THE LEGACY OF LIBERALISM

By AL. CARTHILL

Author of 'The Lost Dominion'

'This dead God here against my face
Hath help for no man'

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The Legacy of Liberalism

CHAPTER I

GENESIS

THE historian who, in the sixth millennium after Christ, shall write the story of the nineteenth century will no doubt devote some paragraphs to an account of the origin, rise, splendour and fall of Liberalism in these islands and elsewhere. Let us try to anticipate what he will say. But, living as we do so near the times when the effectiveness of this power was at its maximum, we must devote rather more space to it than the future Grote will think necessary.

Liberalism was in England a foreign product, but like many a foreign product had as its basis good British stuff. Thus the juice of the uninspiring gooseberry returns from a short Continental sojourn in the more exhilarating form of champagne. Liberalism is the descendant of Whiggery. The Whigs were not interested in liberty in our sense.

They stood by the liberties of England as expressed in the charters and the common law of the realm. They were, that is, champions, not of the rights of man, but of the rights of Englishmen. The principal right of the Englishman of the eighteenth century seemed no doubt to be that of being governed by the Whigs, but there were others. This Government by great families had grave defects, but the country throve under it, and in military affairs displayed unheard of tenacity and drew on unimagined resources. France was then the chief rival of England, and had suffered severely in many wars. The French therefore began to investigate into the reasons of this superiority, and they found that England was better governed than France. They studied what they imagined to be the constitution of England, and deduced from that study certain universal principles which they thought made for efficiency in Government in general. At the same time there came into existence 'the political man,' the creature of the imagination of professors and closet politicians. Man is and has been always and everywhere the same. The form of Government which best suits A is obviously also the best for B, C and other letters of the alphabet.

But the 'political man' could not appeal to the laws and charters of England. His creators therefore appealed to what they called the rights of man. Among the rights of man is clearly the right to be well governed. And, as we have already demonstrated, he can be well governed only in accordance with the theory we have formed from consideration, of the British constitution. These rights were first successfully maintained in the American rebellion, but it was the French Revolution which first made them really popular.

In so far as the French Revolution was a rebellion against Bourbon and Papal absolutism there was nothing in it to displease the Whigs. But as the Revolution proceeded incidents began to occur which were not so satisfactory. Great nobles did not like to see the annihilation of all privileges. Landowners were not enthusiastic at the confiscation of feudal domains. Wealthy burghers were not enamoured of assignats and the law of maximum. Ladies of fashion blushed when they were told that their skins were useless to the tanner. The leaders of the Nonconformists were not overpleased when the Goddess of Reason was enthroned on the altar, even though that altar was that of Nôtre Dame.

The men of formal law were shocked at the setting up of a simple and effective military Government unhampered by the checks and controls so familiar to them. The whole nation was alarmed at the success of that Government. The victories of France seemed to menace the world with subjugation, and the mightiest ally of France was what was afterwards to be known as Liberalism.

The English nation therefore, after some hesitation, drew itself together to oppose France. To the politician of the baser sort the war was merely one trump in the eternal game, the prizes in which were place and wealth. The more patriotic statesmen regarded it as a war of the old type for the balance of power and the picking up of sugar-islands. But the people knew dimly that it was a crusade. And this feeling ultimately penetrated into the circles of the administration. England was at war not so much with France, as with what France stood for—armed and aggressive Liberalism, which proposed to make a new heaven and a new earth in a few weeks, by some strokes with a pen, and some slashes with a sword.

The eighteenth century, particularly in its latter part, had been an era of reform. France had not

had its reforming despot and it was for that reason that the Revolution broke out there with such force. There was not in England a great demand for reform. There were there as elsewhere abuses, but the people were accustomed to them and those classes which suffered most from them were not vocal. Nevertheless during that part of the ministry of the younger Pitt which extended from 1784 to 1793 much had been done. More was in contemplation, but the Revolutionary War and the consequent hostility to Liberalism stopped this necessary process of Reform. The genuine Whig was a Conservative, for he rested his claims on the ancient Constitution of the Kingdom. The system as it existed gave him place, power and riches. Why reform so admirable a state of things? The leaders of the Whigs therefore rallied to the banner of the nation, and lent their strong support to those who were fighting for those elementary things—national dignity and independence. Others withdrew from public life. A few formed a factious opposition. It appeared that the domination of the Tories was established for ever. And the Tories would hear of no reform because it was associated with peril to the nation.

Long after the danger from France had passed the power of Government remained unshaken, and it was strongly supported by many classes which had no desire for oppression, reaction or obscurantism. Toryism was a mighty engine moving by its own momentum. But though the official leaders of the Whigs had turned away in horror from the doctrines of Liberalism, or rather from the works of Liberalism, there was a party which had always fought under the Whig banner to which those doctrines were by no means distasteful. The Whigs had always had a strong left wing. They themselves were a highly respectable party, but some of their associates were not of that character. The policy of the Whigs of the Restoration period may have been just and holy, but it was not over-popular. It was necessary for them to league themselves with very dubious allies. Russell and Sidney had no official cognizance of the activities of Oates, Rumbold, Ferguson, and Barillon, and would indeed have looked on perjurers, assassins, and war-traitors with aristocratic and high-sniffing contempt, but without those activities there would have been small chance of a glorious 1688. So at the time of the French Revolution there were many in the Whig camp who

were not real Whigs, but mere filibusters, and were therefore noway alarmed at the spread of subversive doctrines, and did not rally to the cause of reaction which was at that time the cause of the nation.

The Tory party, destroyed by its own internal dissensions, fell in 1830, and after a bitter struggle the Liberals came to their own. Liberalism remained dominant for over fifty years and set earnestly about the work of reform. It was in no great hurry. There was no violent revolution. The process of change was so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. What the French did in a few months at the cost of great suffering was done in England in the course of a century. Liberalism did a great and necessary work, but it must strongly be emphasised that it has now completed its task. It is long since dead on the Continent of Europe and it appears to me to be dead in England. But organisations, once vital enough, linger on with a sort of horrid posthumous existence long after they should have been tucked away comfortably in the sarcophagus. Men go on repeating the old creeds and intoning the old psalms, when they have long since ceased to believe in the formulas and when the chants no longer stir any emotion.

That is because all organisations are beneficial to certain private interests. Men are born into them. Men marry and beget children relying on the income to be derived from them. Men are loyal to the memory of their predecessors who slew and were slain for those principles which are now dead enough, but which were at one time living things which men might hate or love. But we who have stood aside from the dust and conflict of political life in England, can see well enough that Liberalism is dead. It is time to write its memoirs.

Strange is the working of the law of growth. Liberalism traced back through the Unitarians and Socinians, through the Jacobins, through the Encyclopædists to the great Whig stock, and so to the companions of Cromwell, but I suppose Sir Harry Vane would have looked with some astonishment on his spiritual offspring. Thus the wise owl so excellently fashioned for nocturnal foragings must regard with doubt the egg just deposited in the conjugal nest. What will be hatched from it? And what will be the true descendant of Liberalism?

Under the new constitution of 1832, great classes for the first time were admitted to the regular and legal exercise of power. One of the blessings we

have derived from our institutions is that political divisions have never followed the lines of social divisions. There have been Radical Dukes and Tory working-men. But to speak roughly, round the new banner were gathered the lower middle class, the educated artisans, the manufacturers and the dissenters. Labour, and particularly agricultural labour, had not been much affected by political agitation and was mostly excluded from the suffrage. It was the men of these same newly enfranchised classes who had come into power, or hoped soon to come into power on the Continent in consequence of the Revolution. For though the French Revolution had established itself chiefly by the power of the urban mobs, and of the peasants of certain areas, yet the middle classes had soon taken over control. The town proletariat was crushed back into its slums and the peasants were quieted for the present by allocation of confiscated lands.

It will be observed that Liberalism was international. Those classes which in England were the mainstay of Liberalism existed everywhere in Europe, and particularly in Western Europe. To them are to be added, before we can form a true

conception of the party, the oligarchical men, who were not wholly at home in the new party, but who were even less at home in their own party which, for various reasons, they had abandoned. There were, of course, also the lawyers, divines, journalists and professors who are to be found there where there is a good chance that the golden shower may fall thickest. There was the party of Catiline, and ardent youth in great numbers for whom it is enough to find some cause which demands sacrifices, and which seems to promise the realisation of the dream of Manoa. This party was, as I have said, international. The Zion of the new religion was Paris. Its sacred oracles were vulgated in the French tongue, with which the educated of all nations had at least a bowing acquaintance. Whether there was behind it a secret and sinister organisation, we need not enquire. To my mind the evidence is insufficient.

No doubt the aims and objects of this party differed superficially in the various municipal states of the Christian Republic. The alliance of the various insurgent bodies was not formalised into any ostensible League or Church, but there was an actual good understanding between the Liberal chiefs of

the various states. England was on the whole the paymaster and supporter, as London was the Ziklag of the new secession. The Liberal party consisted, as may be seen, chiefly of classes who had long been denied their due place in the commonwealth. They had been kept in a position of social inferiority. They had been refused any share in the Government. They felt they had been treated with less consideration than they merited. They felt also that they were called to champion the cause of the weaker brethren who were not vocal and not political. They on the whole stood forth as a party pledged to revolt against what they conceived to be oppression, but was actually authority.

The thing they revolted against might be somewhat different in the various states. For the most part on the Continent the rebellion was against the Church of Rome, not so much in its capacity as a faith, but as an all-pervading institution which got hold of the citizen in his cradle, and never gave him up till he became thoroughly corrupted and perverted and had sold his soul to believe a lie. Against this ancient oppressor, and its accomplice the autocratic state, whether feudal or Caesarian, the Liberal party raised itself in fierce rebellion. Or

it might be that it was against the undue predominance of one class, e.g. the oligarchical burgher or the great landlord, that the war was to be waged. Or it might be against mere use and wont and the Kingship of tradition that the feud was to be fought to death. Particularly bitter was the war where these enemies were aided and abetted by foreign dominion.

The cause of Liberalism was therefore to a certain degree a just and holy cause. Europe at the end of the eighteenth century was full of dead things which had once been vital enough but were now an encumbrance. As I have remarked before, institutions go on existing after they are well dead, and it is better that a mild hint should be given that dead things ought to be buried. The municipal institutions of the states of Europe dated from feudal times, and many ideas which were living enough in the tenth century had long ceased to have any vitality in them. There had been the oceanic discoveries, the increase of the currency, the discovery of gunpowder, the spread of education, the definite repulse of the Turks, the Reformation, the vulgation of the Gospel according to Machiavelli, Hobbes and Adam Smith, but there had not been a

corresponding reorganisation of Europe. That reorganisation had been checked by the civil wars of religion and the growth of conservative despotisms and oligarchies. Therefore it was time that there should be reform. Liberalism gave the driving spirit which was necessary to provide the secular powers with the will and power to reform. But alas! it is not sufficient to reform. There must also be a rebuilding. The Liberals were not architects. The Liberal was a Vitruvius indeed, but a Vitruvius of ruin.

The cardinal principle of the Liberal party was the duty of revolt against authority. But revolt in itself is a sterile thing and begets nothing. But nature abhors a vacuum. It will not be contented with mere ruin. It does not look around itself and see a solitude with satisfaction and call it peace. It requires a palace for its King, and a temple for its God. These Liberalism made no attempt to furnish. The student of history is touched with pity for the pure and ardent Liberal, because he knows that for such was prepared a great disillusionment. Liberalism could change many things, and shake most things, but one thing at least was beyond its jurisdiction, and that is man, man whose nature

is below that of the beasts and above that of the angels. I shall deal with the Liberal fallacy on this subject hereafter, but here it is necessary to say that the cardinal error of Liberalism was the idea that man is in his nature perfect. That is to say that if he be left to himself he will tread in the path of virtue and prosperity, and that accordingly all that is necessary to make man a wise and happy and virtuous creature is to 'break the shackles' which have been imposed on him by some unknown but extraneous power, to free him from the bonds of use and wont, to give him the vote and tell him to march. Then assuredly he will march of his own volition to the land where pigs run about ready roasted. But alas! the truth was other. The people, which cannot perpetually be deceived, discovered that there was somewhere a mistake, and it is for that reason that Liberalism, long since dead everywhere on the Continent, is now dead in England. For the leaders of Liberalism were actually leading the world, not to the promised land, but to some squalid hell, the empire indeed of Mammon.

Nevertheless the world owes much to these men. And there is sorrow for the young ardent souls who

perished in the early stages of the conflict. They were fighting against what seemed to them, and what was often enough, actually grievous oppression. In England there was little to be feared by the Liberal. The Squire might indeed withdraw his custom. On the Continent men of whom the world was not worthy perished by the sword or famine, or pined out their lives in gloomy fortresses, or desolate isles of the sea, or tropic marshes, or knew the full misery of exile. The whips of Austria and the knout of Russia tore their flesh, aye, even the delicate flesh of women. Worse perhaps than the fate of these martyrs was the fate of the renegade, the man, that is, who sold his principles for place and power; the modern Lauderdale, who, believing in the justness and holiness of the cause which he had abandoned, yet did abandon it. To be pitied also is the reformer who lost his illusions. For the new things had seemed so beautiful.

> "The world's great age begins anew
> The Golden Years return,
> The earth doth, like a snake, renew
> Her winter weeds outworn."

It is a great thing to fight on the side of the Lord of Good against the Lord of Evil, but how, if the

conviction grows that your Lord and Leader is not the Lord of Good but the Lord of Evil himself, in cunning disguise? Painful indeed was the spiritual pilgrimage of him who began by thinking at the dawn of the Revolution:

> "Mighty were the auxiliars which then stood,
> Upon our side, us who were strong in love,
> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven . . . ,"

And who ended up as stamp-distributor for the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and political agent for the Earl of Lonsdale. But this painful progress awaits him who, as a young man, chooses the wrong side. It is best to make up your mind to the inevitable. If you are sincerely convinced that your side is the wrong side, leave it, and care not that men call you a traitor and lost leader. But some will prefer the unknown but lamented grave of Petôfi. When the house of tyranny is standing, when the banners of oppression are waving from the unshaken battlements, when the malignant garrison is in good heart, and sallies forth with cheery audacity to harry and oppress the people of the Lord, then to generous youth it seems enough to raze that citadel to the earth. But

when it is razed what then? Ardent souls will not long be contented to contemplate the heaps of ruins overgrown with nettles and ivy, but will seek for some architect to re-edify that which is fallen, so that it may be no longer a den of thieves, but the house of the Lord. Temple and palace and castle have gone down, but the master-builder tarries, and when he comes what will he build?

CHAPTER II

LIBERALISM AS A RELIGION

LIBERALISM, being a revolt against authority, came necessarily into conflict with the Church. The Church claims an absolute and supereminent authority. It derives its commission direct from Heaven. It is subject to no jurisdiction of human origin. It calls therefore for unquestioning obedience from all mortal men. No such Church has actually existed, but the Catholic Church exacted unreasoning obedience from its own followers. Where therefore Catholicism was the State religion, Liberalism came early into violent conflict with the Church, and so with the State as maintainer of that Church. In fact, it may be said, that the history of Continental Liberalism is in some degree a history of the revolt of human intelligence against clericalism, or (as I suppose a Clerical would put it) a revolt of the Powers of this world against the Lord of the other.

In England and Scotland there were no doubt State Churches, but the Church of England had never seriously claimed, and the Kirk of Scotland

had long tacitly abandoned, a supereminent spiritual domain. Liberalism in this island therefore did not come into such sharp and direct conflict with the Church as it did in the Latin lands. The Latin Liberal was often an illuminated freemason and therefore a fanatical unbeliever. To him Christianity was the enemy. Here, Liberalism has drawn its chief strength from the Nonconformists. What they disliked in the established Church was not so much that it was a Church, as that it was established, and that its ministers therefore were accorded a certain rank in society higher than that assigned to the pastors of the schismatics and sectaries. Even among those Liberals who were unbelievers there was not that dread and hatred of the established Church that existed among the Liberals of the Latin lands. It seems impossible to regard the Church of Rome with indifference. You must be a fanatic one way or the other. But those who have left the communion of the Church of England do not necessarily hate her. Therefore Liberalism in England never formally entered the lists as a determined and vowed opponent of the national Church. The policy of Liberalism was at most rather hostile to clerical claims in general, and so

far Erastian rather than antichristian or even anti-Anglican.

Many of the English Liberals indeed were staunch Churchmen, but the connection between the English Church and the State is of such a nature and so intimate that it was not possible for a Church thoroughly Erastianised and absolutely dependent on a Liberalised administration long to possess any positive value as a Church. The Kirk of Scotland was more fortunate because it, though established, is not so much under the control of the civil power as the Church of England. But in both the vitality of the Church as a Church was fatally attacked. They ceased, in fact, to be Churches, and became State institutions, allowed and encouraged to teach morals.

The story of the Church of Ireland and that of the Church of Wales need not here be entered upon, for the disestablishment of those Churches had nothing to do with Liberalism in the sphere of religion. If it be indeed true that a national church is not the Church of the nation, the abolition of it can have no importance except as a purely political act.

Still the Liberal could look round himself with much satisfaction. He had abolished tests. The State could now call on all its subjects to give it

love and loyalty, for to none it denied its protection. He had stopped much petty persecution. He had wound up some institutions which might be said to be noxious and absurd. He had secularised education and marriage. He had put down the Churches beneath his feet. It is true that the gaiters of the bishop were still intact, but they were menaced. It was a great work of emancipation. Surely the free spirit of Man might now resume its triumphant march?

One effect of this was an increase in the power of the Church of Rome. The Liberal thought that it was sufficient to demonstrate that a tenet is irrational. Then man being a reasoning animal will cease to hold it. But man, though endowed with reason, is not wholly governed thereby. He has his emotions. A rational religion is a contradiction in terms. None of the truths of religion are to be ascertained by reason alone. Reason tells us that the end of man is the charnel-house. But so strong is the will to live or the vanity of man that he is reluctant to believe that. A secularist cannot therefore by humbling a national church destroy religion, or (if he likes to call it) superstition. What he can do is to destroy the spiritual

habitation into which a man was born, and where he was more or less at home, and expose him shelterless, undefended and alone to fearful unseen dangers. Where, then, is a man so lost, so terrified in the thick darkness, likely to take refuge? Surely with that Church that tells him that she has a light that cannot be quenched, the light not of fallible reason but of authentic inspiration. There is only one Church which makes that claim. Therefore, in Protestant countries the activities of Liberalism have been rather favourable to the spiritual power of that Church which, in the Latin lands, was the principal enemy of the spirit of revolt.

