The Ethic of Socialism

E. Belfort Bax.

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BEING

Further Essays in Modern Socialist Criticism, &c.

BY

ERNEST BELFORT BAX,

AUTHOR OF

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"*Jean Paul Marat*," *etc., etc.*

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PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

In laying the Fifth Edition of this book before the public, I have merely to remark that it has been carefully revised throughout, in parts rewritten, and an entirely new essay on *The Individual and a Future Life* has been substituted for the essay in the previous editions entitled *Immortality*. The book was already in the press when Mr. M'Taggart's *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* came under my notice; otherwise I should have traversed certain of the positions put forward in that work.

It is gratifying to me to think that these *disjecta membra*, which I originally collected into a single volume with some hesitation, should have been fortunate enough to have reached a Fifth Edition within the course of a few years. I trust that in this new edition, which is to be published at a popular price, they will meet with still wider favour.

E. B. B.

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PREFACE.

In submitting a new collection of short pieces, most of which bear directly or indirectly on Socialism, I have to thank the socialistic and socialistically-sympathetic public for the favourable reception accorded to a similar little book published some two years ago under the title "The Religion of Socialism." That the hints contained in the former series have been found suggestive by many Socialists is a sufficient excuse for publishing the present volume, which differs from the preceding mainly in the greater variety of its contents. There are two papers dealing with speculative matters, and one of a purely historical character. The rest all turn more or less on the subject of Socialism.

The opening paper on "The New Ethic," which may be regarded as a pendant to that on "Universal History," was originally published in January, 1888, in German in the Stuttgart *Neue Zeit*. As now given, it contains a few passages which had on that occasion to be sup-

pressed in view of the Anti-Socialist law. Otherwise it is the same. "The Revolution of the 19th Century" was addressed in the first instance mainly to secularist hearers and readers in the earlier stages of the English Socialist movement: and to those who have followed the subsequent literature of the movement it may seem to contain a good deal that has been said before, both by myself and others. It was thought, however, that, in view of the fact that there are still a considerable number of persons who profess a zeal for "freethought," and yet do not embrace the ideal of Socialism, it might be worth while to include it in the series. The article, "Criminal Law under Socialism," is practically a continuation of that on "Civil Law under Socialism" contained in the former volume. Of the other socialistic articles it is unnecessary to say anything by way of preface beyond the fact that their intention is suggestion rather than lengthy exposition.

The advance of the Socialistic movement within the last two years, *i.e.*, since the publication of the "Religion of Socialism," has been marked in England in two ways. Firstly, the Trades' Unions have begun to be penetrated by socialistic ideas. The solid front of true British stupidity, of which, unfortunately, hitherto, they have been the embodiment, has at length, to say the least, been broken. Economic causes must infallibly do the rest before very long. The

second noteworthy point in the progress of the English movement is the steady accession of what is sometimes termed the "intellectual proletariat" to the cause of Socialism. By the "intellectual proletariat" is to be understood the increasing class of young men of the middle-classes, who, while provided with a good, and, in some cases, a "liberal" education, can find no opening for a livelihood in modern society. These persons are often possessed of the "higher culture" (to employ a phrase which has become current drawing-room slang), and yet they are commonly driven to the greatest shifts to gain a bare subsistence. While they have often to endure the hardships of the manual proletariat, their suffering is increased by the very fact of their education. This class is, if we mistake not, likely to do "yeoman's service" in the cause of the Social Revolution in those countries where, as in England. it is largely represented. Although sprung from the middle-classes, economic progress can hardly fail to force it, as a class, into the struggle on the side of the "fourth estate."

As regards those papers which are mainly non-socialistic in character, that on "Dr. Faustus and his Contemporaries" (first published in *Macmillan's Magazine),* claims to put a fairly complete statement of all that can be said on the subject of the rise and development of the Faust-mythos. The short essay on "Future Life" criticises the dogma or belief from the standpoint

of metaphysical analysis; and the concluding essay of the volume offers suggestions critical and otherwise on subjects of popular and speculative interest.

In conclusion, the author would like to say a word to the malignantly-hostile critic, if such there be, who may perchance deign to notice the present volume. He would particularly request that this gentleman would confine his animadversions to mere rude personal remarks if he finds any satisfaction therein, and *not* by manipulating extracts torn from their context, and placing sentences in "quotes," with important words left out or interpolated, make the author responsible for statements and style of which he is wholly innocent. The author is aware that the malignantly-hostile critic whose intellectual resources are limited may be under some temptation to act thus, but he feels himself compelled to enter a protest against the practice, inasmuch as the general public has a superstition that even reviewers of reactionary "religious" journals draw the line at hard lying in their attempts to damage writers of whom they disapprove.

THE NEW ETHIC.

PROBABLY few subjects have been more written about and discussed, both by the philosopher proper and the ordinary man of letters, than the meaning and basis of Ethic. But in all that has been talked on the subject of Ethic, it has been for the most part tacitly assumed, that moral obligation or duty was capable of being treated as a fact more or less isolated from the rest of human nature. Again, the sanctions of conscience have either been regarded by moral philosophy as something supernatural and absolute, or else they have been confounded with the mere phenomena of the moral consciousness. The first of these standpoints is that of the old metaphysical schools, and of those modern semi-theological writers who found more or less upon them; the second is that of the modern Empiricists, who in this as in other departments, think they have exhausted the essence of a thing after they have merely traced the series of its phenomenal expressions. With these latter, as with the former, morality is a matter centring in the individual character; the individual living in society that is in combination with other individuals, finding it necessary to his own enjoyment, or even existence, to recognise certain obligations towards those other individuals on condition of their recognising the same towards himself. This position, which is the ethical side of the social contract theory, has been handed down from Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke, to Bentham, Mill, and the rest of the English

School, and treats society as an *aggregate* of individuals. It resolves all morality into a question of personal utility—for this, despite all protestations to the contrary, is the necessary outcome of the theory. The former, metaphysical, theological, or mystical, (as we like to term it) theory, is not less individualistic than the one just referred to. According to this theory, moral sanctions are absolute and eternal, inasmuch as they constitute part of the relations of the individual soul to its divine source; and their connection with society is thus purely accidental.

It will be seen, therefore, that both the recognised theories, the ordinary spiritualistic theory, and the ordinary materialistic theory, alike regard morality as having for its end—the individual. The theological Ethic finds its criterion and aim in the "purity," "humility," "likeness to God," &c. of the individual; the empirical Ethic finds it in the fulfilment by the individual of the pledges towards other individuals which his existence in community with them implies—his non-interference with their equal rights as individuals. Self interest is the key note of both moral systems. The theological or spiritualistic system apotheosises the "soul;" its method being a continuous introspection or communing of the individual with this apotheosised self or soul. The empirical or utilitarian system apotheosises "self interest," which for it is the ultimate fact in human nature. Its problem is, therefore, to deduce morality from self interest, and its method to seek to identify the necessary requirements of social existence with self interest—by self interest being understood, the interest of the individual *qua* individual.

Now, it will be observed, as before remarked, that both these theories treat Ethic as a fact to be explained apart from the concrete synthesis of human nature to which it belongs. Such an abstract treatment as this necessarily results, when we neglect to take into account the entire evolution of society in which human nature is shown in the making, so to speak; and the several elements constituting it are displayed in their interconnection. This has not been altogether unrecognised. Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, although taking their stand on empirical Ethics, have both endeavoured to deduce morality from general social evolution; but the empirical method which they adopted hindered them from attaining any real insight into the matter. The mere collation of the phenomena of the moral consciousness, and the forcing of them into accordance with the fundamental assumption that the antagonism of self interest and social interest is ultimate, and that morality must always imply a conscious effort to reconcile the two—can never afford any but a one-sided and fallacious view of things. Auguste Comte labours under the additional disadvantage of feeling it incumbent upon him to unite the current utilitarian Ethic with the relics of the older theological or introspective Ethic. As a result, neither of the writers in question can be said to have added anything new to the discussion. Before we can hope to attain a real insight, we must, I think, get rid of the notion that society is in the last resort, merely an *aggregate* of individuals, with its necessary corollary, that there must always exist a latent or overt opposition between individual and community; in short, that the category individual has any meaning *per se* and separated from

the category community or society. The recognition of the fallacy of this conception is only the obverse side of the recognition of the dependence of morality, that is, of the view taken of duty or of the nexus between individual and individual, or between individual and community, on material conditions, social and economical. As soon as society can be said to exist at all, ethical sentiment must exist, implicitly if not explicitly. The ethical sentiment is the correlate in the ideal sphere, of the fact of social existence itself in the material sphere. The one is as necessarily implied in the other, as the man is implied in his shadow ; and just as the shadow bears the impress of the particular man whose shadow it is, so the Ethic bears the impress of the particular society whose Ethic it is. The above, of course, merely states a fact—we do not profess to deal with the metaphysical question of the basis or ultimate significance of the fact, a point which lies outside the scope of the present paper.

The sentiment of duty in general will be found on examination to be ultimately reducible to the following expression ; viz., *that the content, the meaning, of individuality is not coincident with the form of the living individual or personality.* Otherwise expressed, this content is not exhausted in its form, but seeks its completion outside its form. It implies that the individual is, in other words, dependent ; he is not a self-contained whole in himself, but merely an element in a larger whole. It is a trite thesis in philosophy, that the *telos* or end of every reality or thing, is to reach its highest expression, *i.e.* to perfect, complete, or *realise* itself. Now, as I conceive it, moral sentiment, and what is the same thing in a higher potency, religious sentiment.

consists in the consciousness of the inadequacy, of the form of individuality to the content of individuality, and in the desire to adequately realise or *in*form, this content. If the above be admitted it follows that there can be no greater absurdity than to attempt to found morality on a calculation of profit and loss to the individual, or in other words, on the self-interest of the utilitarian empiricists. Out of pure individualism it is obviously impossible to get an Ethic at all, if morality be that side of the individual or personality considered *per se*, which proclaims his inadequacy to himself, since in this case Ethic is nothing but the expression of the abiding contradiction of the individual within himself.

In one respect the crudely materialistic Ethic of the British School has less plausibility even, than the old theological or mystical Ethic. The latter at least recognises that the root of the ethical problem, as has been stated, lies in the inadequacy of the content of individuality to its form ; it at least sees that the individual is not a self-contained or concrete whole in himself. The solution it offers, to wit, that in God as the *telos* of all things, the individual finds that perfection, that realisation he has sought for in vain in himself considered *per se*, and the want of which is indicated in the moral and religious sentiment, is, to say the least, in one sense an intelligible explanation, which is more than can be said of the Benthamite theory. If the individual be a complete and independent totality ; if his end be in himself, then any voluntary self-restraint, let alone self sacrifice on the part of the individual is unintelligible. We are aware, of course, of the attempts made to evade this difficulty—of "enlightened self-interest," and the rest. But allowing the greatest possible latitude to the

"enlightenment" displayed in the "profit and loss" calculation, we still contend that it leaves the main body of moral activity unexplained. Admitting the hypothesis, when and where was the account originally cast up, and how has it come to be modified? If the individual contains his end within himself as person, where can the *obligation* lie to prefer a painful course (let us say) which can never possibly redound to the ulterior interest, "enlightened" or otherwise, of his personality, to a pleasurable one which cannot (we will suppose) result in any ulterior pain to himself as individual? To talk of obligation in the case supposed is plainly absurd, if the standard of obligation be assumed to lie, so to speak, within the skin of the individual; for on the above hypothesis neither the enlightened nor unenlightened interest of the individual is concerned in the matter. To affirm merely that "enlightened" self-interest always lies on the side of virtue is simply to beg the question in the baldest manner, and to explain nothing.

Let us now first of all take the theological-metaphysical hypothesis, that the *telos* or end of the self, individual, personality, is realisable not *per se*, but in the divinity between whom and the soul or personality there is a mystical connection. It is here recognised that the form of the personality is inadequate to its content. Morality, duty, religion, are the expression of this inadequacy of form to content. But the theologian, or the dogmatic metaphysician seeks to attain the adequacy *per saltum*. The *saltus* proves itself a *saltus mortalis;* since it removes him altogether from the sphere of the concrete or real world. He creates an ideal sphere in which the soul shall find its satisfaction; in which that element

within him which proclaims himself inadequate to himself, and therewith his entire personality, shall reach its completion and perfection. Now let it be observed that in this theory the principle of individualism while *formally* surrendered is *really* maintained. It is felt, it is true, that there is a permanent contradiction involved in the individual when viewed abstractly, or as a thing existing by itself. So far, so good, but how is the contradiction dealt with? By the attempted suppression of one of its terms. From the speculative standpoint the natural personality is absorbed as to its end and object in a supernatural being; from the practical standpoint the natural personality, as such, is suppressed, or rather supposed to be suppressed. For, and this is the important point, it has passed unnoticed that the contradiction is not only not resolved, but that the term which was sought to be suppressed, is not suppressed, but holds its own more firmly than ever. The personality on these grounds "is as the air invulnerable, and our vain blows malicious mockery." The attention of the individual is now more than ever before rivetted on self. The attempt of mysticism to transcend individualism at a stroke has recoiled upon itself. The individual and his God, though professedly distinct, are really one and the same. That this is so as regards the actual concrete world is obvious; since it is admitted even by the theologian, that all that goes on is in the "heart" of the individual, and relates to a spiritual world revealed to his own soul alone. The renunciation of the theologian or mystic is therefore a double-dyed egoism. His personality continues under other conditions and on another plane, the focus of attention. It is, to employ a mathematical phrase, individualism to the n^{th} power.

To the worldly selfishness of the empirical or utilitarian individualism, it opposes an other-worldly selfishness; since from the point of view of the natural or real world (that is, so far as society is concerned), the divine nature in which the imperfect natural individual claims to be realising the higher perfection of his individuality, appears only as the subjective reflex of that individuality, with its natural tendencies, in some cases exaggerated, in others completely inverted.

We have as yet dealt with the two fundamental ethical theories hitherto current, so to speak, statically. It now remains to show their origin, meaning, and connection, in the dynamics of human evolution. The particular view of the moral relation which obtains, is, as we said before, conditioned by the social forms of which it is the outcome. The empirical utilitarian theory of the British school, is, it is quite clear, no more than the speculative formulation of the principle obtaining under that competitive capitalism, which reached its earliest development in the Anglo-Saxon race of modern times, but the basis of which (viz. property), and consequently the tendency towards which, has been present since the dawn of civilisation.

The other and equally individualistic theory, that of the theologians, though not so obviously the outcome of social conditions having this same basis, is none the less really so, as we shall hope to show directly. But to understand this clearly, we must consider the original nature, object, and meaning of the ethical consciousness; its meaning, that is, in those earliest forms of society wherein its manifestations were so different from what they are in the world of to-day. We have first of all to remember, then, that

in the ancient world and in earlier phases of society, morality affirmed itself as the solidarity of the individual with his kin, his "gens," his "tribe," his "people."[1] There was then no opposing interest between individual and community; the interest of the individual was absolutely identified with that of the race. He had not as yet drawn the distinction between himself and the society to which he belonged. The Greek of the pre-Homeric age, the Hebrew in the period echoes of which are discernible in the Pentateuch, the Teuton as described by Tacitus and many later writers, did not exist for himself or others as an independent individuality; his significance consisted in the particular clan of which he was a member, or in the particular tribe or group of tribes he represented. His personal *telos* was identified with the social whole into which he entered. But at the same time that he had no interest independent of his race, he had likewise no duties outside that race. Society, and therefore Ethics, existed on the basis of *Kinship* and of kinship alone. Within the charmed circle all was sacred, without it all was profane. The primitive society

[1] It would be unnecessary here to offer detailed illustrations of a fact admitted in principle by every anthropological or historical authority of the present day. For an exposition of the principles on which early society is based, it will suffice to refer the reader to the well-known works of Sir Henry Maine, of the late Lewis Morgan, &c., to the celebrated treatise of Fustel de Coulanges "La Cité Antique;" and in German to the works of Von Maurer, of Bachofen and others. The "primitive" or "natural" communism of ancient society is at present a recognised scientific fact; and the ethic which accompanied it, and which survived into the stages of society shortly removed from it, is obvious to every student of the early annals of mankind and the traditions they contain

of kinship then, was a self-centred organism, apart from which the constituent units, the individuals composing it, had no significance. The individual, the personality, unconsciously recognised his *telos* in the society. The incompatibility of the form of the individual to the content of individuality had not as yet become explicit, since the individual had not as yet been thrown back upon himself. His life was an objective one; objectivised in the society. But now mark the gradual change which took place, a change of the process of which the great historical type is to be found in the annals of Greece and Rome. The *society* by the very fact of its own development merged into the *state*. With the growth of the state, *property* tended more and more to supplant kinship as the basis of things social. For a long while the two principles continued to exist side by side. It took time for the principle of property to gain the upper hand, and it was long before the personal nature of property was fully realised. No sooner was this the case; no sooner had personal property become definitively the basis of social order, than the naïve ethical sentiment of early society was at an end, and an individualistic Ethic had taken its place. This individualistic Ethic was of a two-fold-nature; on the one side it was an attempt to realise happiness or the end of individuality within the limits of the natural individual, on the other it was an attempt to realise the end of individuality on a supernatural plane. With the one as with the other, the individual became the centre of attention. Man as individual awoke to a consciousness of himself as formally distinct from man as society. It was not long before the formal distinction became converted into a real separation of

sympathy and interest; consequent on which the society came to be regarded as a mere appendage, as merely organic to the individual life or soul. The problem of morality became henceforward as a necessary consequence —how to reconcile individual interest with the exigencies of social existence. In the later classical period, we find the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, all attempting to solve this problem of the greatest possible happiness for the individual, on an empirical basis; that is, within the limits of the life of the individual. Duty was by these sought to be explained, it might be by some abstract formula, or by the classical prototype of the "enlightened self-interest" doctrine of our modern utilitarians—*i.e.*, by the somewhat daring assumption, that morality in the long run coincides with self-interest as such. These schools assumed that the individual was self-sufficient, that he was an independent entity having only casual relations with the community; in other words, that the meaning of personality and therewith of morality, exhausted itself within the bounds of the individual epidermis. The other school spoken of, of which were the later Stoics, the Neo-Platonists, the Gnostics, and the numberless theosophic cults which sprang up and flourished throughout the Roman world during the first three centuries of the Christian era, recognised the fact that the empirical self implied more than it expressed; that its content was not exhausted in its form. The old feeling of duty, of the *ought*, still survived, but without its old object, and without its old basis. Metaphorically speaking, it "wandered through dry places, seeking rest and finding none." It was already long since man had begun to reflect, and through reflection to distinguish not merely

his own personality from society and the universe at large, but also to distinguish his thinking self from his corporeal self; and the sense of the importance of these distinctions was growing on him year by year. It was out of the depths of his introspection, coupled with his dissatisfaction at the then orthodox official morality which had now lost its meaning for him, that a solution of the enigma and an object for his moral consciousness seemed to offer itself. Was not the material universe like his body, the outward manifestation of a soul or self? Nothing could be more obvious, as it seemed to him. Further, was not this personality enshrined in the body of the universe the immeasurably higher counterpart of the personality enshrined in his body? and was not this higher personality at once his source and end?[1] No less assuredly as he thought. He, the feeble reflection of the divinity, had as his chief end the fulfilment of the divine will preparatory to his ultimate union with the divinity. Morality, duty towards his fellow man, might be, it is true, a part of the divine system of things, and conscience even a spark of the divine flame; yet nevertheless the only ultimate sanction of morality was the will of God. This chief end was not to be found in any relation between his individual self and society, which was only incidental and by the way, but in the relation between this self and the divinity. It was by careful searching

[1] "What is fitting is incumbent, and obedience is founded on commands. And these being, as they are, the same as counsels—having truth for their aim, train up to the ultimate goal of aspiration, which is conceived of as the end. And the end of piety is eternal rest in God, and the beginning of eternity is our end." Clement of Alexandria, Ante-Nicene Library, vol. 4, page 185.

of his own heart, by lengthened self-introspection, that the divine will might be discovered. The first and chief end of all morality was to purify his highest self from the gross taint of material desires.[1] He must negate and subdue his inferior part, his body, which was the greatest hindrance to his higher perfection and of which his soul was independent, just as the Deity was essentially independent of the physical universe. The result was that the aim of moral action became diverted into the negation of bodily desire—asceticism.[2]

It is to this moment in the evolution of the moral consciousness which we have briefly sketched as exhibited in its typical historical example, that the conceptions of holiness and sin, with their derivatives, belong. The highest and most complete expression of this phase is to be found in Christianity, though it is also embodied, in its essential features, in all the great ethical religions (so-called) as well as those later philosophies and theosophies of the Pagan world which Christianity super-

[1] "For whenever anyone who has been brought away by the Word from external things, and from attention to the body itself to the mind, acquires a clear view of what happens according to nature in man, he will know that he is not to be earnestly occupied about external things but about what is proper and peculiar to man—to purge the eye of the soul, and to sanctify also his flesh. For that he is clean rid of these things which constitute him still dust, what else has he more serviceable than himself for walking in the way which leads to the comprehension of God?" Clement of Alexandria, Ante Nicene Library, vol. 4, page 187.

