile to humanity as a whole that it had to be destroyed. But it is worth noting that in any of these great organizations far

the greater expenditure of time and energy is devoted to the good of its members, to such ends as education, transport, industry, agriculture, government and the administration of justice; and the evil it does, even when it is enormous, is mostly either unconscious or else accidental. The clearest, and perhaps the most tragic, case is that of the Roman Empire.

If we try to enter into the mind of a good Roman official, like Pliny, for instance, as shown in his letters to Trajan, he seems to feel that the service of Rome was for him the nearest approach possible to the service of God, or the helping of the human race as a whole. Rome, he would say, had doubtless her imperfections; and not all Roman proconsuls were worthy of their high calling. But, when all deductions were made, the Roman Empire meant peace throughout the known world; it meant decent and fairly disinterested government; it protected honest men from thieves and robbers; it punished wrongdoers; it gave effective help to towns wrecked by blizzards or earthquakes, or to provinces where the crops had failed. It spread education and civilized habits; it put down the worst practices of savage superstition. And, if any improvement in the practice of governing human beings could be pointed out, on the whole a good Roman governor was willing to consider it. If Pliny had been asked what was the greatest calamity that could befall the human race, he would probably have answered, "The overthrow of the Roman Empire"; and it would have been hard to contradict him. One might have argued that, in nation after nation, Rome had crushed a native art and culture, and put in its place a very dull and mechanical civilization, with little life, or beauty, or power of growth; that it took the heart out of the local religions, and put in their place a dead official ceremonial. But such arguments would have been met with an incredulous smile, as similar arguments are met nowadays. Pliny would answer, very justly, that if the various subject nations all preferred Roman culture to their own, surely that must be because Roman culture was obviously superior. If they accepted the Roman official religion, it must be for the same reason. As a

matter of fact, he would add, the religion of *Roma Dea*, the acceptance of the spirit of the Roman Empire as something to be regarded with awe and love and worship, was the nearest approach to a truly philosophical religion that uncultured men could assimilate; and, after all, Rome never suppressed or injured any local religion that was not criminal in its practices. All that Rome asked was the recognition of a common brotherhood, a common loyalty, expressed in the simplest and most human way, by an offering of incense and prayer at the altar of *Roma Dea*, Rome the Divine Mother, or sometimes at that of the existing head of the State.

And then, as we know, certain odd people would not do it. It seems curious that so simple a point of difference could not be got over. I do not see why Jews or Christians need have refused to pray for the welfare of Rome, provided they did so at their own altars, nor why the magistrates should have made a difficulty about the particular altar used. But evidently the affair was badly managed at the beginning. And by the time we have any detailed evidence we find the Christians uttering curses and incantations against the Empire in place of prayers, and the Roman working classes trying by pogroms to stamp out such incredible wickedness. When people met secretly and prayed to an alien and hostile God to do ill to the whole Empire; when they called our holy Mother Rome a harlot riding on a wild beast and drunken with the blood of the saints; when they saw visions and uttered incantations fraught with the most appalling afflictions upon mankind that any mind can conceive, seals and bowls of poisoned blood, and Riders upon strange horses, who should eventually trample the whole Roman world beneath their feet until the blood of that wine-pressing should wash the horses' bridles, while the Christians receive rich rewards and sing for joy—by that time the average working man or peasant began to look about him for clubs and stones, and the worried magistrate to decide that this new Jewish sect must be registered as an illegal society.

The mental attitude of the Book of Revelation is almost exactly like that of the persecuted Bohemian sectaries in