Nor in Protestant countries was Liberalism ultimately unfavourable to the political power of the Church of Rome. Liberalism soon meant democracy, and in a democracy that party which has the best organisation has the advantage. And the Catholic Church was a powerful political machine.

But perhaps I am wrong. There is not one Church and one Church only which makes a claim to authentic inspiration. For Liberalism itself makes that claim. Liberalism is, in fact, a religion. It may be a false religion and is at least in my

judgment deeply tinged with error. But it is a religion for all that and must therefore be spoken of with respect. And indeed it is only because it is a religion that it has been able to do what it has done. For a faith in which men believe strongly and for which they are ready, not only to die, for that is little, but also to sacrifice the material things of this world, worldly prosperity, the love of kin, friendship and other franchises must, true or false, have a strong operative power.

Liberalism is a religion. It has its church. It has its martyrs and confessors. It has its pontiffs, priests and doctors of its Law. It has its prophets, men, that is, who are leaders because they dominate not the reason but the emotions of the flock. It has its church-rhetoric, its liturgy, and ritual. It has its formulas and its dogmas. As all true churches must do, it appeals for the proof of its dogmas, not to the formal processes of logic, but to transcendental processes, that is, to the illative sense. The illative sense, it may be mentioned in passing, is that sense which enables a child to be certain that there *will* be cake for tea, because it desires so strongly that there *should* be cake for tea. It is well that Liberalism can appeal to the

illative sense to prove its dogmas, for according to human reason they would appear to be false.

Liberalism has also its dissenters, and it is not any more than any other church inclined to treat dissenters otherwise than cavalierly. 'Illiberal,' 'reactionary,' 'obscurantist,' and the like terms of opprobrium have much the same unpleasant connotation as 'heretic' had to the man of the Middle Ages. The stake and faggot await him without more enquiry.

People are apt to accuse French thinkers of being superficial. This is often unjust enough. The mistake is due to the fact that the use of the French language has been brought to such a height of perfection, and that French writers are often men of such clear and logical minds, that the propositions which these writers set out to prove are expounded in so easy and limpid a style, that there appear in the composition no traces of effort. Thus the real deep-thinking, the conscientious research and patient accumulation of materials which has gone before does not appear. But the French political writers of the eighteenth century seem really to have been shallow and superficial though brilliant men, and they were far too addicted to

the highly dangerous deductive method. That is to say for the purpose of their political speculation they did not take the trouble to observe man as he is, and as he actually behaves under various conditions political, social or economical; but from a hasty and inadequate survey of a few communities, or rather of a few classes in a few communities, they deduced the 'political man,' a creature which they supposed to be a representative of man in general in so far as he is the subject of government. They endowed this creature with certain peculiarities, and then from the consideration of the man so created and so endowed, they further deduced what he would do in certain circumstances, and accordingly decided how he should be governed. The process being defective must, according to the rules of human logic, be extremely likely to give false results. Similarly there was once a zoologist who wrote a tract on the breeding and education of camels. He had never seen a camel but proceeded deductively on the lines that 'here is an animal of a certain structure, and adapted for certain purposes, and it will consequently need such and such treatment.' The tract was eloquent and admirable and indeed a masterpiece of style. The chain

of reasoning was, however, unfortunately vitiated by the fact that the author imagined that the camel laid eggs. So there being actually no such person as the political man, schemes of Government framed for him did not operate quite as they were expected to operate when applied to that real person, the average man.

Liberalism presupposed that man is pre-eminently a reasonable creature, and that it is enough to demonstrate to him that a course of action is unreasonable, and that he will then abstain from it.

It postulated also that man was in his nature perfect or at least perfectible. From this and from the first axiom, it followed that man if left to himself would follow the path of virtue and prosperity. All that was necessary was to remove maleficent authority, and perhaps to educate.

A creature of the kind imagined by the Liberal will, if unchecked, progress towards some ideal perfection and will ultimately reach it. The Liberal went on to deify that conception of the perfect man (Radiant Humanity) and that Deity being (as all true Deities must be) unconditioned by Time and Space, is necessarily here and now,

and it is the duty of all men to facilitate the establishment here and now of the Kingdom of Man. And it is the right of every man to participate in the privileges of that Kingdom.

This metaphysical scheme seems probably false, for the Deity is not existent in fact. Therefore, it would seem that the religion based on the worship of that false deity must necessarily be false and therefore inconvenient.

In the first place, it may be noted that apart from the divine ordinances or the ordinances of the State, man has only one right. That is, if he dies, he has a right to be buried. For rights which cannot be enforced are no rights, and no man is by his own unaided strength able to continue to compel his neighbours to do anything against their will. But when he dies they are willing and even anxious to bury him. But this is elementary and perhaps mere carping criticism. All the Liberal means when he says that a man has a right to do anything, is that it is expedient to allow him to do it. And, no doubt, if it be possible for man to realise here and now the idea of radiant humanity, it is expedient to allow him to do so.

The real difficulty of the creed is more serious.

It is not true that man is a creature of the kind supposed. A short inspection of his own nature by any unprejudiced enquirer will convince him of the falsity of these dogmas, and that conviction will be more and more strengthened as he proceeds with his investigations and studies the nature of other real men.

It is denied that man is wholly a rational animal. If he were, he would not be here. For it is not reason which induces women to undergo the pain and danger of childbirth. Man is much dominated by instinct. He has two sets of instincts—the social instinct, and the instinct of self-preservation. These often come into war with one another, and in that case the social instinct is apt to go to the wall. For man, though a social animal, has not the social sense very strongly developed, not so strongly for instance as certain insects. No city is as well-organised a community as a hive or even as an ant's nest. I should put the social instinct of man at about the same level as that of a wolf. The power of the social instinct is moreover found to vary much in various races, and even under various conditions in the same race. History also shows that it is dangerous to interfere with the free interplay of

these two sets of instincts. If you require the individual to sacrifice too much to the social idea, then the individual either rebels against society, and destroys it, or he submits and quickly becomes impotent. Thus society again perishes. For a sound structure cannot be built of rotten bricks. On the other hand, if you encourage individualism too much, there again is danger to the society.

If someone appears and summons me ' to take up my cross and follow him,' I am quite likely to do so, though I may have no very clear idea of what I am doing. Though the cross be heavy, and the desert hot, and though the purpose of the march may be obscure, I may persist in it out of evil pride, and because I fear the taunts of the people I had left and must now return to. If I marry Phyllis rather than Doris, I do not do so after mature consideration as to whether Doris or Phyllis is likely to make the better wife, but because I like the funny little squiggles that the curly hair of Phyllis makes on her young neck. If the competent authority invites me to leave my comfortable villa at Brixton and expose myself in the front trenches to the activities of the hostile Flammenwerfer, I shall very likely go ' with a good

heart,' even though I do not believe that the cause in which I am to be roasted is altogether laudable. But I should think it very intolerable that a lot of beastly foreigners should put any slight on the crown of England. If I select Timbuktu as a suitable winter resort, I do not do so after maturely weighing the advantages and disadvantages of that city, Capri, Hyères and the like, but because I think it would be rather fun to go to Timbuktu. If I am a married Calvinist I beget children, knowing though not believing that I am therefore providing hell with fuel. I like *Punch*: I dislike *Puck*. I am very far from believing that $a \times a$ is inevitably $2a$. There must be a certain amount of give and take in these matters. Such are a few, a very few instances of my own lack of rationalism, and a study of my friends and neighbours seems to show that they are no better algebraists than myself.

Thus it is not true that man is a creature governed by reason alone. It is untrue therefore that in order to enable him to become and remain happy it is sufficient to set him free from authority and to enlighten his reason. And if by perfectible it is meant that man will ultimately develop into a creature which will automatically and perpetually

sacrifice its own personal interests to the interests of the community in which it lives, then it is denied that there is any evidence that man by his own power is perfectible.

Liberalism therefore which claims to be pre-eminently a rational system is forced in order to establish its primary dogmas to rely on that very transcendental process against the use of which by other creeds it vigorously protests.

Liberalism thus, while degrading and humbling the churches, taught men to look for a paradise on this earth. It promised to man if he would follow it, to lead him to perfection. It found itself wholly incapable of fulfilling its promises. Man still remained man. But while man is man, there is no paradise for him on earth. But the captive who has once been promised liberty from his bonds will not be satisfied merely because he is removed from an insanitary old Newgate to a modern and hygienic Sing-Sing. Liberalism had taught men that it was useless to look for happiness to heaven. It had then to confess that the existent social order, however much remodelled and reformed, was incapable of providing that happiness on earth. Therefore man began to think whether the social

order itself might not be in fault, and whether, if that were subverted, happiness might not be found beneath its ruins.

Therefore, though we may regard Liberalism as a religion, yet it presents no very reassuring appearance. The sacred edifices are there. The ministry is eloquent and well beneficed. The august liturgies are sung by tuneful and hired choristers. But where is the congregation? The congregation seems to me to be moving off either quickly or sluggishly, but nevertheless certainly, either to the Rock of Peter or to the temple of Baran Satanas.

The fair patrimony, that is, of the Liberal party of the sixties, is to be fought for by a fierce Ultramontanism and a fierce Communism. And as this war must indubitably soon be waged with the temporal sword, so also it must be waged with those weapons of the spirit which are proper to wars of religion.

CHAPTER III

THE MORALS OF LIBERALISM

INSOMUCH as Liberalism was a Church, it was necessary for it to possess and enforce a code of morals. For that nowadays men require of a Church. They are not satisfied (as they used to be) with a system of magic, they must also have a divinely revealed system of ethics. And perhaps there is wisdom in this, for it does not appear that apart from revelation there can be said to be anywhere absolute morality. It is true that there are certain actions which are generally considered as wrong even by savages, but the list of such actions (which may be called immoral by universal consent) is not long. It would appear also that even an action so universally considered as immoral might, on certain particular occasions, be actually harmless or even laudable. Apart from revelation therefore, and supposing that morality is the creature of the interplay of rival egoisms, then it would appear that there can be nothing more than

a regional or sectional morality, and that even that regional and sectional morality may not be immutable.

If, then, there be no revelation, it would appear that it would be wise to leave the inhabitants of each region or the members of each section to practise their own morality, as long as they did not attempt to interfere with those who were not subject to their jurisdiction. But this by no means satisfied the Liberal. The Liberal had created the 'political man,' who is the same in all regions. If this creature exists then he must be subject to a moral code, but there is obviously no reason why the code should vary according to climate or other local conditions. What is wrong in Clapham, must be wrong in Khatmandu, and what is right for John must also be right for Fatima.

There is a divergence here between the Continental and British Liberals. The founders of the Liberal party on the Continent had been Epicureans and their morals were congruous. In England the party was supported by the Nonconformists, and the Nonconformists had very decided opinions as to the immorality of certain actions. The earlier French Liberals were not

Christians, but were for the most part Deists, and deduced their code of morals from what they were pleased to suppose that a wise and merciful Deity would wish them to do. The Deistic element was not so strong in English Liberalism. Accordingly in the ethics of English Liberalism we find a great deal of Christian morality, depraved and degraded indeed, but clearly recognisable. In fact, it is difficult for a baptised man, living all his life in a community saturated with Chrstian ideas, to get very far away from the Sermon on the Mount.

The Liberal imagined that his ethics were based on reason. They were not. They could not be. Reason may enable us to draw up a moral code for the use of such as are inclined to obey it, but reason will never provide that code with any sanction. Reason tells us, no doubt, to avoid being hanged, but that we are liable to be hanged if we commit murder does not prove that murder is wrong, but this only, that other people think that a murderer ought to be hanged. Thus the fear of the gallows is not the beginning of wisdom. And even the most convinced Hobbist will admit that mere threat of punishment by the civil ruler is a poor support of morality. Given youth, money and

leisure, I would engage to wallow in iniquity without any fear of the police, and, of course, many an infernal scoundrel dies deeply respected, a member of the local bench.

Morality is therefore the product of instinct or the child of revelation. And so in neither case is reason responsible for its existence. Thus reason alone did not enable the Liberal to frame and obey his Code, and induce others to obey it.

There must therefore have been a revelation of some sort here also. But history seems to show that God has willed that the truth should be born in the strong travail of the spirit. His prophets have therefore for the most part been the disinherited, and His voice is more easily heard by him who is rejected of men, by the wanderer by night in the desert under the silence of the stars, in the raging of the waves, by the inmate of the cavern, by him who is seated on the bench of the galley, by the denizen of the deep dungeon. But this people was a well-fed and eupeptic people, for the most part seated in snug back parlours, prosperous too, in their thriving trading way, and protected from grievous misfortune by the institutions which they attacked. Moreover, the party was not

homogeneous. The bulk of the party was, as I have described; but these were neither possessed of broad culture nor very intelligent. Intelligence and warped culture was found in the small but influential professorial class, and in the days before golf the professorial class was rather costive. Costiveness inclines to Calvinism. Indeed, it is possible that the proper dose of Kruschen every morning (just as much as would cover a sixpence) would have turned John Knox into a semi-Pelagian or at least an Arminian.

But these interesting speculations must be abandoned. The fact remained that the new ethic was a queer farrago. There was the eupeptic optimism which generally leads to sexual looseness. But this was corrected by the fact that most of the adherents of the new faith in England were respectable middle-class men who had no love of irregularities. They were mostly married and prolific and found Bohemia not a good business area. Indeed there seeemed rather a tendency to ascertain the rightness of any act or policy by the test " will it in the long run produce material prosperity ? " Here and there were doctrines which seemed to trace to Calvinism, or rather perhaps to

the accursed Manichæanism which damns pleasure merely because it is pleasure. Here and there also were Christian doctrines torn away from their root and therefore withering, but still easily recognisable, which doctrines gave to the whole system what of permanent value was to be found in it at all. Such was the morality of the new sect, and it seemed that man when he did reach the ultimate perfection of Radiant Humanity would be not unlike a Nonconformist grocer with a thriving little business in some small bleak Northland town.

Such was the faith which the Liberal held, and he held it strongly. It was in vain to ask what institution he had for it? It was enough that he thought it was true because he thought it was true. And thinking so, he could not but feel that all others ought to think with him, and that those who did not must be knaves or fools. Laud and Knox had just the same reasons for believing in their own doctrines, neither more nor less.

Such was the morality that was now to seek its expression in the political sphere. As it was a false and adulterine morality it could not but do in the long run much harm, for in politics false

principles must necessarily work ruin. But this evil was not at once apparent. On the contrary at first Liberalism did a great and beneficent work. There was in it a love for humanity, though an ill-regulated love, a ready sympathy, though a sympathy pushed too far, a divine pity which however showed signs of degenerating into a weak sentimentalism. There was also here and there a strong and fierce hatred of wrong and particularly of cruelty and oppression. But alas! not being wholly of God it could not stand. Still this Christianity without Christ was for a certain time and under certain conditions able to effect much.

The Liberal is apt to imagine that he was the original inventor or at least the patentee of pity. This is not so. Not in vain did Christ die. And, as I have said, the Tory party, when it first came untrammelled to power, showed no signs of backwardness in the cause of humanity. Leaders of the Tory party took up the cause of the slave with enthusiasm, and the prosecution of Warren Hastings, also sanctioned by the chiefs of the Tories, was a mistaken homage to pity. But as the reaction set in, the Liberals claimed exclusive rights to the exploitation of pity as a political asset, and were

merciful enough where mercy did not interfere seriously with dividends. And there was much scope for the operation of pity. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been times of progressive brutality. The men in power were with few exceptions cold, stern and ungenerous. This was perhaps more by reason of a lack of sympathy and knowledge due to that segregation of society into small coteries which is characteristic of oligarchies, than to any positive pleasure taken in oppression. For the Englishman naturally hates oppression, in so much as it is contrary to his ideas of sport, of which he is by nature a devotee. In any case the system pressed at many points cruelly on the people and particularly on those classes who had no voice in parliament. The slave trade, the penal code, the law of debt, the press gang, military discipline, the apprentice system, to mention only a few instances out of many, were clear indications that the divine passion of pity had not been allowed its fair share in the administration of the state; and the fact (which was the fact) that these oppressions were oppressions enforced not of set purpose, but coming into being by a natural process of evolution with merely the tacit acquiescence of all parties in

the state, did not make them any the less grievous oppressions. Like the woodman on Ida, the Liberal now in power wiped his forehead and looked round him and said, "Which growth shall I first cut down?" Here indeed was a fine field for the powers of destruction.

Yet the philosopher might have some reasons for dubiety. Pity is no doubt a divine passion, but it is a dangerous passion. As the divine clemency is infinite, so also is the divine justice. But with mortal men pity, if undisciplined, is apt to slop over into an effeminate shrinking from the infliction of pain, merely because the sight of suffering is painful to the spectator. A small investment of severity may be necessary to produce a bountiful dividend of tranquillity. He who thinks that to cause suffering is the unpardonable sin, and who imposes his views on the civil government, will assuredly see the fruits of his doctrines in the desolated homes and the unburied corpses of the people of God. For the magistrate does not bear the sword in vain. The powers of evil are strong in fight, and there can be no fight without the shedding of blood and the infliction of pain. Victor and the vanquished must alike bleed and weep.

This debauched and impure pity, so different from the austere divine clemency, is a constant in the Liberal system of morals. Its predominance is due partly to the worship of abstract humanity, but also to another cause. Pity is closely connected with the sexual instinct, and, as I have observed, many of the Liberals were men of what is called virtuous lives. They were not formally ascetics, for they saw no harm in gratifying natural appetites under certain limitations and conditions, but as a party they were inclined to regard with horror open indulgence in sensuality, especially when that indulgence led to sexual irregularities. In order therefore to benefit by the powerful Liberal connection it was necessary at any rate to pretend to be a man of strict life. But, as I have said, there was in the party ardent (and penniless) youth in great numbers. Nor was every convinced Liberal rich enough or fortunate enough to be happily married. Thus the sexual instinct so powerful in man was often perverted. One of the results was the undue strengthening of this impure passion of pity.

The policeman if wise will keep an eye on the middle-aged respectable gentleman who, at the edge of a wood, is petting and consoling the poor

little golden-headed Lucy who has temporarily mislaid her family, and has also broken her doll.