[2] It may perhaps be alleged that the Cynics evolved an ascetic morality from their empirical standpoint. This is quite true; the mere egoism which delights to show superior power to the average man of course also tends to asceticism; but this does not alter the fact that an ascetic morality is, generally speaking and in the main, the offspring of a mystical attitude of mind.

seded. The way of the ancient social morality was broad and clear, a knowledge of duty had not to be consciously evolved from a creed, it was not embodied in abstract propositions, neither had it to be sought out in the mysterious depths of the individual conscience. But this broad highway to moral justification did not satisfy the new individualist Ethic. The broad way was declared to lead to destruction. Now it was the task of every man to search out by the narrow, tortuous and labyrinthine paths of casuistry and personal introspection, his moral goal. As a pendant to the narrow way of the Christ, we have the "eight-fold path of duty" of the Buddha. The great negative characteristic of this movement was the definitive abolition of racial morality. The moral relation being a personal one between the individual soul and the divinity revealing himself thereto, it is quite clear that the old limited tribal notions of "Greek, barbarian, bond or free" had lost all meaning. The Roman Empire had broken down the old importance of these distinctions, and it now became evident that the barbarian or even the slave, must, as a personality, be equal before God with the man of noble race, or with the free citizen; provided he attained to that holiness which was within the power of every human personality as such. All men were equal from the highest point of view since in this connection every case rested on its individual merits alone. The test of a man was no longer one of kinship or of blood, but of personality. The supreme power of the universe could take no account of the tribal distinctions among men, but only of the spiritual element in each individual which was above all such distinctions. At last then in the notion of a

transcendent yet immanent God, the *end* of man, that is of the individual man (the only aspect of man that was now considered) was found. In God, this individual man saw the completion and perfection he lacked when considered as an independent being. Duty in the worldly sense was in the last resort merely a condition prescribed by God for attaining individual holiness. The crucial point in this theological or mystical Ethic is, that while it recognises the incompatibility of form to content in the individual, (in other words his incompleteness *per se*) as the fundamental fact of the moral and religious consciousness, it seeks to obviate this incompatibility, to resolve this contradiction, as already observed, *per saltum*. The individual, as individual it rightly concludes, cannot be an end or *telos* to himself; but this end it seeks to realise by a magic key which eliminates the concrete world altogether from the calculation. This done, the rest follows "with ease" and without any "shuffling." The ethical consciousness having disposed of the real world of concrete relations, proceeds to create an ideal world of abstract relations in which it seeks satisfaction. It must not be supposed that there is anything arbitrary in this proceeding. The social medium in which morality first arose has changed; the individual and his interest has supplanted the community and its interest, economically, socially, and politically; hence the ethical consciousness can, by no possibility, find satisfaction in the real world. The most that reasoning can do for it, is to seek to explain it away by Epicurean or Benthamite theories of "enlightened self-interest" and the like. These, however, as theories, for the most part only touch the man of learned leisure, and

exercise but little real influence on the world at large. So that it is what we have termed the theological or mystical morality which alone really holds the field. And the apparent satisfaction that the latter carries with it can only exhaust itself and pass away with the conditions which have given it birth. It was more or less in abeyance with the mass of mankind during the Middle Ages, when the social ethics of the German races asserted themselves concurrently with those remains of primitive communism which entered into the composition of the Feudal System. But it obtained sporadically nevertheless, and under Protestantism sprang up into rank luxuriance. With the modern middle-class man it is the only alternative to the other individualist doctrine of "enlightened self-interest." But the Individualist Ethic, whether mystical and introspective, or empirical and practical, is to-day rapidly evolving its own contradiction as its economic base is dissolving. While the man of the middle classes can conceive of no goodness that is not centred in the individual—be it in his soul or in his pocket—the man of the working classes finds his individuality merged in the collective existence of the group of producers to which he belongs. The whole life of the working classes of to-day under the conditions of the great industry is a collective one, inasmuch as the labour of the individual is merged in the labour of the group the group again in that of other groups, and so on throughout the entire industrial and commercial system. The workman of the great industry has never, as a rule, paid much attention to his soul, to the *vrai*, the *beau*, the *bien*, as embodied in his character. Personal holiness has never been his ethical aim, as it has been the pro-

fessed (and in some cases, doubtless, sincerely professed) aim of the moral man, and still more of the moral woman, among the middle classes. The idea of a "holy" working man is even grotesque. The virtues which the working classes at their best have recognised have been rather those of integrity, generosity, sincerity, good comradeship, than those of "meekness," "purity," "piety," "self-abnegation," and the like; in short, social and objective virtues—those immediately referable to the social environment—rather than those individual and subjective ones referable to the personality as such. The working man has no time, he will commonly tell you, to trouble about his "soul." In short, the working-man who takes life seriously is political rather than religious (in the current Christian or introspective sense of the word religion).

The decline of the introspective morality is of course largely connected with the dissolution by modern thought of its old ideologic basis. While the working classes have for the most part, in so far as they think about the matter, frankly renounced the old theology, the middle classes have occupied themselves with the endeavour to find out every conceivable compromise by which they might evade overtly breaking with their speculative tradition. But that it is possible for their introspective morality to survive its speculative basis is evidenced by the Comtists, who, while repudiating this basis, nevertheless retain the introspective Ethic of Christian Individualism in its most accentuated form, even to the extent of erecting into a devotional breviary the *Imitatio Christi*. As for the other form of the individualist Ethic, the latter-day counterpart of Epicureanism, namely, "enlightened self-interest," that, like its forerunner in the classical world, is essentially the formulated Ethic of the

full belly and the full pocket. "Self-interest," from the workman's point of view, might lead him, should a safe opportunity offer itself, to plunder his employer's till, or at least husband his labour-power by giving as little work as possible for his wages; but this, according to the advocates of the theory, would not be "enlightened." On the other hand, "enlightenment" in the bourgeois sense, would lead the workman (c.f. Professor Huxley in "Lay Sermons") "to starve rather than to steal;" but this would not be "self-interest" from the workman's point of view, however "enlightened" it might be. So that altogether the workman seems rather "out of it," in so far as the gospel of "enlightened self-interest" is concerned.

The objective social morality, of which we see the germs even in the working classes of to-day when at their best—and when they are not, as they are to a large extent in this country, completely brutalised by the conditions of their life—becomes, when translated into a higher plane, the basis of the religion of socialism, which consists in a sense of oneness with the social body; in an identification of self-interest with social interest, the immediate form of which is an identification of self-interest with that of the oppressed class which is struggling toward emancipation. In the supreme aim and endeavour to aid the economic new birth of society, the Revolutionist has no time, and cares not, to be continuously looking within either to admire the beauty or to measure the imperfections of his individual character. His highest instincts are directed not within, but without; not on himself, but on the social cause he has in view—the cause which means as its final issue the abolition of

classes and the brotherhood of man. Most of us are familiar with the well-known story of the National Guard who, asked during the last days of the Commune, when death at the barricade was often a matter of moments, for what he was fighting, replied: "*Pour la solidarité humaine.*" It is quite possible that this poor workman understood but little of scientific socialism and of the precise meaning of the solidarity for which he fought; yet his instincts and those of his fellows were true—they had the religion of socialism at heart—they knew they were fighting for the emancipation of their class, and that in this emancipation human solidarity was involved. According to Christianity and the Ethics or religion of Introspection generally, regeneration must come from within, must begin in the heart and mind of the individual. The ethic and religion of modern Socialism, on the contrary, look for regeneration from without, from material conditions and a higher social life. The ethic and religion of Socialism seek not the ideal society through the ideal individual, but conversely the ideal individual through the ideal society. They find in an adequate, a free and harmonious social life, at once the primary condition and the end and completion of individuality.

It seems here a fitting place to analyse briefly the notion of self-sacrifice or asceticism, which plays so large a part in the theory of the Ethics of Inwardness or Introspection. Its basis we take to be as follows. The Introspectionist, recognising the fact that the motive-power of morality or religion breaks through the mere form of individual interest, and frequently even contradicts the latter, mistakes this merely negative element in the

moral consciousness for its salient feature, and holds the highest morality to consist in a continual mortification of self. His spiritualistic theory of the universe, his contempt for nature and reality, according to which matter with all its belongings is intrinsically evil, of course confirms him in this view, and gives it a speculative groundwork. Now, as we before pointed out, the votary of introspection, while he seeks to kill off one *self*, does so only in the interest of another and still more exacting self. His object is only the individual in another form. Pleasure is his great *bête noir*, the annihilation of pleasure his great end. The habit of mind proper to the introspective Ethic, which is roughly expressed by the word Puritanism, has indeed the ascetic tendency so strongly developed that the possessor of it is never happy unless he is finding out that something or other, which it pleases his fellow-men to do, is wrong. It is aptly illustrated by *Punch's* joke of the little girl who directs her brother "to go and see what baby is doing, and tell him he mustn't." To refrain is the only end of the person in question. The effects of the ascetic poison, as before said, outlive their cause; the introspective Ethic of which it is part survives its theoretical basis. Thus, even where this basis is no longer present, the mind cast in this mould will endeavour to find a possible evil in everything which conduces to pleasure. The taint of introspection vitiates its view of life; it must seek by sophistry to poison life for itself and others. Thus in the instance supposed, where the Divine fiat or the inherent evil of matter can no longer be appealed to, and where directly evil social results cannot be proved, it will have recourse to vague and lofty phrases such as "human dignity," "social order," and so forth.

Now the New Ethic of Socialism has no part nor lot with asceticism. In the first place, it grudges the amount of energy required to be expended by the individual in his effort to acquire the "self-discipline," so called, which is only another name for the moral tight-rope dancing which the Ethic of inwardness postulates as its end. It despises the introspectionist's love of striking an ethical attitude. The mere discomfort or the sacrifice of the individual *per se* is for it no virtue, but a folly, unless it be part of the means to a *clearly defined* social end. We italicise the words *clearly defined* since, as above indicated, it is possible to smuggle in, under some vague, high-sounding phrase, such as those already given, the old theological Ethic, asceticism included. The negation of the individual only becomes a virtue for the New Ethic when it occurs, not for its own sake, but as a mere incident in the attainment of a definite social end. The highest expression of socialist morality—socialist religion—is of course the readiness to sacrifice all, including life itself, for the cause. In the case of the French National Guard, we have a type of this true moral and religious heroism, as also in the thousands of nameless martyrs who are at this moment sealing their testimony with their blood in Russian dungeons or on the road to Siberia.[1] The New Ethic of Socialism, moreover, exhibits for the first time in the world's history the conscious sacrifice of the individual to the social whole. Early man was ready enough to fall for his tribe or gens, but then he had not awakened to the full consciousness of himself as an independent being, any more than he had awakened to the conception of an equal humanity outside his tribe. He was so completely identified with the

[1] Written in 1887.

society in which he lived that he could not conceive of his having an independent interest, or even of life itself, apart therefrom. It is not so now. In the modern world the self-consciousness of the individual *quâ* individual is fully developed. The Paris workman consciously surrendered himself, the contradiction between the content of his moral personality and its form (viz., the personality as living individual) was absolute, and the form succumbed. *La solidarité humaine*, the social Ethic, triumphed over individualism, the personal Ethic. The Russian Nihilist or the Paris workman, in deliberately exposing himself to certain death, believing in no personal immortality, that is, in no sort of continual existence for himself as individual, for the sake of the cause of human brotherhood, we again repeat, embodies the highest expression of the new Ethic the world has yet seen. Martyrs to the introspective, individualist religions there have been without number, martyrs who believed that while their pain endured but for a moment, their joy would be everlasting; that their souls would rise to higher realms, the personality to union with the Divinity. All very fine, all very noble, doubtless, but without a gleam of aught but sublimated individualism and rarified self-seeking. How differently the workman who died for his class, and through his class, for humanity!

Having traced the self-denial of the introspectionist to its source, and found that, after all, it was only an inverted form of self-assertion, we will now turn to the self-interest of the utilitarian, and examine its grounds. The doctrine of self-interest has an extremely plausible sound. "All I do," says the empirical philosopher, "is

simply done to please myself; my apparently most disinterested actions are at bottom selfish; I should not do them if it did not please me to do them—I cannot transcend myself." Now, this sounds like common-sense—irrefutable common-sense. But in reality this root-principle of utilitarianism, like all the saws of the empirical philosophy of the eighteenth century which sound so plausible, is but one of those half-truths which, when diligently investigated, evince themselves the most insidious of fallacies. It is quite true that externally and *formally* every motive actuating the individual has the stamp of his individuality upon it. This is a very obvious, and, at the same time, a very harmless proposition; but it does not by a long way carry with it the implication which the empirical utilitarian would put upon it. Though the form of the motive may be individualistic, it does not follow that the content must necessarily also be so. The content may transcend the form; that is, it may have for its end something wholly apart from, and even antagonistic to, individual interest as such. A man is said to have a high moral character, precisely when the material of his motives *does not* predominantly coincide with their mere superficial form, or, in other words, with his personal interest. He has a low moral character when this motive-material *does* predominantly coincide with its form; and he has no moral character at all, or, in other words, his character is criminal, when the form and the matter—*i.e.*, individual interest and motive material—absolutely balance one another. This latter is, of course, the ideal criminal towards which the actual criminal approximates in varying degrees.

The belief that in the *ought* of conscience there is any element that is not personal and individual (Herbert Spencer's modification of the theory by incorporating with it the notion of heridity does not affect the case), this belief the utilitarian tells you is an illusion, and in confirmation thereof he points to the stamp of self-interest which every action on the part of the individual apparently bears upon its face. Now, what I contend is, that the illusion is on his side, and that it results from his confounding the merely superficial *form* of the action with its *end*, or, in other words, with the motive-material which is its content. Just as the introspective individualist has been deceived by the mere superficial form of the denial of self which commonly accompanies high moral action, into mistaking this subsidiary element for the whole of morality, or at least its most important part, so the utilitarian individualist has been deceived by the mere superficial form of self-interest which necessarily accompanies every action of the individual, into mistaking this barren and abstract form for the content, motive-material, or *end*, which is the real source of the action. His proceeding is exactly analogous to that of the metaphysician, who thinks he has made a wonderful discovery, when he has reduced everything to the category of "pure being." No one denies the singularly vapid proposition, that every action emanating from the human personality or individual bears on it the stamp of its empirical source. What is denied is that this proposition carries with it the implication with which it is credited, or in fact that it advances the explanation one step. What the ordinary person means by self-interest is not merely that the action begins with the individual, but that it

ends there, that its *telos* is the personality. As in a great many similar cases, by a verbal juggle two distinct things are confounded in one. To say that I am actuated by self-interest when I among others place myself in front of a mitrailleuse with the dead certainty of having my natural self annihilated and without any kind of belief in a personal post-existence—to say that this is self-interest, that I do it to please myself, is either the most insipid of platitudes, or else a piece of the wildest conceivable nonsense. It may be either, according as we take it, the truth being that in this case the motive-material or the content of the action has absorbed and thereby abolished its form. The individual in that very act of will by which he apparently affirms himself, "pleases himself," *really* negates himself, contradicts himself, and *a fortiori* the interest, pleasure, or happiness, which is identified with himself. Of course, the example chosen, that of the deliberate choice of immediate death for a cause into the realisation of which the individual *as* individual does not enter, is an extreme one; but the same principle holds good in the case of working for such a cause, that is, sacrificing personal pleasure, interest, or convenience, for results which we believe we shall never see. Here, though the form of self-interest is not immediately abolished—the individual does not completely negate himself as in the former instance—he yet nevertheless supersedes his interest as individual, the material of impulses and motives proclaims the inadequacy of their form. The man who sincerely, that is, without personal advantage in view, works for such a cause, by this very fact tacitly admits the inadequacy of himself as an end to himself. And this brings us back to the point from

which we started, and therewith to our concluding summary of the results of this investigation.

First, then, we find that the meaning of the *ought* of "conscience," of the moral impulse, moral sense, moral consciousness, or by whatever other name it may be called, is nothing more nor less than *the implicit or explicit consciousness of the inadequacy of the individual and his interests as an end to himself.* This consciousness is pre-supposed in the existence of human society at all. But although conscience, or the moral consciousness, is ultimate, the forms of its manifestation no less than its object, are determined by the conditions of economic and social evolution.

At first the "society of kinship" is the end of all duty; the individual *implicitly* conscious of his own inadequacy is sunk in the society, knows and cares for no existence outside the society. This is from the Socialist point of view the highest morality which up to now has been generally prevalent in the world. But with the dissolution of early tribal society with its kinship basis, with the rise of political society with its property basis, and the leisure thence resulting, the old ethical object of the individual gradually lost its power. He now became *explicitly* conscious of his own inadequacy to himself; but tried to resolve this consciousness and to abolish the dissatisfaction of which it was the cause, by (1) resolutely turning his attention in upon himself, and with conscious purpose definitely placing self-interest before him as his end (Cynics, Cyrenaics, earlier Stoics and Epicureans); and (2) by holding up before himself a professedly extra-individual, but also extra-natural ideal, as his end (later Stoics, Neo-Platonists, Gnostics, and Christians).

Man as individual thus no longer recognised his end in the society, but rather in himself considered either as natural individual, or as spiritual individual. Hence arose the two systems of individualist Ethic which though they have passed through many variations of aspect, have remained substantially the same from that day to this. On the one hand, amongst the well-to-do you have, in the shape as it were of a light froth, the Epicurean-Benthamite Ethic of "enlightened self-interest;" on the other the Stoic-Christian Ethic of personal "holiness" and "sin." This though it reaches its classical historic expression in Christianity is fundamentally the same in Neo-Platonism, Buddhism, Parseeism, and even Islamism. It boasts a gigantic literature from the noble musings of a Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the Sermon on the Mount, and the *Imitatio Christi*, down (and verily great is the fall) to the last goody-goody volume of edification, published by the "Religious Tract Society."

The Ethic of the early tribal world was a naïvely objective Ethic; this is a naïvely subjective Ethic. With the waning of this Ethic the consciousness of a new meaning to the term goodness is now gradually dawning on men. Even the Christian or other introspectionist (and this is one of the surest signs of a change) is driven on to the defensive, and feels himself compelled to read a social meaning into the essentially personal Ethics of his creed. The old ethical sentiment, he instinctively feels, has exhausted itself, and is passing over into its opposite although its form may still remain intact. The ethical *telos* is now vaguely or clearly felt to be no longer self-renunciation or self-glorification in

the abstract, but the identification of self-interest with social interest. Men are now beginning to feel that any morality of which self-renunciation is an end or even an essential element is one-sided and fallacious. In what I may term a concrete Ethic, self-sacrifice can never be more than an accident; the substance of such Ethic consisting as beforesaid not in the humiliation of self before God, but in the identification of self with humanity. By this we should observe is not especially to be understood the "living for others" of the current Christian Ethics, which at best means sacrificing oneself for other individuals, as individuals. What we here mean is, we must again repeat to avoid all possible misunderstanding, *that affirmation of self with, or identification of self in, society, which in the first instance can only be brought about by the identification of the material conditions of individual well-being with those of social well-being.* At last with the dawn of a new economic era, the era of social production for social uses, we shall have also the dawn of a new Ethic, an Ethic whose ideal is neither personal holiness nor personal interest, but social happiness—for which the perfect individual will ever be subordinate to the perfect society. The test of personal character will here be not self-renunciation in the abstract, but the possession of social qualities and the zeal for positive and definite social ends. This may be termed in a sense an absolute Ethic. It is no longer naïvely objective like the Ethic of the primitive world, when the individual was unconscious of possible interests apart from the community; and still less is it naïvely subjective, the attention of the individual being no longer primarily directed towards the mortification of self, but rather to-

wards the broad issues of social life and progress. He will recognise the call of duty to do and to forbear only in things which directly affect Society; all actions not having a direct social bearing being morally indifferent for him. In this new conception of duty, the individual consciously subordinates himself to the community, this time not a community of *kinship* but of *principle;* not limited by frontier but world-embracing.

Thus in the new Ethic the two previous ethical momenta are, so to say, at once preserved and destroyed. The naïveté and limitation of the first tribal Ethic have passed away never to return. The abstract individualism of the second will have also passed away never to return. The separation of Ethics from Politics and of both from Religion, is finally abolished. In Socialism, Ethics become Political, and Politics become Ethical; while Religion means but the higher and more far-reaching aspect of that ethical sense of obligation, duty, fraternity, which is the ultimate bond of every-day society. Yet nevertheless, all that was vital in the two earlier stages of the moral consciousness will be preserved in this one; the social object of the first; the conscious definiteness of the second.

In treating the subject of Ethics I might have proceeded very differently. I might have filled these pages with an account of various practises and customs drawn from every source, ancient and modern, savage, barbaric and civilised, and in this way have interested many; but this which has often been done before, was not my object. My object was, by indicating the salient points in a thorough-going analysis of the moral consciousness, to lead the reader to reflect on Ethic in its essential character

and as embodied in the historic races, rather than, as many do, to content himself with the mere co-ordination of the casual manifestations which are its temporary and local expression.

Again, I have purposely refrained here from entering upon the speculative problems which lie on the confines of the subject. To treat such even in outline would require, not one, but a series of essays like the present. I will mention in conclusion one only of these problems. A very obvious question arises as to the *telos* of society itself, and the connection between the moral consciousness and this *telos*. May we regard the inadequacy of the individual as an end to himself as the indication that the *final purpose* of society as such is not to be merely *for* the consciousness of its component individuals or personalities, but that these are in the end destined to be absorbed in a corporate social consciousness: just as the separate sentiencies of the organic components of the animal or human body are absorbed in the unified sentience or intelligence of that body? I offer this as a closing suggestion for the reader who is of what is sometimes known as a "speculative turn of mind."

THE REVOLUTION OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN 1883.

THOUGH the observation that our age is one of transition, is perhaps somewhat trite among thinking men, the number of unthinking men who are still possessed by the remains of an "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be" theory of the world and of human nature, is sufficiently great to render its occasional illustration and enforcement desirable. The most obvious way to bring home this fact to the mind incapable of seeing it unaided, is by fixing on a *terminus a quo*, and showing that while it logically leads to a certain *terminus ad quem*, we are, historically, but half-way towards the said *terminus ad quem*; in other words, that the present state of things involves a contradiction. This is the method we shall accordingly pursue in the following observations. The expression, "age of transition," is, of course, only relative. In one sense the whole of history is a vast transition. "All things flow," said Herakleitos—and truly; but the flowing sometimes takes the form of a cataract, at others of an even, and almost imperceptible, current. This is only another way of saying that the usually slow and gradual course of evolution is, at certain stages, interrupted by a more or less prolonged period of revolution. The embryo, arrived at maturity,

breaks the eggshell, the *imago* insect its chrysalis skin. The process of transformation, from being gradual and imperceptible, becomes spasmodic and perceptible.

Let our *terminus a quo*, then, be the mediæval system of Europe, and we shall see that every advance, every departure, from that system, has led us deeper and deeper into the region of unresolved contradiction, is fast leading us through incompatibility to impossibility, and thence, we may hope, to a reorganisation of human life which shall mean the resolution of these contradictions. We will examine the system of Mediævalism first of all in its industrial organisation. With its industrial system is most closely bound up the whole social and family life of a people. But no aspect of a civilisation can be logically separated from the other. The social and the political life, and the intellectual conceptions of an age, act and react upon one another. They are the inseparable aspects of that particular phase in the evolution of the one organic, or, if you will, super-organic, whole—Humanity.

The economical system of antiquity, which was founded on slavery—production being entirely, or almost entirely, confined to slaves, consisting either of prisoners taken in conquest or their descendants, or else of the persons of debtors seized in default of payment—became gradually modified, on the disruption of the Roman Empire, into serfage. As the feudal system consolidated itself, serfage finally and definitely superseded slavery. The serf could not, like the slave, be bought and sold at pleasure, but was generally inseparable from the soil on which he was born. Nevertheless, as with the slave, all that he and his family produced over and above what was barely

necessary for food and clothing, was the property of the lord. But since, if the number of his serfs was diminished or their labour-power impaired by ill-treatment, others were not so readily obtainable, as in the case of slaves in ancient times, it became the interest of the lord to maintain them as far as possible in a healthy and contented condition. Besides this it must be remembered that the main object of the feudal lord was not *gain*. Beyond what was necessary for his personal use and that of his retainers what he cared for was to rule over men—to possess a numerous and devoted tenantry. Hence serfage was a distinct advance on slavery, as regards the condition of the labourer. If we look a little more closely at the conditions of production on a feudal estate, we shall find that it was within itself, generally-speaking an industrial whole, the links connecting it with the outer world being at most few, and even these seldom indispensable to its existence. The total of the commodities consumed on the estate was, in most cases, derived directly from its own ground. The peasant and his sons tilled the soil, hunted the wild animals, raised domestic stock, or felled trees for building or firewood; while the wife and daughters spun the raw flax and carded the wool, which they worked up into articles of clothing, distilled the mead or assisted in the in-gathering of the grapes, the making the wine, and, in some cases, in the rougher work of production. Division of labour and distribution, in a society composed on this plan, were obviously, alike, if not unknown, at least unessential. This was the system that continued to form the frame-work of society throughout Europe for centuries.