Consuelo. The world and the rulers of the world are absolutely evil—not faulty men who make mistakes, but evil powers, hating all that is good and acting on earth as the representatives of evil gods: the earthly Cosmos is evil, and all that the righteous can desire is its utter destruction. This conception that the World Order may be definitely evil was, of course, not a new one. Four hundred years earlier, Athens had thrilled at Plato's conception of the ideal Righteous Man, who, coming to an unrighteous world, suffers every affliction, is bound and scourged and has his eyes burnt out, and at last is impaled or crucified, and yet is, on the whole, happy—i.e. he is a man you would like to be—because of his righteousness. Greek mythology itself possessed the traditional character of a divine rebel, Prometheus, who, for love of man, had defied the cruel Power which rules the world. The late and mystical Greek philosophers who were the founders of Gnosticism are eloquent on the badness of this world, and the malignity of the Powers who created it or who rule it. Such a view of the world as evil is, I think, seldom of any value as philosophy, but always of interest to the psychologist and the historian. When widespread, it is the result of some special and widespread unhappiness, either defeat and persecution or else of extraordinarily bad government. In isolated cases it may come merely from some sensitive idealism which pitches its hopes too high for human life to satisfy. It is the belief sometimes of the anchorite or the mystic; but normally it is the cry of the persecuted, the refugee, the sufferer of things past endurance, the victim of those Governments which are the enemies of their own people. It is never, I think, the belief of the good governor, the efficient public servant, or even the successful mechanic or man of business. But of that later: the point which I wish to lay stress on at this moment is a different one. It is that, unless I am mistaken, in every single case the man who believes that the order in which he lives is evil provides himself, either in this life or the next, with another order in which all is redeemed.

The writer of the Apocalypse looks forward, after the utter destruction of the hostile order of Rome, to a mil-

lennium upon earth, in which all the posts of authority are occupied by the faithful. Plato's righteous man, though in discord with the society which tortures him, is in harmony all the time with the true nature of things. Prometheus himself ultimately gains his point, and is reconciled to Zeus. The overpowering strength of this impulse in the persecuted, or unhappy, to project out of their own desires an imaginary order in which the injustices of the present order are corrected, a special Heaven in which the righteous are consoled, together with a special Hell in which the enemies of the righteous meet their deserts, is illustrated vividly in the apocalyptic literature of all persecuted faiths, both Christian and pagan. Persecution always generates vivid descriptions of Hell, the projection of righteous revenge unsatisfied. One of the most pathetic and amiable of these attempts to justify by imagination that which cannot be justified by the evidence is the theoretic optimism of the Neo-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean communities. They had not suffered much. They did not revel in visions of revenge or recompense: they merely argued *in vacuo*. Their fundamental doctrine was that the Cosmos, the Universe, was good. If it was not good all their system reeled into ruins. But the world, as they actually saw it and lived in it, seemed to them a mere mass of gross matter, rolling in error and delusion, and wisdom could only be attained by abstention from it. How can these positions be reconciled? By a method so simple that it leaves one almost awed at the childlike power of living in dreams by which the human mind protects itself against the thorns of life. "True," said these philosophers, "all of the world that we see is bad, all steeped in matter and in error. But what about the parts we do not see? If you could once get above the moon you would find it absolutely different. All those parts of the Universe about which we have no information are so extraordinarily and infinitely good, that the badness of the parts we do happen to know sinks into insignificance." It is as though a judge had to try a number of accused people, of whom some could not be caught; all those who were brought into court were found guilty of

various crimes, but the judge has such a strong inward conviction of the saintliness of those whom the police could not lay hands upon that he acquits the whole gang, and they leave the court without a stain on their character.

Quite absurd, I venture to say. And yet I think it is in essentials what I believe myself, and what we all believe. And I very much doubt whether human beings can go on living without some such belief. It is a matter of human psychology. But perhaps we do wrong in using the words "good" and "bad"; we really mean "friend or enemy," on our side or against us. The division between "friend" and "enemy" goes far deeper down into human nature than that between good and bad. If you read the sort of literature that I have been treating, the ancient apocryphal or pagan apocalypses and descriptions of Hell, you will not find on the whole that Hell is primarily the place for people who do not come up to the received moral standard; it is the place for the enemy. It is the place for him who now persecutes us, robs us, hangs us, burns us, makes us fight with wild beasts, and laughs the while. Let him wait and he will be made to laugh on the other side of his mouth! And if a third person explains that a particular enemy is a decent and sober person, a good husband and father, the statement is almost irrelevant, as well as almost unbelievable. You may hate a man because he is wicked; or you may think him wicked because you hate him. You may love a man because you think him good, or you may feel him to be, with all his faults, a splendid fellow because he likes you. But in either case the psychological ground fact is not a moral judgment, good or bad, but an instinctive gesture, Friend or Enemy.