One of the unfortunate effects of the predominance of this sickly and unmanly sentimentality is to nauseate those who are nourished on a sterner creed, and thus to raise hostility in the minds of such to policies which are in themselves just and holy. Similarly the dogmatic and pontifical manner in which these doctrines are expounded by the arid professorial class raises at once a sense of distaste to the really desirable product of the doctrine. Thus I myself am a convinced Free Trader. And good reason why. For I am a man with a small fixed income and I therefore think that under Free Trade I shall buy the things I want at a less price than otherwise. And there is a good deal of M. Josse in all of us. Therefore on the highdays and holidays of Free Trade I may be seen circumambulating the statue of Cobden uttering short howls of religious exultation. But if anything could wean me from this devotion it would be the argument of the Liberal who tells me that "it is wrong to tax the food of the poor." In the first place I do not admit that it is wrong to tax the food of the poor, meaning thereby the men who earn their

living by productive work. In the next place I am sure that in a highly organised society all taxation falls ultimately on the food of the poor. Therefore the matter of protection is so far merely a matter of economics and of scientific taxation and not of morals.

And again there is the man who fills one's ears full of arguments as to the immediate utility of the free-trade policy, leaving wholly out of view the far more important ultimate effects of that policy, which are surely at least equally worthy of consideration. It is not the arguments of the protectionists, it is those of the free-traders that tend to shake that ardent faith of mine.

Or again, to take an imaginary example, the question of slavery, for, as I have said before, the question of the lawfulness of slavery was not raised originally by the Liberals. It was taken up by illuminated Christians, and the champions of the slaves were found at first among the Tories.

The Christian confronted with the question of slavery will consider it and perhaps decide that it is sinful for man to keep his brother man (for whom also Christ died) in slavery. That is enough for him. In so much as it is far better that the whole human

race should perish in unimagined tortures than that any man should voluntarily and with full knowledge commit a sin, there can be no doubt. The system must be abolished at once and for ever, whatever be the consequences to the state, to the slaves or to the slave-holders.

The Statesman will proceed on different lines. He will not at first regard the moral aspect of the case at all. He will consider first the primary economical and social questions. They are numerous. What is the effect on our African trade of the export of so many negroes from their homes? Can sugar be cultivated in the West Indies without slaves? If sugar cultivation is to cease there what effect will that have on the trade of the Kingdom? Will it be possible to substitute some other industry? Is not slavery economically unsound, that is, does it not lead to an undue destruction of capital, and to slovenly cultivation? What will happen to the slave-holders? What will happen to the slaves? The statesman will probably go on discussing these topics (especially if he be a bureaucrat) for years. Meanwhile Sambo is having his fill of the cart-whip. Finally the enquirer will make up his mind. He will find that the system is economically and socially

either unsound or sound. In the first case there can be no reason why slavery should continue. But if it be ascertained that the system is economically sound then the wise statesman must look farther. What are the secondary effects of slavery? What effect, for example, will it have on the morals of the citizen in general, if large sections of the community draw handsome profits from injustice and cruelty? Probably the unbiassed lay statesmen will come to the decision that slavery is a nuisance and must be abolished, and all that remains is to provide that individuals do not suffer more than can be helped, and that such institutions be set up as will provide for the due governance of the lands once populated by slaves and their masters, but now inhabited almost wholly by free barbarians.

The Liberal was apt to treat the question in something like this manner. "It is dreadful to think of our poor black brothers being torn away from their happy homes on the banks of the Gambia. It is absurd to say that they are an inferior race. They are Africans, and Hannibal and Cleopatra were Africans. There is a negro who writes quite good Latin verse. We are all of us liable to error, and any one might shorten the *u* in *furcis*. And they

work out their lives in severe labour under a tropic sun driven on by the cart-whip. And when they get too old to work they are flung out into the gully to die. And they are really naturally Christian souls hungering and thirsting after the precious words of the Gospel. Yet their cruel masters will not let them be taught the truth. And the women . . . you don't mean to say! . . . not really? . . . can it possibly be true? . . . how disgusting! . . . And as a matter of fact, if you think of it, there is not much real profit in all this. Our colonies are well stocked with negroes, and, free or bond, our black brother will have to go on working or starve. The foreign colonies are not so richly provided in this respect, and if emancipation is now decreed, we shall really be in a better position than Spain or France to be producers of sugar. Moreover the emancipated slave will probably be well-to-do, and the West India Islands will thus be better markets for Manchester goods than they are now."

This sort of preaching based on a morality where the superficial daubing of cant could not conceal from the eye of the critic the underlying gross and sordid utilitarianism, was applied to many questions

and was bound to cause opposition even among those who were well inclined to the policy actually recommended by it. The opposition it aroused went so far that Zarathusthra arose, the religion preached by a madman of genius which taught that pity was the unpardonable sin.

It would be unfair to make Liberalism responsible for this extreme reaction, but heresy will be met by heresy, and it does seem as if the old humanity was going out of fashion and being replaced by something more cosmopolitan and therefore less effective. On the other hand the oppressor is forced to add hypocrisy to his other vices.

Still it must never be forgotten that these two virtues, pity and self-control, are virtues, and must be saluted as such, even though we may not approve of the garb they wear, or the accents with which they speak.

And, indeed, it is sometimes hard to be patient. There is too often in the Liberal polemic too much that revolts and nauseates. Something really illiberal in the old sense, something ergastuline. There is, as I have said before, too often a certain grovelling materialism, as if patriotism, liberty, religion, God Himself, must be made to pay dividends.

And the fighters seem possessed not always by the noble spirits of revolt and hatred, but by the pettier demons of spite, malice and envy. Truth to tell, in England the Liberal party was too prosperous. It never found its soul in suffering. It had not fire in its belly, but wind.

Such was the guide which was to lead the human race for about a hundred years, and such the lights that it possessed. The human race followed it and its progress has been over many a bog and morass, through many a perilous defile, through many a pleasant champaign and green pasture. But now the guide is fallen and her torch extinct, and she has led us—whither?

CHAPTER IV

LIBERALISM AND SOCIETY

INASMUCH as Liberalism was a revolt against authority, it necessarily came into conflict also with the order of society that it found in existence. It is to be confessed that the then existing order of society had in it much that was worthy of destruction. It was a decrepit survival from the Middle Ages. The European genius had, after the total excision of the Roman system (which was based on slavery), worked out an elaborate and all-embracing system of its own whereby were controlled the duties of man to man. This system rested much on status, and the cardinal principle was that every man should have a lord to whom he should render fealty, and who should protect him, and should also be responsible for him to superior authority. This system had, owing to external causes, become practically obsolete all over Western Europe, and was held together by mere use and wont and the innate Conservatism of man. There was much

good in it, but like all obsolete systems it teemed with abuses.

The first Liberals were much interested in society. Indeed, their attacks on the civil power were to a great degree directed against what they conceived to be the malignant upholder of an obsolete social system. There is probably no easier butt for the ridicule of the sociologist, who applies the deductive process to the construction of a Nephelococcygia, than the social system as it exists now, and of course the social system of the eighteenth century would have been still more ridiculous to such a critic.

It has been observed that the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were epochs when the study of pure mathematics was suddenly developed to an extent which made it appear that the deductive process was something like the Evangel of a new religion. Nothing was beyond the reach of the new calculus. Moreover Liberalism was to be much aided by the so-called science, which in its turn is greatly indebted to the spread of mathematical knowledge in Europe since the days of Descartes and Newton. The continued extension of the power of man over nature did render a great deal of use and wont

obsolete, and therefore many of the ideas of society, resting as they did on pure use and wont, altogether absurd.

Liberalism in England was not formally anarchic. It accepted, that is, as axioms in the mathematics of society certain general principles which the foreign brethren regarded not as axioms but as highly disputable propositions. But reluctantly it was compelled to attack these axioms also, and it has proved a strong solvent in the society where it was distilled. Man as a social being is an individual living in relation to other individuals. What regulates those relations? Some authority. There must be somewhere something that says to man: "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not," when he contemplates the commission of some act which will affect other men. Therefore Liberalism being in its essence a revolt against authority must necessarily come into conflict with that authority also. Thus the social system could not escape from destruction. The old commands might or might not remain, but it was now a question who issued them. In some cases the old authority has been allowed to linger on, as a tenant whose lease has run out may be allowed to hold over from term to term by a precarious

tenure. In other cases a new authority has emerged which pronounces the necessary commands with no less imperiousness than the old authority.

It is impossible to deal with the whole of this question in these few pages. A few instances must suffice.

Liberalism had a thorough mistrust of status, but it had in England at least perhaps an exaggerated respect for the contract. But as regards this question of contract two of the doctrines of Liberalism came into sharp conflict.

Man is entitled to freedom. But a part of that very freedom is the right to surrender it in a good cause and for a proper consideration. For instance, if the state were to prohibit a freeman from selling his labour in the best market that would be to treat him like a child or a slave. Yet to refuse to enforce contracts would be in effect to prevent such transactions, because A and B will not enter into a bargain, which may impose disadvantages on B, unless A is in his turn compelled to carry out such terms of the agreement as may appear to damnify him.

And man being a perfectible creature will learn not to exact a hard bargain from his brother. Nor

will he enter into contracts which will be dangerous to himself and society. All that is necessary is to enlighten his self-interest.

But it soon became apparent that this theory, admirable in itself, broke down when applied in practice. Then the other great Liberal doctrine, the doctrine of pity, stepped in, and came into violent contest with libertarian theories. Man must be protected against himself, and further he must be compelled to protect those who are dependent on him. When for example the doctrine of free contract allowed fathers to send their little children to the mine or factory to be worked to death, then it was time to interfere.

The result of all this has been the erection of a new authority in place of the decrepit authority attacked by the Liberals. The true mediaeval system supposed the existence of a chain of authorities delegated from the Deity down to the churl in his capacity of father of a family. It was the Civil Sovereign, no doubt, who stood behind the relations created by status and use and wont. But his power was not invoked, as a matter of common practice. There were, or appeared to be, other sanctions. Liberalism destroyed all this, but

by itself could, being merely a revolt and therefore sterile, substitute nothing. But as man must have authority, and as one of the unforeseen effects of the working of Liberalism in the political sphere had been the creation of the omnipotent state, that creation necessarily stepped into the vacant place. Thus was provided the required authority. As an emancipator, therefore, the Liberal had proved a failure because he had set up an authority much less shackled, and therefore far more absolute than the old authority. He might congratulate himself in the belief that the new authority was impregnated with Liberal ideas, and would therefore necessarily be rational and humane. But was there any guarantee that it would long remain so, or indeed subject itself to any moral law whatsoever?

This authority therefore, 'The State,' is the authority that stands behind all those relations between man and man that rest on agreement. At first it seemed as if the invocation of this force might be wholly noxious. There seemed at one time a menace that men might be reduced by the free operation of the law of contract to mere wage-slaves. But now it would appear that the danger is rather on the other side. There are so many

precautions to prevent a man contracting to his own disadvantage, and the law is so chary of enforcing contracts when any loss is thereby caused to the members of any very vocal class, that it seems not impossible that contract will in time become as obsolete as status, and in that case there will be no legal bond at all between man and man. In this way Liberalism may prove an emancipator, but its path as such has been over strange ways, and the emancipation may not prove altogether such a boon to the emancipated as was hoped. For man must eat. And before he can eat he must produce the thing that is to be eaten, and while he is doing that he must be fed. And unless he works during one year there will be nothing on which to feed him in the next interval between harvest and harvest. But people will not long consent to feed other people without hope of profit, and that profit cannot be had where bargains are not held sacred or are not enforced.

And, therefore, it is partly because men hope by the interference and the power of the State to profit unjustly, that there is unemployment and much misery. And Liberalism has falsely thought that a man by nature has a right to employment,

But man has of himself no rights. It is indeed expedient that all men willing to work should find employment, and so maintain themselves and their families, but it is not always possible that this should happen. And it has never been the case, and, as far as can be foreseen, never will be the case that he who is willing to labour will invariably find an opportunity so to employ his labour as to win sufficient maintenance. But men are never contented to starve, and still less to see their loved ones starve, and now they have learned that if they starve that is because other people are doing them injustice. Hence the road is clear to the teaching of anarchy. And here is a remedy indeed, because perhaps it is better to starve for a fortnight and then die than to linger on half-starved for months and then die. That is a matter of choice. But some, not caring for this prospect, have devised schemes whereby men who do not like to work may yet eat. And these are more demoralising to the whole class who benefit by them than anything which has yet been devised by the wit of man. A population which is used to the free distribution of bread will never again settle with energy to honest toil, and he who expects to be fed by the state, and never to

repay, is the real proletarian, the coming menace to the modern as he was the actual destroyer of the old civilisation.

Another important system which brought men into relation with one another was the family. English Liberalism never directly attacked the family. Indeed, the English Liberal was rather apt to be the fanatic High Priest of the family, and to make it a sort of Dagon on whose altars he sacrificed the rights of his wife and the aspirations of his children. Yet the continuance of the family was incompatible with Liberalism. The European idea of the family which rests on the union for life of one man with one woman necessarily demands that the husband and father should be supreme. And this demand was strengthened by the economic position assigned to the wife by the laws of the great states of Europe. But this power given to the head of the family was authority, and was therefore a thing to be rebelled against. It was also (as power must ever be) occasionally misused. Its misuse caused suffering, and to cause suffering is the unpardonable sin. Therefore, that ancient institution of marriage could not long survive. But nothing yet has taken its place. Yet before we attempt to regulate the

rights of man as a citizen, whether of England or of the world, we must first ascertain his status as a son, a brother, a husband or a father. For the state so far has been a collection of families, and it was through the family that the state regulated the existence and early protection and education of the citizen. But if that institution of the family is to be abolished or modified, corresponding modifications must be introduced into the structure of society. We pretend indeed that the old Christian monogamous family is still in existence, but that is not true, for a visit to Corinth is still a visit to Corinth, even if you travel on a season-ticket. The relations of the sexes also have here been thrown into confusion, and it looks to me as if something like polyandry would emerge. But the emergence of polyandry would require a total reorganisation of the whole social system. And a state which, being really polyandrous, insisted on pretending that it was monogamous would be in parlous case.

It is to be noted that polyandry no less than monogamy is a rigid system and that its rules, though not the same as those of the discredited system, are just as binding. Therefore to substitute polyandry for monogamy would not be to ' break the shackles

for ever' but to impose others. And as in the previous instance in respect of the relations set up between man and man by bargaining it was shown that Liberalism had by a false application of its principles been responsible for the dolcs, an institution subversive of the nation, so also in this matter of the relations of the sexes the principles of Liberalism ultimately led to a grave danger to the race and so to humanity. For to those women, and they were many, who were conscious of abilities it seemed a grievous thing ' to be born a lassie and sit boring at a clout,' and that was an injustice which should be remedied. But the times seemed to promise no other career for woman except maternity, yet it was clear that even if all desired that profession, all could not legally engage in it. The Reformation had destroyed one set of institutions which gave scope to the adminstrative abilities of women outside the home, namely the convents, and had given no substitutes. Thus woman was denied by the fact of her sex the share which she deemed her right in the business of the world and in the multitudinous activities of men. That the injustice was one wrought by nature did not matter. It was an injustice and should be remedied. Therefore

careers were opened to women, to the benefit no doubt of the individuals who adopted them, of the nation and of the state. But it was found that in this struggle for freedom woman was severely handicapped because she was highly specialised for motherhood, and had therefore strong instincts which demanded gratification. For though there is certainly growing up in Western Europe something like a third sex of neuters, who approximate in appearance to the feminine type, but who have little femininity in them, and who being neuters have always great jealousy of masculine prerogatives, yet these are but few in numbers and confined to certain classes, and it is too true that woman is still feminine. She has on the whole asserted her 'inalienable right' with tenacious persistence. Whether secluded in the gynaecaeum of Athens or wrestling naked in the palaestra of Lacedaemon, a spectator in the Circus of the games, demurely riding through the magic glades of Broceliande, aiming the quarrel at the hart, taking the waters at Bath or Cheltenham, walking in the shrubbery, or a competitor at the archery meeting, or now with shingled hair and short skirts figuring a belated Bacchanal at the dance-hall or in the night-club,

she has ever pursued ruthlessly (and none the less ruthlessly because half-unconsciously) her object, namely to stir the emotions and thus dominate the reason of some suitable young male so that she may the sooner set about the real business of life. Against that tyranny the Liberal will revolt in vain. Wise were the words of the wise daughter of Theon. Before that ensign we all—Radical or Tory, Liberal or Conservative, Anglican or Schismatic, Minimist or Bolshevik—must strike our topsails. Thus it was found that many women showed a regrettable tendency to abandon the cause of freedom, and that a girl highly educated and fitted to fill with lustre some high position in the state was contented to sink down to be the wife of some man and the mother of a riotous troop of children, and, what was worse, rather to be proud in proportion to her success in that career.

When you come to think of it, what tyranny is more despotic than that of His Majesty the Baby? He begins his career by inflicting torments compared to which Luke's iron crown and Damien's bed of steel were a couch of roses. For years he demands a patient and unwearying service which could not be bought by the hoards of Montezuma. And he

shows no gratitude. He does not condescend to argue. He takes all this service as a mere matter of right. If it be delayed he howls; and if it be denied he dies. There might well be rebellion against a tyranny like this.

But what was to be done? The instinct was there and very powerful, it could not be eradicated. But could it not be perverted or defrauded? Was it not possible to have the sugar without the cane? So there were not wanting those who should preach the holiness of the childless marriage, or better, of living in maiden meditation fancy free amid the lilies and languors of the Lesbian air. Thus was the yoke of sex, it seemed, if not wholly removed yet much lightened.

The promised land was thus once more not far removed from the shores of the Dead Sea. And those persons who have a taste for that climate may find those shores an agreeable habitation enough. But how far this new learning will increase the capabilities of the human race, is another question. For the necessary result was that motherhood is tending to confine itself to those classes or to those persons whose instincts are a great deal more powerful than their reason, that is to such as verge on the

feeble-minded. Whether it is probable that creatures born mostly into the feeble-minded classes will find the toilsome march towards Radiant Humanity a very possible feat, seems to me at least somewhat doubtful.