But with the decline of the mediæval civilisation, townships began to arise, and with them a new industrial organisation, based on independent guilds of burghers. The township got the feudal services of the citizens within its domain commuted for an annual due or payment. It was thus that free labour arose. Each man now worked to maintain himself and his family, at a *particular* handicraft, by exchanging or selling the products of his labour. In this way specialisation of labour and an organised system of distribution—of commerce—came into existence. Leagues for mutual protection against the robber nobles of the period were formed, such as the Hanseatic League. With the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, and yet more with the Reformation in the sixteenth, the strength of the mediæval system pure and simple was practically broken up. The middle or trading classes of the towns became more and more powerful, and, with their power, more and more restive at the imposts laid upon them, and at the restrictions put upon their liberty and dignity by governments constituted of the lords of the soil, spiritual and temporal, and the crown. The growing breach between the commons or third estate—a name originally applied to the smaller landholders, but now more particularly used for the burgher population—and the first and second estates, consisting respectively of the lords spiritual and temporal, culminated in the great French Revolution of 1789. In this convulsion the third estate was arrayed against the clergy, the nobility, and the crown. But burgher and noble, or, as the French have it, *bourgeois* and *grand seigneur*, in their struggles for supremacy, were oblivious of the rise above the social horizon of a little cloud

destined ultimately to overshadow both their interests alike. This fourth estate, distinct from the peasantry of the country as the new commonality or third estate was distinct from the copyholding commonality of feudal times, was none other than the modern proletariat or working class.

On the first rise of the town-system every tradesman, burgher, or citizen combined in his own person, or those of his immediate household, the functions of workman, supervisor, and distributor, as regards his particular commodity. But with the development of the new industrial system these functions became separated. With their separation the distinction between employer and *employé*, master and workman, *bourgeois* and *prolétaire*, arose. The whole processes of production and exchange which had hitherto been carried out on the small scale exclusively adapted to individual work, had become gradually changed by simple co-operation, the ever-extending subdivision of labour, and other causes. The distinction between the middle and the working classes first became definitively marked in a political sense during the French Revolution, and it has been yearly accentuating itself ever since. The middle, or capitalist classes have long ago come to a compromise with the landed aristocracy. This compromise has taken the political form of constitutional government, in which Toryism, or landed interest, and Liberalism, or capitalistic interest, take it by turns to sponge upon the people. The prodigious development of capitalism in this century is due to the sudden and revolutionary acceleration of the process of development referred to as previously taking place gradually, namely, the socialisation of the

modes of production. The sudden acceleration of the process, amounting to a complete transformation of previous conditions, is the result of the introduction of *machinery.* It is to *machinery* that we owe the polarisation of wealth and poverty we see around us: luxury on the one hand and starvation on the other, colossal fortunes and abject misery. This is rendered possible by the fact that while production has become more and more socialised in character, exchange still remains in individual hands. The workers do not own the means of production or the product, either individually or collectively. Hence the capitalist obtains a leverage power by which he can wring from the working classes all the value of their labour over and above what is barely necessary to their subsistence. It is thus that interest or profit is obtained. This is facilitated by competition, the competition amongst labourers and the competition amongst capitalists themselves. There is an ever-increasing section of the labouring population on the verge of starvation, and ready to work at starvation wages. Small capitalists are being daily thrown into the ranks of the proletariat by their inability to compete with the larger firms. Capital tends daily to a concentration in fewer and fewer hands; in other words, the bulk of the population are forced to labour in order that a smaller and smaller oligarchy of grasping capitalists may enter into the fruits of their labour. As it is, out of the thirteen hundred millions produced annually by this country, the small minority of capitalists and landowners are said to absorb one thousand millions, leaving just three hundred millions for the overwhelming majority of the community. I should say that the landowners only take a hundred and thirty-six

millions out of the total, more than half of which is mortgaged back to the capitalist class. This is a fact those who regard land nationalisation *alone* as the panacea for all evils would do well to consider. Machinery, as employed at present, simply serves to produce profit for the capitalist and to increase the misery of the working-classes. As Mr. Hyndman well puts it: "The socialised system of production revolts against the individualised system of exchange." Here, then, is our first contradiction. The homogeneous utility-production of the Middle Ages, in which exchange did not exist, gave place to an individualistic mode of production and of exchange. This is, in its turn, superseded to-day by a highly developed social system of production, which yet remains allied to the old individualist principle of exchange. The logical *terminus ad quem*, the resolution of the contradiction involved in the situation, is obviously —a return to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries being out of the question—the completion of the process of socialisation, *i.e.* the *complete* socialisation not only of production but of exchange as well. This means nothing less than the abolition of the current *régime* of capitalism and landholding, which furnishes the middle and upper classes, so-called, with interest, profit, and rent by the concentration of land, raw material, instruments of production, and funded property in the lands of a democratic State really representing the people. That this is impossible with our boards of guardians of vested interests furnished under the various constitutional governments, monarchical or republican, it is scarcely necessary to observe.

We have already touched indirectly upon the political

question in discussing the economical. First, as to its internal, as distinct from its international aspect. In the Middle Ages all political power was in the hands of the hierarchy of the Crown, with its advisers, the clergy and the large and small landed proprietors, the three estates as they were termed. On the decline, and especially after the break-up, of the mediæval system, when the towns and the smaller landed proprietors were becoming a power as against the old feudal nobles, strong efforts were made by the monarchy to utilise the state of things thence arising for rendering its prerogative absolute: a feat which was attempted by all the Tudor and Stuart sovereigns in England, and resulted in the overthrow of Charles I. It was left for the genius of Louis XIV. of France to effectually accomplish the change in the nature of the royal authority. The advent of the first crisis of our revolutionary epoch—the French Revolution of 1789—was thus facilitated. The true significance of this convulsion is the definite assertion by the middle or capitalist classes of political equality with the noble or landed classes. Although during the actual crisis the fourth estate or proletariat achieved some signal successes, notably in the constitution of '93, yet these were one and all subsequently swept away again in the ebb of the revolution, the only thing left high and dry, past the chance of subsequent loss, being the political power of the *bourgeoisie*. Every reform during the present century has tended to increase and consolidate this power. Constitutional government itself is simply a tacit compact for the key of power to be transferred from land to capital, from aristocracy to plutocracy. Even where, as in England, the fundamental basis of the

old political order, the Crown, the House of Peers, remain intact formally, the force they embodied is departed from them into other hands. It will be thus readily seen that the political power of the middle classes has grown with the growth of the capitalistic system and increased with its strength, and that the monopoly of political power by knots of influential, *i.e.* moneyed, men, of which modern constitutional governments—be they Liberal or Conservative, monarchical as in England and Germany, or republican as in France and America—one and all consist, is simply the corollary of our industrial contradiction, the monopoly of a socialised or semi-socialised system of production and of its fruits by a comparatively small number of individuals. The social system which contradicts the first laws of justice and of human welfare, merely because the majority are at present too stupid to see this, owing to the complexity of the machinery involved, has as its natural pendant a corresponding political system—a system which must stand or fall with it.

Now let us look at the other side of the political question, the international or external. The feudal system was essentially Federal in character. The fulcrum of government lay in the local centre, not in the national centre. The autonomy of the different feudal jurisdictions was incomparably greater than is to be found within any existing State. Like the method of production, the system of government was suited to small and semi-independent communities. Each estate of the feudal hierarchy owed direct allegiance only to the one immediately above it; after this the allegiance became more and more indirect, more and more shadowy, even where, as in England, it nominally existed and between

the extremes was altogether *nil.* At the same time the whole political system of Europe had for its coping-stone the papacy, and to some extent also the shadowy Roman Emperor of the German nation. But, as we have seen, on the dissolution of the feudal system, monarchy began to assert a centralising influence, and this was the first beginning of our modern State-system. With the Reformation the political paramountcy of the papacy was ended, and hence the two opposite checks to national centralisation, the local and the cosmopolitan, were almost simultaneously abolished. On the ruins of feudalism and papal domination, then, arose the modern State-system of Europe. As in the case of industrial production the methods are social but in individual hands, so with the State-system, its tendency and machinery, although involving international relations at every turn, is administered for national ends. The administrative unit, the feudal commune, is abolished, and the nationality takes its place; but while the whole system of modern life is cosmopolitan, government is still carried on in the interests of this racial unit. The illogicality of this administrative halting-place between the local community and the system of nations constituting the civilised world, is shown by the empire-tendency of modern States—that empire-tendency which means the ruthless sacrifice of weaker races for the sake of the stronger. Here again we have a parallel; as in industry the larger capitalists absorb the smaller, so in politics the larger States absorb the smaller. Hence, as the tendency of capital is to become concentrated in a few large trusts, so the tendency of government is to become concentrated in a few large empires, the smaller independent centres being crushed out.

I have spoken of nations, but it must be remembered that by this term is meant, in modern politics, merely the privileged and ruling classes of nations. Parliaments are little more than boards consisting of members of these classes; and in voting war estimates, railway guarantees, grants for expeditions to occupy territory, or for schemes for "opening up" new channels of commerce, new markets, etc. etc., they are only consulting their own interests, under the specious masks of "national honour" and the public welfare. In foreign politics the capitalist is no less king than in domestic. Well nigh every war within the present generation has been the work of a clique of bourse speculators, stock-jobbers, or manufacturers anxious to secure markets. Such was, to a large extent at least, the Franco-German war; such have been, unblushingly, all our small English "wars" (so-called), which might more truly be termed cowardly *massacres* of untrained and ill-armed barbarians. Such have been no less the French expeditions in Tunis, Tonquin, and Madagascar. What advantage do the workers of a nation derive from the extension of empire? What does the possession of India, for example, benefit the English working class, or any but the larger capitalists and the functionaries who are their hangers-on? The working classes are taxed for the maintenance of this imperial system, and have as their reward the magnificently barren honour of belonging to it.

Chauvinistic Nationalism is the political side of the *status quo* of which Capitalism is the corner-stone. There is nothing more cherished by the ruling classes than a patriotic cry. It is their most serviceable ally in times of danger. Thus, our second great contradiction—the

political—lies in administration being carried on in the quasi-interests of special nationalities in an age when the whole civilised world has really the same interests, as it has the same science, the same inventions, the same communications—in short, when the whole system of things is international. We have noticed the connection existing between this political and the industrial contradiction, in so far as the diplomatic *nation* really means the "privileged classes" of that nation—or, in other words, the capitalists, the landowners, and their salaried allies. The logical *terminus ad quem* of the situation is plainly the internationalising of government. The centralisation must be carried to its furthest point, and not arrested at the national frontier, often a mere arbitrary diplomatic or geographical expression. This would have as its natural correlate the rehabilitation within certain limits of the local centre. When we think what the disappearance of capitalism, landlordism, and class privilege would really involve, it is easily seen that national and diplomatic boundaries would, under such circumstances, no longer have any *raison d'être*. It is thus, and not by *bourgeois* propagandism and humanitarian talk that war will be abolished and the ostensible ends of the "Peace Society" accomplished.

We come, finally, to the intellectual or religious contradiction of our epoch. The system of Catholic dogma, the religious system of the Middle Ages, formed a coherent whole in itself, and with its industrial and political systems. Furthermore, it was consistent with the entire mental attitude of these ages.[1] But, with the new

[1] For a good exposition of the mediæval speculative position Mitman's History of Latin Christianity (vol. i.) may be consulted.

learning, all this began to change. Authority in matters of belief became generally shaken. A climax was reached in the Lutheran Reformation when the standard of authority was definitely shifted from church to dogma, from pope to Bible. This change undermined the Christian theology. The infallibility of the canonical scriptures rested, as did every other dogma, on the authority of councils and church tradition, regarded as traceable in a direct line to the apostles, and through them to the titular founder of the Christian religion. Once the doctrine of apostolical succession and the supreme authority of the Church repudiated, the principle of private judgment in matters doctrinal admitted, and the pillar supporting the entire dogmatic edifice was broken, leaving it only a matter of time for the whole superstructure to fall in. Even the granting of the cardinal dogma of dogmatic Protestantism could not much mend matters, since this leaves it open to any person to dispute every other dogma on biblical authority; seeing that each individual with sufficient ingenuity could devise a system out of that heterogeneous body of literature called the Bible, differing essentially not only from the orthodox one, but from that of his equally original neighbour. *Aus der Bibel lässt sich alles beweisen,* as the Germans have it. Truly might an eminent Catholic prelate claim for his creed "a complete consistency from its first principle to its last consequence, and to its least institution"; and well might he accuse the Protestant variations of preserving "forms and doctrines, which must have sprung from a principle

The hierarchical order of celestial beings founded on the work of the pseudo-Dionysius beginning with the supreme overlord god, is a striking analogue of the mediæval hierarchy of terrestrial beings.

by them rejected, but which are useless and mistaken the moment they are disjoined from it." Such is, nevertheless, the doctrine of the modern *bourgeois*. He is Christian. Oh yes! He must be Christian to the backbone; but in the logicality of the Catholic system the *bourgeois* discovers its error. And doubtless he is right from his own point of view. He is himself the outgrowth of a logical contradiction, and hence his whole polity and converse are illogical. The landed aristocrat still adheres to at least some semblance of the old Catholic hierarchy and tradition, such as high Anglicanism offers; but the capitalist, large and small, the middle-class man, is the bulwark of Protestantism proper—to wit, that illogical *non-sequitur*, dogma *minus* sacerdotalism. The manufacturer or merchant has his evangelical church, the retail linen-draper or grocer his chapel, the butcher or greengrocer his mission-hall, the converted costermonger his open-air service.

The connection between the trading classes and dogmatic Protestantism holds historically. The Reformation was coincident with the first great expansion of the town population, both politically and industrially. It was the industrial classes that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove from France, to found colonies in England and Germany. The pre-eminently industrial nations—the English, the Germans, the Dutch, etc.—adopted Protestantism as their State creed; and even in non-Protestant countries the main strength of the Protestant minority lay in the trading classes. It would not be uninstructive, did space allow, to trace in detail the connection between Protestant cults and dogmas and the aims and aspirations of the middle classes; and this

would not be difficult. But we must pass on to a more important aspect of the intellectual contradiction of our civilisation. Every religion presents two sides, an intellectual and a moral. It involves a theory of the how, the whence, and the whither of existence, and an ideal based upon that theory. The theory dominating the mediæval civilisation was, as we have said, Christian theology in its only consistent form. But the Christian theology is merely the development of a fundamental idea common to the other ethical religions (so-called) of the world, which in other shapes is traceable to paganism, and thence to still more primitive stages of human culture—I mean the hypothesis of the existence of an intelligent being or beings outside the natural order, by whom that order is regulated. This conception is the groundwork of every religion, properly speaking, that has hitherto existed. The conception of law, of an essentially unchangeable order has, however, from the first rise of physical science at the close of the Middle Ages, been steadily growing, and as steadily supplanting the old notion of volition as a causal agent in the several departments of science, till now no region is left other than completely occupied by it. The intellectual attitude of all educated men in the present day, among all peoples, kindreds, and tongues, is hence separated by a yawning chasm from the intellectual attitude of those of all previous ages by this fact alone, just as the material conditions of life in the nineteenth century throughout the civilised world are separated by a similar abyss from those of all previous ages by the invention of machinery as applied to industry, of the railway, the telegraph, etc. The significance of this change of mental attitude can hardly be

exaggerated. All previous changes have left the cardinal principle of supernaturalism practically untouched. It is now, for the first time, that the principle of the invariability of law is universally established. Yet strange to say—and here lies the main intellectual contradiction of our age—while all our science, all our commerce and industry, all the actions of our daily life, are based on this great truth, it still remains, so to speak, officially unrecognised by mankind. Old creeds based upon an entirely alien conception of the universe still remain, outwardly at least, intact. Men are categorised as Christians and Mussulmans, or as Catholics and Protestants, irrespective of their real belief. Churches and religious movements abound, and priesthoods flourish. Now and again simple-minded persons try to carry out the principles of supernaturalism to their obvious conclusion: they trust in the providence of "God," and dispense with medical attendance for their dying children, and, *mirabile dictu!* a Christian country arraigns them for manslaughter, and then, perhaps, this latent contradiction involved in our civilisation comes to light for the nonce. The logical *terminus ad quem* of the situation, it is obvious, is the definite abandonment by society in its collective capacity of supernaturalism, and the formal recognition of human reason as the sole means of arriving at truth.

If on their intellectual side, as theories of the universe, the older religions are a *non possumus* for us, they are this none the less on their moral side. The local and tribal religions of ancient times were encountered by the newly awakened ethical conscience of the individual as such. Much in them which was natural symbolism to his ancestors was repellent to him. But Christianity

itself contains the same opposition in a more developed form. It is useless blinking the fact that the Christian doctrine is more revolting to the higher moral sense of to-day than the Saturnalia or the cult of Proserpine could have been to the conscience of the early Christian. And more than this, the social and humanistic tendencies of the age, the consciousness of human welfare and human development as "our being's end and aim," as the sole object worthy of human devotion, must instinctively shrink from its antithesis, the theological spirit—and this despite the emasculated free Christian and theistic guise in which the latter may appear at the present time. "Ye cannot serve god and humanity," is the burden of the nobler instincts of our epoch. But here, again, we see the intrinsic unity of the several aspects of human life. What is it which prevents the realisation—ay, and even in most cases the conception—of nobler aims, of a higher intellectual, artistic, and moral existence for men? It is a true saying that though false ideas may be refuted by argument, yet only by true ideas can they be expelled. The true ideal which alone can effectually exorcise the spectre of the Christian theology from our midst is unfortunately confined to a few. And why is it so, but because modern civilisation is composed of two classes, the possessors of capital and the victims of capital? When "success in life" is the highest ideal of which the majority of men are capable, when the condition of a higher culture is the freedom which the possession of capital alone can afford, we need indeed scarcely be surprised that it is so. The higher human ideal stands in opposition at once to capitalism, the gospel of success, with its refined arts of cheating through the process of exchange, or, in

short, to *worldliness;* and to Christianism, the gospel of success in a hypothetical other life, in a word, to *other-worldliness.* But a glance around at our various bodies and organisations, charitable or otherwise, of a Christian character will show that at least two-thirds of modern Christianity is simply Capitalism masquerading in a religious guise. Even where such is not the case, Christianity is none the less an integral part of the *status quo.* The privileged classes instinctively feel this. So long as human aspiration can be kept along the old lines, so long as the further gaze of men can be kept directed heavenward to the cloud-shapes of god, Christ, and immortality or inward on their own hearts and consciences, and averted from the earthly horizon of social regeneration, all will go well. John Bull's auxiliary, the minister of the gospel, or possibly the wife or daughter of John Bull, must be able to say to him or her who is not blessed with J. B.'s share of the good things of this life, "What does it matter, dear brother or sister? Why repine? 'Tis but for a season god has placed us in different stations in this life; in the life to come, where we shall hope to meet by-and-bye, all will be well." The idea of the dear brother or sister meeting this consolation in affliction with the rebuff of Faust—

> "Das Drüben mag mich wenig kümmern
> . . . . .
> Schlägst du erst diese welt zu trümmern
> Die andre mag danach entstehen"—

or something to the same effect, is naturally repugnant to the *bourgeois* mind. No, verily, this bringing down

of religion from heaven to earth belongs not to the present civilisation of expropriation and privilege!

And now, a word or two on a point dealt with by me more fully elsewhere, to wit, on the ethical contradiction of our epoch. The moral side of Christianity is centred in the notions of individual holiness and responsibility to a supernatural being. This ethical side of Christianity largely overlaid by other influences during the Middle Ages, with Protestantism came again prominently to the fore, and has remained so ever since. But with the growing sense among all earnest men that social utility is the end of all human endeavour, an Ethic based on the notion of individual likeness to God is in flagrant contradiction, a contradiction which can only be resolved by its formal surrender.

We have now touched upon the two aspects—the intellectual and moral—of our last main contradiction, the religious contradiction. We have pointed to the universal *prevalence* of a natural conception of the universe, with the universal *recognition* of a supernatural one. We have further pointed to a humanist ideal of life, growing up cheek by jowl with the commercial ideal of worldly success for the individual, varied occasionally by the Christian ideal of other-worldly success, the whole cemented by the feeling that it is necessary for the "lower orders" to believe "in a sort of a something" which will afford them consolation, and at the same time tend to the stability of society by preventing discontent. As a matter of course, from the three main contradictions —the industrial, the political, and the religious—issues a strain of discord through every sphere of life. A volume might easily be written on the artistic contradiction of

the present age, but this is a direct result of the economic and the religious contradictions. Art is degraded to furniture, quantity takes the place of quality in artistic production, comic operas of classical music, simply because art is dominated by capital, and artists impregnated with the gospel of commerce. The true artist is oppressed with the lack of the ideal he sees around him, with the contradiction between theory and practice, between what is recognised and what is really believed.

It has been our object throughout the present lecture to show the mutual implication of the different aspects of the Modern Revolution. Our moral is the futility of attempts to fundamentally change one aspect of the current order of things while conserving another. In vain does one party (of generous and well-meaning men, no doubt) think to batter down current theology, while ignoring, or even justifying, the great social contradiction of the age. In vain do they hurl their thunderbolts at the gaunt spectre of Christian dogma, which only stands "as the air invulnerable," confronting them with its soulless eyes. What, for instance, though they may show the doctrine of vicarious atonement to have its roots in a bestial superstition pertaining to the worst side of paganism, a superstition which has borne cruelties innumerable in the world's history as its fruit—the foul doctrine, with the rest of the system of which it forms a typical part, will continue to be fulminated every week from a thousand pulpits while these pulpits are subsidised by capital, and they will continue to be subsidised so long as the *status quo*, of which capitalism and Christianity are two of the chief elements, subsists. We commend to the attention of secularists the assertion of

Mr. Justice North in his summing-up to the jury in the trial of Mr. Foote, to the effect that in the attacking of Christianity the law itself is attacked. Of course! For the law is simply the exponent of the *status quo*, the nature of which we have been examining, and of which modern Christianity is the ideal expression.