And as soon as we see this, we see also how it is almost impossible not to believe that ultimately in the real battle of life the Cosmos is with us. You cannot belong wholeheartedly to the Labour Party, or the Jesuits, as the case may be, without believing that God is on the side of the Labour Party or the Jesuits. You cannot belong to Islam without believing that God is on the side of Islam. In the main, whatever majority may be against you now, and however hostile you may find the present World Order,

you cannot help believing in your heart that there is a better order which is on your side, and perhaps even that, as they say in melodrama, "a time will come. . . ."

We all know, on Dr. Johnson's authority, that the Devil was the first Whig. But the above argument enables us to see the difference between him and, let us say, the Whigs of later history. The Whig, while condemning and working against the existing order in some particular, is always consciously trying to institute another order which he regards as better. And through all the series, Whig, Liberal, Radical, Revolutionary, the same remains true; the only difference is that at each stage the ideal new order is increasingly remote from the existing order. But the Devil, unless I do him a wrong, is not trying to substitute another order which he prefers; he is merely injuring, marring, acting as an enemy—*ἀντιπράττων τοῖς κοσμικοῖς*. And here, perhaps, we get to the first result of this long argument: That goodness *is* the same thing as harmony with or loyalty to the World Order; but that, since the true World Order does not yet exist, Opposition to the present order is at times right, provided that the opposition really aims at the attainment of a fuller or better order. Theoretically this seems sound. And I think, even in practice, the rule has a certain value, though of course it does not, any more than any other political rule, provide us with an infallible test of the good or evil, the sane or insane. It is rare to find any political lunatic so extreme as specifically to admit that he wishes to destroy and never rebuild, to make the present world worse than it is, with no intention even at the back of his mind, ever to "remould it nearer to the heart's desire." Yet a certain type of revolutionary does for all practical purposes take a position that is almost equivalent to this.

I once in my youth met the celebrated Nihilist, Bakunin, the unsuccessful Lenin of his day, who was credited with the doctrine that every act of destruction or violence is good; because either it does good directly, by destroying a person or thing which is objectionable, or else it does good indirectly by making an already intolerable world worse than before, and so bringing the Social Revolution

nearer. Since he and his followers had no constructive scheme for this so-called Social Revolution, the theory is for practical purposes indistinguishable from true Satanism or hatred of the world. One of the deductions made from it was that, in the ordinary workaday business of political assassinations, it was far more desirable to murder innocent and even good persons than guilty or wicked ones. For two reasons; the wicked were some use, if left alive, in furthering the Revolution, and, also, to kill the wicked implied no really valuable criticism of the existing social order. If you kill an unjust judge, you may be understood to mean merely that you think judges ought to be just. But if you go out of your way to kill a just judge, it is clear that you object to judges altogether. If a son kills a bad father, the act, though meritorious in its humble way, does not take us much further. But if he kills a good father, it cuts at the root of all that pestilent system of family affection and loving kindness and gratitude on which the present world is largely based.

Let us become sane again and see where we are. What do we most of us, as a matter of fact, think about the existing World Order? I am thinking of all ordinary sensible people, whatever their politics, excluding only those who are prejudiced against the world by some intolerable private wrong, or in its favour by some sudden and delightful success. Strictly speaking, the world as a whole cannot be called good or bad, any more than the spectrum as a whole can be called light or dark. The world contains all the things we call good and all that we call bad: and since by the laws of language you call things bad if they are worse than you expect, and good if they are better than you expect, and your expectation itself is formed by your experience, you cannot apply any word of blame or praise to the whole. But when people speak of the world or the existing order, they are of course thinking of the part in which they are most interested: and that, for various reasons, is usually the part that depends on human society and human effort. And I shall feel a little disappointed if every one of my readers does not agree with me in thinking that on the whole,