And in another way Liberalism with the best of motives has set in train a series of impulses which must necessarily lead to race impoverishment. The Liberal theory being that all men were equal in capacity it followed that every man had the same latent ability and that education would bring out that ability. In fact it regarded the intelligence of every human being at birth as a blank sheet of paper on which the parent or schoolmaster could inscribe what he willed. This doctrine was held very strongly by the earlier Liberals, and the more fanatical extended it even to animals. Thus there was once a Liberal who heard a friend complaining that a certain horse (the property of that friend) was irreclaimably vicious. But the Liberal said that there is no such thing as a horse vicious by nature, and that education is all that is necessary. Therefore he bought the horse and trained it and treated it with kindness, and it grew to love him. So he mounted it, and rode it, and it flung

him off, and bit him in the stomach, and he died, and the world had rest from him.

This doctrine is, of course, wholly false, for education does not put into the mind anything of which the germ is not there already. Nor is it very potent to suppress instincts, though it may pervert them.

But if men are all equal in capacity it would follow that all men ought to be educated equally, so that all may start in the race of life without handicap. For what can be unjuster than that some mute inglorious Milton should be loading a dung-cart, while the educated Milton is getting his obol or so for *Paradise Lost*?

Universal education has done a vast amount of good, and has added greatly to the happiness of the human race. But at any rate, in a country organised as England is, it does cause serious dangers to the race. I am not talking about the inevitable growth of disaffection which a shallow educational system must necessarily cause when the young citizens of a state, organised on so unnatural a basis as the modern England, are exposed to it. The danger of universal education is deeper than that. It causes the nation to live on its captial. When

education is universal, children will, after their education is done, seek and obtain such occupations as seem suitable to their abilities and training. In a country where there are no peasants, that means for the more able occupations in towns. But town life is notoriously hostile to reproduction. It follows therefore that we have set up a system of selection by which the abler persons of both sexes are partially sterilized, and that breeding takes place chiefly from the inferior stocks. But ability is hereditary. Therefore if the abler people be discouraged from breeding, and the less able encouraged, you come to the abyss. At first of course the results are not apparent; for the state, drawing on what really should be its reserves, finds a sudden but temporary accession of patent ability at its disposal in all its activities, so that it is able for a time to work at maximum effectiveness. Thus an arc lamp through which excessive voltage is passed will shine for an instant with ominous and unnatural brilliance and then remain extinct and fulminated for ever. Be it noted that I do not argue against popular education. But I say that popular education calls for far-reaching changes in social organisation which have so far not been

attempted. And what effect this present system of selection will have on the character of the race remains for the future to decide. But whether a race thus degraded by perverse selection will be in any way capable of marching to Radiant Humanity, and whether it will not prefer to remain grovelling in the abyss, seems to me at least doubtful.

It is impossible in the limits of a short essay like the present to trace the effect of Liberalism on society with that thoroughness which is desirable. But it will be an amusing task for him who is fond of the deductive system himself to work at the problem on mathematical lines. Given a school of philosophy which teaches that man is by his own nature perfect, or at least perfectible, that man has rights which it is cruelty to deny, and that cruelty is the unpardonable sin, and give that school such control over the opinions of men that it is able in great part to realise its ideas, what then will probably be the effect on all the relations between human beings which constitute society? After you have spent a few amusing days in working out the answer to these questions deductively, you may then spend some profitable years in observation of actually existing phenomena, and you may then

see how far Liberalism has fulfilled its promise as an emancipator and as the Moses who should lead the human race to a permanent seat in the Land of Promise. And you will not, I think, wonder that though the Liberal party is very much alive, yet Liberalism is dead and that on its grave is written the conclusive epitaph :

'*Mortuus est, et sepultus est, et descendit ad inferos.*'

CHAPTER V

LIBERALISM IN THE STATE

LIBERALISM began as an emancipator. Man being perfect, or at least perfectible in his nature, all that remained was to 'break the shackles' and invite him to march; and it was the civil Government which had imposed those shackles which most hindered the free progress of man. Liberalism therefore in its earlier forms stood for liberty in one of the many senses of that ambiguous term. It stood, that is, for the abolition or at least the attenuation of the civil authority. As a matter of history Liberalism has played a very strange part in this affair and one which its originators in no way desired. Man has no objection to authority. At the word ''*Shun,*' pronounced with sufficient emphasis, he is very pleased to spring to attention in a smart and soldier-like manner, with his thumbs in a line with the seam of his breeches. If authority be removed he does not march anywhere; he with his neighbours mobs and mills like a herd of cattle.

He is then grateful to any one who takes on himself the responsibility of command. He knows well enough that his power is greater as a member of a platoon than as an individual unit. He has no objection to a dominant and rather aggressive authority. Certainly among a few races, and at certain periods of history, he has shown himself intolerant of an incapable authority; but taking man in general he has such a horror of anarchy, that he prefers to anarchy almost any sort of authoritative government which can provide the most rudimentary sort of public order. In fact the most that the ordinary man can hope for is a kind master. And liberty means in general merely liberty to change masters. Therefore from the very first the original programme of the Liberals was impossible.

In England Liberalism came to power only when anarchic doctrines had been thoroughly discredited on the Continent, and those classes which were here the support of Liberalism were by no means classes who desired the breakdown of the power which enforced contracts. The English Liberal therefore never aimed at the destruction of the social order as such. He desired merely this; that the necessary authority should be

benevolent and progressive, that is that it should be in Liberal hands, or at least the civil chiefs should be in sympathy with Liberal doctrines. To accomplish this end, there was no need of armed revolution. The constitution was such that it would be easy enough by due process of law to transfer the power of the state to the veritable Lords.

The civil rulers of the eighteenth century in England loudly proclaimed, and apparently had succeeded in convincing themselves (which is natural enough), the French (which is strange), and their American brethren (which is remarkable), that they were living under a limited monarchy. They were of course doing no such thing, because there cannot be a limited monarchy. It is not possible in this tract to explore deeply the arcana of the British Constitution. All that is necessary is to say that after 1715 the House of Commons was in fact immediately supreme, and that all the functions of Government were vested in a committee of both Houses, the House of Commons having a negative voice in the selection of the members of that committee. The majority of the House of Commons was chosen by a limited number of Englishmen, the electors, and both electors and elected were

occasionally influenced by the wishes of important classes who had not the suffrage and so were not effectively represented in parliament. There was thus behind the wearying interplay of faction the British nation to whom account must ultimately be rendered; but except in times of national emergency, the British people (the real sovereign) was somewhat somnolent and inclined to leave things very much in the hands of the people who were after all in some sense its chosen delegates. These delegates were in fact the land-owning aristocracy, and they did, on the whole, perform fairly efficiently for many years their delegated functions.

That the Liberals should come into power, that is that power should be vested in wise and progressive hands, all that was necessary was to convince a certain number of the land-holders that the Liberal programme was politically desirable, slightly to extend the suffrage so that those classes who were naturally inclined to Liberalism might be properly represented in the House of Commons, and to carry on propaganda among the voteless population, so that pressure might be put on the electors and elected. None of these policies presented much difficulty. The oligarchy was a divided and fractious

oligarchy, and large sections of it were always looking round for some new policy which might appeal to the people, and thus carry him who knew how to exploit the policy to supreme power. There was the tie of kinship between Liberalism of the British type and Whiggery, and the oligarchs were in their nature Whig. As regards the electors the representative system did need an overhaul, for there were certainly important and valuable classes who were not sufficiently represented in parliament and whose interests therefore might as things stood be disregarded. Such classes were almost wholly Liberal, and their emancipation would at once transfer the sceptre to Liberal hands. The voteless, ill-organised multitudes, easily stirred by enthusiasm, would halloo and riot for that side which promised them the speedy realisation of the dreams of man—a well-ordered state that provides a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and a comfortable habitation for Polly and the kids.

Thus was effected the revolution of 1832, and power passed into the hands of men who, whether they called themselves Liberals or Conservatives, were all believers in the Liberal theory. The old oligarchy had been a somewhat timorous sovereign.

All the powers of Government had actually been vested in its hands, but it either did not know this, or hesitated to use those powers. There had no doubt been even in the eighteenth century some isolated examples of very daring use of the legislative power, but as a general rule the Government had stood on the old ways and had allowed things to develop under the old law (common and statute) as expounded by the tribunals, and modified by the action of the executive. The Liberals when they came into power changed all this, and gave to the legislature an unnatural and perhaps dangerous activity. But the voice of the legislature is the voice of the sovereign, and this legislative activity ill accorded with the theory that man is by nature perfect and that 'shackles should be removed'; for every law imposed obligations, and every obligation was enforced with the threat of punishment. Thus the Liberal rapidly was converted to the Tory doctrine, namely that man cannot do without a master and that all he can reasonably require is that that master should be a kind and benevolent master.

No doubt at first the Liberal in the sphere of legislature was principally active in the direction of

repealing noxious laws. The doctrines of *laissez faire* were preached vigorously. But it was soon found that it is not enough to repeal a noxious law—you must put something in its place. There was thus a great deal of positive legislation, and the legislature therefore became the most important organ of the state. At the same time a new idea had spread which was to produce important consequences, that was the idea of democracy.

Neither on the Continent nor in England had the first Liberals been democrats. It is not necessary or possible to give an account of the attitude of the earlier political reformers towards universal suffrage, but it will not need much argument to convince any one of the truth of the axiom that those who have got away with the swag do not, except in case of evident necessity, wish to share it with any one else. The Liberals had got away with the swag, and they hoped to retain it in their own hands. The suffrage was thus to be extended only to those classes who might be relied on to 'Vote Liberal,' that is to the middle-class, and the 'Lower Orders' must be kept in their proper place.

But this policy proved impossible. In the first place it did not fit in with theory. Man being by

nature perfect, it is not possible to admit that one man is better than another, for there can be no degrees in perfection. That A is a loafer, a haunter of taprooms, a seducer of maidens, and one whom the sight of a job of work casts into a passion of fear, and that B is a professor of Science in the University of London, is immaterial. They are both men, and humanity is the essential. You must look to the essential, and disregard accidents. Furthermore as every man has a right to vote, to deprive him of that right is injustice, and the object of injustice suffers pain, and to inflict pain is a deadly sin.

Moreover, in practice it early became obvious that the future of the Liberal faction was by no means safe in the hands of the actual electors. After about seven years from the revolution of 1832, the dominant Liberal party fell from effective power, and in no short time a Conservative party took over the Government. That Conservative party was doubtless strongly tinged with Liberal principles, and proceeded somewhat hesitatingly with the substantive Liberal programme; but the hands into which the salaries were paid were the hands not of the genuine Esau but of the fraudulent Jacob.

But the Conservative party also in its turn felt by no means safe. Reaction had put it into power, and a second reaction might dethrone it. Faction apart, thinking men could not but feel that it was desirable in the interests of the country that the Government should have some permanence. We really cannot afford a revolution every five years. Both parties began to think that the extension of the suffrage would eventually lead to the existence of some popular and permanent Government 'broad-based on the people's will.'

Further, the truth of the Tory doctrine that it is dangerous to trust power to large minorities had become manifest. Experience has shown that it is often the case that a despot may regard with equal attention the interests of all his subjects. All his subjects are his subjects, and there is no particular reason why he should favour one class at the expense of another. Thus a farmer would not be supposed *a priori* likely to favour his pigs at the expense of his cows, or vice versa. Similarly a small oligarchy will no doubt look after its own interests and the interests of its immediate satellites and supporters first, but having done so it will still have some regard to the interest of the community in general.

Being a small body it feels itself divinely set apart to look after the general thing, which is in some sort its private property, and will rarely totally neglect this duty. The practical difficulty is that neither benevolent despot nor benevolent oligarch knows quite where the shoe pinches, and that his benevolent measures are often disastrous. But a minority which is possessed of the sovereignty, but is too large to be an oligarchy, is almost by necessity negligent of the interests of the voteless majority. This may be proved both deductively and inductively by him who has leisure. Quite rightly therefore it was felt that the power which had passed from the King to the oligarchy and from the oligarchy to the people should remain with the people, but the people must be the whole people and not any fraction thereof. Thus at last we have come to universal suffrage and the establishment of democracy.

In this way there came about an event which the earlier Liberals had not foreseen and which they would much have dreaded. And the establishment of democracy was to procure effects very contrary to Liberal principles.

People write and talk as if democracy were a

divine ordinance. Other people talk as if it were merely a form of Government. Neither is true. Democracy is a good deal more than a form of Government; it is, like Liberalism itself, a religion. But we are at present concerned with it only as a form of Government. There are many forms of Government, and there is not any one form which is always and everywhere the best. At present in certain regions of the world democracy is the best form of Government because it is the only form likely to command sufficient assent among the people to enable itself to exist.

But if ever people become wearied of democracy (and there are not lacking signs that the people are losing faith in it as a form of Government) then it will have no more right to exist than a theocracy, a tyranny or any other form of establishment now discredited and therefore useless.

However, in any case it does not much matter. Government is always the business of a small class. It is in effect always the few who direct the energies of the state and take the rewards of their activities. The paths by which the aristocrat attains power, and the means by which he retains it under democracy, or in an oligarchy, may be different, but

there is no evidence that competent men do not come to the helm as easily under a democracy as under Lord North or the Prince of the Peace. In fact, it is probably true, that in a democracy in its present form (working that is through representative institutions, with a kind of double election of the executive) the true aristocrat more easily obtains and retains power than in any other system, though perhaps he gets a little of the bloom of aristocracy rubbed off in the process.

The real trouble is quite different. The question is whether the democratic system will not kill out the aristocrat and that not because it is democratic, but because of its despotism. Experience has shown that it is not difficult to eradicate in a nation all energy, determination, individuality and initiative—in fact that greatness of soul which is the characteristic of the aristocrat, the born leader of men. And if there be no aristocrats, then the state, if it is to survive at all, can survive only in the form of a bureaucratic despotism.

But that city is to be commiserated where there are no leaders. And the leader is the aristocrat. Not, of course, the aristocrat according to Debrett, but the aristocrat by divine commission. For in

very truth it is the aristocrat who has guided the vague energies of man and led him up from the marsh and the jungle. And if there be any hope for man that he shall come to the promised land that hope is not in the many save as followers, but in the few, the very few, appointed to that end. For the kingdom is from God, and to the leader belongs the kingdom. For he has both the power and the will to rule. But it is in no way necessary to write at length as to the nature of the aristocrat. For the people may follow many a time after erroneous leaders, but they never fail to recognise the true king among men. *Agnosco procerem.* And they acclaim him, though in the end they may crucify him. But as for the clerk, he hates the aristocrat and will stifle him if he can.

This quality of aristocracy is rare. A people cannot create an aristocracy. A people can easily eradicate it. A despotism crushes it. A democracy is apt to draw too lavishly on its small capital of aristocracy and exhaust it. And that race which has once lost the seed of aristocracy can never again recover it. For that seed is produced only in the garden of God, and when God purposes the destruction of a nation He destroys its Lords, and

does not renew the sacred stock. Thus the nation deprived of leaders may not progress. It cannot even stay where it is, but must sink back, back to the marsh and forest whence it has painfully and under guidance emerged.

If it desires that for a time and a season it should remain apparently motionless, then it must set up a democratic bureaucracy. Thus the form of valid and valuable institutions may be preserved though the vital spark is gradually withdrawn. For the laws do not live of themselves ; they are dead things of sheepskin and wax, and it is the spirit which makes them live. But that animating spirit is from God and is communicated by Him to the leader not to the mass. Therefore the democracy is jealous of, though submissive to the leader, and when it becomes absolute and thinks it no longer needs leadership, it will kill him.

A democracy is necessarily a despotism. It became evident soon enough that though man in the abstract might be a divine figure and worthy of all franchises, yet that Tom Brown and Eliza Simpson were not yet perfect and that no very short date could be set when they would be perfected. Thus it became necessary to pass even

more and more laws, directing the subject what he or she should or should not do. The modern state therefore claims a far wider dominion over the lives and souls of the citizen than any of the old tyrannies. Moreover it is far more efficient. Its mechanism is almost perfected. It commands the loyal devotion of a whole host of salaried officials, well versed in the business of office, who can and do enforce the execution of the laws with a severity which would have been impossible even fifty years ago. Moreover the State disposes of such vast material resources that all resistance is hopeless and is not attempted. By its system of education, by its salaried Church, by its influenced Press, it possesses a means of propaganda which is so effective that the citizen regards its commands with a sort of religious awe. Under the old constitution there were all sorts of apparent checks and controls. These were not real checks and controls, being mostly 'painted devils to terrify babes,' but they were left as symbols that the Government did not think it right to exercise its power to the full. Thus much private liberty existed. And the people valued this liberty, and the symbols which seemed to guarantee it. But now the rulers delight in

treading underfoot those old fictions, and more and more it becomes obvious that power is one and cannot be divided, and that he who holds the power can lawfully do all things. And ever the cry is for more and more control and greater and greater subjection of the individual to the state. And despotism is despotism whether it be the absolute rule of a Cæsar or of a whole nation.

Happy indeed is the citizen of the modern centralised state. After he has paid his due of homage to the idol of the People-God, deafened by the howling of hosannas, and asphyxiated by the reek of monopolised incense, he may return in his licensed car, amid strictly regulated traffic, to that castle, his rated villa. He may ask if his copy of *La Garçonne* has come. More fortunate than he wots of, he learns that he is forbidden to read it lest his morals should be corrupted. While awaiting the return of his children from their enforced attendance at the Council school, he may profitably put in a few hours in studying the latest regulations of the various boards. But it is now time for a meal. The food of the people must not be taxed, so he may partake of a light and palatable luncheon of Argentine beef, Dutch cheese, Californian

peaches and Swiss milk. He cannot indeed have a glass of beer. And as for cigarettes it is closing day. But emboldened by this generous diet he may wish to sport with Amaryllis in the shade. If he do so, he must do so with an eye fixed on the statute book and the bye-laws regulating the use of public places. In the evening he may go to the censored theatre, and perhaps end up the evening at a night-club. After all, the chances that the premises will be raided by the police are remote, and there is always the hope that he may get away over the roof and through the skylight of No. 10. If he should be unfortunate enough to be arrested, he will spend the night in a sanitary cell, and may reflect with pride that he is a citizen of no mean city—that he did not purchase this franchise, but was born free.

I do not say that many of these regulations are not wise and salutary. But I do say that for an emancipator Liberalism has proved a strange sort of emancipator, and I say further that a race so cabined, cribbed, and confined, may not unnaturally lose some of those manly virtues which flourish mainly in the keen, hard air of freedom.

> "You may twist, you may writhe, may rebel at your will :
> But the hand of the despot is over you still."