The futility of attempts to change religion on the lines of the current social and political order, is seen in the fact that, despite the prevalent disbelief pervading the middle and upper classes, all attempts at instituting rationalist churches are conspicuous failures. To the one secularist hall, or even Unitarian chapel—you have your thousand places of Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Wesleyan worship. The soil is productive of the one and barren of the other. To the thousands subscribed to a new chapel, you have your pence to a new hall of science. Whence the cause of this phenomenon? Has it never struck the ardent secularist that the old metaphor as to pouring the new wine into old bottles has its application? The misfortune is that the conclusion fails. The new wine does *not* burst the bottle, which possesses the power of contracting its neck so that none goes in, and thus its outer surface only gets affected. Doubtless, could the wine of a humanistic ideal penetrate into the depths of the *bourgeois* mind, it *would* "burst" the *status quo*. But the capitalistic system itself, and the spirit it generates, effectually prevent this. Unconscious humbug is an important ingredient of the *Zeitgeist*. The *bourgeois*' respectability and pietism alike, spring from roots hidden perhaps to himself, but none the less real, to wit, his own pocket, potential and actual, or the pocket of his class generally. *He is acute enough to connect Atheism and Communism*

Again, how vain are the efforts of the International Peace Associations at effecting the abolition of war in a political system based on the rivalry of nationalities, and consisting mainly of half a dozen powerful States, each with armaments outvying the other, which supply positions for the younger sons of the landed classes, and of which the trading classes are glad enough to avail themselves when they want new markets or fresh commercial channels opened up, little as they may like their cost at other times. The arbitrationists may succeed in getting up a brilliant meeting now and then, in which war is declared to be unchristian; and Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Samuel Morley, and other worthies of the same ilk, will expatiate on the need of spreading the gospel in the form of the evangelical tract so dear to the British middle-class heart. But such attempts will continue to be regarded by society at large, and justly, as the hypocritical shams of a few "philanthropic" talkers.

Lastly, one word on that singular hybrid, the "Christian Socialist." Though the word Socialism has not been mentioned, it will have been sufficiently evident that the goal indicated in the present articles is none other than Socialism. But the association of Christianism with any form of Socialism is a mystery, rivalling the mysterious combination of ethical and other contradictions in the Christian divinity himself. Notwithstanding that the *soi-disant* Christian Socialist confessedly finds the natural enemies of his Socialism among Christians of all orthodox denominations, still he persists in retaining the designation, while refusing to employ it in its ordinary signification.

It is difficult to divine the motive for thus preserving

a name which, confessedly, in its ordinary meaning, is not only alien but hostile to the doctrine of Socialism. Does the "Free Christian" want a personal object of reverence? We can offer him many such, even now. Let him look eastward at those who have indeed places in which to lay their heads, ay, and in some cases mansions and estates, but who renounce them and court the slow death of imprisonment in fortresses and Siberian mines, who flinch not at the sword, and whose utmost good fortune is the liberty of preaching *their* gospel in the dark places of civilisation, and oftentimes amid a poverty unrelieved by even a Zaccheus. Let them call to mind the massacres of '71, and the Paris workman who, on being asked for what he was fighting and dying, replied, "*Pour la solidarité humaine.*" Or again, let them think of the aged Delescluze closing a life of untiring devotion at the barricades, in harness to the last. Must we for ever insult the living and lately dead, by falling back for our ideal upon the first century? Do nobleness and devotion, indeed, require to be mellowed by the "dim religious light" of ages before we can recognise them as such? This, however, by the way. Our contention is the following. If by Christianity be meant the body of dogma usually connoted by the word, it will probably be conceded by those to whom we refer that it is in hostility to progress. If, on the other hand, this be not meant, but merely the ethical principles Christianity is supposed to embody, then, even if these principles were distinctly and exclusively Christian which they are not, we challenge them to show this connection or even their compatibility with Socialism. If, again, they fail in this, as fail they must, the whole matter is resolved into one

of sentiment. And for the sake of retaining a catchword, for such it is, and no more, under these circumstances, they would compromise principles, and throw a sop to the *status quo* in its most hypocritical form. To say nothing of the thousands in Europe to whom the name Christian is positively abhorrent, how shall they face the Eastern world when the time comes for so doing? Only those who can tell the Moslem, the Buddhist, the Confucian, we care not for Jesus of Nazareth any more than for Mohammed, for Gautama, or for Kon-fu-tze; disputes as to the relative merits or demerits of those teachers are vain as they are endless; only those who can say we know of greater men than these—greater, inasmuch as humanity has reached a higher level; greater, inasmuch as they have not posed as great teachers, but have contented themselves with the rank of humble and equal workers—who come in the form of neither god nor prophet, but of the humanity whose religion is human welfare—not the welfare of a race or a class, but of the whole; whose doctrine is its attainment, through human solidarity, or, in other words—Socialism; only those, we repeat, will ever obtain the ear of the Orient, and never they who come in the hated and blood-stained name of Christianity—name indicative of racial and religious rivalry. What in earlier phases of human evolution has been accomplished as in pre-human evolution by the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence; in other words, what has been hitherto accomplished *physically*, or unconsciously, must, in the future, be done *psychically*, or consciously—the *struggle* for existence must give place to co-operation for existence, and this co-operation though in one sense the result of economical revolution, implies

on another side a correlative change in the basis of Ethics and religion. Then, and not till then will the contradiction of our age be resolved in the unity of a fuller and more complete life than any yet experienced by Humanity.

CRIMINAL LAW UNDER SOCIALISM.

Not many persons realise the extent to which crime is reducible to the question of private property. There are few orders of crime which are not traceable directly or indirectly to possession and the desire of possession. A broad division may be drawn between animal crimes or those directly springing from a natural appetite such as hunger, desire of self-preservation, sudden anger, lust, &c., and "social" or (better) "civil" crimes or those springing directly or indirectly from the desire of gain or possession. The two classes doubtless overlap, but are easily distinguishable in their general outlines. In the first place we have the largest and most important section of offences recognised by law, those which may be comprehended under the phrase "unlawful appropriation," *i.e.*, theft and robbery in all their forms. Here, of course, is a vast body of crime which would be practically impossible in a state of society in which the necessaries and comforts of life were within the reach of all, and when the fact of possession did not carry with it the possibility of surplus-value. Then, again, there is the indecent class of crime. This is largely a consequence of the hypocritical sexual relations at present obtaining, resulting from the institution of monogamic marriage, which is in its turn based on our existing property-relations—although here matters of pure pathology have properly to be taken into account. Thirdly, we have the

description of crime coming under the head of *brutal assaults*, or malicious injuries (including murder). This last is usually associated with one or other of the two former departments, most frequently, but not always, with crimes against property. Fourthly, must be included perjury or false-witness in all its forms. We shall find that all serious crime (as distinguished from mere misdemeanour, as it is termed, and from political offences) is comprised within these four categories, the first embracing all crimes primarily against property, the three last all crimes primarily against the person, it matters not whether the question of property enters secondarily into them or not.

Now, largely as the present condition of society is directly responsible for crime, and still more largely as it is so indirectly, we can hardly hope that a change of economic condition would do more immediately than efface the crimes directly connected with property. The gradual elimination of the remainder might be effected in the process of the development of the new order, but not entirely at once. We cannot, therefore, treat this question in the snakes-in-Iceland fashion we were able to do when dealing with civil law under Socialism on a previous occasion. But, nevertheless, I take it that the *régime* of a Socialist administration will involve an enormous change of attitude in dealing with crime. Firstly, it will without doubt reduce to the minimum the number of actions characterised by the law as crimes. Secondly, it will certainly regard the greatest possible consideration for the criminal compatible with the maintenance of social existence at all, as its first duty in the matter. Thirdly, it will assuredly withdraw the

right of prosecution from private individuals and vest it wholly and solely in the delegates of society.

The interest of the legal body, so influential in all modern legislatures, is to increase to the utmost the cognisance of the criminal law over actions. In this they are aided and abetted by a number of persons who entertain a pet hobby against particular vices (real or "so-called"), and are always prepared to agitate for their elevation to the rank of crimes. The legal luminaries who assist in this are quite indifferent to the fact, of which they must be well aware, that the wider the range of law-made crime, the greater the chance of innocent persons being, if not convicted at least accused, and their characters thereby blasted. And these, be it remembered, are the gentlemen who are so zealous in defending the law of libel as a necessary protection of character. It is monstrous, they pretend to think, that a man who has done an action deemed discreditable should have it proclaimed on the platform or in the press, but it is a "mere natural" misfortune incident to human affairs that an innocent person should be put to the annoyance and inconvenience of being arraigned before a police-court to answer a trumped-up charge, which it may nevertheless be very difficult to disprove to the satisfaction of the public.

Of course, all that these "legal gentlemen" care for, is to maintain and increase the business of the courts, civil and criminal. To such commercial principles are their zeal for the protection of character and the suppression of crime in the last resort reducible. A Socialist society, whose aim would be to reduce the machinery of law to the minimum, would rely for the preservation of public

morals precisely on that publicity which the legal crime-manufacturer tries so energetically to suppress for the protection of character. And in the end, he would undoubtedly find this a more powerful agent for the repression of crime than the most elaborately comprehensive code, designed for laying direct hands on the persons of offenders. When there is no interest at stake in the maintenance of judicial machinery, the number of law-made crimes must inevitably diminish.

That a Socialist administration would treat delinquents with the utmost leniency consistent with the existence of society will, of course, not be disputed. The failure of organised brutality as a corrective to crime has been attested over and over again by experience. Were the brutal punishments of earlier phases of society effectual in repressing crime? The panegyrists of modern civilisation are never tired of impressing upon us the great advances made in respect of crime, both as to diminution and treatment. It has been shown constantly that a particular offence has actually diminished on the repeal of brutal enactments bearing on it. Yet, strange to say, these very panegyrists of modern civilisation are frequently the first to cry out for *deterrent* punishments and long sentences, and to dilate on the maintenance of prison "discipline" (the specious euphemism for the inhumanity practised in our gaols). To convince themselves of the needlessness of so-called "prison discipline," they have only to cast an eye on some of the Swiss cantons (notably Geneva), where imprisonment means little more than simple reclusion, and where they will find that even a bourgeois society holds together without any of the acts of brutality and petty tyranny dignified in most countries

by the name of "prison discipline." A brutal officialism and red-tapeism which pay no attention to individual cases must of itself breed crime. The bourgeois moralist should at least be consistent. The chief and, indeed, only real advantage (outweighed by its many disadvantages) which the society of to-day has over that of the Middle Ages, is its relative security from brutal violence, and the relative (I had almost said the co-relative) absence of the more brutal forms of punishment. And the panegyrist of bourgeois society knows this and makes use of it. Of how many a declamatory newspaper leader and platform speech is it not the theme? And yet this same penny-a-liner or platform spouter will often be the first to condemn as sentimentality any protest against the still-existing brutality of our criminal code and prison system. He will be anxious to minimise to the utmost one of the few points wherein modern civilisation can show any sort of real superiority to that of earlier ages. Such is the consistency of the advocates of class-society and its methods.

Once more, we have said that a social administration would remove the right of prosecution from the private individual. As to this also I should imagine there could be no doubt, since the right of private prosecution exists only to facilitate recourse to the tribunals in the interest of the legal profession and its offshoots. If an action is injurious to society, it is plainly the part of society to take the initiative in dealing with it, and not allow the individual from his mere lust for revenge to set its judicial machinery in motion. This is also the work of lawyers, whose interest it is to multiply the business of the courts. The individual right of prosecution is a premium on

extortion in all its forms and personal malice. As things are at present, the only safeguard a man has against malicious prosecution is the clumsy device of in his turn instituting a prosecution for perjury, which he will probably fail in bringing home to the delinquent.

If we consider now the order of heinousness in the respective classes of crimes enumerated, we must admit that the first, those against property, since they spring directly from a rotten economic condition, must be regarded as (barring specially aggravating circumstances) the most entitled to consideration. It will be scarcely necessary, however, to controvert the absurd notion put forward by a certain section of Anarchists, that the mere individual appropriation of the property of other individuals, or in plain language, theft (such as that practised by the Anarchist heroes, Stellmacher and Ravachol), has anything whatever to do with Socialism, and the expropriation it advocates. On the contrary, Socialism deprecates robbery in all its forms. The mere change of individual possession of property does not affect the matter in the least. One can very well exonerate the poor man who steals to satisfy his wants; but when a man who has merely satisfied a personal desire of his own at the expense of another person, seeks to cover this individual act with the mantle of principle, an element of hypocrisy enters into the case which tends considerably to exacerbate our opinion of him. Let him steal if he will, but not as an act of devotion to any cause. This, however, by the way. The fact remains that theft and its allied offences are the immediate result of current economic conditions. It is natural that men should seek to obtain the necessaries and comforts of life legitimately, if economic conditions allow them, if not, illegitimately.

The second class of offences named, those connected with sexual matters, from rape downwards, may be viewed from two or three different sides, and are complicated in ways which render the subject difficult of discussion in a work intended for promiscuous circulation. Here, as in the last case, viz., of theft or robbery, we must be careful, in considering such offences, to eliminate the element of brutality or personal injury which may sometimes accompany the crime referred to, from the offence itself. For the rest I confine myself to remarking that this class also, though not so obviously as the last, springs from an instinct legitimate in itself, but which has been suppressed or distorted. The opinions of most, even enlightened people, on such matters are, however, so largely coloured by the unconscious survival in their minds of sentiment derived from old theological and theosophical views of the universe, that they are not of much value. This is partly the reason why the ordinary good-natured bourgeois who can complacently pass by on the other side, after casting a careless look on the most fiendish and organised cruelty in satisfaction of the economic craving—*gain,* is galvanised into a frenzy of indignation at some sporadic case of real or supposed ill-usage perpetrated in satisfaction of some *bizarre* form of the animal craving—*lust.* Until people can be got to discuss this subject in the white light of physiological and pathological investigation, rather than the dim religious gloom of semi-mystical emotion, but little progress will be effected towards a due appreciation of the character of the offences referred to.[1]

[1] It is a curious circumstance, as illustrating the change of men's view of offences, that an ordinary indecent assault which in the

The two last orders of crime named differ from the preceding, in that they do not have even a basis in natural or social instinct as such. A brutal assault or malicious injury (*i.e.*, one not inflicted in self-defence or under immediate and strong provocation) is purely and simply inhuman—criminal without having any direct palliation in the facts of economic conditions, like crimes against property, or in physiological and (possibly) economic conditions combined, like sexual crimes. Brutality and cruelty so far outweigh in enormity the two last as to seem almost to swallow them up. For instance, in cases of robbery or rape with violence, it is the personal violence accompanying the substantive crimes which naturally excites one's resentment most; and properly so, although it is the latter of which the bourgeois law primarily takes cognisance. Any crime causing bodily injury or suffering must surely, in the absence of specially palliative circumstances, be regarded as the most deserving of condemnation at the hands of society.

The same may be said of false accusation of crime, an offence which is now classed together with others much less serious, under the absurd name of Perjury, the idea being that its gravamen consists not in the injury done to the innocent but in its insult to the majesty of the law. The unperverted sense could scarcely conceive of any crime more monstrous than this,[1] and yet it is one which is frequently passed over lightly, with the view possibly of not discouraging prosecutions and thereby

Middle Ages, in Chaucer's time for instance, would evidently have been regarded as a species of rude joke, should now be deemed one of the most serious of crimes.

[1] The same applies to *chantage*, which is the attempt to make personal capital out of the knowledge of some misdeed of another,

injuring the legal interest. By being classed under the head of perjury, moreover, it sounds less infamous than it really is, mere perjury being a thing recognised and practised in the best social circles, where the co-respondent in a divorce case who has been committing adultery swears he hasn't, as a mere matter of form.

It seems to us that all the serious offences with which any society would have to deal at present may be grouped under the classes named. Of course there are special orders of offences (such as bigamy) which belong essentially to it and to it alone, and with which we have not dealt. According to one view of the matter, crime may properly be defined as an action proscribed by law, and hence may or may not be immoral, since many of the most laudable actions have been, and are, proscribed by law. But in the foregoing I have confined myself to such crime as would be universally admitted to be directly anti-social—for, of course, it is with such only that the administration of a Socialist commonwealth could be concerned.

What has been said, we should mention, touches only the new society, conceived as having already passed through the transitional period of revolutionary crisis, during which, the one aim of Socialism being the victory of the revolutionary principle, any means which would be conducive to that end would of necessity be adopted.

by threats of disclosure. If anything would justify the taking of life it is surely this; and one of the greatest artistic blunders Charles Dickens ever made was in the attempt to awaken sympathy in the reader for such a scoundrel as Tigg, when going to meet his well-deserved doom at the hands of his victim. That Jonas Chuzzlewit, who inflicted it, was a villain himself does not alter the matter so far as Tigg is concerned.

For example, the death-penalty, the *systematic maintenance* of which as an institution is one of the most obviously repulsive features of the criminal code of civilisation, might probably have to be held to, as the temporary measure of a revolutionary crisis.

And now a final word on the charge of sentimentalism commonly brought against those who object to the repression of crime by organised brutality. It is clear that the distinction between sentiment and sentimentalism in this connection (which has hitherto been conceived as one of degree merely) has been shifted progressively since the sense of horror at the infliction of pain first came prominently to the fore. What in the seventeenth century would have been complacently admitted as a necessity for the repression of crime would now be regarded with loathing (real or feigned) by the most determined supporter of "deterrent" punishments. The notion that there is any fixed point at which justifiable sentiment ends and sentimentalism begins is therefore plainly absurd. But that the distinction has a meaning I am not disposed to deny; although I do not believe it to consist in any question of degree. Sentimentalism is, as I take it, not excessive but *illogical sentiment*—that is, *unequally distributed sentiment.* Where there is a strong sensibility to the feelings of one class or body of persons and a comparative callousness to the feelings of other classes under like circumstances—there, I think, we have *sentimentalism.* And the tendency of the modern bourgeois treatment of crime is precisely in the direction of such sentimentalism.

In the Middle Ages "benefit of clergy" might be claimed by offenders who could read and write, such "benefit'

consisting in exemption from the ordinary punishment for the offence. In the modern world all such wicked and unenlightened distinctions are abolished. The law nowadays makes no distinction of persons between men. True ; but it makes distinctions between *men* and *women*, and where *law* draws no distinction, *practice* does. "Benefit of clergy" is superseded by "benefit of sex." Not only are all the more brutal features of "penal discipline" still practised on men abolished as regards women, but the chances of prosecution, of conviction, and if convicted, of heavy sentences, are at least a hundred to one in favour of women. Of course we know that the principle of equality between the sexes, as understood in the present day, demands this, and has been, and is, continually pushing legislation forward in this direction. Unless the social upheaval obliterates current lines of progress beforehand, we may yet live to see "equality between the sexes" realised in laws, whereby no female may be prosecuted for any offence whatever, the nearest male relation being substituted, and where the quiet London wayfarer in a lonely street will be in as dangerous a position as the "unprotected male" in the railway-carriage with a lone woman is now. Of course, any one that points this out is not treated seriously. The sentiment is still on the ascendant, and will have (as things go) to work out its own absurdity by its very excess before it begins to dawn upon the average British intellect that the distinction between the cohorts of Ormuszd and Ahriman is not invariably based on sex—and that persons who would legislate on this assumption are not quite fit to be at large. Meanwhile our Ormiston Chants, Garrett Andersons, and consorts, will probably have the opportunity of

celebrating, in after-dinner speeches, new triumphs of the sexual inequality they apparently have at heart.

In concluding these remarks, we would again point out the truth more than once alluded to in the course of them, that with the establishment of a classless society—a society based on labour for all, leisure for all, and culture for all, through the concentration of its whole productive and distributive wealth in its own hands as embodied in its administration—that in such a society crime, and therefore the mode of dealing with crime, must tend to lose its present significance and to become "rudimentary." This is obvious as regards crimes against property and all such as are *directly* traceable to the present constitution of society. It is none the less true, in the long run, of the rest, which are only *indirectly* traceable to it. Given a class bred in squalor, and that class is bound to develop a certain number of individuals in whom the dead-level swamp of coarseness inseparable from squalor will overflow into criminal brutality. Given a community in which business capacity is identified with ability to beggar one's neighbour ruthlessly under the name of competition, and where temptation offers you will have (1) direct appropriation by individuals of the property of other individuals—or, theft; and (2) the law-courts made use of to subserve private ends— or, briefly expressed, perjury.

But the best illustration of the truth in question is afforded by the relative preponderance of crime in the propertied and unpropertied classes of modern civilisation. From what section is the so-called criminal class recruited but from what Marx has termed the "reserve army of industry"? And is not this the class the precarious

conditions of whose existence are continually driving its members to isolated criminal acts, even before they become habituated to a life of crime? And yet this reserve army of industry is inseparable from capitalistic production. On the other hand, can crime (as defined in this article) be said to be common among any section of the well-to-do classes? We have here and there sporadic instances of this commented upon as something remarkable, as showing the depravity of human nature, it is true, but no one can say it is common. If then we see an habitual absence of crime in one class, and an habitual presence in another class, both living in close proximity, both breathing the moral atmosphere of the Christian civilisation of these latter days, and differing only in the material circumstances of their life, and the results immediately flowing from these, what stronger evidence can we have of the ultimate dependence of crime on economic condition,—and I may add in conclusion, what greater earnest of the complete disappearance of crime in that future when generations of social morality shall have created human beings, compared with whom the crimeless bourgeois of to-day is but as the brute beast?

LEGALITY.

THE respect for law as law is one of the most marked characteristics of the middle-class mind. One is particularly struck with the strength of this superstition on occasions like attempts on the life of the Czar. There are probably few middle-class Englishmen who would in so many words condone the atrocities and murders of the Russian Government. And yet there are probably few who would refuse the word crime to any act of self-defence initiated by its victims. Here is a case in which you have on the one side what every Englishman (bourgeois though he may be) that knows anything about the matter would in his heart admit to be an organisation of brigands, a mass of corrupt officials, seizing and secretly torturing or murdering, on the slightest pretext, any person they imagine to be obnoxious to them, tearing men away from their families at a moment's notice to serve in an army, not of defence, but of oppression—in short, establishing a reign of terror in all the towns of a vast territory. On the other, you have their victims, the population, who are endeavouring to defend themselves against this organised brigandage. There is a difference, however, a vast line of cleavage, between the two. The one operates under the name of "established government," and hence, all its transactions, however criminal in themselves, are protected by the trade-mark "*legality*." The other does not operate under

the name of established government, and hence all its hostile transactions, however justifiable in themselves, are contraband as not bearing the trade-mark "legality." For this reason the average bourgeois hesitates or refuses to denounce the one as criminal or to uphold the other as righteous. In this course he is insincere. It may be unhesitatingly affirmed that any sane man who says he believes it wrong to kill the Czar, lies. No man's conscience is so grotesquely twisted as to make him think thus. For it must be remembered this is not a case of Socialism *v.* anti-Socialism, but of the most elementary form of the rights of liberty and life.