and allowing for exceptions, when people try to do something, and pay attention, they come nearer to doing it than if they did not try at all. Normally, therefore, that systematic organization of human effort which we call a civilized society, does on the whole succeed in being a good thing, just as the Roman Empire did. Doctors, on the whole, prolong human life rather than shorten it. Lawyers and judges, on the whole, bring about more justice than injustice. Even in a department of life so very imperfectly civilized as economics, on the whole, if you know of a young man who is hard-working, intelligent and honest, you do expect him to get on better than one who is lazy, stupid and a thief. This lands us in the belief, which any minute study of social history corroborates in letters of blood, that almost any Government is better than no government, and almost any law better than no law. And I think we may safely go further. If we take any of those cases where a civilized society obviously shows itself evil, where it rewards vice and punishes virtue, produces misery and slays happiness; when it appoints unjust tribunals, when it bribes witnesses to tell lies, when it treats its own members or subjects as enemies and tries to injure them instead of serving them; when it does these things it is not really carrying out its principles, but failing. It is not a machine meant for doing these bad things; it is a very imperfectly designed machine for doing just the opposite, at any rate inside its own boundaries.

If we accept this position, we see that the organized life of mankind is on the whole organized for good, and that the great pilgrimage of the spirit of man from the beginnings of history onward has been on the whole not only a movement from ignorance to knowledge, from collective impotence to collective power, from poverty of life to richness of life, but also in some profound sense a pilgrimage from lower to higher. And it will follow, in spite of constant lapses and false routes, which have to be corrected, that the road of progress is in the main a road onward in the same general direction; that the better order which a reformer wishes to substitute for the present order must be a fuller realization of the spirit of the existing

order itself. This belief does not rule out changes which many people would call extreme or revolutionary; to the eye of the historian most revolutions are little more than a ruffling of the surface of life. But it does mean that a change which violates the consciences of men, a change which aims at less justice and more violence, at more hatred and less friendliness, at more cruelty and less freedom, has the probabilities heavily against its ultimate success.

The instinct of the average man is apt to be shrewdly right on this point. We do instinctively judge men and movements, not by the amount of suffering or bloodshed they cause, but by the quality of human behaviour which they represent. For a general to cause a thousand deaths by an unsuccessful attack is a much slighter disturbance of the World Order than if, for example, he were to cause one innocent man to be condemned to death by forging false documents. The first would be a disaster and perhaps deserving of blame; the second would imply a shattering of the very foundations on which the World Order rests.

We seem to be led to a profound and almost a complacent conservatism, but I think there has been one flaw in this justification of ordinary organized societies. It is the same as lurked in Pliny's arguments above, justifying *Roma Dea* to the rebellious Christian or Jew. It justifies them so far as they really represent, however imperfectly, the World Order; so far as they *are* organizations for justice and freedom. That is, the argument applies only to the action of the organized society within its own borders, and utterly fails to touch the relation of the state or society to those outside. On the inside a state is an organization for good government and mutual help; and it has a machinery, elaborate and well thought out, by which it can improve its powers and correct its errors. And only in cases of extreme failure are its own members its enemies. But towards other states or societies it is something utterly different; just as a tigress to her own cubs is a clever and delightful mother, but to strangers nothing of the kind. Seen from the outside, a state is mainly a fighting power, organized for the use of force. It is represented by diplo-

macy in its better moments and by war in its worse. And towards subject societies, if it has them, its relation is ambiguous; in favourable conditions, they are members of the whole and in accord with it; in unfavourable conditions, they approach more and more nearly to rebels and half-conquered enemies. The relation of empires to subject communities is, in fact, the great seed-ground for those states of mind which I have grouped under the name of Satanism.