The people found they did not like freedom in the sense that they might do what they liked. They could not use it. It was clearly noxious. Therefore they turned away from it. But that people ought to have freedom was the vital principle of Liberalism, and, that principle dying, Liberalism also died.

Liberalism being thus dead, but the Liberal party remaining, it was necessary to assign to that party some rôle in the political vaudeville. It seems now resigned to play the part of a Leoporello. It is the invaluable confidant who bribes the waiting maid, drugs the duenna, oils the locks, adjusts the ladder, and coughs to show that the coast is clear. It is rendering these inestimable services, not to some graceful and graceless Don Juan, but to honest Ragu toil-embrowned and reeking from the forge, that he may more conveniently ascend to the chamber of Basileia.

CHAPTER VI

LIBERALISM AND PROGRESS

BUT in the meanwhile the citizen was not satisfied. And indeed there was small chance that he should be so. Man as a citizen is brought into relation with other individuals, and also into relation with the thing which represents all other individuals, namely the State. The continuance of those relations implies a sanction, and what imposes the sanction is an authority. But Liberalism had destroyed authority. Thus both Society and State became chaotic, and man does not long love chaos.

As for a moral authority, Liberalism tried to supply that by means of a transcendental revealed morality of its own. But that was a base and adulterine morality and had no evident institution. People, therefore, would not accept it as a valid moral command, and did not feel towards it that automatic impulse of obedience which men feel towards the precepts of an authentic system of morality. The Liberal, therefore, feeling that there must be somewhere something which would sanction

morality, turned (against his first principles) towards the State. This was in effect a denial of Liberalism and was generally felt so to be on the Continent. There, there grew up centralised bureaucratic states highly inimical to personal liberty in the sense of the freedom of the individual to do what he wished. For the 'liberating word' there seemed to be *Verboten* or *Défendu*. These states rested for support on the unprogressive classes, the smaller bourgeois and peasants. It is for that reason that Liberalism died long ago on the Continent. That it lived so long in England is due *inter alia* to the fact that the State was never so highly organised here as abroad.

To suppose that the State has in itself any moral power, in the sense that it is an institution which can by itself lead man upwards and onwards, seems erroneous. Man cannot advance unless he has his eyes fixed on the goal whether ultimate or intermediate. But the State cannot teach or enforce a morality much better than that of the 'average man' whose voice is decisive in politics, and as the suffrage became more and more extended so the ideals of the State became either impracticable or degraded.

And in some ways it may be expected that there will be actual retrogression, in fact though not perhaps in theory. For to change the form does not change the substance. Government is merely one of the organs by which the will of the race expresses itself. But if there be a fool at the other end of the wire then, though you may install an improved and modern telephone, and even dismiss the girl at the exchange, yet nothing will be audible except folly. So if we are to take as a moral guide the views of the 'average man' as expressed through a Government, however perfected in mechanism, we must take care that the 'average man' is a good citizen. For if the citizen be selfish, corrupt, inert and inefficient, then the Civil Government will be tainted with the same qualities. And though such a Government will pay lip-homage to virtue, yet its practical teaching will be far other. And a race which is wholly enslaved having irrevocably signed away its freedom to some authority, even of its own choosing, can never for long remain a good people. I believe, however, that the Educational Authorities have at last drawn up a satisfactory *Primer of Morality* for use in the Council schools.

Having thus summed up the result of the preceding chapters I proceed to consider the social state as it now exists and to indicate the various solutions possible. It is not my business to criticize these solutions, or to suggest a solution of my own. I have no warrant for doing so. In any case the affairs of this planet cannot long be of interest to me and with reasonable good fortune I may hope to escape without being starved to death, skinned or otherwise excessively damnified. The legitimate exits are dark and dreadful enough in all conscience, and who knows whither they lead? Not, I think, to the pleroma of Radiant Humanity. But the event is with God.

And now I feel that I ought to apologise to the enlightened reader for the use here and there of the word 'God.' In deference to the opinions of the moderns I have attempted to write this word with a small 'g,' but I found that my fingers (guided by old prejudices) wandered instinctively to the upper case.

People may be divided roughly into Nominalists and Pantheists. As regards the Pantheist, if he is to take any interest in politics, he must pretend for a time and season that the phenomenal universe

exists. To the uncompromising Pantheist these pages are not addressed. For politics concern themselves only with the relation of certain phenomena *inter se*. But if there be no phenomenal universe in substance, then the phenomena are visions of a nightmare. But it seems useless to ascertain the laws which bind together the visions of a nightmare. They all emanate from the Primal-Mince-pie. And it is to that that the attention of the enquirer should be addressed. But that is not to write politics but metaphysics.

As for those who either admit for the purposes of argument, or actually believe that the phenomenal universe in fact exists, they will find the expression 'God' of great service. I do not wish to pronounce where so many and such learned experts have pronounced with such emphasis so many and such diverse opinions. I do not, therefore, say with the People of the Book, that God is a person who has manifested himself either in flesh or through prophets, and I therefore do not assert anything about His nature. Nor do I, with the Deist, try to find a benevolent and wise God in the phenomenal universe. And it seems cumbrous to talk about Nature, the Time Spirit, the Racial Urge, Vital

Force, or the Will to Live or whatever may be the idol of the moment. It is simpler to call all that animating and operative power 'God.'

It is to be observed that this God is not necessarily connected with any system of mythology or theogony. Whether he possesses an existence separate from or antecedent to creation, or whether he was created along with it, and if so Who created Him, are matters as to which I express no opinion. Similarly this God is not necessarily guided by any morality. And if he be so guided it may be doubtful whether he has willed himself to be beneficent and just, or malignant or merely freakish. All these questions may be discussed at length on the burning marl of Tartarus as in quiet cloisters, without there being any hope of a solution. For to apply reason to such problems is to trisect the angle by geometry.

But by observation we may say that, given certain conditions, God will work in a certain way. I do not assert that He is bound to work in that way. If I appear to assert that there are any immutable laws, or that God has an unchanging nature, that may be merely rhetoric. He might (for all I know) suddenly raise man to the status of an archangel.

Or, again, he might to-morrow decide to wind up the whole concern. When, therefore, I say that ' God does this ' or ' loves that ' I may merely mean that that operative spirit has hitherto worked subject to certain limitations and conditions, and that I assume that it will continue so to do.

Thus, if I say ' The Kingship is from God,' I may mean no more than this, that while it was no doubt easy for that operative Spirit so to have operated that every man born on to this earth might have possessed all the abilities of all the saints of the Comtist heaven, so that each man so born might have been a happy amalgam of Moses, Cæsar, Shakespeare, La Place, Mr. Gladstone and Charlie Chaplin, yet observation has shown that that Power has not in the past worked in that way, preferring to guide the human race (if indeed there be any guidance) by means of chosen races and by means of leading men in those chosen races.

Again, when I say that ' God will smite the perverse rebellious city ' I may not mean that God has revealed any eternal code of laws and sanctioned it by the threat of destruction here or hereafter. I may mean no more than this: Supposing that a number of persons are living in a community, and suppose

that conditions change and become such that it is requisite that the community and the members thereof should adapt themselves to the new conditions, and suppose the community and the members thereof fail so to adapt themselves, but are persevering in their attempt to live as they had been living under totally different conditions, then experience has shown that the community and the members thereof are in grave danger of destruction. But the former expression is shorter and less clumsy.

That there is an operative spirit is I think patent. Experience shows how it has worked in the past. Experience cannot of course tell how it will work in the future. But we must assume that it will work in the future as it has worked in the past. For if this be not assumed, then the whole matter is removed from the domain of politics to that of vaticination, and with that I am not concerned. Thus I have said the event is with God. It may be that some superhuman event may upset the whole scheme of things, but against that chance we cannot provide, and may therefore leave it out of consideration. Elissa must go on building Carthage, not knowing that she will soon be exclaiming :

"Alas how happy I
If never those Dardanian keels had drawn our shores anigh."

The dodo must go on with its nesting, though the Portuguese topsails are white on the horizon. I assume therefore that in the future, as in the past, change will be slow and organic, and not catastrophic and *per saltum*.

But I fear that neither by land nor by sea shall we come to the Paradise on Earth promised by early Liberalism. It is far from us indeed, that Star of My God Rephan, where stands,

"Far hence, with holier heavens above
The lovelier city of my love,
There the utter sky is holier, there
More pure the intense white heights of air."

or where

"There sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep."

Such an island as that of which one of them told us:

"Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War, and Earthquake never light
Upon its mountain peaks. . . .
The winged storms, chanting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight."

And so on. (But note the *sponsalia verba* common to apocalypses of this class.)

And here radiant creatures in the form of man (for, I take it, there had been effected no serious modifications in the digestive and reproductive systems) dreamed out their tranquil lives. There there was no conflict. How should there be? Man was too reasonable. His brain weighed about a pound more than the brain of the average Scotchman of to-day. Moreover (and here the oecists were wiser than the mutineers of the *Bounty*), there were women enough to go round. Rebellions, murmurs of 'Beer, beer' had long since died away. For all tyrannies, including the tyranny of the Demon Rum, were broken. And there was food for all, for these radiant creatures lived for the most part on cabbage, and the earth with small labour brought forth its kindly fruits in due season. And in the intervals of sleeping, eating and free intercourse according to the Laws of the Symposium, man meditated on his own perfections and evaluated *pi*. This may be called Radiant Paradise Mark I.

Such was the Paradise of which ardent souls at one time dreamed. But the Paradise on Earth of which

the dogmatic English Liberal dreamed was as different from that as Karnah is from Eden. He hoped by removal of all restrictions in the economic sphere to turn this lovely land into a universal Manchester. Real wages, he imagined, would remain constant, or perhaps slightly decrease. Money wages would fall. Machinery would be more and more perfected. Skill would become less and less important. Thus England, being the workshop of the world, would be wholly industrialised. It would be populated by employers and 'hands.' Thus it would increase mightily in wealth. That wealth would be the property not of the labouring millions, not of the obsolete land-holding and cultivating classes, but of the men of enterprise in trade and manufacture, the capitalist, to a limited extent of the man of ideas, and of course of the parasite. Any superfluity which might be thrown to other classes would be so thrown as a matter of grace and not of obligation. But in 1848 there was posted at the door an angel with a flaming sword, who barred humanity from Radiant Paradise Mark II or the Empire of Mammon.

The actual state of society in which we are now living does not seem in any way to correspond to

either of these two paradises. To the superficial observer it presents the sad picture of a society thoroughly demoralised. It is so demoralised because the Liberal spirit has left no principles fixed, or at least not sufficient principles fixed. The general cannot manœuvre except round a fixed point. If the French and Imperial armies may at pleasure march and countermarch over the whole universe, the struggle may never come to an end. For the strategical lines may never intersect. In mathematics, that the curve may be traced, the co-ordinates must be known. In our society Würmser may possibly be in Mantua, or again he may be in Zürich. And $\lambda^2 - 4ax$ may very likely equal 0, but then again it may not. But it is on the firm foundations of the rock only, and not on eternally shifting sands, that the City of Man must be built.

In the meantime society presents a very unpleasing appearance. An arrogant display of great wealth often acquired in dubious enough fashion. Dead Gods worshipped in magnificent temples, but godless cynicism unblushing, or masked with a hypocrisy not intended to deceive, openly invoked as a moral guide. Woman,

Whose lightness and brightness do shine with such splendour
That none but the stars are thought fit to attend her,

the object of an insulting homage from the lips, but in truth valued in proportion to her utility as an instrument of pleasure, and exultant thereat. All the parasite class—the pandar, the mercenary, the sophist in high glee. The people looking at all this tawdry splendour with questioning eyes, for there is still no secure habitation for Polly and the kids, but the abyss is ever yawning and enlarging its bounds, and whole classes, once the pride and stay of the race, are engulfed. But for the bulls of the herd it is a good time and long may it last. Therefore bribes and ever more bribes, lies and ever more lies if perchance these things may endure.

But all this is, I think, superficial. There have been other times when society seemed equally demoralised. There was for instance the time of the Restoration and the end of the administration of Walpole. Now as then it might be said of vice,

> " Her birth, her beauty courts and camps confess,
> Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless,
> The willing world in golden chains she draws,
> And hers the gospel is, and hers the laws."

Yet this was all but a passing malady, and it was

seen in the event that the race was sound enough. Now I think the evil has bitten deeper. But in my judgment the true nation, the masses, that is, who do not talk, but just live, love, work and die, still believe the old simple things, and will believe them and act on their beliefs in spite of the chatter of sophists. For this in which we are now living is merely the kingdom of Belial. It cannot endure. If the race were so disordered as some think, then there could be no hope. Race and system must go down together. But the race is still sound. That was demonstrated in the late war. Therefore this is but a transitional stage. The last sun is not yet set. The last chapter is not yet written. That creative force, the energies of which work so mightily in many spheres, will ere long manifest itself in the political and social sphere also. Then man will burn his robe of dishonour and the lice with it. This beneficent revolution will come too late for me. But to youth I would say: 'Exalt your hearts. I am a herald of more noble contests.'

The necessary change will be effected slowly and organically, that is, by the way of evolution. There are several possible developments that I see, and there are no doubt many others which I cannot

foresee. Any attempt to forecast the future is merely a conjecture, and though amusing it is not profitable, for of all the amusements suitable for a wet Sunday in Suffolk the amusement of political vaticination is the least useful. Fate, God, or what you will, continually intervenes, and just as the analysis is nearly complete introduces some new factor which renders the whole of the preceding labour vain. There are few things more instructive and more humiliating for the man proud of his carnal knowledge than to read the writings of the great men of old times, who lived in times of revolution, and to compare the prophecy with the event.

One solution which seems attractive to many is the solution offered by Socialism. There is no real difference between the various schools of Socialists. Some think that the time is not yet ripe for complete Socialisation. Those who think that the time is now ripe are called Bolsheviks or Maximalists, and demand that the State should now exercise those maximum powers which all will admit that State does actually possess, and which all Socialists say it must ultimately employ. But inasmuch as the temporary establishment of the system in Russia was attended with some unpleasant

incidents the word Bolshevik has acquired an unpleasant connotation, and it is improperly applied to the anarchist. But it is better to look forward to the time when Socialism is perfected, that is to say, let it be supposed that the Maximalist programme is carried out to the full.

Algebraically the Socialist position may be stated thus :

Let p = products and c = producers and d = number of objects necessary to satisfy each of the units whose sum is c; then, though p, c and d all vary independently, $\frac{p}{c} = d$ invariably.

All property and all powers will then be vested in the State for the benefit of every individual citizen. Man will so develop his social instincts that he will loyally exert himself to the full extent of his muscles and brain for the mere joy of service and for the applause that such loyal service will ever obtain. Absolute power will necessarily be lodged in the hands of the directorate and its officials, but neither they nor the workers will ever seek a base profit for themselves and those dear to them. Man exposed to this discipline will by no means deteriorate but will rather continue ever to

improve and advance not only in the social virtues, but also in those which up to the present have been held somewhat dangerous to society. But these latter (the unsocial virtues as they may be called), will be fettered and brought under control so that they, like a waterfall now set to drive a turbine, will be a source of material benefit to the community and not a mere object of wonder, or perhaps a nuisance.

Another solution is that of Anarchy. The Anarchist and the Socialist went a certain part of the way together. Both were agreed that the existing authorities should be removed. Both did their best to remove them (not necessarily by criminal means). But they differed totally as to the next step. The Socialist wished to abolish all lesser authorities because those authorities prevented the State from exercising that beneficent power which is its due. Here he parted from the Anarchist, who asserted that authority was in its nature illegal and oppressive, and that the State being an authority, was of necessity also illegal and oppressive. The Anarchist, therefore, wished to abolish the State, or if that did not prove possible, so to cut down its activities that it became the

shadow of a name. To the individualist who pointed out that to destroy the State might plunge society into chaos and cause infinite suffering, he would say that there is no need for man to be numerous, but there is a need that he should be happy, and that it is better that a few millions should die off in a few weeks from the sword and famine than that tens of millions after tens of millions should in succession linger on through the ages in misery. To the Socialist he replied that he preferred that these islands should be populated by a few small packs of wolves, than by bleating legions of innumerable sheep.

There is, no doubt, a large Anarchical party in England, for, as I have elsewhere pointed out, the people of the abyss are necessarily Anarchist, and the abyss every year widens and deepens. But the classes interested in the maintenance of public order and the State in general are so numerous and powerful, that Anarchy could not, I think, come as a result of slow evolution. That is, if it comes at all, it will come in the form of a sudden insurrection. That also would be an organic act, but in the England of to-day it would probably be that last organic process known as death.

Both Socialism and Anarchy are derived from Liberalism as maggot from dung-beetle. Both appeared very early in the history of Liberalism, though both were crushed with extreme ruthlessness by the scandalised bourgeoisie into whose hands the power of Liberalism soon passed. Both seem to me to show that mixture of optimism and pessimism common to the whole of this school. Man is, by his nature, perfect or at least perfectible, yet the institutions he creates for himself have up to the present been wholly, or at least almost wholly, evil.

Moreover, both owed much of their attractiveness to the teaching of Liberalism in economics. The earlier economists used the deductive method, though in the case of Adam Smith this is concealed. The writers who followed him were openly admirers of that method. They therefore invented the 'Economic Man,' and proceeded to deduce from the nature of that being certain universal economic laws. But it was clear that the unfettered working of these laws would produce what I have called, a few paragraphs before, the Empire of Mammon. The Socialist asks that if man is to be regarded merely as a wealth-creating animal, the wealth he

produces should so be applied that all may benefit equally. He hopes thus by a devious path to reach Radiant Paradise Mark I. The Anarchist on the other hand is so terrified at the prospect of the realisation of this Empire of Mammon, that he thinks it well to destroy that which alone made it possible, namely the State, which enforces contracts. Both systems have of course added a great deal to those primitive ideas, but the origin of both was as stated.

The English mind is peculiarly averse from system or theory. Therefore it does not seem probable that any rebuilding of the social structure will be done according to plan. We shall probably go on patching here and repairing there, pulling down now and rebuilding then in a haphazard manner, till the old edifice is fairly watertight and commodious. Thus by chance,

> "Another Athens may arise,
> And to remoter time
> Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
> The splendour of her prime,
> And leave, if nought so bright may live,
> All earth can take, or heaven can give."