The Czar and his bureaucracy render life, even from the ordinary point of view, all but impossible in Russia for any one outside their own body. The man, therefore, who hesitates to justify to the full any action that may be taken in self-defence is plainly dishonest. But his dishonesty has its explanation; "this defect defective comes by cause." And the explanation of his dishonesty is to be found in his unwillingness to violate that "blessed word," "*legality.*" But whence the magic of this word? Thereby hangs the tale, of personal property, crime, and contract—in short, the tale of civilisation. Law, nowadays, is not usually identified as in Russia with direct personal violence. On the contrary, one of the great planks of the bourgeois in his struggle with Feudalism has ever been security of person and property from overt violence. To this was subsequently added liberty of conscience and the free expression of opinion. Now these principles are (with one partial exception) at least nominally upheld by bourgeois law throughout Western Europe. So that speaking generally the bour-

geois can appeal to *legality* as embodying his notion of justice and the rights of liberty and property—the two things being in the main identical. In Russia, on the contrary, they are for the most part altogether opposed; the pet political nostrum of the middle-classes, constitutionalism, is unknown, all opinion is crushed out. Here, then, our worthy bourgeois finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. He cannot consistently with one side of his principles champion or even condone the Russian Government. On the other hand he cannot without endangering the basis of his social order openly pronounce in favour of conspirators against any established government, however bad even from his own point of view. To do so would be to take the side of lawlessness against law. And is not the sacredness of private property enshrined historically in the conception of "law" and "government"? This is awkward, very. The issue, however, is not long doubtful. Class-interest triumphs. With more or less of hesitation, and in violation of his conscience, he denounces as "assassins" the executioners of a murderous Czar, and as criminals the manufacturers of the munitions of war designed for self-defence against the most infamous band of oppressors existing in the modern world.

For the reason above given, the Socialist alone dare speak the naked truth in the matter of Nihilism *v.* Czarism. *He* has no obligation to respect "established government" or legality as such, inasmuch as the right of property it enshrines has for him no eternal sacredness. For him it is indifferent whether social and political ends are realised by lawful or lawless means. He has not the slightest objection (if he is sensible) to obtaining what he desires by legal and constitutional

methods, but neither has he any moral objection to employing or seeing employed other methods where these fail. Not discerning any sacredness in the fact of legality, not recognising any patent right to criminality as vested in constitutional authorities or governments, he hesitates not to brand their ringleaders as miscreants when crimes are committed in their name. Just as little does he hesitate to recognise as agents of judicial retribution those illicit mandatories who, always at the risk, and in some cases the certain sacrifice of their own lives, take upon themselves the social function of judge or executioner. The fact of wearing a particular garb, being paid a high salary, and propounding unctuous platitudes from a "bench," is not for him the *sine quâ non* of an administrator of justice. The test of criminal conduct or of judicial functions with him lies in the actions themselves and in the circumstances giving rise to them, and not in the official status of those performing them.

The Socialist alone, then, can unreservedly speak what others only dare to think—can express his conviction plainly where others casuistically prevaricate. Even the Radical, inasmuch as he still clings in theory at least to the absolute sacredness of private property, can hardly, if he be consistent, help squirming at the notion of illicit justice. He may have given up many things, but at this he draws back. There is a story of an ancient Tartar prince who one day issued the order to his retinue to draw their bows at every object at which he let fly an arrow, on pain of instant decapitation. He first of all shot one of the royal game. Some of his men hesitating, lost their heads. He thereupon shot one of his best horses. Some of his train held back. Their heads fell

immediately. After that he discharged an arrow into the body of his favourite wife. (*N.B.* It must not be supposed that this wife had done anything particular; but as she happened to be there the prince used her as an illustration, which, though it may seem to argue an inadequate sense of the respect due to woman, does not imply any malice on his part.) Here, again, some of his men hesitated, with the same result as in the former case. Striking at higher game, he then proceeded to pierce with his arrow the finest steed of the reigning khan. On this occasion all the bows were drawn and all the arrows flew. Now for the first time the prince saw that he had got his men well in hand, and that henceforth they were ready for the final *coup*. So the next day, riding out with the khan to the chase, he "drew" upon him. The unhappy monarch, to employ the phraseology of the historian, fell pierced with a thousand wounds, and the prince was that day installed in his place. The moral of this story is evident. Before the working classes are prepared for the Revolution they must place the demands of the Revolution before everything else. The Radical, until he is prepared to transfix that leading steed in the stable of class society—bourgeois legality—is not ready to immolate that society itself and install a more virile one in its room.

But, says the bourgeois, to come back to the case in point, if you admit what is commonly called political assassination, where are you to draw the line? We will see. What is commonly but often incorrectly called political *assassination* may or may not be morally justifiable. In the opinion of the present writer, and that of most Socialists, it is morally justifiable when the right

of discussion of social or political questions, either by speech or writing, is suppressed as against those who suppress it, and only then. The reason is, that from the point of view of progress such suppression being the strangulation by brute-force of social life itself, the removal of its author or authors is a mere act of self-defence. So long as free discussion exists, there can be no excuse for the use of terrorist methods, which are in this case at once a crime and a blunder. For in these circumstances, when the people are free to organise for this end, if they do not overthrow, either by constitutional or other means, a system whose rottenness has been exhibited to them on platform and in press, it is clear as the noonday that conditions are not as yet ripe for such a change. When this is so, no amount of terrorism will avail aught. Terrorism is only effective as the result of a strong but suppressed popular movement; never as the cause. "Rover's cross this morning and won't play," says the little girl to her brother; "What shall we do?" "Wag his tail for him," replies the latter. The idea of the Anarchist to stimulate an unprepared proletariat to revolt by wagging the popular tail with dynamite is just as reasonable.

Applying these remarks, we may observe in conclusion that in Russia, where not only is opinion suppressed, but no man's life or liberty is safe from the autocrat or his myrmidons, terrorism must be pronounced unquestionably both morally justifiable and expedient; in Germany, where discussion is suppressed, though morally justifiable, for various reasons inexpedient; in this country at the present time, and wherever discussion is free, neither morally justifiable *nor* expedient.

CONCERNING "JUSTICE."

PLATO and the ancients generally deemed the whole of morality to be summed up in the idea of Justice. And indeed, when looked at closely it will be seen that the notion of *justice* at least supplies the key-note of every ethical system. It is therefore on this notion of *justice* that the crucial question turns in debates between the advocates of modern Socialism and of modern Individualism respectively. The bourgeois idea of justice is crystallised in the notion of the absolute right of the individual to the possession and full control of such property as he has acquired without overt breach of the bourgeois law. To interfere with this right of his, to abolish his possession, is in bourgeois eyes the quintessence of injustice. The Socialist idea of justice is crystallised in the notion of the absolute right of the community to the possession or control (at least) of all wealth not intended for direct individual use. Hence the abolition of the individual possession and control of such property, or in other words, its confiscation, is the first expression of Socialist *justice*. Between *possession* and *confiscation* is a great gulf fixed, the gulf between the Bourgeois and the Socialist worlds. Well-meaning men seek to throw bridges over this gulf by schemes of compensation, abolition of inheritance, and the like. But the attempts, as we believe, even should they ever be carried out practically, must fall disastrously short of their mark, and

be speedily engulphed between the two positions they are intended to unite. Nowhere can the phrase, "He that is not for us is against us," be more aptly applied than to the moral standpoint of modern Individualism and of modern Socialism. To the one, individual possession is right and justice, and social confiscation is wrong and injustice; to the other, individual possession is wrong and injustice, and confiscation is right and justice. This is the real issue. Unless a man accept the last-named standpoint unreservedly, he has no right to call himself a Socialist. If he does accept it, he will seek the shortest and most direct road to the attainment of justice rather than any longer and more indirect ones, of which it is at best doubtful whether they will attain the end at all. For be it remembered the moment you tamper with the sacredness of private property, no matter how mildly, you surrender the conventional bourgeois principle of justice, while the moment you talk of compensation you surrender the Socialist principle of justice; for compensation can only be real if it is adequate, and can only be adequate if it counterbalances and thereby annuls the confiscation.

It is just, says the Individualist, for a man to be able to do what he likes with his own. Good; but what is his own? The "own" of the Roman citizen of the republic included his slaves. These he could cut up to feed his lampreys if he liked, and he doubtless felt it "unjust" when the emperors limited his right to the control of his own property, in this and similar ways, by sundry enactments which (to employ a modern phrase) "savoured of State Socialism." Again, the donkey is the costermonger's "own." But if the costermonger

stimulates that donkey's flagging energies with a two-pronged fork, the modern State interferes and limits the control of the costermonger over his property. The costermonger perhaps thinks it unjust—"state-socialistic," and the like; the humanitarian thinks it just, and is so far untrue to bourgeois principles. But, says the bourgeois advocate, this does not touch us; we only refer to the things which are products of industry and which can be, and have been, lawfully acquired. Now the right to property in human flesh is not admitted in the present day in any sense, and therefore it cannot be lawfully acquired. The property in asinine or other flesh is admitted only with certain restrictions. Have a care, O bourgeois! You concede, then, that the concepts of "right" and "justice" as regards property, have changed, for it was not always so. But no matter. It is just, you say, for a man to possess the product of his industry, or what he has acquired in a lawful manner, and to have the entire control of it. Good. But the feudal baron would not have thought it just to have been deprived of his "dues" taken from the industry of his villeins, whom he had acquired with his lands, lands obtained not by industry but by violence. At the sack of a town the mediæval knight would have thought it unjust had his lord, in accordance with nineteenth century notions of equity, magnanimously compelled him to surrender his booty to its original lawful owner. And the rest of the world would have agreed with him, owner included. The Frank who broke the vase at Soissons would not have appreciated the justice of Chlodwig any better had he sought to make him surrender it to the Romano-Gaul who had previously possessed it, and had

presumably acquired it in a lawful manner, than he did when he claimed to appropriate it himself. But these were bad men, you will say. And it is true that the principle of your middle-class conception of "justice" is opposed to the "justice" of these men, therefore to you they are bad.

Having shown by these one or two examples that justice was conceived differently in the past, we will trace the logical working out of your own true bourgeois conception—that of the right of every man to the full possession and control of wealth acquired by the industry of himself, or of others who have voluntarily given or bequeathed it to him. This conception of right or "justice" you have inscribed on your banner throughout your struggle with the ancient feudal hierarchy—those bold bad men who robbed the honest merchant, oppressed the tiller of the soil, despised the receiver of interest, laid onerous imposts on wares, etc. It was this that lay at the root of your struggle with the old territorial ecclesiasticism in the sixteenth century, with the king and noble in the seventeenth, with the *ancienne noblesse* of France in the eighteenth. Security of property to the *personal* possessor against the remains of the ancient tribal communism and against the exactions of the feudal head whose power directly or indirectly grew out of it, has ever been your watchword, and is so to-day, even when you demand compensation for improvements and denounce the "unearned increment," just as if any portion of "rent" were *earned*. And at first you were perfectly sincere; your demand seemed the cry of an eternal "justice," a justice that was absolute in its nature and unalterable in its manifestations. "Wealth" did to a

large extent belong to its immediate producer or to those who had acquired it directly from him by gift or bequest. The means of production were within the reach of all. Most of those that were so minded could earn wealth by their labour. All that seriously hindered them seemed the fetters of feudalism and semi-feudalism. On the land the peasant cultivated his own plot with his own implements; in the town the handicraftsman laboured primarily at least on his own account. What the one craved was freedom from the unjust exactions of his lord, and from the tolls and local imposts which obstructed the exchange of his produce. What the other craved was freedom first from aristocratic custom, laws, and ordinances, and secondly, from the rules and regulations of the guilds—the umbilical cord which still united the new-born social organisation with the feudal order and privilege which was its parent. Even later and till some way into the Manufacture Period—the second stage of capitalism—in spite of the exploitation which went on, the possibility for the vast majority of earning a tolerable livelihood, masked the retreat of truth from within the bourgeois citadel of justice and its occupation by lies. Even the working-classes, for the most part, assumed the "enemy" still to be feudalism, and held that middle-class "justice" was their "justice," that the complete possession and control of the product of industry was involved in the freedom of industry from local restrictions, and of trade from undue impositions, and nothing more.

We have referred to the evacuation by truth of the middle-class concept "justice." This is the point the middle-class advocate invariably ignores. He assumes that his principle, the right of the individual possessor

to the full control of his lawfully acquired property, means the same thing now, has the same application now, as when wealth meant the direct product of the labour of the individual possessor, or of those from whom he had received it by gift or bequest. It does not occur to him that wealth in the modern capitalist world means something very different from this, that neither has this man sinned nor his father in its production, but that on the contrary the modern possessor and his father are alike innocent of having had any share in the process. If it be alleged that the modern capitalist's ancestor in some golden age of the past created by his personal industry the wealth which was embodied in instruments of production, we may well call upon our bourgeois advocate to give us some chronological data on the subject, seeing that the most extended research has as yet failed to discover the primitive ancestral capitalist in question. Go back as we may, we discover nothing but essentially the self-same process as at present, though less in scope and intensity, the formation of capitals from unpaid labour, and their division by the scramble of competition, till we reach the feudal period, when status, serfdom, and forcible appropriation reign supreme. The old original capitalist who has rested from his labours, and whose works do follow him—creative, frugal, and laborious—he looms ever "at the back of beyond." It is a beautiful conception this of the first capitalist, and only shows that poetry like hope springs eternal in the human breast—even the economical breast. Like Prester John and the Wandering Jew, he has a weird charm about him that almost makes one love him. But our reverence for an old legend must not blind us to historical fact, to wit,

that the real origin of modern capital is to be found in the forcible expropriation of the peasantry from the soil, in oppression laws to keep down wages, in the plunder and enslavement of the inhabitants of the new world and of Africa, in the merciless overworking of children in factories, &c. &c.

The contradiction between the assumption contained in this formula and the facts of modern life which it stupidly or designedly ignores, is proclaimed by the Socialist, who shows that the maintenance of private property in the means of production is in flagrant opposition to the concept of "Justice" with which he set out, since the former necessarily involves the workman's deprivation of the greater part of the product of his labour, as otherwise such property would be of no value. The concept "Justice," therefore, as meaning the right to the possession and control by the individual of the product of his labour has lost all meaning in modern times. But in the maintenance of the sham, of the assumption, that is, that the meaning remains what it was, lies the whole theoretical strength of the bourgeois position. The means of production are no longer in the hands of the producers, but in those of men or of syndicates who are usually entirely divorced from the process of production. Now the only use of means or instruments of production is to produce wealth and commodities. So that to the non-producers who possess them they are of no use whatever, *except*, and a very important *except* it is, *in so far as they compel others to labour under conditions which allow them only a fractional part of the product of their labour.* The only possible use of these means of production is, therefore, to violate the original

bourgeois definition of "Justice." This being so, that definition of "Justice" cannot be invoked as an excuse for gentle dealings with monopolists, whose retention of these instruments is a cause of injustice. For the removal of what is necessarily cause of injustice cannot itself be unjust. But if it is not unjust it must be just. It is *just* therefore, to confiscate all private property in the means of production, *i.e.*, in land or capital. *Q.E.D.*

Now, *Justice* being henceforth identified with *confiscation* and *injustice* with the rights of property, there remains only the question of "ways and means." Our bourgeois apologist admitting as he must that the present possessors of land and capital *hold* possession of them simply by right of superior force, can hardly refuse to admit the right of the proletariat organised to that end to *take* possession of them by right of superior force. The only question remaning is how? And the only answer is how you can. Get what you can that tends in the right direction, by parliamentary means or otherwise, *bien entendu*, the right direction meaning that which curtails the capitalist's power of exploitation. If you choose to ask further how one would like it, the reply is so far as the present writer is concerned, one would like it to come as drastically as possible, as the moral effect of sudden expropriation would be much greater than that of any gradual process. But the sudden expropriation, in other words, the revolutionary crisis, will have to be led up to by a series of non-revolutionary political acts, if past experience has anything to say in the matter. When that crisis comes the great act of confiscation will be the seal of the new era; then and not till then

will the knell of Civilisation, with its rights of property and its class-society, be sounded; then and not till then will *Justice*—the *Justice* not of Civilisation but of Socialism—become the corner-stone of the social arch.

THE MORROW OF THE REVOLUTION.

SOCIALISTS are often asked the question, what would you do if you found yourselves with power in your hands to-morrow? This question is not an unreasonable one, and I think it is one that Socialists should discuss before the day finds them unprepared. In Paris, in the year 1871, the problem had to be faced in a practical manner, but the leaders of Paris were then unhappily in utter confusion as to its solution. It is true they performed the ordinary executive functions of an administration admirably; and it is sufficient to point to their example to confute those who affect to laugh at the notion of men unacquainted with official red-tape being put into responsible positions. But when it came to the question of any new departure to be made the council-room of the Commune was the battle-ground of rival propositions. Now it seems to me that it is not unprofitable for Socialists to enter upon the discussion of such points as these at once, and as far as may be to "thrash them out," before rather than after they are called upon to act.

The usual reply to the question referred to in opening is that we intend to nationalise or communise the means of production and distribution. This is undoubtedly strictly and literally correct, but from the questioner's point of view it may possibly be regarded as what a celebrated character would have called an "evasive answer." If further elucidation is required we proceed

to explain that we mean to take over the big industries, railways, factories, banks—all, in short, that are sufficiently concentrated to admit of being worked by the State—and to proceed by the erection of communal or municipal workshops and stores on a large scale to undermine by competition the individualist-capitalist production and distribution. So far so good. But all this takes time to work itself out. "While the grass grows," etc., says Hamlet. An objection may be raised, therefore, that in a period of revolution it would be necessary to take certain immediate steps of an *ad interim* character to satisfy legitimate popular demands and to forestall the *panem et circences* schemes of reactionary demagogues—Tory and Liberal "democrats," to wit. In other words, it may be insisted that the *purely economic* action of the organised Socialist administration must be supplemented by legislative and juridical action for the former to have the chance of taking effect. That this is the case I am myself convinced. What action, then, would be the right one to be taken in addition to the orthodox economic readjustment above referred to, and which would of course be the mainspring of the great social reconstruction? In this instance, as in many others, I find the traditional three courses present themselves; with this difference, that here, as I take it, not one only, but all would have to be followed, since they are all more or less interconnected. To be brief, the first is the reduction of the working-day to eight hours or less; the second, the all-important correlative of this action (without which I fear the limitation of hours would be merely illusory), viz., the enactment of a law of *maximum* and *minimum;* and the third, the abrogation of "civil" law,

especially that largest department of it which is concerned with the enforcement of contract and the recovery of debt. As to the first of these provisions, it is unnecessary to say much, the reduction of the working-day having become a plank in the working-class platform throughout the world. But the second and third may need a word of explanation. By a law of *maximum* and *minimum*, then, we mean the fixation of a maximum or compulsory price for all the necessary articles of daily consumption—ordinary food, clothing, firing, etc.—and a minimum or lowest wage for the day's work in every industry, or at least in all the more important industries. This, it seems, is a necessary concomitant of a reduction of the working-day, otherwise the price of necessaries must tend to rise in proportion to the increased cost of production, or wages to fall, or perhaps both. Of the abolition of civil law I have elsewhere spoken, showing this law to be indeed the logical result of an individualist society and the indispensable corollary of such a society, but to have no reason of being in one based on collective possession of the means of production and distribution. The grounds of this are obvious. In an individualist society, where every man is fighting for his own hand in the *mêlée* of competition, he requires as the first condition that the laws of the war should be observed—that is, that plunder and murder should follow the prescribed rules, since if they are departed from his position as a combatant is prejudiced. In fact, without the enforcement of such rules the fight itself would be impossible, so that they are vital even to the very existence of competition or the commercial system.

On the other hand, under a Collectivist *régime* they are

neither necessary for the system nor for the individual. The latter has his livelihood already assured by the constitution of society in return for his contribution to the labour of society. Hence, he is not dependent for his subsistence upon any contract or agreement he may choose to make with other individuals. Any such agreement must therefore become a purely subsidiary and private matter, with which he has no right to expect Society to concern itself. Socialism implying that contract has ceased to be the corner-stone of economic conditions and social relations, it would be but natural that a revolutionary government should proclaim that fact in abolishing its legal sanctions. But there are additional reasons, and those of expediency, why this should be an immediate measure: (1) The abolition of enforcement of contract (including recovery of debt) would instantly put a stop to an enormous mass of swindling now carried on under the *ægis* of the law; (2) would effectually preclude the possibility of even temporary competition with the national or municipal industries; and (3) would as effectually prevent any evasion of the law of *maximum* and *minimum*. In fact, the abolition of the courts taking cognisance of contract (including the recovery of debt) would of itself so dislocate the whole commercial system as to render its resuscitation during any period of temporary reaction well-nigh impossible.

These three provisions, I take it, ought to be the immediate issue of the attainment of power by a Socialist administration. For the rest it might be further asked by one desirous for light, what attitude would a Socialist administration adopt towards the existing criminal law? To this also, so far as I am personally concerned, I am

prepared with an answer. The customary laws of Anglo-Saxon tribal society, which form the basis of the so-called common law of England, as they became inappropriate to the new conditions, have been gradually superseded by legislation or by statutes, and these form the main body of our modern criminal law. Westminster has dictated statutes which have taken the place of the local "common law." This is necessarily the case as primitive society merges into civilisation. Civilised law, which is based on the independence of the individual and on the personal possession and control of property, is necessarily opposed to "customary law," which presupposes the dependence of the individual on a group and the collective ownership of property by that group. The latter (viz., customary law) will stretch and may be modified, it is true (as evidenced by the English "common law"), up to a certain point in accordance with the changed conditions; but beyond this it has to be supplemented, and is finally superseded by legislative enactments or statutes. Now, as Socialists, we believe that civilisation is destined to pass into a new and higher communism, just as tribal communism has passed into civilisation, and that therewith the whole of modern civilisation will become obsolete. But, meanwhile, and until the economic change has worked itself out in ethical change, it is clear that a criminal law must exist. The only question is whether its basis shall be a mass of anomalous statutes and precedents or a logical system. In the one case the sweeping changes which it would be necessary for a Socialist administration to make would be complicated and hampered in a thousand ways. In the other they could be effected with ease. Now the most perfectly logical

and connected system of jurisprudence is admitted by all students of law to be the Roman or civil law, and in modern times the system founded upon it prevalent over a part of the Continent, and known as the "Code Napoléon."

My answer, then, to those who would ask the proper course for a revolutionary government to take in the matter of jurisprudence, is that in my view such a government should, in countries where the "Code Napoléon" does not obtain, immediately suspend the existing criminal law and replace it by this code, at the same time appointing a committee of urgency to expurgate and amend it in accordance with the new Socialist conceptions. Such expurgation, it is possible, might leave little of the original in the end, but that original would have acted as a working basis and so served its purpose. The crucial distinction, it must never be forgotten in all these matters, between the old Society and the new, is that the one is based on the absolute sacredness of personal property, the other recognises the equal welfare of the whole community alone as the one absolutely sacred claim, all other claims having validity only in so far as they are derived from this one.

ON SOME FORMS OF MODERN CANT.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CANT.