An appalling literature of hatred is in existence, dating at least from the eighth century B.C., in which unwilling subjects have sung and exulted over the downfall of the various great empires, or at least poured out the delirious, though often beautiful, visions of their long-deferred hope. The Burden of Nineveh, the Burden of Tyre, the Burden of Babylon: these are recorded in some of the finest poetry of the world. The Fall of Rome, the rise of her own vile sons against her, the plunging of the Scarlet Woman in the lake of eternal torture and the slaying of the three-quarters of mankind who bowed down to her, form one of the most eloquent and imaginative parts of the canonical Apocalypse. The cry of oppressed peoples against the Turk and the Russian is written in many languages and renewed in many centuries. What makes this sort of literature so appalling is, first, that it is inspired by hatred; and next that the hatred is at least in part just; and thirdly, the knowledge that we ourselves are now sitting in the throne once occupied by the objects of these execrations. Perhaps most of us are so accustomed to think of Babylon and Nineveh and Tyre, and even Rome, as seats of mere tyranny and corruption, that we miss the real meaning and warning of their history. These imperial cities mostly rose to empire not because of their faults, but because of their virtues; because they were strong and competent and trustworthy, and, within their borders and among their own people, were mostly models of effective justice. And we think of them as mere types of corruption! The hate they inspired among their subjects has so utterly swamped, in the memory of mankind, the benefits of their good government, or the contented and peaceful lives which

they made possible to their own peoples. It is an awe-inspiring thought for us who now sit in their place.

The spirit that I have called Satanism, the spirit of unmixed hatred towards the existing World Order, the spirit which rejoices in any widespread disaster which is also a disaster to the world's rulers, is perhaps more rife to-day than it has been for over a thousand years. It is felt to some extent against all ordered Governments, but chiefly against all imperial Governments; and it is directed more widely and intensely against Great Britain than against any other Power. I think we may add that, while everywhere dangerous, it is capable of more profound world-wreckage by its action against us than by any other form that it is now taking. A few years ago probably the most prosperous and contented and certainly in many ways the most advanced region of the whole world was Central Europe. As a result of the War and the policy of the victors after the War, Central Europe is now an economic wreck, and large parts of it a prey to famine. A vast volume of hatred, just and unjust, partly social, partly nationalist, partly the mere reaction of intolerable misery, is rolling up there against what they call the Hungerherren, or Hunger-Lords. The millions of Russia are torn by civil war; but one side thinks of us as the people who, taking no risks ourselves, sent tanks and poison-gas to destroy masses of helpless peasants; and the other side thinks of us as the foreigners who encouraged them to make civil war and then deserted them. All through the Turkish Empire, through great parts of Persia and Afghanistan, from one end of the Moslem world to the other, there are *Mullahs*, holy men, seeing visions and uttering oracles about the downfall of another Scarlet Woman who has filled the world with the wine of her abominations, and who is our own *Roma Dea*, our British Commonwealth, whom we look upon as the great agent of peace and freedom for mankind. Scattered among our own fellow-subjects in India the same prophecies are current; they are ringing through Egypt. Men in many parts of the world—some even as close to us as Ireland—

are daily giving up their lives to the sacred cause of hatred, even a hopeless hatred, against us, and the World Order which we embody. I have read lately two long memoranda about Africa, written independently by two people of great experience, but of utterly different political opinions and habits of thought; both agreed that symptoms in Africa pointed towards a movement of union among all the native races against their white governors; and both agreed that, apart from particular oppressions and grievances, the uniting forces were the two great religions, Christianity and Islam, because both religions taught a doctrine utterly at variance with the whole method and spirit of the European dominion—the doctrine that men are immortal beings and their souls equal in the sight of God.

This state of things is in part the creation of the War. In part it consists of previously latent tendencies brought out and made conspicuous by the War. In part the War has suggested to susceptible minds its own primitive method, the method of healing all wrong by killing or hitting somebody. And for us British in particular, the War has left us, or revealed us, as the supreme type and example of the determination of the white man to rule men of all other breeds, on the ground that he is their superior. Here and there peoples who have experience know that the British are better masters than most; but masters they are, and masters are apt to be hated.

There is a memorable chapter in Thucydides, beginning with the words: *Not now for the first time have I seen that it is impossible for a Democracy to govern an Empire.* It may not be impossible, but it is extraordinarily difficult. It is so difficult to assert—in uncritical and unmeasured language—the sanctity of freedom at home, and systematically to modify or regulate freedom abroad. It is so difficult to make the government at home constantly more sympathetic, more humane, more scrupulous in avoiding the infliction of injustice or even inconvenience upon the governed British voters at home, and to tolerate the sort of incident that—especially in the atmosphere of war—is apt to occur in the government of voteless subjects abroad. When I read letters from friends of my own who are engaged