It may be so, and there is no doubt that a child

playing with the keys of a typewriter may accidentally strike out *Paradise Regained.* And it is certain that if you employed an infinite number of children in tapping casually on the keys of an infinite number of typewriters to all eternity, then you would some time obtain by chance a perfect transcript of that work. But you would also obtain a perfect transcript of the *Inferno* or Smiles' *Self-Help,* or indeed any other great masterpiece of the human wit. And we have not in this matter eternity before us. Rather the eleventh hour is at hand. Let us hope, therefore, that someone will guide the fingers of the child, but as an instructor, not as a master.

There is, of course, the solution of the gradual sterilisation of the race and consequent death, and there are not lacking processes at work which might bring this about. But, as I have said before, I think the race is still so vital and so sound that it will be able to work out its salvation.

Some persons seem to have a yearning towards Cæsarism. That, no doubt, seems to be a solution. But to the admirers of that system I would hint it is not a final solution. The acceptance of the solution by Cæsarism means as a general rule that the race,

finding evolution leading it in a direction and at a rate which it does not like, but is unable itself to change, resolves to retard, if not wholly to stop, the process. But that is really a confession of political impotence. A race, by installing or tacitly accepting a Cæsar, admits publicly that it is not capable in itself of regulating its own destinies. A race rarely makes this admission unless it be in fact true. The adoption of Cæsarism is therefore an organic act, but in general the last organic act of which the race is capable in the sphere of Government. Thereafter the Government is merely a mechanism, and the activities of the race in all other spheres are controlled by that mechanism. But mechanisms wear out, and leave nothing behind them except rusty wheels and levers. Thus Cæsarism is no permanent solution. It merely protracts the transitional stage and makes the inevitable dissolution slower and perhaps less painful.

As I have said, the affairs of this planet will not long concern me. If I on my deathbed were impertinent enough to breathe a prayer for the human race, it would be that for a time and a season society might become static. The conditions which surround us have been changing with great

suddenness, the number and importance of the problems presented to us for solution are increasing with fearful rapidity, while at the same time the intellect of man remains stationary and his nervous and physical powers have (if anything) receded; so that there seems real danger that, unless some breathing space is given, the race may succumb to the strain.

And after these various Radiant Paradises it is agreeable to go back and read the words of Cacciaguida. Cacciaguida was, I will admit, a benighted old Tory, and would indubitably have found his place in hell, had he not been the ancestor of the poet, but he says:

" Florence, within that ancient ring of walls
From which she takes to-day her tierce and nones,
Abode in peace and temperate and chaste.
No chains of gold had she, no coronals,
No slippers of brocade, nor such a girdle
That men looked rather there than at the wearer.
Nor did the daughter, by her birth, strike terror,
For then the father knew that time and dower
Would not exceed on this side or the other.
No houses were there desolate of children,
For thither had not come Sardanapalus
To show what in a chamber could be done.
Bellincion Berti . . . I have seen him walking
So smart! in bone and leather, and his Lady
Go from her mirror with her face unpainted.

And him of Nerli saw I, him of Vecchio,
Raw sheepskins set their Honours ! And their Ladies
Busied about the spindle and the wool.
Fortunate women then ! For each was certain
Of sleep in Tuscan earth. The gold of Frenchmen
Had not yet bought their husbands to desert them,
One, a young mother, watching o'er the cradle,
Used in her solace that sweet baby talk
That years ago consoled her 'Mum' and 'Daddy,'
Another, drawing tresses from the distaff,
Sung once again old stories to her maidens,
Of Fiesole and Rome and of the Trojans . . .
To such a peaceful, such a beautiful
Life of the citizens, to such a loyal
Community of brethren, such an hospice
Maria gave me, with loud cries implored."

For it is not only death that gives peace. Sleep also gives peace. And it is sleep that renews the strength of man and prepares him for new labours. But he who gives Germinal and Messidor gives also Nivôse.

CHAPTER VII

LIBERALISM AND THE EMPIRE

INASMUCH as Liberalism was a revolt against authority, it regarded the Empire with suspicion. For it cannot be denied that the Empire rests on force. The *imperium* connotes the *fasces*. For the Empire, if it be anything, is an institution that works justice, and justice cannot be done unless the wrongdoer is punished. Therefore the arrogant will must be beaten down with the axes or the rods. That an Empire cannot rest on force alone is clear enough. An Empire is built on the love and loyalty of its subjects, and no man can by force be made to love and bear faith to anything. But on the other hand men will not long love and bear faith to a lie, and an Empire which has no power of coercion is not an Empire, but a lie.

The transmarine British Empire was of two parts. There were first the Dominions (I speak roughly), the great countries once desolate, but

now inhabited by men of our own blood and faith who had set up English homes under strange skies. There were also the Crown colonies, inhabited for the most part by men of different faith and race and of very varying degrees of civilisation. This domination, which was rather the raw material for an Empire than an Empire, had grown up by reason of the sea-power of England, and as an outlet for the restless acquisitive energies of the people. It was administered under a lax but effective system and there was little to hold it together except a common loyalty to the Crown and a general consent. But these islands also were an Empire. The inhabitants thereof were of at least four races differing much in faith, antecedent history, blood, and national tradition, held together under the domination of the Crown of England.

The old theory of the law of England in respect of the transmarine Empire had proved thoroughly untenable, and had necessarily been abandoned. Trenton, Saratoga, and Yorktown had proved that white colonies cannot eternally be treated as dependencies, and in particular that a legislature of what is in effect a foreign country, makes a very

intolerable sovereign for men saturated with English tradition.

The problem which confronted the statesman about the end of the war against Napoleon was what should be done with this Empire? Can it and ought it be organised, and if so how? On the other hand, if it cannot be organised, should it not be wound up?

The Liberal was inclined to wind it up. As regards the Dominions there was indeed no inclination on the part of the home Government to coerce the colonials. But in some of the colonies there were strong aboriginal races which came into conflict with local European residents, and the Crown forces were then compelled to interfere on the side of the men of our blood and faith. In others there were dissidents, few in number, who occasionally proved too strong for the local executive. Thus it seemed that the maintenance of the Empire entailed the use of force, and the use of force means in the long run killing or otherwise damnifying the rebel or dissident; and that causes pain to the rebel or dissident, and to cause pain is the unpardonable sin. Moreover, and this in the Liberal system of morals is perhaps the most

important consideration, it did not appear very clear that the Empire paid. After all the colonials are there now, and will have to stay there, and being there they will have to buy and sell, whether they are subjects of the British Crown or not. And they will of course buy from us who *ex hypothesi* furnish the best and cheapest market.

As for the Crown Colonies and India, there the case was in some ways clearer, for the races that inhabited them were held in subjection, a mild and legal subjection, perhaps, but still subjection, and that is clearly injustice. Moreover, as must always happen when men of one race rule over men of another, the clash of ideas led sometimes the clash of arms. This was rare, but it did occur, and it is not pleasant for a humanitarian to be the spectator of a servile revolt and of the measures taken to suppress it. The existence of the Empire also entailed the creation and indeed encouragement of the Imperialistic type, soldiers, sailors, and administrators as well as concessionaires, exploiters, land-grabbers, whisky-peddlers and other sons of Belial, who all were equally detestable to the good Liberal. If only the world would accept the true and veritable doctrine of free trade! We might then get rid

of this bloodstained burden of Empire. France or Germany would take on her the guilt and the burden, and we should reap the profit by trading with those countries. As it was, however, the matter was not absolutely clear, because after all a manufacturing nation must have foreign markets, and as long as foreigners are under the darkness of Protectionist fallacies, it is perhaps permissible to shut one's eyes and incur a little bloodguiltiness in order to assure Manchester of a market.

As regards the extra-insular Empire, therefore, the Liberal attitude was much like that of a prudent wife who is aware that her husband is flirting with the governess. 'It is sad and disgraceful that dear John should be carrying on in that way, but if I make a fuss, perhaps it may come to an open scandal, and there may be an elopement. In that case where will the housekeeping money come from? It is better to let things take their course and hope for the best.' The hope was that the Dominions would drift off and become independent nations, that the Crown Colonies be taken over by some free-trading power, and in that case the army and navy might be materially reduced and a penny or so taken off the income tax.

In some ways this wittol's wisdom was beneficial, for the Liberal had an aggressive and offensive morality, was very fond of preaching it in season and out of season, and of forcing it on those on whom it was possible to force it without much risk. The Dominions were originally governed under constitutions of the 'limited-monarchy' type, where the Governor-in-Council representing the Crown is theoretically supreme in the executive; while some elective assembly, theoretically impotent in the executive, is supreme in the legislative sphere. This system, where it really exists, never fails to lead to continual bickering between the legislature which represents the people of the Dominion, and the executive which is the representative of the Crown, that is to say of the Colonial Secretary and so of the Cabinet and so of England. Had, therefore, the Liberal party taken a real interest in the Empire and attempted to force their views of absolute right and wrong on the Dominions, where those views were held to be false and noxious, there would have been a speedy rebellion, and the separation between Mother Country and Dominions would have taken place under the same conditions of hatred and mutual injustice as had attended the

successful revolt of the Thirteen Colonies. The Liberals were wise enough to see that it was inexpedient to terminate the connection between the Dominions and England in this manner. They did not wish to have deadly and malignant foes in every quarter of both hemispheres. They prepared therefore for what they regarded as a necessary and inevitable separation by arranging that it should take place, when it did take place, as part of a natural process of evolution which would leave no bitterness on either side. They, therefore, introduced responsible Government into the Dominions. Under this system the Governor ceases to be the head of the executive except in name, and his functions are rather those of an ambassador. He communicates the wishes, not the commands, of the Government of England to the local Executive, which is in this case that committee of the Legislature known as the Cabinet.

As it was, however, a rather unexpected result followed. The Imperial connection, being no longer a burden, but conferring obvious benefits both material and spiritual on all parties, became loved and did attract loyalty. Loyalty not indeed to England, for that would have been meaningless,

but loyalty to the idea of the Empire of which England was a constituent and the King a symbol. The Liberals themselves were not untouched by the new spirit, but they never really got so far over their old dislike and mistrust of the Empire as to profit by the growth of the Imperialistic spirit. Perhaps the task would have been too hard for any man. Perhaps to set up some form of federal government would have proved impracticable. Perhaps even a modified Zollverein would have proved beyond the power of the statesman to introduce and preserve. But in any case nothing was done, and as it had clearly been proved that in this case the destruction of authority over the Dominions exercised by the Municipal Government of England had been beneficial, so it could not be wise to set up any other authority. The control of the British Cabinet was abolished, and rightly so, and it would be inexpedient therefore to set up any other executive which could control the policy of the Empire as a whole. In any case, it did not seem possible. Consequently, as things must follow the line of least resistance and organisations will develop according to their nature, the Empire has well-nigh ceased to exist except as a sentiment.

For an Empire which has no common executive or legislature, which will soon have no supreme judicature, the component states of which have their own fleets, armies and diplomatists, is not an Empire but an alliance of independent states. And the bond which binds together an alliance is far weaker than the bonds which bind together the provinces of a common Empire. This is, indeed, the eleventh hour, and it looks to me much as if the master-builder, if he come, will come too late. In that case the Dominions will leave the Empire and become independent states, hostile or friendly to England as the exigencies of the moment may require. And in my opinion this will be a calamity for the human race, and by no means in accordance with good Liberal principles, for the greater the number of powerful independent states the greater the chance of the peace of the Christian Commonwealth being disturbed. My wish rather is that all Christian men, or at any rate those of the Latin and Teutonic stock, should be under one supreme Lord, that there might be less waste and spoliation of the wealth of the people of God, and less shedding of blood. But this cannot be, save by setting up some authority

having the power to coerce, and that may not be possible.

As regards the Crown Colonies the effect of the operation of Liberal principles has been different. Inasmuch as man, by his nature, is perfect and entitled to his rights, it is not proper that one race should conquer or dominate over another. This proposition may not be universally true, for some of these fellows seem really hardly human. They display, for example, a regrettable reluctance to profit by the teaching of the word and a corresponding eagerness to lunch on the teacher. In that case the use of a little gentle coercion may be permitted, the more so as the victims are not likely to put up a very serious fight, and consequently the expense of the campaign will not be great. Indeed, if things are well managed there will hardly be any bloodshed at all. So go to it, ye warboys! You are, anyhow, a perverse and malignant generation. It shall be yours to struggle through the malarious marsh and the poisonous forest, to penetrate there where no kafila has ever come, to meet the numerous, valiant and cruel enemy. We will provide you with munitions—at a reasonable profit—and with provisions—at a reasonable profit. And when you

have forced the last stockade, and have thoroughly and for ever abolished some ancient and barbarous oppression, we will draw the dividends. So far so good, and under this system of give and take (the soldier giving his blood, and the trader taking the profits) the Empire spread widely. Not so widely as it should and could have spread, for there were epochs of hesitation and withdrawal (the impulse which forced Liberalised statesmen forward on the Imperial path being a fitful impulse), but a great section of the globe came under the Union Jack, to the enormous advantage of the dwellers in the lands so annexed. For I say that the British Empire, inspired as it is by the nobler spirit of Liberalism, is a great and beneficent creature of God. It is indeed regarded as such with almost superstitious awe by its subjects of every race, colour and faith, and rightly so ; for

> "The rods and axes which are types of Justice,
> Mercy and starlike piety,"

have everywhere been used to put down the oppressor and the robber and the violator, and to allow the poor man to live in security. Therefore, that which was waste is populated ; and millions live in security in those lands that were once desolate. So

great is the power and justice of the Empire. It is better to be of a race which has built this fabric than of the race which built the Parthenon, or built the road from Rome to Stirling.

But the Liberal party, or any rate a considerable and important section of it, did not look at the Empire in the same way. It regarded it as an evil, necessary perhaps at present, but tolerable only because it paid. For that one race should dominate over another is contrary to theory, and even a robber or oppressor feels pain when he is shot or hanged ; and it is wrong to cause pain. Moreover, though the nature of man is perfect, or at least perfectible, yet the nature of the Englishman when he gets into the waste places of the earth is apparently an exception. It seems very hard for an Imperial official to remain long a good Liberal. You prime a lad with sound doctrine and send him forth, and he comes back for his first leave muttering all sorts of heretical matter about the necessity of a just and salutary authority, about fighting against the Kingdom of Satan manifest on earth, about racial inferiority, about the concoction of cocktails, about further levies of Haussa mercenaries, about the disadvantages of extending missionary activities.

Then there are dreadful stories of fierce rebellion and ruthless repression, and stories, listened to with avid ears, of sexual irregularities. Altogether this Empire is a very dubious kind of thing, and must be regarded with suspicion. Moreover, the Empire, though no doubt a divine creature, is yet also a human institution; and no human institution yet existed that was not liable to grave defects. There will under the best systems be a few real cases of fraud and oppression, where a superior race comes into contact with an inferior race, or, let us say, where the rapacious and energetic Occidental finds scope for his activities among a simple and trusting community of negroes, or a wealthy and unpractical community of Orientals. These activities have always in modern times been suppressed as far as possible by the Imperial authorities, and for this fact we have to thank Liberalism. We do not, like the Pilgrim Fathers, first debauch our coloured brethren with rum, and then roast them alive and thank God for the riddance. Liberalism has taught a purer doctrine than that. But, of course, if there were no Empire, there would be no concessionaires, and to that extent, I suppose, the Empire must be looked on with suspicion by the Christian man.

Thus, if a bug or two be found in a palace the remedy is not to buy a tin of Keating's, but to abandon the polluted edifice.

The effects of Liberalism on this part of the transmarine Empire were thus in a way far-reaching. It did not so much matter that the Empire grew up in a haphazard manner, for that really is the best way in which an Empire should grow up. Statesmen who lay out an imperial policy which is to be carried out according to plan over a period of two or three centuries frequently run up against unexpected snags, and the galley of Empire may founder, having her bottom ripped out. It did not matter so much that some valuable officers had to see their lives or careers or honours sacrificed, for these are sacrifices which all servants of factions must be prepared to pay. It did not so much matter that oppression and darkness lasted longer than need have been the case, for the world is yet young, and hurry is from hell. It did not matter that some great insolences were committed and tolerated, for in any case the practice of baseness was erected into a political system, and it is well that policy should be consistent. What did matter is that Liberalism insisted that this unlawful power, if retained,

should be exercised for the good of the subject races. It may in details have erred. It may have thought certain things lawful which were not lawful, and other things unlawful which were not unlawful, but it never faltered in proclaiming that great and fundamental truth that an Empire to endure must be founded on justice and mercy, that is that it is a *beneficium*, and not an allodial domain.

So far Liberalism strengthened the Empire, but in other ways its disapproval of the whole system worked harm. For it is necessary that an Imperial race should feel that the possession and rule of empire is not merely a privilege but a burden (doubtless he who bears a burden expects his wages), a burden to be taken up gladly in obedience to a transcendental command. But this being contrary to the ideas of the Liberal as to the nature of God, Man and an Empire could not but seem heretical to Him. Therefore too often Liberal counsels in Imperial affairs had a relaxing and depressive effect.

Some young postulant has watched his arms all night before the high altar. He has purified his soul by prayer. The spirits of temptations have fled from him, and their lovely and terrible shapes are evanished with the first grey of the dawn. Then

comes to him Brother Copronymus, the chatty old monk whom he has known from childhood, and says: 'Dear lad, are you wise in this? Do you think you are strong enough? It would be a dreadful thing if you were to fail. Besides—the giants and dragons—are there really any giants and dragons? In any case why not leave the creatures alone? They have never done you any harm. Probably the will of God is that there should be dragons and giants, or He would not have created them. And as for the distressed damsels, it is not at all likely that respectable girls would be wandering about the country asking unknown young gentlemen to help them; and for the matter of that there are at least twenty distressed damsels in this very petty sessions division. As for going pot-hunting after the Grail, it is but a jug after all, and they make quite good jugs in Staffordshire. No need to roam the deserts and sail perilous uncharted seas for that. And your parents are growing old, and they have none but you. And the home-farm is neglected and needs a young master. Yet it is good pasturage for cattle, and beef sells for a high price in the market at Astolat, for even lily-maids must eat.'