It may be not uninstructive to trace the various forms in which the essentially bourgeois vice of "cant" pervades the whole world of to-day, and even creeps in among the Socialist harbingers of a new society. These forms are legion, but there are a few cases that may serve as typical. (1) There is the obvious and in this country at least most important "cant," the religious "cant." (2) There is the ordinary political "cant" of moderation. (3) There is the philanthropic cant; (4) the "purity" cant; (5) the commercial cant; (6) the literary cant; (7) the æsthetic cant; and (8) the Socialist cant. We must premise that by "cant" we understand the ostentatious assumption of a quality (a virtue or vice) that one has not got, or the "puffing" of an indifferent quality one happens to have got by nature, as a virtue!

Of the general and most usual aspects of the religious cant it is unnecessary to say much, since it is unfortunately too widespread to escape the recognition of any moderately intelligent man. The form, however, which it takes in modern "cultured" circles and which unfortunately in this country is apt to spread outside them is very noteworthy. Repudiation of Atheism is a favourite form of speculative cant with us. No matter what a man's belief or absence of belief may be, you may be quite sure

in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he will profess to have conscientious scruples as to calling himself an Atheist. The reason of this is not far to seek. The question of God or no God has very little to do with it. When the popular theory of the mounted policeman up above is discarded, all that remains is a highly subtle philosophical problem which it would be the rankest humbug in any ordinary man to pretend he felt the smallest interest in or even understood. The real point in the "not-an-atheist" cant lies in the fact that the word *atheism* is supposed in the popular mind to imply the rejection of the current bourgeois morality, the avowed sanctions of which rest on the abnormally-developed-policeman theory. It is bourgeois sentiment which is the well-spring of objection to the word Atheism, and not suddenly evoked scruples on refined points of metaphysic. If we abstract from the latter and take words in their popular sense,[1] we have a right to say that the man cannot be quite sincere who accepts the doctrine of development as opposed to supernatural interposition in human affairs, and who "kicks" at the word "atheism."

The "cant" of the politician, like the cant of the "religious" man, is also protean in its guise, but its chief

[1] Our "Agnostics" have, to suit their own convenience, chosen to give the word Atheism an altogether new and non-natural signification. Until recently it has simply meant, both in its etymology and usage, a non-believer in God. The highly respectable "agnostic" of to-day who accepts this latter position, in order to avoid calling himself an atheist, has ingeniously twisted the word Atheism into meaning exclusively the attempt to prove dogmatically the non-existence of a deity. Armed with this brand-new definition of Atheism he is able to pass in middle-class circles as a highly creditable person who is "not an atheist"—oh dear no!

method is to explain away words. The politician can always show you that he doesn't mean what he says, but something rather different from what he says. Political cant consists in pretending to agreement with hearers, whoever they may be. This cant is part of the stock-in-trade of every politician, be he Tory, Whig, or Radical, and it is by its means that he tries to haul in stray votes.

The philanthropic cant is seen in its richest luxuriance when in combination with the religious cant, as for example at May meetings, when the one, so to speak, brings out the flavour of the other. The philanthropic cant has done yeoman's service to modern industrial and commercial enterprise by smoothing the way to new markets for it abroad and by hocussing the workman with sham nostrums at home. Its "anti-slavery," "missionary" (for there is a "philanthropic" side to "missions" to which all bourgeois, religious or not, do homage), "temperance" (teetotal), and "thrift" campaigns, have been godsends to the capitalist. On the one side they have constituted him in the eyes of his own middle-class public opinion a saint, and on the other side they have drowned the aspirations of the working classes in a sea of delusion. No wonder, therefore, that the capitalist pours out his thousands freely for religio-philanthropic objects.

Akin to this is the "purity" cant which animates "Leagues of the White Cross," "Moral Reform Unions," *et hoc genus omne.* This form of humbug, which pretends to regard the fulfilling of a natural physiological function, except under one condition, as something like a crime, may either have at its root deliberate and conscious hypocrisy or else it may arise from the desire to make social capital out of a natural bodily defect or peculiarity

—on the principle of the fox without a tail. Now it is a well-known fact that the instinct of sex varies in strength from 100, let us say, to 0. In those exceptional cases where it even *approaches* the zero it is obvious therefore that the social *kudos* attainable by zeal for the conventional morality must outweigh the natural impulse for gratification. Here, then, we have the conditions of a highly successful prosecution of the cant of purity without any apparent insincerity that the most hostile eye could detect,—in short, we have the "honest fanatic" of "blameless life." And he or she is doubtless the nucleus of the movements in question, which become the rallying-point for conscious hypocrisy and respectability in the male, and the "sour grapes" of despised love and hope deferred in the female.

The special form of commercial "cant" here selected consists in the favourite pretence in the present day of "having a profession" or being in business. Money-making being the avowed end of life, a man of the middle-classes looses caste if he does not appear to be engaged in some occupation recognised as lucrative. He is like a knight without his spurs, a Roman senator without his toga. It is amusing to see the fortunes men will squander in keeping up bourgeois style by pretending to be following a profession or business. I have known a man who could ill afford it spend at the rate of £500 a-year in keeping a school. Another studies medicine, another law, another engineering. It is well-known, of course, that all these professions are over-stocked, and that the average young man is about as likely to receive a "next-of-kin" windfall as to make his fortune with any of them. But the young man of "means" must "have a

profession" or business even though he die in the workhouse in consequence. So he goes through the course, spinning it out as long as possible, and when done takes chambers or offices as barrister or engineer. His expenses cost him two or three hundred per annum, and if his "profession" brings him in ten he is in most cases extremely lucky. When a young man with small means can't afford to go in for a profession, he has to content himself with a small office, where he has his letters addressed. This is sufficient to show he is "doing something." He goes up to town every day, lounges about, reads the papers, and endeavours to obtain the credit of being "a man of business" by, among other things, pretending always to be in a great hurry. In this way he perhaps manages to come off with no more than a loss of £80 to £100 a year.

This cant of "business" is peculiarly significant as marking the fully developed bourgeois era. Time was when the middle-class man was proud of posing as the "gentleman-at-large" (the remains of the feudal tradition). Now even when he has independent means, as in the cases supposed, he reckons it necessary to "good form" to pretend to be making money whether he is actually doing so or not, and is prepared to squander his substance in that pretence.

Then there is the literary or rather critical cant. One of its forms is affected hunting after blemishes in style and the pedantry allied thereto. The fact is, of course, that the modern reviewer's taste is not really shocked by half the things he *sics* or otherwise castigates, but he must find something to say, and above all make a show of purism. A great deal of the pretentious fuss made about

confusion of metaphor, for example, is cant. All language is more or less metaphorical, and no one has shown the slightest rational ground why one should not pass from one metaphor to another even in the same sentence. That the sensibility of the ordinary "callow" critic on the subject is sham is proved by his admiration for Shakespeare's confusions of metaphor. When a man can stand "taking arms against a sea of troubles," he ought to be able to stand anything.[1]

The æsthetic cant is a noteworthy product of modern culture. It is a subject about which so much has been said already that I confine myself to noticing one feature of it. Every man aspiring to culture in the present day professes an appreciation of painting. He deems it *de rigueur* that he should be able to maunder "some" on the technicalities of picture-criticism. On the other hand the same type of cultured English Philistine, when the conversation turns on the subject of music, will, with an air of smug self-satisfaction (as if he had said a clever thing) tell you that he knows nothing of the subject. One wishes he would only say the same of the sister art, for it would be doubtless quite true. But, unfortunately, painting, or "art" as it is termed (as if there were no other art), is the fashion just now with the Podsnappian type of bourgeois, who must in consequence perforce assume an appreciation of it, while with music he is

[1] To take the stock instance of "nipping" a tempest "in the bud." Something is likened to a tempest. The tempest is in its turn likened to a blossom. The metaphor of the tempest holds in one connection, of the original fact, the metaphor of the blossom holds in another of the tempest. The metaphor, although a little violent, is not illogical

under no such obligation. Here, then, we have cant in a double form.

Lastly, we come to the Socialist cant. Here we touch on delicate ground. But we must, nevertheless, face the truth that with the sentimental or semi-sentimental Socialism of the middle-classes there is mingled a good deal of half-unconscious cant. There is a sort of feeling that poverty, squalor, and coarseness are in themselves sacred, and the "good young man" who, instead of joining the Y.M.C.A. takes to studying "social questions," seems to think it incumbent on him to develop a taste for sordid habits and surroundings. A worthy person, with aspect of spotless cleanliness and refinement, was heard to exclaim recently in a moment of wild enthusiasm that he had rather sleep in a bed infested by noisome insects than eat and drink the wedding-breakfast of a baronet. Now this sentiment, it seems to me, is more fitting in the mouth of a retired bacon-factor turned vestryman and presiding at a soup-kitchen, who wants to keep the poor contented with their lot, than in that of a Socialist. Beds, as above, are within the reach of all, even the poorest of our brethren, but baronets' breakfasts are certainly not within the reach of all. Now if the beds in question are better than the baronets' breakfast, wherefore do we seek economic reconstruction? The present system supplies even the "reserve army of industry" with beds of this description upon demand at the casual ward, and does not trouble them with Yorkshire hams, cold fowl, and champagne, but gives them rather meat and drink in keeping with the beds. So, on the whole, we live under the best possible of systems in the best possible of worlds. I had always thought Socialists wanted to bring the

baronet's breakfast within the reach of all, and only leave enough "frowsy" beds to supply the wants of eccentric persons like our friend.

Again, I know of a young man who thinks it an act of Socialistic virtue (not an unfortunate necessity, mind !) to live on 15s. a-week with wife and children. He started with the view of proving that after all money is rather an encumbrance than otherwise to noble aspirations. Now, I really think this young man ought to be "decorated" by Baron Rothschild or the Liberty and Property Defence League. If he could prove his thesis, no more crushing argument could be brought against those who doubt the perfection of the present system to satisfy all human requirements. Others, again, pretend to like dropping h's (a vile cockney corruption of language having only an incidental connection with distinctions between classes), dirty hands, and uncomfortable third-class carriages (such, presumably, as Sir Edward Watkin's line affords), and many other nasty things—and all because of Socialism. This is very silly, perhaps, but more or less harmless. When, however, middle-class young men take to virtuously entering an already overstocked labour market, and thus "doing" the proletarian in more than one sense, the same cannot be said.

It is surprising that these essentially individualist and bourgeois notions of the superiority of poverty and squalor, and of the virtue of self-mortification for the mere sake of it, and without any ulterior social object (which are radically inconsistent with Socialism), could ever come to be regarded as having any part or lot with Socialism, the end and aim of which is to abolish all these

things. It only shows the influence of old associations and habits of thought.

We have characterised "cant" as an eminently bourgeois vice, and it is certainly true that it is mainly confined to the middle-classes. The working-classes have many faults, as is only natural, but this is not characteristic of them as a class. No working-man, for example, would even profess to prefer sleeping in an insect-haunted bed to partaking of cold turkey and champagne—not even if he were a vegetarian and teetotaller combined. We have only touched upon a few of the forms of cant which have more particularly struck us, but our whole bourgeois civilisation is saturated with it. Other ages have been brutal, but with none but our own has hypocrisy become part of its very nature. The whole subject of "cant" is an interesting one, and well merits a scientific analysis. If these few remarks will induce some student to undertake this analysis they will not have been in vain.

MEN VERSUS CLASSES.

In the character of every human being, man or woman, in the present day, we shall be able to detect without much difficulty two sides, more or less distinct, more or less blended. On the one hand, you have the side of friendship, of devotion, of good-nature, of refinement, of the social qualities generally; on the other, that of acquisitiveness (greed), meanness, hypocrisy, coarseness, brutality—in fact, the anti-social qualities. Now, we maintain that in every civilised human being these two elements are present to a greater or less extent; it is only a question of degree. The anti-social qualities belong, at bottom, to the anti-human, or pre-human nature, which human nature has inherited, and which were superseded by the specifically human nature or qualities which presided over the institution of tribal Society. But, in their present form, we contend they have taken on the forms and become crystallised into expressions of class-opposition. Some of them, indeed (*e.g. vulgarity* in its various forms, and *hypocrisy*), are entirely the offspring of the class-society of modern times. The social qualities, on the other hand, are inherited from the human nature which, as we have just said, superseded men's brute nature in the earliest forms of society. But these, again, have maintained themselves only in spite of the class-system, and have disputed the ground with it inch by inch. It is evident, then, that every man in the

present day, inasmuch as he belongs to one or other of the two great modern classes, the fleecers or the fleeced, the oppressors or the oppressed, the middle-class or the working-class, possesses, in addition to his manhood, a classhood. The classhood necessarily interpenetrates his whole system, although it may not be always obvious. His social qualities may gain the upper hand, and permanently repress the anti-social qualities and prejudices which he inherits from his class. Again, his class-character may completely eat away his human character. Like the cells and fibres of cancer in the human body, his class-character may be latent, and only become active from some external cause. It may then break out in the most unexpected ways. In any case, the human or social character *varies in an inverse proportion* to the class or anti-social character of the man. This is an important fact. A mathematician might make a reputation by wrapping it up in curves and equations.

And it will be observed that I make no distinction here in favour of the working class as such. Many people are apt to think of the new society as essentially the same as the present, only with the relative positions of classes changed. They have a confused notion of the gentle stockbroker being bullied by the coarse and brutal factory hand. They cannot realise that under a developed Socialistic system, the workman type of to-day and the middle-class type of to-day will be alike as extinct as the dodo. Out of the changed conditions a new type must necessarily arise differing from any of those at present existing, for these all pre-suppose class-conditions. All class-character *qua* class-character is bad. Were the working man any more than the middle-class man an angel, Socialism would be unnecessary. Socialists who

recognise individual character to be the child of social condition, could not expect a class degraded materially to the condition of Proletarianism not to bear the mark of this degradation on the character of its members. We may observe, however, in passing, though it is immaterial to the point, that while the class-element alike in the character of Proletaire as of Bourgeois is bad in itself, yet it has probably in the former case been less generally successful in corrupting the human nature into which it has entered than in the latter. The particular class-qualities in the character of the modern capitalist may be roughly indicated by the definition, *vulgarity in a solution of hypocrisy;* the particular class-qualities in the character of the modern proletarian as *brutality in a solution of servility.*

How plainly both are the outcome of economic condition will be evident at a glance. Open your morning paper, and you will see both illustrated in its columns. They are the obverse and the reverse of the same medal —modern civilisation. But, we repeat, these class-qualities may be reduced to the minimum in favour of the essentially human or social qualities in individual instances in either case; or they may on the other hand be so highly developed as to exclude the latter altogether. The last case may be best illustrated by types drawn from those concerned in class-politics. Almost any statesman—let us take as types a Harcourt or a Goschen —exhibits the class-element in its purest embodied form. Such men are lumps of class-feeling. A hypocritical vulgarity has in them absorbed humanity. The corresponding illustration of the mere proletarian class-element may be looked for in that section of the Anarchist party

which pursues the tactics technically known as *diebspolitik*, and of which a Stellmacher or a Ravachol is a type. Here also the class-element, a servile brutality, the mere bloodthirstiness and lust of gain of the slave, has eaten out humanity. Of course, these are extreme instances on both sides. Human life would be manifestly impossible were the whole middle class transformed into Harcourts or Goschens, no less than if the whole proletariat were transformed into Stellmachers or Ravachols. Between them lie the great mass of both classes, where human feeling struggles with class-feeling with varying success. In the centre a nucleus is beginning to form. It is the International Socialist Party. And just here the chief superiority of the working class as a class over the middle class comes into view. Among the working classes there is a large section, especially on the Continent of Europe, among whom the mere class-qualities have to a large extent succumbed to human qualities, although they necessarily and properly (as we shall show directly) take a class-*form*. Such, in the nature of things, is not the case with the middle class. They, as a class, have material power and wealth bound up with their class-being; so that while with the working-man culture in the natural course of things is a direct avenue to the elevation of the class-feeling within him to a human feeling, with the middle-class man it too often only cements it with a thicker varnish of hypocrisy. The educated workman knows that human progress is bound up with the ascendency of his class. The educated bourgeois knows that human progress is bound up with the decay and overthrow of his class; so that where we have among the working classes whole sections that are Socialistic,

we have among the middle classes only isolated individuals.

How, then, it may be said, if we admit class-feeling to be that element in the modern character in which its worst and anti-social features are embodied, can we make the accentuation and exacerbation of class-feeling the starting-point for a social reconstruction in which classes shall be abolished? Is not the attitude of the benevolent old gentleman who says, let us ignore classes, let us regard each other as human beings, more consonant with what we have been saying? We answer no, if we are to deal with facts and not with phrases. Classes exist; you may ignore them, but they will exist still with the respective characters they engender. Though you ignore them they will not ignore you. The difference between the Socialist and the benevolent bourgeois Radical in their respective crusades against classes is, that while the one would affirm the *form* of class-distinction, knowing that thereby the *reality* of class-distinction will be negated, the other, though ostentatiously denying the *form* of class-distinction, would affirm the *content* or *reality* of class-distinction, inasmuch as he would leave it untouched. He thinks to get rid of class-instincts while maintaining classes. To be rid of classes, the possessing and expropriating class must be itself expropriated—expropriated of its power of expropriating—in other words, of that control of the instruments of production by which its class-character is maintained, when it will disappear together with its correlate, the possessed and expropriated class.

It is not true, as might at first sight be supposed, that the political class-feeling of the Socialist

workman is the mere anti-social class-feeling of the ordinary proletarian (*lumpen proletarier*), or of the mere blood-thirsty Anarchist. The class-feeling of the former is a class-feeling with a difference. It is a class-feeling that has already negated itself; otherwise expressed, it is human feeling in a class guise. The Socialist workman's conscious end and aspiration is the annihilation of classes, with the class-element in character. He knows well enough that his classhood places him at a disadvantage. He knows that the fact of his belonging to an oppressed class is an insuperable obstacle to the development of the best within him; just as the middle class Socialist knows that the fact of his belonging to an oppressing class is equally an obstacle to the development of his nobler qualities. Mere class-instinct, which *per se* is necessarily anti-social, can never give us Socialism. That is why the most degraded section of the proletariat are, to a large extent, useless for the Cause of Socialism. Their lower *class*-instincts are incapable of being purified of their grosser elements, and transformed into that higher instinct which, though on its face it has the impress of a class, is in its essence above and beyond class; which sees in the immediate triumph of class merely a means to the ultimate realisation of a purely human Society, in which class has disappeared. With those who have attained to this instinct, classhood or class-interest has become identical with humanity or human interest. In the Socialist workman the class-instinct has become transformed into the conviction that, in the words of Lassalle, "he is called to raise the principle of his class into the principle of the age." He knows that in the moment of victory--of the realisation

of the dominion of his class—the ugly head of class itself must fall, and Society emerge. Militant, his cause is identified with Class; triumphant, with Humanity.

Meanwhile, we who live to-day, who are the offspring of a class-society, and who breathe the atmosphere of a class-society, bear ineradically the mark of the class-demon upon us. It is engrained in our characters. Even among Socialists, where its grosser features are toned down or obliterated, it shows itself ever and anon. It is only a question of more or less. In no human being born in a class-Society can the class-element be altogether absent from his character. In the best working-class Socialist there is a strain of possible brutality. In the best middle-class Socialist there is a strain of possible snobbishness. Meanwhile, we know that these things endure but for a day. We may, therefore, take heart of grace in the confidence that after one more decisive affirmation of class-interest, we shall see the end of *Classes* (with their hypocritical vulgarity on the one side and their servile brutality on the other) and the beginning of *Men.*

THE CURSE OF CIVILISATION.

It is or was a favourite practice of the historical school of Buckle, Spencer, etc., to dwell upon the fact that the attention of the early speculative intellect is more occupied with exceptional than with ordinary phenomena—with comets, meteors and eclipses, rather than with the facts and sequences of everyday Nature. Many a generation has passed since this has ceased to apply to progressive man. He is now perfectly alive to the saliency of the common phenomena and operations of Nature (in its narrower sense) and to the comparative unimportance of those exceptional events which so much excited the terror and wonder of his remote ancestor. But in spite of this change of mental attitude as regards inorganic nature, there is one department of phenomena, that of social life and history, in which the old attitude is unconsciously maintained. It seems to have entirely escaped the notice of students that the current view of history—strange to say, even of modern social life—when we reflect upon it and formulate our reflections, is based mainly on the exceptions of life—battles, murder and pestilence—and that the rule—the everyday routine—is, for the most part, left entirely out of the account. This, conjoined with the still widespread assumption of the eighteenth-century fallacy that all progress is in a straight line, has led to the conviction in most, even candid minds, amounting to the strength of an axiom,

that the advance of civilisation has augmented the sum of human happiness; that life under earlier conditions must have been intolerable, and hence that the Socialist contention that the modern world is not only not the best possible, but not the best up to date, is merely a whimsical paradox.

In discussing this subject, two or three points have to be considered. Firstly, we must distinguish between what I may term the *dynamic* and the *static* estimation of history. In the first, any particular historical period is regarded as part of the general evolution of history, as a moment merely of that evolution; it is viewed solely in its relation to what preceded and what followed it. In the second a period is regarded *abstractly*, in itself and not as the element of a whole; it is treated as an independent whole and compared with other periods also regarded as independent wholes. It is further to be borne in mind, in discussing the subject statically that, the individual being the product of his period and its conditions, it is no answer to the comparative merits of one period over another to point out the impossibility or evil results of suddenly transplanting an individual brought up under the first set of conditions into the second.

On the dynamic view the proposition, "whatever is, is best," has a certain truth. Every historical period has its meaning or significance for historical progress, considered dynamically, however meaningless considered in itself. Thus, without the decay and dissolution of tribal society and its issue in civilised individualism, a higher universal communism would have been impossible. Nay, without the particular development of civilisation

represented by nineteenth century capitalism with its "great industry," the higher, more universal, more complex communism, which is the ideal of the modern Socialist, would have been inconceivable. Even for the Socialist, therefore, the worst and more brutal forms of civilisation are good. The progress from tribal society to civilisation is thus a progress indeed, every step is a triumph and brings us nearer to the realisation of human hopes. In this sense the Socialist is at one with the Whig historian. But here he joins issue with him. No sooner does he change his standpoint and consider history statically, than he finds that every step toward modern civilisation is a step for the worse. Considered by itself, every historical advance has meant a positive loss to human happiness in the essentials of life, immeasurably outweighing any positive gain in the details. The Socialist is bound, therefore, when viewing civilisation statically, to pronounce it unreservedly an unmitigated evil.

The ordinary historian, who considers only the exceptional incidents of life and ignores its essential aspects, finds everywhere signs of progress as he understands it—that is, signs that the present is better than the past. In the Middle Ages he observes a state of society in which life was relatively insecure from violence, where flagrant acts of cruelty and injustice were often perpetrated, where terrible plagues every now and then devastated considerable areas of population, where open war was a common occurrence. This in the first place. In the second, he finds a complete absence not only of all the modern comforts and luxuries of life, but of many things he is accustomed to regard as necessaries.