in this work of world-government, I sometimes feel that it brings out in good men a disinterested heroism, a sort of inspired and indefatigable kindness, which is equalled by no other profession. And I think that many English people, knowing as they do the immense extent of hard work, high training and noble intention, on which our particular share in the World Order is based, feel it an almost insane thing that our subjects should ever hate us. Yet we must understand if we are to govern. And it is not hard to understand. We have seen lately in Amritsar a situation arising between governors and governed so acutely hostile that a British officer, apparently a good soldier, thought it right to shoot down without warning some hundreds of unarmed men. In Mesopotamia, since the War, it is said that certain villages which did not pay their taxes, and were thought to be setting a bad example, were actually bombed from the air at night, when all the population was crowded together in the enclosures.[1] In Ceylon, in 1915, large numbers of innocent people were either shot or flogged, and many more imprisoned, owing to a panic in the Government. In Ireland prisoners have been tortured to obtain evidence and, it is alleged, innocent men murdered to suppress it. In Rhodesia a few weeks ago a boy of sixteen, who shot a native dead for fun, was let off with eight strokes of the birch.

I wish to pass no harsh judgement on the men who did any of these things. I give full value to the argument that those of us who sit at home in safety have no right to pour denunciation on the errors of overworked and overstrained men in crises of great peril and difficulty. I mention these incidents only to illustrate how natural it is for imperial races to be hated. The people who suffer such things as these do not excuse them, and do not forget them. The stories are repeated, and do not lose in the telling. And many a boy and girl in the East will think

[1] I am happy to say that the accuracy of this report about Mesopotamia is denied by the officials concerned; in particular it seems clear that the bombing was done by day, not by night. I therefore withdraw my own statement unreservedly, and have only allowed it to stand in the text because to omit it silently might not seem a sufficiently explicit withdrawal.

of the English simply and solely as the unbelievers who habitually flog and shoot good people, just as the Jews felt about the Romans, or the Manichaeans about the Orthodox. Now my own view is that all these actions in their different degrees were wrong; all were blunders; also, all were really exceptional and not typical; and, further, that no action like them, or remotely approaching them, is normally necessary for the maintenance of the Empire. I am too confirmed a Liberal to take the opposite view. But suppose we had to take it. Suppose we were convinced by argument that all these actions were wise and necessary, and that violence and injustice of this sort are part of the natural machinery by which Empire is maintained; that the rule of the white man over the coloured man, the Christian over the "heathen," the civilized over the uncivilized, cannot be carried on except at the cost of these bloody incidents and the world-wide passion of hatred which they involve, I think the conclusion would be inevitable, not that such acts were right—for they cannot be right—but simply that humanity will not for very long endure the continuance of this form of World Order.

William Morris used to say that no man was good enough to be another man's master. If that were true of individuals, it would, as great authorities have pointed out, be much more true of nations. No nation certainly is as trustworthy as its own best men. But I do not think it is true, unless, indeed, you imply in the word "master" some uncontrolled despotism. Surely there is something wrong in that whole conception of human life which implies that each man should be a masterless, unattached and independent being. It would be almost truer to say that no man is happy until he has a master, or at least a leader, to admire and serve and follow. That is the way in which all societies naturally organize themselves, from boys at school to political parties and social groups. As far as I can see, it is the only principle on which brotherhood can be based among beings who differ so widely as human beings do in intellect, in will power or in strength. I do not think it is true that no nation is good enough in this

qualified sense to be another's master. The World Order does imply leaders and led, governors and governed; in extreme cases it does imply the use of force. It does involve, amid a great mass of other feelings, the risk of a certain amount of anger, and even hatred, from the governed against the governor. A World Order which shirked all unpopularity would be an absurdity.