But the difficulty of combining fire and water, *Imperium et Libertas*, became yet more manifest when some members of the subject race began to learn and talk the cant of Liberalism. Themselves scorners and loathers of Liberalism in all its positive doctrines, certain persons soon saw what a powerful spiritual weapon Liberalism had put into the hand of the rebel. The rebel is the man who is for various reasons discontented with the existing system and wishes to overthrow it. Rebel is not necessarily a word of reproach. The armed force of the Empire could make short work of the Nanas and Riels, and the struggle must be transferred from the open field of battle to the domain of the spirit. Liberalism was the child and apostle of rebellion. It was unpleasant for a convinced Liberal to hear addressed to him the very same arguments which he had himself addressed to the old malignant authorities of Europe in years gone by. 'Men are by nature free and equal. By what authority do you dominate over us? Every man has a right to do what he wishes to do. By what authority do you pretend to dictate to us our behaviour? All men are equal in capacity. By what authority do you claim that the British have the right to hold in subjection us

who are also men? You say that cruelty is the unpardonable sin. What is more cruel than to deny to a race the opportunity to develop on national lines, and by what authority do you imprison and slay those who stand up against you?'

The Liberal had really no argument with which to meet this address, except the good old *argumentum baculinum*. This latter logical figure is effective enough, so the stick be wielded by determined hands; but it is worse than useless if applied fitfully, hesitatingly and capriciously. My sincere advice to the statesman is: Repress vigorously or not at all. If you must kill the chicken, a couple of twists and a wrench will do the trick. Or if you prefer it you can dine on *broccoli*. But do not keep on picking and plucking at the poor animal tentatively and humanely for twelve hours or so till it is not fit to eat. Repression which irritates and does not crush is mere cruelty. But a Liberalised administration found itself unable severely to repress or frankly to concede. Thus things drifted on in the good old slipshod British way, and now it seems that that great organisation the British Empire, which, as I believe, was under God a mighty power for good, is on the point of collapsing merely

because there is no one to defend it. Yet its assailants are few in number and the rams' horns sound with a feeble and faltering note, not with the deep bellow which speaks of the earnestness of the circumambulating blower, and which might reasonably enough be expected to bring down the walls of Jericho.

But then what? I speak not at all of loss of wealth and honour to the people of these islands. For by the practice of injustice and oppression wealth and honour cannot be won. Or if there be won some simulacrum of these things it is but faery wealth and the bravo's honour. And of these we have no need. But what of him who was called to a service and refused it? And what of him who refused it, not saying that the labour was onerous, the sun hot and the wage inadequate and that he was frightened of the dangers, but that this service was unlawful to him? What of him who being a coward and knowing that he is a coward says he is too proud to fight? Is not such a man among the unprofitable servants?

And as for the countries where there is no good governance—when the Empire has gone there will arise a cry like the howling of Jasher, the noise as of

a city taken by storm. But to that we shall be deaf, for the prophets will utter sweet things. Happy will be those who again find a master, one who may guide them and protect them. But as for those lands which preserve a simulacrum of freedom, either under the shadow of the name of the Empire, or by reason of the contending egoisms of ambitious powers, for them there is prepared a most grievous affliction. Yet these peoples were bound to us and we also were bound to them by strong ties. And what shall be said of the shepherd that has led the flock from the secure fold to the rich pastures, the resort of the wolf and of every ravenous beast? He who gives up his office of protector and leaves the sheep as a prey to the meat-eaters because he thinks 'that there is much to be said for vegetarianism'? But this is no other than treason, and for the faithless there are assuredly prepared circles of ice. But that men may be faithless, needs be that something should destroy their faith, and what was it that destroyed our faith save the ghost of this dead thing that has ever stood against all faiths?

But perhaps it is not to be wondered at that the transmarine British Empire seems on the verge of voluntary liquidation when one considers the state

of the ancient Empire of Britain. The mediæval writers were much puzzled by the word *pomoerium* which they found in their reading, and derived it from the word *pomum*. Therefore Dante lays his curse on the base ruler who suffered 'the garden of the Empire to be waste.' Perhaps these writers were no good Latinists, but there was much sense in their view of the matter. A race is not fit to exercise a dominion over exterior races which cannot cultivate its own garden to bring forth fruits of edification. The state of society in Britain is ominous indeed, but the most evident proof of the degeneration of the once Imperial race was the loss of Ireland. This is too tragic a story to be made the subject of a light tract like the present, and the loss of Ireland cannot be attributed to Liberalism alone. For the Irish were alienated by the measures of a long series of statesmen from the thirteenth century onwards. But it was in recent years Liberalism which incited the rebels, and fortified them with effective weapons of the spirit, accustomed the British people to the idea of surrender, and finally negotiated the capitulation. Thus there was lost to this ancient Empire a race which had contributed much, and might under good government

have contributed more, to the common stock. A gallant and high-spirited race, a giver of gold to the bard and to the saint, capable of great ideals, valiant in battle, and steadfast in loyalty to the chief who claimed it. And we have set up in the name of universal peace a hostile kingdom at our very doors, so that our seas are no longer our seas, and we are vowed to use our strength to put down, beneath the feet of those who are now made our enemies, our own friends. Men of ages to come, after they have surmounted their first incredulity, will laugh and wonder at the eternal folly of man; but to us of this age the tragedy is too deep for tears. Look and pass on, but speak not of conquests on the Congo and Hari Rud when our Shannon flows through hostile lands.

CHAPTER VIII

LIBERALISM AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE attitude of England towards the European system was much like the attitude of Thebes to the Hellenic system. England stood in some way outside Europe, close to it indeed but actually unattached. For centuries she allowed, with much indifference, the various states of Europe to combine and separate and recombine according to their fluctuating views of self-interest, and felt it by no means incumbent to throw away the advantages of her isolation for the mere pleasure of being a crusader, that is of championing causes, however admirable in themselves, which held out no prospect to her of material advantage. She was, however, though an Island, a trading Island, and she felt that she must keep free those inlets by which her manufactures could pass to the continent. Therefore any attempt by Europe to come under one umbrella, any league among great powers which promised the speedy subjection of the whole

Continent to one interest, or still worse the rise of one State to undue predominance so that that state threatened to impose its will on the whole Continent, was certain soon to bring England into the field, or rather on to the sea, against what it regarded as a menace to its existence. The actual *casus belli* was ordinarily the question as to the ownership of the Low Countries and particularly Antwerp. England therefore destroyed in the germ many a scheme which might possibly have given unity to Europe. At the same time she showed no wish herself to perform the duties of hegemony.

This system of politics was known as 'preservation of the balance of power,' and it must have been for centuries an affliction to the ambitious foreign offices of Europe. There were accordingly moments, not rare, when there flitted before the imagination of the statesmen of the continent the dream of a revived and extended League of Cambray, that is that all the states of Europe should for the moment lay aside their differences, and unite for the conquest and total excision of England, after which they would be at liberty to resume their strife among themselves, till some permanent master of the human race arose. The mutual distrust of the

Great Powers and the fear of the sea-power of England have so far rendered it impossible for these dreams to take shape.

Our policy was on the whole successful, and after the downfall of Napoleon there was not, for nearly a hundred years, any attempt by any of the Great Powers to seize by force of arms the Empire of Europe. The policy may have been a wise policy. It had, however, nothing particularly moral about it, being merely a matter of self-preservation. But of course English statesmen thought it necessary to attribute to it a moral basis—namely an anxious solicitude for the liberties of Europe.

Liberalism, therefore, when it became predominant in England, found the foreign policy of that country pledged to preserve the 'liberties of Europe,' which at any rate sounded as if it were part of the good Liberal creed. But liberty is an ambiguous word, and Europe except as a geographical expression means nothing, and there might be some dubitation as to what was meant by the liberties of Europe. In the eighteenth century the statesman knew well enough what he meant. He meant that no state should be allowed to predominate on the Continent. The statesman of that epoch therefore

looked with mistrust on the attempts of the Government of one state to interfere in the affairs of another state, and was inclined to support the weaker and smaller states against the Great Powers.

This policy was for long not difficult to carry out. The power of England in the field was indeed negligible, but her sea-power was great, and her resources seemed infinite. As she rarely committed herself to permanent engagements, and showed small scruple in shuffling out of such agreements as were, though binding, likely to prove noxious, she was very free to make herself the centre of the opposition which was certain to arise on the Continent when one power became dangerously powerful. She availed herself of this freedom. Having herself no wish for Continental possessions, she indemnified herself for her trouble and expense as a champion of liberty by adding more and more to her colonial empire.

But in the last half of the eighteenth century a new factor came into foreign politics. That was the rise of Russia as a great power. Russia like England stood apart from the system of Europe, but not infrequently interfered, with disastrous

effects. In my judgment, when it became clear that Russia was to be a great power, when it was certain that there were practically no limits to its expansion to the east and south, and when it showed evident signs of intending to impose its will on Europe, then there should have been a federation or at least a permanent alliance of the States of Western Europe against a power which was not, except superficially, European at all. For Europe is the creation of Rome. We all of us, west of the Vistula and north of the Balkans, have sacrificed to Jupiter Capitolinus, we have all bled at Cannae, and washed each in our own Tiber. But the Eastern Slavs had never known the Roman discipline. And particularly in Russia the Government, though itself an imitation of Western models, was not the natural product of the country. It was merely a clever bit of mechanism, mostly the device of one man, imposed on a supine people, and drawing on inexhaustible supplies of man-power, and on resources which augmented year by year, but were never sufficient.

Such a mechanism, whose driving energy was the fear of bankruptcy, might prove a more formidable enemy to the liberties of Europe than the ambition

of Charles, of Louis or of Napoleon. There was, however, no question of any such federation whether voluntary or forced. Napoleon with his clear vision seems for a moment to have caught a glimpse of the truth, but by the time he became convinced of the danger to the west from Russia, he was hopelessly committed to a struggle with England, and so to that war so little understood at the time but ominous indeed, the Spanish war. There could not be in 1811 any real hope of a league of Western Europe against the peril from the East, and the struggle soon ended in the downfall of the French Empire and the resolution of Europe (united for a moment) into numerous independent states. One of the results of the reorganisation of the European system after Waterloo was the emergence of Russia as a first-class power. It had added enormously to its territory and prestige and pressed heavily on Prussia and Austria, which states were, however, in some way bound to it by common participation in that unholy sacrament, the partition of Poland.

The restored autocracies hoped to settle down into some sort of fixed system, each Government administering its internal affairs by means of a mystic and benevolent despotism. And these

consecrated rulers were to be in some manner federated by a common consent for the furtherance of the objects of that mystic and benevolent despotism, Russia being a kind of High Pontiff of the new faith. There never was any real hope for so absurd a scheme, even had the rulers been men possessed of the necessary qualifications. For it is not over-easy to be a benevolent despot unless you are indeed divinely consecrated to that end, and there did not seem any visible signs of election about Ferdinand of Spain or Louis the Eighteenth. The English government might be excused for looking with much suspicion on this strange sort of theocracy, which had its roots in adultery, and which, if established, might have isolated Britain from Europe. But a new element was soon introduced which was to produce unforeseen effects, and to assist in the dissolution of Europe into contending states.

The restored Governments found much trouble from such of their subjects as were thoroughly saturated with revolutionary ideas, and to whom, therefore, the restored autocracies, particularly autocracies appealing to religion for their sanction, by no means commended themselves. In order to

distract the minds of their subjects from these dangerous preoccupations, and also to throw discord among the solid ranks of the Liberals of Europe, some of the Great Powers began to encourage the spread of Nationalism.

As Nationalism eventually developed it became a claim to the right of self-determination. The doctrine in that extreme form seems to mean that every body of men who speak one language have a right to their own independent Government. The inferior limit (I suppose there is an inferior limit) where the claim to self-determination, like that of Dicæopolis of yore, would become absurd, has not yet been set. The claim to self-determination as made by races like the Italians or Magyars was difficult to resist, though inconvenient. Some claims seemed to rest on a very slender basis, and some to be patently fraudulent. Still, there the claims were, and it is clear that they would if conceded wholly break down the old system of Europe. Further, inasmuch as some of the oppressed nationalities were Christians under Muhammedan rulers, and others were Slavs under German, Turkish and Magyar domination; and as Russia claimed to be protector of the Slavs and of the members of the

Orthodox Church in general, the spread of nationalism could not but strengthen the power of Russia.

Nationalism, then, soon became a danger to the European system, and the powers that had at first encouraged it banded to suppress it. And so it soon took the form of a revolt against authority. Thus it endeared itself to the Liberal: to the nobler Liberal because it was a revolt against oppression, to the meaner Liberal because it was a revolt against authority.

The English on the whole heartily encouraged the spread of nationalism. As regards Russia, the Government was in two minds. The people had an instinctive fear and an ineradicable mistrust of Russia, and these sentiments were fully justified. On the other hand, the pious Liberal found a strange sort of pleasure in supporting the diplomacy of a corrupt despotism, which was clearly neither Papist nor Anglican, and which always had Christ in its mouth, while its hands were busy with its neighbour's windpipe. Amid these three shifting shoals —nationalism, Russia and the Continental system— British diplomacy steered for long a devious course. The success which attended its manœuvres was

attributed by the governments of the Continent to the existence of a sort of secret discipline in the English Foreign office, whereby all Governments, whatever they were called, or whatever their home politics might be, were religiously bound to follow out a fixed diplomacy. This diplomacy was supposed to be incredibly far-seeing, extremely perfidious (Machiavellian, that is, to a degree) and devoted solely to increasing the power of England by weakening in turn all the States of Europe. There was, of course, no such diplomacy. What seemed such were actually only the shifts and doublings of a Government determined to keep out of war, yet equally resolved on free access to open markets, and therefore seeking temporary alliances with any power or any idea which would prevent it from being itself forced into the field in defence of its vital interests. Moreover, the British people, though not bellicose, had no great taste for public humiliation, and was occasionally subject to panic outbreaks of the war-spirit. Even a popular government cannot too long disregard the people.

The existence of a strong Liberal party made this policy a difficult game to play. Inasmuch as

to cause pain is the unpardonable sin it can never be right to go to war, and as all men are governed by reason, and regard principally their material interests, it will, in general, be sufficient to demonstrate the wickedness and foolishness of an action which we think wicked and foolish. The side which is wrong will, therefore, drop its preposterous claims, and thus there will be no need of compulsion by the sword.

Moreover, the Liberal had a mistrust of the army and of the military type in general. He had a sort of instinctive feeling that the army would one day, somehow, on some quarrel not yet begun, make a summary end of him and his. Meanwhile, the army cost money. Moreover the existence of an efficient army is a danger, because there is always just a chance that there may be some madman at hand ready to use the weapon. Whereas if you have no army you cannot, with the best will in the world, fight. Therefore the real Liberal was always in favour of any measure tending to diminish the power of England. It would have extended these principles to the navy also, though the objection here was merely to useless expense, but in this matter the instincts of the people were too strong.

England might at a pinch, it seemed, get on without an army or with a very badly organised army. It could not exist for a week without retaining dominion over the seas. Therefore the sea-power of England was never seriously menaced, while her army was reduced to an extent which seemed to make her claim to rank as a Great Power ridiculous. There was a tendency in Liberal circles to treat the army and military questions in general in a way which, had it not been for the peculiar nature of that force, the special relations it stood in towards the Ruler (not to the Crown), and the traditions of the classes from which its officers were drawn, might have led to serious disaster.

It is clear that this is a dangerous system. Perpetually bluffing on a four-flush must in the long run lead to a calamitous show-down. Bluffing on a four-flush when the fifth card is unknown is also dangerous, but it so happened that on the only occasion when our bluff was called the concealed card when exposed was found to be the requisite ace. But that was of the immediate clemency of God. It was not due to the wisdom of the Liberals. Nor was the danger diminished by the lofty, priggish, canting tone of preaching

too often adopted by the Foreign Office in its dealings with Great States. The danger was of two kinds. The bullied and lectured autocrat might lose patience, and, convinced that nothing would induce a Liberalised England to go to war, tell it to go to the devil. If the policy for which England was then contending was a vital policy, one, that is, on which England felt she must (Liberalism or no Liberalism) insist, then war followed. Such was the story of the Crimea. If, however, the said policy was not vital, then England swallowed the rebuff with as good grace as might be; but there was always the danger that the negotiations might leak out, and that public indignation might be raised to such an extent that the Sniders would go off of themselves. The skill of British diplomacy averted in our case inconveniences like that of the Ems telegram, but there were several occasions when incidents occurred, which, save for the immediate interference of Jehovah, might well have plunged England into a hopeless war for some absurd principle, a war to be waged against an unapproachable power, amid the general disapprobation of Europe, and therefore without allies.

One word may be said about secret diplomacy.

There is a tendency nowadays to depreciate diplomacy as an art, and to think (according to the true Liberal theory) that man being a reasonable creature, it is better that disputes between nations should be settled by free, frank, and open discussion. If the political affairs of Europe are discussed in the press and by representative bodies of the countries concerned rather than in the Chancelleries of the Embassies, the cabinet of the ministry, or perhaps the boudoir of the concubine and the study of the confessor, there will be less chance of war. And indeed, this is according to the old theory of the British constitution. But this is really a dangerous delusion. As far as I can gather from a perusal of the diplomatic records of the last century, the desire of the diplomatist has been to keep out of war. Diplomacy is like a card-game, and the professional diplomatist is like a bridge-player who hopes to win the rubber by calling his hand on sound principles (which does not wholly exclude overcalling), and by playing it with the success that must always attend the skilful use of the cards in his hands, card-sense, and the knowledge of how to profit by the mistakes of his opponents. But war is like the action of an Irishman who, at spoil-five, draws his cudgel from

beneath the table, breaks the heads of his adversaries, and sweeps off the stakes. These crude methods are abhorrent to the man of art. Therefore, on the whole, the diplomatist is against war, and time after time diplomacy has by superhuman efforts kept England just free of disaster. But to transfer the management of public affairs to parliament, which in effect means the popular press and the mob meeting, is to introduce the reign of sentiment and emotion; and sentiment and emotion in foreign affairs are very apt to seek discharge in the way of war. And there still lingers a sort of idea that war is a kind of sideshow. Insomuch as there is no permanent conscription, and the army is not the nation but a small professional force, the nation may well enough think that a war will not damage it, and will provide cheap laurels and an interesting *Daily Mail* to accompany the matutinal rasher. I think, therefore, there is reason to suppose that the grey wolf and every raven might welcome the new doctrines as to open diplomacy.