He finds locomotion difficult and dangerous, and all means of communication of the most rudimentary description. In modern life, of course, he sees exactly the reverse of all this. The positive evils mentioned are reduced to a minimum or removed altogether. Life has become a mass of little wants with the means of satisfying them ready to hand for those who can purchase them. More excitement is required, and can be had for money; tours round the world replace journeys into the next county.

I think I cannot be accused of having stated the case unfairly for modern civilisation; but after all, what does the difference amount to? In the view of many persons, the mediæval famine, pestilence, war, and host of other evils, are conceived as occurring all in the same place in the same week. Were this popular view of mediæval society correct, it is manifest that no flesh could have survived. But as a matter of fact "flesh" did survive; and so far as can be gathered, the average length of human life was not much inferior then to what it is now. For if, as is sometimes contended, great age is more frequently reached now than then, this is more than counterbalanced by the fact, confirmed by all accounts, that premature death (properly so called) from organic disease was of comparatively rare occurrence. Now, although a fringe of well-to-do people may attain a greater average age than a corresponding set of people in the Middle Ages, in the nineteenth century whole sections of our ever-increasing town population are doomed by the conditions of their life to a premature grave. The difference is this, as I take it: the well-to-do middle and upper classes have the chance of an average

year or two's longer life than the wealthy classes of former ages, but the mass of the population, although relieved from the fear of famine, sword, and, to a great extent, even of decimating epidemics and other sensational incursions of the grizzly skeleton on their front, are relieved only to find him stolidly clinging on at the rear, in the shape of anxiety for daily bread, overwork, bad and insufficient food, squalor, insanitary housing, etc. The ordinary historian sees the exceptional and horrific evils of sword, violence, and famine incidental to the life of past ages; he passes over the common-place evils essential to modern life. Yet under the one set of conditions early death is certain; under the other at most only probable.

Now let us compare two cases—an ancient and a modern—in which the result is the same, and note the difference between them otherwise. Say the modern town artisan dies at forty; the mediæval guildsman is killed at forty. But the modern town artisan has been qualifying for death from infancy, every step in his life has been dogged by that death—literally in the midst of life he has been in death. If actual disease be not upon him, potential disease is, in the form of low bodily condition, rendering him absolutely incapable of any enjoyment other than "boozing." His tendencies, inherited and acquired, all converge to the one end. He is throughout life decaying. Now take the mediæval guildsman. What is his life? He also works at his trade, but under what conditions? With plenty of air, food, leisure, work in which he takes an interest and a pride, and in healthy emulation with companions similarly circumstanced to himself, his life is a healthy

and a happy one. Suddenly news comes that a hostile lord is advancing upon the town with his retainers, and that all must arm in its defence. The excitement is a not altogether unwelcome interruption to the peaceful daily life of burghers possessed of nerves begotten of generations of life under healthy conditions. The citizens sally forth and the walls are manned. Our forty-year old workman takes his place. The fight begins; bolts, arrows, and javelins fly. In the thick of it all our burgher is struck and falls moaning; he is carried home, and after a few hours of pain, dies. Now here you have your choice: death by the exceptional thunderbolt of mediæval society; death by the undying worm of modern civilisation. Which do you prefer? In the one case unsettled conditions, life and property insecure—in short, all the bogies of the Whig historian; in the other settled conditions, law and order reigning over all the land, and every blessing of civilisation. I think few can honestly hesitate as to the answer they give.

Now we have just been supposing the case of an individual with whom the specific evils of mediæval society were actually operative. But it must be borne in mind that the balance of probabilities against any particular individual being affected by any of them was probably almost, if not quite, as great as against any given individual in the present day being killed in a railway accident, blown up in an explosion, drowned in an over-insured unseaworthy ship, run over on a London crossing, crushed in a panic at a public building, etc., etc. One or other of these disasters peculiar to modern life is chronicled every day in the newspapers, and often several the same day, yet the apprehension of them does not seriously affect the happiness

of the modern man, with all his instability of nerve. How much less, then, must the fear of being killed in battle or by robbers or by pestilence have disturbed the equanimity of the mediæval baron, peasant, or citizen, with his iron nerves and sturdy frame?

By far the most powerful popular indictment of mediæval society in favour of modern civilisation is that of Mr. Owen Pike. In his "History of Crime in England" Mr. Pike has taken a single year—1349—and carefully and laboriously collected all the cases of private war, forcible entry, highway robbery, etc., etc., he could find in the official records as having taken place throughout England in that year. He has certainly done his best to paint the Middle Ages as black as possible; yet after reading his catalogue of crime, spread over a whole year and distributed over the whole of England, one rises with the feeling of an anti-climax. The chief thing that strikes one about mediæval crime is not so much its amount as the brutal frankness, the undisguised straightforwardness, of it. On the whole, the most unfavourable presentment of mediæval conditions will, we think, confirm what we have just said, in the mind of every candid reader—namely, that the chances of these evils affecting any given person or even locality was, to say the least, not so very much greater than the chances of any given person or locality being affected by the other and often quite as great, if more commonplace, evils peculiar to modern life. Men were at least robust and healthy for the most part *until* they were cut off by famine, war, or pestilence. They were not harassed by the dread of loss of employment and starvation, or by the horror of their children being left without means of subsistence. If no

one else did, the Church would always care for them. But here again, the sensational, exceptional, evils of mediæval life are so much more dramatic, appeal to the imagination so much more than the commonplaces of stunted growth, deficiency of vital power, trade depressions, strikes and lock-outs, that in a general estimate of the respective periods the one is taken prominently into account, while the other is left altogether unnoticed.

Let us now consider that portion of the indictment of more primitive society—again taking the Middle Ages as its type—which refers to the absence of change, variety, comfort in life; and in this we will take as an example the subject of locomotion. "Steam" is pre-eminently the material symbol of modern civilisation, and its advocate invariably adduces the blessings of free intercourse and locomotion as against the restricted communication of earlier ages as a convincing argument, not merely of the greater capacity of acquiring wealth in the modern world, but of the greater possibilities of happiness which the facilities of modern times for change, intercourse, and education, afford. Now there can be no doubt that "steam" has provided the means of travelling long distances for a vastly greater number of persons than have ever been able to travel before. But have our tours round the world or to the most distant countries for the comparatively well-to-do who have a few weeks, or even in some cases a few days, to spare, or our day-trips to distant parts of the same country for the less well-to-do who have only a few hours,—have these things really or only apparently increased the possibilities of change of scene and ideas and the education thence resulting, as against those supplied by the restricted com-

munication of former days? I am convinced the distinction is merely in appearance, and that the change of ideas derived from a visit to a foreign country to-day is very little more than would have been derived from a visit to another county in the Middle Ages.

The reason is obvious. Where the steam-engine has penetrated, the bourgeois civilisation which it represents, with the uniformity of condition which specially characterises that civilisation, has penetrated also. Everywhere that the steam-engine carries you, it carries along with it the world you intended to leave behind you; the same architecture—the big hotel, the railway station, the cheaply-built house as you find them in London, Paris, or Berlin: the same costume—the shoddy cloth of the "world-market," the Parisian "cut," the "top" or "bowler" hat; the country, as at home, cut up by the railway itself, with its long rows of telegraph posts, its shunting yards,—in short, everything as like as possible to what it is at your own door. You open up a conversation with the natives; the old local dialect, with the old local dress, customs, and traditions, have long since fled, and in the quondam peasant you find a clumsy approach to the getting-on townsman.

This is your change, your variety in life, which "steam" has brought you. For none can deny that a railway sooner or later brings all these things in its wake. Is, then, the variety in life, the change of scene, the freshness of intercourse, so much greater here than when every district had its special features; its own hills and dales unscarred by the ubiquitous "navvy;" its own manufactures; its own characteristic architecture; its own homespun costume; its own dialect and mode of express-

ing its ideas; its own local laws and customs; and its own traditions and legends? Has the modern London bourgeois who occasionally, by the help of Cook, strives to get away from the routine world in which he lives, by a desperate effort and at a considerable expenditure—has he, I ask, so great an advantage over his ancestor of the thirteenth century, who by a stroll into Kent or Surrey on any Church holiday could find himself in a district with an individuality in many respects quite distinct from the one he left? With a great price the modern bourgeois obtains (or tries to obtain) his freedom from the dull monotony of his life; but the mediæval guildsman of London was freeborn. After his day's work he could probably obtain more real change and amusement than the modern "city man" during the whole of his autumn outing.

But if we must confess thus much of the privileged man, the man of means, how does it stand with the poor mechanic, who on his every holiday has to pay the tax of the railway company, and to be stived up in its cattle-boxes, perhaps for three or four hours, in order to get a breath of fresh air and a glimpse of country, which in earlier ages he could have had, even though he lived in the heart of London, within an hour's walk of his own door? When rurality and variety were comparatively close at hand, there was no need or desire to travel far afield. Now people travel much and have little change: in former ages they travelled less and had more change.

It is clear, therefore, that the pseudo-advantages of civilisation (such as they are) refer, in this case at least not only to the exceptions of life rather than to its ordinary round, but also to the man of exceptional social

advantage; in other words to the "classes," and not to the "masses." What applies in this case is only typical of the great truth that modern civilisation not only accrues at best solely to the advantage of a propertied and privileged class, but that even that very questionable advantage has been gained by an untold loss for the mass of the people.

I have selected locomotion as the type of modern progress, but it would be easy to show that the telegraph, a "cheap" press, etc., although they have changed human life, have been no positive benefit—that as much pleasure was to be had out of the mediæval ballad-singer's version of Robin Hood as out of the modern newspaper or the penny "dreadful" or shilling "shocker."

That the exceptionally circumstanced man, the man of the middle and upper classes, and not the ordinary man, the man of the people, is the chief beneficiary also by other reforms whose praises are sung so loudly, is curiously illustrated by the sacredness of the modern statesman or bureaucrat. Time was, when a statesman, if he misbehaved himself, ran some risk of losing his head, or at least of imprisonment or exile, accompanied by confiscation of property. Now the plutocracy have succeeded in making statecraft a perfectly safe trade for themselves and their sattelites, the worst evil that can befall a "man of position" in the country being temporary loss of office. Of course it was altogether barbarous when a member of the leading governmental ring who was suspected of having striven to aggrandise himself (whether in reputation, influence, or material wealth) at the expense of justice and the public he was professing to serve, could be arraigned as a criminal! Nowadays, even Opposition

journals of the most pronounced character would deprecate with polite horror the bare suggestion of the "honourable gentleman" having been actuated by any but the highest of motives, or being guilty of anything more heinous than an error of judgment. Nevertheless, satisfactory as this arrangement may be in the interests of the governmental industry, and to the wealthy classes who have such a large stake in it, there can be no question that it is both reasonable and just that delegates in whose hand vast powers for weal or woe are vested should be criminally responsible for their "errors of judgment." No man is obliged to accept a position of such responsibility, and no age but the present would have thought of allowing him, having done so, to slink out of the consequences of his misdeeds under the cover of their being due to "error of judgment."

What shall we say then? If the benefits of modern life, considered in themselves, concern mainly its exceptions and not its ordinary round, and have been for the most part achieved at the expense of its ordinary round; if they further mainly benefit an exceptional or privileged class and not the ordinary man, and have been achieved at the expense of the ordinary man,—are we, like Mr. Ruskin, to call ourselves conservatives and to hark back upon an impossible past, while renouncing the present as hopelessly bad? A thousand times No! But let us make no mistake, or confound two distinct standpoints. The fact that, *dynamically* viewed, modern capitalism, with all that it entails—railways, machinery, squalor—is a good (nay, might be better were it intensified to the fourth power), since it is the necessary condition of the higher social life to follow, must not

blind us to the fact that, *statically* viewed, modern life is in no sense an improvement on the life of past ages. Do not let us delude ourselves with thinking that railways have in themselves contributed an iota to human happiness, or are in themselves anything else than an unmitigated evil, without a shred of compensating advantage. Again, though the acute evils of earlier ages have indeed gone, let us not forget they have gone only to be supplanted by chronic evils in the present. In this static sense I call civilisation a curse. I say, let us clearly recognise it as such. And in doing this, one thing there is which will give us cause to take heart of grace: there has been no evil of which mankind has once become conscious as such that mankind has not already half vanquished. The acute dramatic evils of the Middle Ages—insecurity of life and property, feudal trammels and imposts, ecclesiastical abuses—three centuries ago filled the field of human vision. Thinking, forward-looking men saw in the vanquishment of the evils of their upas-tree—effete feudalism—the goal of all human hopes. It steadily and surely withered, and now it is long since first its place knew it no more. The evils they saw *were* vanquished, with what results we now know. We in our turn see a fatal upas-tree, blasting all human aspiration and happiness. The fact that we see it as it is, is an earnest that its destruction is nigh. We need not be discouraged by the immensity or the solidity of the fabric we see standing. How little could it have seemed to the man of the sixth century, with all the outer forms of Roman life around him, that the Roman empire was a thing of the past and that a new world was on the point of growing up to take its place; how little to the careless man of the sixteenth,

with all the superficial signs of a mediæval civilisation standing, that the era of lord and vassal, knight and squire, was in reality gone, and a world in which the time-honoured symbols, relations, and conceptions of the Middle Ages would be meaningless was fast arising. Much as he might have desired this, it must have seemed impossible to him. So with the Socialist to-day. He sees the great curse, bourgeois civilisation, around him on all sides. The one hope which fills the whole horizon of his vision is the destruction of that curse. The strength of that hope within him is the streak of light denoting the coming of the day.

THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY.

We are often admonished by the professional politician and by the man of "common sense" of the sacredness of the will of the majority, or as it is sometimes called, the popular will. The expression of this so-called will of the majority in legislation and social and political institutions, is conceived as authoritatively representing the wishes and convictions of the greater number of persons inhabiting the country or the given area; and it is assumed as an axiom by the persons in question that the will of a majority has an inviolable claim to respect. The latter proposition, I am here concerned to show, is not true at all as applied to modern society, and can in fact only be true in the case of a society of equals; further, that even in this case it has one distinct principle of limitation.

What has been hitherto called the will of the people, or the will of the majority as manifested in the modern constitutional state, does not express any act of will at all, but the absence of will. It is not the *will* but the *apathy* of the majority that is represented. How many of the—not majority, but minority—of persons that vote, *consciously will* a particular line of policy? Or even if we concede that they consciously *will* the broad political issue on which the election turns, how much of the subordinate though perhaps as regards social life even more important action, legislative and executive, of the government they have placed in office do they deliberately

approve? To show the utter absurdity of the whole thing we have only to remember that in theory the whole common and statute law of England is supposed to be the expression of the public opinion of the existing people of England. Yet if, as in the case of the Swiss referendum, the people of England were formally polled (even those possessing votes) and the whole issue respecting every law placed before each, how many laws, now undisputed, would not be swept away? It cannot be too emphatically impressed upon the ordinary law-abiding citizen that the greater part of law, as it at present exists, does so by the ignorance of the majority, not by its consent. It is the expression, not of the *suffrage* but of the *sufferance* of the people.

But this is not all. Supposing there were a referendum or poll of all the people of England to-morrow, it would be of little avail on any but the very simplest issue. For so long as there is inequality of education and of economic conditions and the majority are at a disadvantage in respect of these things, they are necessarily incapable of weighing the issue before them. Their very wants are but vaguely present to their minds and in their judgment as to the means of satisfying them they are at the mercy of every passing wind. But given an equality of education and economic circumstances, there is yet another condition requisite before the opinion of the majority can be accepted as anything like the last resort of wisdom, and therefore as worthy of all acceptation. It is this. Public opinion, the verdict of the majority, even in a society of equals, if it is to have any value, presupposes a high sense of public duty—a standard of morality which exacts that every one shall take the *requisite interest* in

public questions for forming an independent judgment on them. The man who has not taken the trouble to train himself to think out these things cannot help to form an effective public opinion on any question presenting itself. Given the conditions mentioned, on the other hand, and the judgment of the majority would unquestionably represent the highest collective wisdom up to date. But until these conditions are fulfilled, the opinion of the majority as such can have no *moral claim* on the allegiance of minorities or of individuals, although it may be *convenient* in many or in most cases to recognise it.

The only public opinion, the only will of the majority, which has any sort of claim on the recognition of the Socialist in the present day, is that of the majority of those who have like aspirations with him, who have a definite consciousness of certain aims—in other words, the will of the majority of the European Socialist party. Even the Socialist party, owing to the economic conditions under which its members with the rest of society labour, does not fulfil the conditions above stated as necessary for the formation of a public opinion which should command respect. But such as it is, it represents the nearest approach to an authoritative tribunal which we can find to-day.

As to those persons who prostrate themselves before this idol, the will of the majority (of present society)—of the mere mechanical majority, or count of heads—and swear they would yield anything to the authoritative utterance of "the people" (in this sense), it would be interesting to know how far in the direction of its logical conclusion they would be prepared to carry their principles. There are some among them, we believe

who, while avowedly holding the current theology to be pernicious, yet would nevertheless not oppose its being taught in public schools if the "majority of the nation" were in favour of it. Now it must be admitted that it is exceedingly probable that if the majority of the nation were actively in favour of "religious education" they would get their way. But it is also conceivable that were the majority not very energetic, an energetic minority might carry the day. Yet according to the "majority" *cultus*, it would be wrong to assist in opposing the "will" of the majority. Again, we would like to ask the pious majoritist whether he would complacently see the Holy Inquisition, gladiatorial combats, or bull-fighting established; or on the other hand, witness the abolition of all means of travelling on Sunday, the total prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, the closing of all theatres, and all because an ignorant majority decreed these things? Yet unless a man is prepared to follow a majority (so to say) through a quick-set hedge, the principle of bare majority-worship falls to the ground. Majorities are then tacitly admitted to be nothing *per se*, but only to be respected in so far as their judgments are themselves reasonable, or at least in so far as it is convenient to respect them.

The only conditions which can ensure a judgment on the part of the majority representing the highest practical reason of which human nature is capable up to date, as we have already indicated, are—(1) perfect economic and educational equality; (2) healthy interest in all questions affecting the commonwealth. In a society wherein these conditions were realised, all persons would be competent—some more, some less, of course,

but all more or less—and the verdict of the majority ought clearly to be binding on all, so far as active resistance was concerned (and allowance always being made for the right of verbal protest on the part of the minority). There is one exception to this, however—though perhaps not very likely to occur. It is the principle referred to as limiting the right of all majorities—even though the dissentient minority be only one. I refer to actions which Mill calls self-regarding, or those which in no way directly concern the society or corporate body. Were any majority to enforce a particular line of conduct in such actions, and to forbid another, it is the right and duty of every individual to resist actively such interference. For just as the free motion, development and disintegration of the cellular tissue is essential to the life of the animal body, the cause of death in cases of mineral poisoning being the stoppage of this process, so the healthy freedom of the individual within its own sphere is essential to the true life of the social body—as much so as the subordination of the individual in matters directly affecting society. Civilisation with its destruction of the ancient solidarity of kinship and its inauguration of the reign of the individual as such, brought a new element into human life, which can never again be suppressed, however much it may be modified by the new whole into which it enters.

Were a majority, therefore, to seek to directly regulate the details of the private life of individuals in points where it does not directly come in contact with public life, any resistance on the part of individuals would be justified. Those entrusted with the carrying out of the mandates of the majority in such a case should be

treated as common enemies, and if necessary destroyed. Even though the private conduct of individuals might have an *indirect* bearing on the commonweal, this would not justify *direct* interference; any temporary inconvenience would be better than the infraction of the principle of the inviolability of the individual from coercive restraint within his own sphere. Let us suppose a case. The habit becomes prevalent in a Socialist community of sitting up late at night. This habit renders some of those addicted to it not so capable as they would otherwise be of performing their share in the labour of the community. Now an other-wise sane majority might here easily lose its head and enact a curfew. In this it would be clearly going beyond its function, inasmuch as the habit in question is primarily a private and purely self-regarding matter. Let the majority if so minded exact more stringent standards of discipline and efficiency in work, and enforce obedience to them—such enactments should be binding on all good citizens. But an enactment compelling the citizens to go to bed at a particular time should clearly be resisted at all costs. Of course the probabilities are that a habit which really tended, although indirectly, to be detrimental to the community, would be voluntarily given up in a society where a social morality prevailed.

Again, the fact of an action being distasteful to the majority may be a valid ground for its not being obtruded on public notice, but is no ground for its being forbidden in itself. For instance, a certain order of Parisian palate devours with great gusto a species of large garden snail called *Escargot*. To the present writer, the notion of eating these snails is

extremely disgusting. Now supposing an intelligent but unprincipled majority took the same view, as very likely it might, there would likely enough be proposals carried for prohibiting the consumption of these articles of diet—on the ground that it was bestial and degrading. Here, again, would be a case for resistance to the knife, But take the other side to this *escargot* question. The aforesaid molluscs are in Paris hawked about in the early morning in barrows, around the sides of which they crawl, the sight of them tending to produce "nausea and loss of appetite" (to employ the phraseology of the quack medicine advertisement) in those about to take breakfast. Now it is obvious that if this result obtained with the majority, the majority would have a clear right to prohibit the public exposure of these commodities, even if the would-be consumer were thereby *indirectly* debarred from obtaining them.

The same reasoning applies to sexual matters. Society is directly concerned with the (1) production of offspring, (2) with the care that things sexually offensive to the majority shall not be obtruded on public notice, or obscenity on "young persons." Beyond this all sexual actions (of course excluding criminal violence or fraud) are matters of purely individual concern. When a sexual act from whatever cause is not and cannot be productive of offspring, the feeling of the majority has no *locus standi* in the matter. Not only is it properly outside the sphere of coercion, but it does not concern morality at all. It is a question simply of individual taste. The latter may be good or bad, but this is an æsthetic and not directly a moral or social question.

Once more, the drink problem, in so far as the consumer

gets what he wants, namely, pure liquor and not adulterated stuff, in a great measure comes under the same category, although not so completely, since the directly injurious effects to society invariably resulting with certain temperaments (irresponsible violence, etc.), from the taking of alcohol, might justify prohibitive treatment as regards those cases. Even this, however, would not excuse any general measure of prohibition.

The above, then, is what I have termed the principle of limitation of the coercive rights of all majorities, however enlightened. When they overstep these limits, whether at the bidding of whim or foolish panic or what-not, the minority or the individual has the right and the duty of resisting it, the efficacy of the means to this end being the only test of their justifiability. On the other side of this clear and distinct line, on the contrary, in a free society of equals, free, that is, economically as well as politically, the will of the majority must be the ultimate court of appeal, not because it is an ideally perfect one, but because, for reasons before given, it is the best available.