I sometimes think, in comparing the ancient world with the modern, that one of the greatest distinguishing characteristics of modern civilization is an unconscious hypocrisy. The ancients shock us by their callousness; I think we should sometimes startle them by the contrast between our very human conduct and our absolutely angelic professions. If you ask me what possible remedy I see, from the point of view of the British Commonwealth, against these evils I have described, I would answer simply that we must first think carefully what our principles are, and not overstate them; next, we must sincerely carry them out. These principles are not unknown things. They have been laid down by the great men of the last century, by Cobden and Macaulay and John Stuart Mill, even to a great extent by Lord Salisbury and Gladstone. We hold our Empire as a trust for the governed, not as an estate to be exploited. We govern backward races that they may be able to govern themselves; we do not hold them down for our own profit, nor in order to use them as food for cannon. Above all, in our government and our administration of justice, we try to act without fear or favour, treating the poor man with as much respect as the rich man, the coloured man as the white, the alien as the Englishman. We have had the principles laid down again and again; they are all embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which we have signed, and which is on sale everywhere for a penny.

It was a belief of the ancient Greeks that when a man had shed kindred blood he had to be purified; and until he was purified the bloodstain worked like a seed of madness within him, and his thoughts could never rest in peace or truth. The blood, I fear, is still upon the hands of all of us, and some of the madness still in our veins. The

first thing we must do is to get back to our pre-war standard. Then, from that basis, we must rise higher.

The War has filled not only Russia, but most of Eastern Europe and Western Asia with the spirit that I have called Satanism; the spirit which hates the World Order wherever it exists and seeks to vent its hate without further plan. That is wrong. But this spirit would not have got abroad; it would not have broken loose and grown like seed and spread like pestilence, had not the World Order itself betrayed itself and been false to its principles, and acted towards enemies and subjects in ways which seem to them what the ways of Nero or Domitian seemed to St. John on Patmos. I do not know whether it is possible for a nation to repent. Penitence in a nation, as a rule, means nothing but giving a majority to a different political party. But I think it is possible for individual human beings, even for millions of them. I see few signs so far of a change of heart in the public action of any nation in the world; few signs of any rise in the standard of public life, and a great many signs of its lowering. Some actions of great blindness and wickedness, the sort of actions which leave one wondering whether modern civilization has any spiritual content at all to differentiate us from savages, have been done, not during the War, but since the War was over. Yet I am convinced that, though it has not yet prevailed in places of power, there is a real desire for change of heart in the minds of millions. This desire is an enthusiasm, and is exposed to all the dangers of enthusiasm. It is often ignorant; it is touched with folly and misplaced passion and injustice. It is even exploited by interested persons. These are serious faults, and must be guarded against; but I believe the desire for a change of heart is a genuine longing, and, furthermore, I believe firmly that unless the World Order is affected by this change of heart, the World Order is doomed. Unless it abstains utterly from war and the causes of war, the next great war will destroy it. Unless it can seek earnestly the spirit of brotherhood and sobriety at home, Bolshevism will destroy it. Unless it can keep its rule over subject peoples quite free from the spirit of commercial exploitation and the spirit of slavery,

and make it like the rule of a good citizen over his fellows, it will be shattered by the widespread hatred of those whom it rules.

The present World Order, if it survives the present economic crisis, has a wonderful opportunity, such an opportunity as has never been granted to any previous order in the history of recorded time. Our material wealth, our organization, our store of knowledge, our engines of locomotion and destruction, are utterly unprecedented, and surpass even our own understanding. Furthermore, on the whole, we know what we ought to do. We have, what no previous Empire or collection of ruling states ever had, clear schemes set before us of the road ahead which will lead out of these dangers into regions of safety; the League of Nations, with the spirit which it implies; the reconcilement and economic reintegration of European society; and the system of Mandate for the administration of backward territories. We have the power, and we know the course. Almost every element necessary to success has been put into the hands of those now governing the world except, as an old Stoic would say, the things that we must provide ourselves. We have been given everything, except, it would seem, the resolute and sincere will. Just at present that seems lacking; the peoples blame their rulers for the lack of it, and the rulers explain that they dare not offend their peoples. It may be recovered. We have had it in the past in abundance, and we probably have the material for it even now. If not, if for any reason the great democracies permanently prefer to follow low motives and to be governed by inferior men, it looks as if not the British Empire only, but the whole World Order established by the end of the War and summarized roughly in the League of Nations, may pass from history under the same fatal sentence as the great empires of the past—that the world which it ruled hated it and risked all to compass its overthrow.

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