But Europe was not the only field for British diplomacy; there were also the United States and the barbarous lands. As regards the United States, the experience of 1812, and the feeling that it would

be very difficult to find popular support in case of a serious dispute with that power, made England resolve on adopting peaceful measures at all costs. Consequently, for long years (with only one interruption) the diplomacy of England in its dealings with the United States displayed a sort of base fawning and truckling very disagreeable to contemplate, though perhaps natural enough. This attitude was to produce eventually serious repercussions in the colonial and home sphere, but at present under the cloak of the much-abused secret diplomacy it passed unobserved.

As regards the barbarians and the civilised powers outside the European and American systems, it was not possible always to avoid war. But the Liberal was not a good wager of war. He was rather ashamed of even a just and necessary and successful war. Just as a spinster lady of mature age who has been induced to spend a week-end at Brighton and has returned much exhilarated, and with her horizons notably widened, feels nevertheless a reaction against and a repugnance for her littoral experiences, and resolves never to be guilty of a similar lapse again, at any rate till next time—so the Liberal party, when engaged in war, waged it as if

ashamed of it and sought every possible means to bring it to a speedy conclusion, if necessary by the sacrifice of those vain idols, national dignity and faith. As for the lives and honours of the fighting men, those of course were like silver in the days of King Solomon. And after the war is over, it is to be deemed never to have taken place. But this is not a wise way to deal with a fighting barbarian. That creature is very quick at seeing whether his opponent means business, and if he does is shrewd enough to avoid destruction which is now certain. But who knows what may happen with an irresolute and half-hearted enemy? It may be well to take the chances. Moreover, a barbarian half-crushed is more dangerous than before you attacked him. When the Liberal was not in power at the time when the 'little war' was waged, his course was clear. It was to howl against bloodguiltiness, to praise the 'small power justly fighting to be free,' to accuse the war-party of nefarious and sordid intentions, to overburden the actual fighting men with accusations of atrocities, and to press for an ignominious and inconclusive peace. Thus he might the sooner come into office.

In this manner proceeded the Foreign Policy of

England till the Great War. The danger of unstable equilibrium is that it is equilibrium and unstable. The bicycle must come to rest some time. It may be at the end of the trip, in which case all is well. It may be in the middle of the way. Then there may be scathe to life and limb, or at least an indecorous display of body-linen. And the crash is likely to be the more severe in proportion to the previous security of the rider. And the more perfect the antecedent equilibrium, the greater the sense of security. Some of us felt uneasy. We saw, with no strong enthusiasm, the outline of the Blériot aeroplane cut in the crisp gay Dover turf. We heard of Agadir and Uskub, and our hearts missed a beat or so. But these alarms were not felt in high quarters. The Government directed us to wait and see. We did wait, and we did see. What? A great and curious spectacle, no doubt. But as Cælius himself found, there is no far drop from the prætor's box to the trampled sand and the slavering, bloody jaws.

CHAPTER IX

LIBERALISM AND THE END

IT is true that we have not so learned Christ as to judge by the event, but 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' And nothing will make the carnal man believe that a policy which has led to disaster is not a disastrous policy. Surely the Liberal professors may be tested by the simple test. Did you do what you promised to do? You promised to establish the reign of reason. You promised to make man free. You promised to abolish war. You promised that you would so guide man that he should enter into his true inheritance, the Kingdom of God upon earth. But you have done none of these things. Therefore it seems that either your programme was always impossible, in which case you were deluded or liars, or, on the other hand, that things were too powerful for you, in which case you were cravens. But man will not long obey the

commands of liars or cravens self-confessed. Therefore man turns away here, as elsewhere, from Liberalism.

Before entering at length into this sad story, let me pay due homage to all those who, at the call of duty, cast away the prejudices of generations, and wholly freed their souls from the slavery of faction, and who, Liberal or Conservative, Tory or Labourite, Atheist or Orthodox, Anglican or Schismatic, fought and died like valiant Englishmen for England. And these men seem to me happy in the occasion of their death, for they have been spared much. The red poppy waves over the graves of all alike. But the guilt of their blood is on Liberal principles.

I have read several Liberal apologetics, but they do not convince me. The plea, in effect, seems to be no more than this: 'Granting that we had seen the danger and divined the cure, yet we could never have provided a remedy. Our party was too strong for us. Any attempt to convince the Continent that we should, in a just quarrel, fight, and that our fight would be a fight to annihilation, would have led to an immediate secession of those of the stricter faith. We should have gone out of office, and there

would have been no chance of a strong and patriotic party coming into power. On the contrary, power would probably have vested in the hands of those who not only disapproved of the remedy, but denied the danger.' But surely this is not Liberalism? Is the people, then, so wholly corrupted that it will not believe the truth? Is it deaf to the voice of reason? Or is truth something beyond the power of mortals to ascertain by reason alone, and must one wait for the event?

The Liberal party which came into power after 1905 was composed of many factions. There was a section which thought it believed in the possibility of war and was anxious to provide against that calamity. There was a far stronger section which did not believe in the possibility of war, unless the country prepared for it. Both in their heart of hearts thought that war, being irrational, would never be waged by rational man. All that was necessary was to spread the reign of reason, put more and more power into the hands of the ill-educated, ill-disciplined and impulsive classes, appeal to the emotions, and sit down and wait for the millennium. This is the policy of the school-marm who attempts to placate a rutting baboon with the tender of a bun.

For the impulse to war has at bottom nothing to do with reason, being in this respect much like the sexual instinct, with which it is indeed closely allied. A Hymn to Bellona should in fact begin with a strophe devoted to the bank rate. For if the bank rate be but 2½ per cent., how is the young man with £10,000 to provide Phyllis with chocolates and kimonos, and ultimately with a C-spring perambulator? He must send his money abroad to get at least six per cent. But if a number of young men all over the world are doing that, then there is an internecine struggle for foreign markets, and that, in the long run, means war. If, on the other hand, the bank rate be high, that means a lack of employment, and the menace is no longer to Phyllis and her chocolates, but to the pay-envelope, now sadly attenuated or altogether non-existent. And that means that Polly and the kids must go hungry. Hence civil commotions and war as the way out. As long, then, as war is possible, there will, reason or no reason, be war. The evangelist of peace is not the economist or the moralist, but the scientist. For if the means of destruction are so perfected that it is certain death for the warrior to put on his panoply, then men will not fight but will rather

starve in tranquillity, and even see their loved ones starve. Otherwise not.

The Liberals, however, did not know this, or if they knew it they forced themselves not to believe it, and conducted foreign affairs under the supposition that war can always be avoided by reasonable men. Had they not set up Courts of Arbitration? Was there not The Hague? But vain are the clamours of the villatic fowl when the eagle's egg is near hatching. In any case the foreign policy of the Liberal party was fraught with danger. Several courses were open to England during those fatal nine years. She might have stood resolutely aside from either of the systems into which the European Commonwealth was divided. She might have armed herself for battle and proclaimed that her policy was peace, but that if the peace were broken she would range herself on the side of justice. Or she might have frankly joined herself to one of the two systems. The system to which she had finally attached herself would clearly have been unconquerable, and she might have insisted that the power thus conferred by her was used only for the benefit of humanity and in the cause of the right. Either of these policies would have required a total

reorganisation of the army, and that might not have been possible. In that case it might have been well for England frankly to abandon her position as an imperial power, and make it her duty to build Jerusalem in her green and pleasant land. But there were obvious difficulties about this also. Thus the Liberal party drifted on, till war, which had seemed a madman's dream, was becoming clearly inevitable. Yet it made no preparations for a war of attack. It so entangled itself in ententes, understandings, negotiations and intrigues of all kinds that it was very difficult for the uninstructed man to say on which side the right lay. And it canted with such vehemence that people really believed, and the war-party on the continent thought it possible, that England would keep neutral for the necessary three months. It was therefore only the happy accident that Germany, by invading Belgium, raised the clear issue 'Peace or Honour?' that brought England into the field in time. And when war did come, it was waged at first with a languor which showed how much the leaders distrusted a people actually ready, and indeed eager, to make all sacrifices. Nowhere was there firm leadership. But how can there be leadership among men whose

minds are debilitated by sophisms, and who have, therefore, long since ceased to be able to see and know the truth? Thus a war which might have been short was long, and there was much killing and waste of wealth, and so many and such sacrifices were exacted to no purpose that men became weary, and in order to keep the people up to the war-pitch for so long it was necessary (or was thought necessary; for I think better of the people than do the popular party) to debauch them by bribes, and by propaganda, which is often but another name for lies, till the people of England seemed wholly perverted and led away towards destruction. For they were told that because they had done their duty in the war, therefore they merited and would soon obtain all things. But no man merits anything by doing his duty except his daily bread and the applause of his own conscience. Otherwise duty would not be duty. In this service there are no works of supererogation. We are, when all is done, still unprofitable servants. And wealth is not created by the destruction of wealth, and war does not create wealth, it destroys it. It is not therefore enough that a race should be victorious, it must profit by the victory. But how can a debauched and

demoralised race under the obsession of strong delusions profit by anything except correction?

And the people were told that this was a war to end war, as if it were possible to cast out Satan by Beelzebub. War cannot be ended save by a total re-edification of the nature of man, which is a matter not of secular politics, but wholly of the grace of God, or by bringing the human race under one jurisdiction, or by making war so fatal that no one will dare to engage in it. There was in this war no sign of a new Theophany. The war was waged to victory against the idea of a universal Empire. And the instruments of destruction devised in the course of it, though baneful enough, were yet not so perfected as to be immediately and indubitably fatal. Therefore there was, in truth, no hope that this war would end war.

Wherefore, far from this war ending war, it seemed as if this war were merely an overture to the real tragedy, which was to come later but certainly. But as it was inconvenient to admit this, it must for all purposes be deemed and held for truth that, man being a reasonable animal, and it being clearly demonstrated that war does not pay, man will in future abstain from war, and that therefore there is

no need to prepare for that contingency. Thus it is possible to administer home, foreign and colonial affairs on the principle that there never has been and never will be a war. Thus the hound returns to the vomit of 1914.

After the war there were several policies open to England. It is not my business to say which was the right policy, but I am sure that the one adopted was wrong, that is if the intention was to preserve the peace and re-edify Europe. Germany was humiliated to the dust and a preposterous indemnity imposed on it, the payment of which (had payment at all been possible) would have been far more ruinous to the victors than the war itself. Nevertheless the resources and latent power of Germany were left much as they were. Russia was a welter of anarchy, and the measures taken by the victors made anarchy appear the cause of the country, that is of the peasant. Latin Europe was intact, but the territories of the great Empire of Austria were divided among powers of the third or fourth order. So also with the lands once Turkish but now freed. The net result was that for the moment France was the only great power in Europe. She saw with the usual French clearness of vision that her

predominance was only accidental, and that it might speedily be challenged by a revived Germanic league. Therefore (and who shall blame her?) she made it her business to see that there should be no revived Germanic league. To this end she covered Europe with her own leagues and subsidiary alliances, and above all strove hard to make it impossible for Germany to regain any real prosperity. But this policy soon brought her into disagreement with England. The world had gone back to the penumbra of 1802.

This, then, was the result of the application of reason and sentiment to human affairs. The party, which had promised peace had brought a war, and moreover a war which, dreadful as it was, seemed likely to be a mere antechamber to the real torture-house. The party which had promised economy had laden the world with an incredible and fantastic debt. The party which had promised progress had arranged for the speedy killing off, in the flower of their age, of the young males of three continents. Surely there must have been something wrong somewhere? Is there any wonder that the people has lost faith in the doctrines of Liberalism and that 'the Saint is dead, and the disciple is damned.'

In truth there are two gospels. There is the Gospel of Christ and the Gospel of Macchiavelli, and the Nazarene and the Florentine do not mix well. And a compound between *The Prince* and the Sermon on the Mount may prove sweet to the taste but is bitter in the belly. The Gospel of Christ would say that the armed oppressor must be beaten down, but thereafter there must be a forgiveness of sins, and that it is not Christ-like to trample on the fallen. The Gospel of Niccolo would have said that you must make up your mind. Do you wish to preserve the balance of power? In that case you must not allow the ruin of Teutonic, Slavic and Magyar Europe. Do you wish the whole of Europe to come under the Latins? In that case you may cheerfully proceed with the wholesale excision of the conquered races. But no Gospel will tell you to try to do all three things at once.

The result of all this is that the great republic of Europe seems on the verge of perishing. Everywhere there are furious hatreds, bitter humiliations, and fierce thirst for vengeance. Everywhere there is bankruptcy. No man is sure of the fruits of his labour. He who has must enjoy while he can, for of to-morrow we have no certainty. He who has

not may lawfully rob and slay because he is unjustly deprived of his rights. God has turned away His face from His people. Christ is asleep and His saints are dead. This cannot last. There must arise a Redeemer, but the Redeemer will not be Liberalism.

There is, of course, that impotent Amphictzony, the League of Nations; there is Fascism, which is in effect our old friend Cæsarism; there is Bolshevism, which seems to many the true Messiah. But I cannot say that any of these Redeemers is to me very attractive. I think the true Redeemer has yet to manifest himself.

And such a Redeemer is urgently needed, for Liberalism has done its work. The work may be summed up in one word 'disintegration.' I say a difficult sentence, but one which is nevertheless true. Rebellion also is from God. For it was not without divine permission that Lucifer drew one third part of the hosts of heaven towards the parts of the North. For before there is a rebuilding there must be a demolition. But though man is a destroyer of cities, yet he is also a builder of them, and not for ever were cattle pastured on the sites of Corinth and of Carthage, and order is from God. Therefore,

though rebellion is of divine origin, yet it is the forerunner only, and the builder comes after. And as for Lucifer, after he had fallen, he degenerated rapidly, so that he became the Proculus of Stonehaven fisher-wives, and, wearying of that, now twiddles the magic teetotum at five guineas a séance. As for that Lucifer-Gumbo, which is Liberalism, it has disorganised all things, for it has broken up the Christian commonwealth, and has shattered the British Empire, and has dissolved society, and has left but the simulacrum of the British state. What institutions have sprung up among the ruins are but the temporary shelters which men erect after the earthquake, for no one has yet planned the new city. But as regards the work of rebuilding Liberalism is impotent. For it is now dead and nothing remains but a faction, the Liberal Party. And that cannot build, it can but carp and sneer and intrigue and divide the folk so that men fall to wrangling and the city remains unbuilt. And now all things are returning to their elements, but that from those elements a new order may be evolved, there must be the formative idea and the operative word. But to these rebellion is an antagonist.

Yet I myself think that the new order must be built on the old foundations—on the love that is of God, and love of country, and love of kin, though these may be called by other names. And the new city when built will be a city which will be tolerable for man, and not one constructed by the whims of French philosophers, German pedants or Russian mystics, for the delectation of some non-existent creature, the child of dreams. And the people of the city will be a people subjected to authority, not the decrepit and malevolent authorities of the city which has perished, nor to the usurped authority of leaders of factions, but to authority conferred and maintained by the will of God. For man by himself can do nothing, and this he knows full well. But being subjected to a wise and just authority he is loyal to it, and under that guidance he can do much.

But Liberalism has left behind it a legacy, namely, the hatred for authority. And there are those who claim to be the successors of that dead thing, who say that the city once destroyed must never be rebuilt, lest it may be a house of tyranny. These would condemn man to the life of the forest, the jungle and the marsh, so that all the great things which he has done might be wholly abolished and

forgotten. Therefore the Redeemer, when He shall come, must come in no mild and benevolent avatar, but as a warrior armed, that He may break that arrogant will that would set up anarchy, and force men to worship that bloodstained idol, instead of the true Lord. But the Redeemer tarries.

Yet I think also that before the Redeemer will appear, it is necessary that we provide Him with a habitation. Therefore let each of us prepare the unshaken sanctuary of a purified heart, a heart purified not only from hatred and envy, and the thirst for blood, but also from the love of sophisms and lies, however pleasing they may seem. For it is rare that prophets who speak with the tongue of truth speak a flattering message, a message of good tidings of wealth without labour, and of luxury without weariness, of rights without duties. But to follow after false prophets is sin. Yet for those who sin and repent there is forgiveness unto seventy times seven. But for those who harden their hearts and close their ears so that they persist in believing that to be true which is nevertheless false, there shall come no Redeemer but an Avenger.

It has happened so often before! How great a

people were the Italians of the Middle Ages. Their ships were on every sea, and their merchants were in every market-place. In art it seemed that Greece was reborn, and the new civilisation rested, not on slavery, not on serfdom, but on the free labour of the peasant and mechanic. The cities were made glorious. In the palaces of their princes were gathered all delectable things. They built to their God temples wonderful with marble. The cunning work of the carver in wood and of the carver in stone was abundant in their houses. And they called forth the masterpieces of the human intelligence from obscure lurking places, and they said to the sages and poets of old days, 'We are greater than you.' Surely it seemed to the companions of Lorenzo that the new age had come, and that the Italians at least must march from triumph to triumph, and must be the destined guides who should lead humanity to that radiant perfection which indubitably awaits him. And they exalted their reason and guided their lives by that. And they said, 'If it pleases it is lawful.' And as for honour and loyalty and faith, what are they but names? And war is the pastime for the barbarian races, the Swiss and the Spaniards. We indeed

move our mercenary hosts like pawns on a chess-board. But the campaign is fought out in the cabinet. And as for authority, are we not free men? Have we not wiped out from our cities the accursed brood of the Ghibellines? And what value is there in freedom, if we are not free in this matter also, namely, from the commandments of God? Wherefore *The Prince* ends in this manner, and the man who wrote *The Prince* was the last of the freemen, and a man of great brain who had cast forth God utterly from the world—but he says:

'That the full valour of an Italian soul should be known, it was necessary that Italy should be, as she is now, the most servile, the most enslaved and the most scattered of all nations. That she should be without head or order. That she should be assailed, plundered, tortured and overrun. And now she is almost lifeless, waiting for him who shall cure her griefs, and put an end to the sacks and eversions of cities in Lombardy, and the raids and extortions in Tuscany and Naples, and shall heal her from her wounds, now by long neglect gangrened. See how she prays to God that some one may appear to redeem her from these cruelties and barbarous insolences! See with what readiness she would

follow him who would raise her fallen banner! Nor can I say with what love would he be received in all those provinces that have been inundated with this flood of savagery, with what thirst for vengeance, with what enduring faith, with what loyalty, with what tears. What doors would shut themselves against him? What peoples would deny to him their obedience? What malice would dare to oppose itself to him? What Italian would refuse him fealty? In the nostrils of all of us stinks this barbarous dominion.'

Thus Macchiavelli: but there came from the Lord no help, no redemption, but a more severe chastisement.