The practical question finally presents itself, What is the duty of the convinced Socialist towards the present mechanical majority—say of the English nation—a majority mainly composed of human cabbage stalks, the growth of the suburban villa and the slum respectively? The answer is, Make use of it wherever possible without loss of principle, but where this is not possible disregard it. The Socialist has a distinct aim in view. If he can carry the initial stages towards its realisation by means of the count-of-heads majority, by all means let him do so. If on the other hand he sees the possibility of carry-

ing a salient portion of his programme by trampling on this majority, by all means let him do this also. Such a case, if improbable, is just barely possible, as for instance, supposing Social Democracy triumphant in Germany before other western countries were ripe for the change of their own initiative. It might then be a matter of life and death for Socialist Germany to forestall a military and economic isolation in the face of a reactionary European coalition by immediate action, especially against the stronghold of modern commercialism. Should such an invasion of the country take place, it would be the duty of every Socialist to do all in his power to assist the invaders to crush the will of the count-of-heads majority of the people of England, knowing that the real welfare of the latter lay therein, little as they might suspect it. The motto of the Socialist should be the shortest way to the goal, be it through the votes of the majority or otherwise. As has been often said before, and said with truth, every successful revolution in history has been at least initiated by an energetic minority acting in opposition to, or at least irrespective of, the inert mass constituting the numerical majority in the state. And it is most probable it will be so again. Be this as it may, the preaching of the *cultus* of the majority in the modern State, is an absurdity which can only for a moment go down with the Parliamentary Radical who is wallowing in the superstitions of exploded Whiggery.

"THAT BLESSED WORD."

TALKING with a friend some time ago, the observation was made to me, how easy it was to evoke emotion by using traditional channels. My friend went on to relate that he was addressing a public meeting a few days previously, and was trying to show that the Liberal Party did not always express sentiments favourable to the cause of labour. In the course of his remarks he quoted some observations from a speech of a well-known Radical leader, which were not of a nature to stimulate the enthusiasm of a working-class audience. The views enunciated were, as might have been expected, being vigorously hissed, when some one rose and challenged him to give the name of their author. No sooner had he done so, than the hissing changed to equally vigorous cheering. The familiar sound which had been cheered so many times before was quite irresistible. The emotion responded to it by a sort of "reflex action." The same phenomenon may be traced through everything. "Mesopotamia" is by no means the only "blessed word" in the economy of human emotion.

Take the case of jokes (as my friend further remarked). Look through the comic papers, go to any circus or music-hall, and you will find the old story perennially evoking the old merriment; the time-honoured *dramatis personæ*, the mother-in-law, the drunken man trying to open the street-door with his watch-key,

the husband who kisses the housemaid on the sly—things that have been laughed at ever since modern man first began to make jokes.

Again, in literature and in art how many people persuade themselves they admire what they think they ought to admire, with the most lamb-like simplicity? Quote the merest fustian, and cap it with the "blessed word" Shakespeare, and see if he won't "tumble" to it! Or quote Shakespeare and tell him it is an inferior modern versifier, and see if he will not display emotion accordingly!

But it is in the realm of moral and religious sentiment that "blessed words" most of all assert their efficacy. Hence the success of "revival" and similar movements. Hence also the popularity with lecturers or popular orators of phrases about "him who had not where to lay his head," invocations of "our common Christianity," and the like. (An amusing illustration of the possible dangers in the use of the "blessed word" under new conditions was afforded by Mr. Burt at the Trades-union Congress at Paris in 1883. The English "labour representative" wound up his speech on the claims of labour with an eloquent peroration in which "our common Christianity" played an important *rôle*. Poor Mr. Burt doubtless thought this touching allusion would "melt" the French proletarian conference as though it had been a Liberal meeting of English philanthropic shopkeepers. His interpreter, however, knew better, and to save Mr. Burt the humiliation of having his oration greeted with a storm of hisses, omitted the Exeter-Hall-stirring climax.)

There is a tendency in all successful movements to form

deposits of "blessed words," which stir up a kind of bastard enthusiasm or tender emotion by their mere sound, and apart from any intellectual meaning being attached to them. As already hinted, modern Christianity is a mere coagulation of "blessed words," as any one may convince himself by listening to a sermon any Sunday morning.[1] In France the Great Revolution has left behind it a plentiful crop of such words. How many journalists and platform orators attach any particular meaning to the words "La République" or "La Révolution"? The proof of their fatuous nature in the mouths of many persons is shown by the fact that they are employed, where an effect has to be produced, indifferently by Conservative and Radical Republicans and Socialists, and sometimes even by Imperialists. They all know the magic in the words, the ringing applause which greets them, their potency in filling up a vacuum in a discourse or newspaper article!

Now all this explains the "pull" which the conservative forces of society have over the revolutionary. The former possess an enormous reserve force of these blessed words, the emotion connected with which is inherited, that the latter do not possess. The fact is, most men resent being made to evolve their emotion out of their own thought. It gives them trouble, which they are saved when they can have the emotional tap instinctively turned on by a

[1] For instance, the darker sides of savage ritual surviving in the Christian dogma of the Atonement—the efficacy of blood, washing with blood, etc.—would strike the wives and daughters of the suburban villa as very nasty if they fully realised what it meant—as they assuredly would, but for the conventional associations connected with it and the stereotyped phraseology in which it is couched

phrase. Every Socialist agitator knows the extreme difficulty of divorcing the working-man from the "Liberal party"—how after apparently enthusiastic insight into the fact that the welfare of his class must be sought outside the ranks of current political parties, he will yet at every election return (like the dog of holy writ) to his Liberal vomit. He cannot bring himself to separate from what its adherents are pleased to term the "party of progress," or to risk the horrible danger of letting in a "reactionary," a "Tory," who in the general way would be found, in reality, neither more nor less reactionary than his opponent, if the principles of both were compared. But for the revolutionist there is also another side to the matter. Although the average man doesn't want the trouble of thinking, although, unlike the Athenians of old, he doesn't want to hear some new thing, but at most only the old things or phrases put in a slightly new setting, yet none of the "blessed words" in which he delights can in the end resist the solvent influence of the genuine thought which is the expression of new conditions. Disheartening as it may be to the propagandist of a new truth to find the apparently overwhelming influence of the emotional prepossessions attaching to old jingles and catchwords, yet every time the new truth is proclaimed by tongue or pen something crumbles off the surface of the time-worn phrase. Our propagandist may therefore safely adopt the attitude of the villain of transpontine melodrama, and shaking his fist at the crowds applauding the opposition leader, the popular preacher, etc., which he sadly compares with his own "good meetings" of a few people, may enunciate in the deep and measured tones of real conviction, "Never

mind—a time will come!" for assuredly it will—when the tables will be turned.

Let us always remember that most of these "blessed words" have had a meaning once. Although the men who use them now don't think, yet their fathers who invented them have thought. *They* did not content themselves with hereditary notions. That much abused word Liberty, as implying "freedom of contract," had, as I have before pointed out, a very real meaning when the claims of a superannuated Feudalism were felt to be "the enemy." Even the "blood of Jesus," sin, holiness, etc., were not as now mere jingle—evocative, if of anything at all, of nothing but a mawkish sentiment, empty of all intelligible meaning—to the subject of imperial Rome in the first century, who first used it, with the notion of bloody sacrifice confronting him at every step, and with the disgust at the decaying forms of ancient city-life driving every serious-minded man to seek satisfaction in self-brooding. As before said, there is a tendency in all great popular movements to form these crystals of "blessed words" which produce emotion by reflex action. The modern Socialist movement is no exception. How often are not the phrases "emancipation of labour," "social revolution," "revolutionary crisis," "Socialism and Individualism," "Communist-Anarchism" (!) in the mouths of those for whom they are no better than "blessed words"? This is inevitable to some extent, I know, but for a young movement it is eminently desirable to prevent this process of crystallisation as much as possible by continually driving into its phrases the fresh air of intelligence. After all, it were perhaps not an altogether unreasonable hope that Socialism might form

an exception to the general rule of popular movements in the matter of "blessed words," and rely for its strength rather on the realities implied in its conceptions than on the words connoting them. The extinction of class-society with all that this society involves, and the rise of a new social order; the equalisation of the material conditions of human happiness; the abolition of shams, speculative as well as practical; the installation of realities in their place,—this may be difficult for all to fully grasp, but I think we have a right to expect that everyone who calls himself a Socialist, and still more who professes to *preach* Socialism, should form for himself some conception of what all this means.

While we are on the subject of "blessed words," it may not be out of place to make a few suggestions on the question of sincerity and insincerity or humbug on the part of those who are or profess to be influenced by them. It is a common thing for Socialists and Free-thinkers to hurl the accusation of hypocrisy at Individualists, Malthusians, Liberals, etc., and at Christians. This accusation is of course indignantly repudiated, and plausible cases are adduced in plenty, of persons alleged to be undoubtedly sincere who hold Liberalism or Conservatism (as the case may be), Malthusianism, Profit-sharing, or what-not, to be really conducive to the welfare of the people, and Socialism as "impracticable" and "pernicious"; or, who believe the Christian theology to enshrine "eternal verities."

Now it may be said are these people all humbugs? Their arguments are for the most part little else than "blessed words" spread out thin. But, then, may not they really find satisfaction in them? The question, in

spite of its plain appearance, is a complex one, and not susceptible of a simple Yes or No answer. I offer the following as a tentative solution; Insincerity, Humbug, Hypocrisy, may be divided into four kinds or classes—(1) There is the conscious, deliberate, intentional pretence to opinions known or believed to be false for direct personal ends—the humbug or hypocrite of this class is, of course, never anything more nor less than a rogue or scoundrel; (2) There is the adoption of views, or sentiments, which the adopter or holder would like to believe were true or correct, because the holding of them redounds to his interest, and which by a process of self-deception he often does really come to think he believes. This is the unconscious humbug of a very large class, the great historical type of which may probably be found in the late Mr. Gladstone. Each of these types, the conscious and the unconscious humbug, has its pendant. In their simple and primary form it is individual interest which is the object sought after; in their derivative and secondary form it is not necessarily individual interest directly, but *class-interest.* No man to-day dare openly confess that he cares only for his own class. No man dare say with Foulon, "Let the people eat grass." As a consequence, the man who is only capable of that extension of self-interest of which class-interest consists, must hide the latter like the former under the mask of interest in truth, or in the commonweal, as the case may be. It is to the conscious humbug of this kind that the philanthropic moderate Liberal politician usually belongs. He knows that his nostrums are simply so much dust thrown in the eyes of the working classes, with a view of allaying discontent and bolstering up class-society, just as in his

heart he despises the dogmas promulgated by the missionary society at whose meeting he presides, but which he thinks a desirable adjunct to the bayonet in procuring fresh commercial outlets. The first concern in such a man as this is very often not personal interest *per se*, but personal interest as identified with class-interest. As to those whose humbug is based on *un*conscious class-interest their name is legion, embracing as they do the bulk of the middle-classes. Very good people they are too, some of them, in themselves, but so blinded by class-prejudice that they instinctively wince at truths which tell against the interests of the dominant classes, and instinctively accept fallacies which tell in favour of those classes. They cannot see otherwise than through the distorting lenses of class-interest. Arguments which on an indifferent matter would at once carry conviction to them, in this case appear inadequate; on the other hand, arguments on the other side, which on an indifferent matter would appear grossly inadequate, now carry conviction. Most of the "undoubtedly sincere" belief in the religious world may be reduced to unconscious humbug, having its root in class-interest. The feeling that religion is "respectable," *i.e.*, proper for the dominant classes to profess, and that it is desirable that the poor should be taught to look to heavenly rather than earthly joys for compensation, is what lies in the background of conscience of many a "gentleman" or "lady" who tries more or less successfully to persuade himself or herself that it is true, or at least that there is "a sort of something" in it.

These, then, as it seems to the present writer, are the four forms of humbug, insincerity, or hypocrisy, and for one and all of them "blessed words" are godsends. To

one or other of them may be reduced well-nigh all the fallacies and superstitions influential in the modern world. The first kind is brutally apparent, and easily recognisable; the third, which corresponds to it, is also easily detected. In both of them the insincerity is intentional. In the second and fourth, on the other hand, where it is more or less unconscious and unintentional in the subject of it, there is much greater difficulty in deciding in any individual case. But here also, it must be remembered, that the humbug although unconscious is none the less real. The thought, or action, is not straight, direct and clear—is not what it professes to be—but directed by a definite pervading tendency, to wit, the inordinate regard for self or class as such.

THE ODD TRICK.

We not unfrequently hear a certain school of sentimentalists sneer at Socialism as holding before men a merely low sensuous ideal of existence—of good living. We are accused by such of neglecting the higher ideals of Humanity for the prosaic affairs of the stomach and of still more despised organs. The usual and obvious retort to this sort of charge is the *ad hominem* one, that the persons who make the charge are themselves sufficiently well cared for in these lower matters to be able to afford to ignore them and turn their attention to things above. But though the gist of the matter is often contained in the above retort, it is, as it stands, crude, unformulated, and impolite, even if it were always applicable, which it is not. Let us therefore for the nonce treat these people seriously and develope the answer to their objection in formulated fashion. For in truth this objection springs not merely from deliberate hypocrisy or from thoughtlessness, but has its root in the ethical code in which they have been brought up. This ethical code teaches them that all the highest ideals of man's existence are attainable by a voluntary effort on the part of the individual, irrespective of his material surroundings, which are matters of small concern. The body is in fact a thing rather to be ashamed of than anything else.

I would not say that all our sentimental friends carry their sentiment to this extent, but that this principle—the principle of Christian Dualism as opposed to Pagan Monism—underlies their moral consciousness there can be no doubt. It is of course true that this view is facilitated by comfortable bodily conditions. It is easier to think meanly of the "body" when the "body" is all right than when it is not. And this very fact gives us, as we shall show directly, the key to the Socialist position on the subject. There are, however, not a few persons who in all sincerity hold the view that in the overcoming of the body—in the minimisation of all bodily satisfactions—is to be found the portal to the higher life of man, and who act up to their professions. Now it should be observed that to all who earnestly and sincerely accept the current ethical basis, the body still remains an *end*, although they profess to ignore it. It is an *end* to them just as much as to the epicure and the libertine, although in another way.

Now the difference between this orthodox and the Socialist way of viewing human life is, that the Socialist, while not pretending to ignore the body, yet wishes that it should cease to be the main *end* of human life. At present the satisfaction of personal bodily wants fills the mental horizon of the immense majority of human beings, the only alternative being with those would-be virtuous individuals whose mental horizon is filled, to a large extent at least, with the idea of the suppression of these same bodily wants. That the first of these conditions is unfavourable to the development of a higher life, be it moral, intellectual, or artistic, few would dispute. That the second is scarcely less so is equally obvious on

a little reflection. For in the first place the continued struggle against natural wants, to live on next to nothing, to bear the greatest privations, in itself draws off vast stores of moral energy which is wasted on mere suppression. But if the victory is gained, if the man does not succumb in the process, if his devotion to his higher aim, of whatever nature it may be, is so exceptionally great as to carry him through, what has he gained and what has he not lost? He is purified through suffering, says the Christian. But in how many cases he metaphorically leaves his skin behind in the process; in how many cases he has lost an essential part of himself, those know who have had much intercourse with or who have studied the lives of the exceptional men who have successfully struggled with adversity, and who have observed the souredness, the onesidedness, the twistedness, so to say, of character thence resulting. No one can fail to admire and to honour the strength of purpose which enables a man to pursue a high aim in the midst of privations; but no one who looks at the matter without prejudice and in the light of broad human interests, can honestly say that the man is *better as* man for the privations through which he is come, even though he has accomplished his life-work in spite of them. Instances of this may be found in Chatterton, Beethoven, etc. Of course we leave out of account here the fact that under modern economic conditions it is not a case of being contented with a little which is at least there, but of a desperate and exhausting life-struggle to obtain sufficient to sustain life at all. We do so, as we are addressing not so much the avowed opponents of Socialism as those who, while professing to sympathise

in a manner with its aims, have lingering prejudices in favour of the ascetic or shall I say the "austere republican" theory of life, and who therefore view with disfavour the stress modern Socialism lays on the satisfaction of mere material wants.

Even the sentimental moralist in question must admit that at the present time the end-purpose of life is for the majority of men the satisfaction of natural personal wants. There are not a few, it is true, who pursue gain for the sake of gain, but this is generally *after* they have satisfied their animal wants. Now the apparent ideal of certain sentimental moralists I have heard talk, is an insurance against absolute destitution, and the rigid repression of all further desires over and above this minimum. The Positivists to a great extent hold this view. Such a state of things they think might be attainable (by a kind of state-socialism we suppose) within the framework of present society. The theory, therefore, is not distasteful to those who see that capitalism is unstable and indeed impossible to last as at present constituted, but who would willingly stave off the complete overthrow of the system. The latter are anxious merely to retain their monopoly of the good things of life, but they find a useful ally in the introspective moralist who winces at the idea of removing the causes of moral evil for fear of depriving the individual of the opportunity of "resisting temptation," and who wants to keep him deprived of the comforts and conveniencies of life that he may show his strength of mind in being able to do without them—shutting their eyes to the fact that they thereby perpetuate moral evil.

It is the scientific Socialist, who alone seriously wishes

to lead men to higher aims than merely sensual ones, while caring not one jot for the empty moral gymnastics which are the end of the introspective moralist. He sees that his ideal, human happiness, and that in the highest sense, is realisable rather in the enjoyment of all than in the restraint of each, even in the matter of mere material wants, and that the corrupting influence of luxury hitherto has mainly resided in the fact that it was not enjoyed by all. And his theory is based on knowledge of the "nature of things."

To the sick man what is the highest ideal? Health. His whole horizon of aspiration is filled in with the notion of health. To him, health is synonymous with happiness. He recovers his health, and he finds now that there is something beyond that horizon—that over the mountains there are also oxen. Health now becomes a matter of course, which he accepts as such and does not think about; his mental horizon is now occupied with other objects. Had he remained sick he might have been resigned, but health would still have irresistibly presented itself to him as the ideal goal of life. So it is with the completion of health, which consists in the full, the adequate satisfaction of bodily wants. So long as they remain a desideratum for the majority of mankind, the majority of mankind will continue to regard them as the one end of life—notwithstanding the precept and example of the heroic ascetic who despises such low concerns. Let the mass of men once have free access to the means of satisfaction, and they will then for the first time feel the need of higher objects in life.

As a matter of fact, it is a trite observation that all the "higher life" of the world has been carried on by

those classes who have been free from the presence of material wants, not by those who have been deprived of them or who have renounced them. What did the really consistent Christian ascetics—the St. Anthonies of the fourth century for example—accomplish beyond seeing visions, performing astounding feats of self-privation, etc.? Were they more than moral mountebanks? Do we not find, on the contrary, that the monks who really led the intellectual life of the middle ages, who were historians, philosophers, artists, spring from the wealthy Benedictines and other orders whose discipline was "lax," who kept a well-filled refectory, and whose morality was said to be questionable? So long as monasticism remained ascetic, intellectual life within the monasteries was impossible. Bodily cravings and the struggle to repress those cravings occupied men's whole attention. Another and still more striking instance of how the fact of every possible sensual enjoyment being within reach forces the mind to seek satisfaction in something, which if it is not intellectual is at least non-sensual, is that of the *tyrannos* of the ancient city, or the wealthy noble, the provincial governor, the pro-consul, the prefect of the Roman Empire. No one can adequately conceive now-a-days of the luxury and sensuous pleasure in which such characters as these literally weltered—of the gorgeous marble palaces, of the Persian coverings, of the Babylonian couches, the wines, dishes, and spices from every quarter of the known world, of the most well-favoured concubines that could be procured for money from Europe, from Asia, and from Africa—yet, strange to say, the possessor and enjoyer of all these things was never happy unless risking them all and his life in-

cluded on the barren chance (in the first instance mentioned) of conquering another city, or (in the second) of intriguing for the purple, the attainment of which experience had taught, in nine cases out of ten, meant death within a few months. It was not that the conquest of the city or the ascent of the throne added to his luxury which would have probably been impossible—this was not his object, but that having already his fill of all sensuous pleasures he looked for something more, and this something more he found in accordance with the manners of his age, in the notion of *glory*, the glory of founding a dynasty, or of being saluted absolute master of the world. We see a similar thing nowadays in the tradesman in possession of all that wealth can purchase, and in absence of all intellectual resources, who also in accordance with the manners of his age, finds *his* "something more" in commercial "success," which he continues to pursue for its own sake.

The Introspective moralists, Christian, Positivist, or what not, are therefore right when they insist on the satisfaction of material wants not being regarded as the final end of human life. They are only wrong in not seeing that until obtained they must *necessarily* seem such to the vast majority of men. The signal failure in history of the doctrine of *repression*, whether it take the form of the "holiness" of the Christian, or the more plausible "ascetic discipline" of the Positivist, after a reign of two thousand years ought, one would think, to give these good people pause as to whether repression is, after all, so conducive to the higher life of man as satisfaction.

The true *telos* of human life, the "rational activity" of Aristotle, "the beautiful, the good, the true" of the

young man who is taking to literary composition, may be compared, not to speak it profanely, to the odd trick in whist, which, though it is the object of the hand to win, yet presupposes the winning of six other tricks. Now the amateur of the "goody-goody" morality—the perfectionist of individual character—thinks to make the odd trick without having completed his regulation half-dozen. The socialist is rather concerned that the human race as a whole, should each and all "make" the first six tricks, called respectively, good and sufficient food and drink, good housing, good clothing, fuel, untaxed locomotion, adequate sexual satisfaction, knowing that before these are scored the "odd," which is the final purpose of the "deal," will be impossible. With bad and insufficient food, with small and squalid dwellings, with scanty and shoddy clothing, with insufficient firing in cold weather, with the lack of change, and with inadequate satisfaction of a sexual kind, man may exist; but he (*i.e.*, the average man) will see nothing but these things in front of him, his ideal will still be them, and nothing else but them. When once he possesses them they become a part of his ordinary life, and he ceases to think about them. His horizon is then extended. He sees the final purpose of his life in things of which before he had never dreamed.

Once more, I repeat, let us make no mistake, all asceticism, all privation, is in itself an unmitigated evil. It is doubtless true that there are occasions when it is our duty, living in a period of struggle, to deprive ourselves, to sacrifice ourselves, for a better society. But even this deprivation, this sacrifice, is in itself an evil. It only becomes a good if it is undergone with the

purpose of putting an end to the sempiternal privation and sacrifice which civilisation imposes on the majority of our fellow-creatures. One can well appreciate the sacrifice of ourselves, the men of this generation, when necessary for the future, in all the respects named; but I confess that did I, like the Christians, the Positivists, and the sentimental Socialists, such as I understand Count Tolstoi to represent, believe privation and sacrifice (even "ascetic discipline,") be it in the most grovelling of material matters, to be the permanent lot of Humanity, my ardour in the cause of progress would be considerably damped.

One can scarcely conceive the nobler life which will result from generations of satisfied (rather than repressed) animal desires, once they are the lot not of this or that class, but of all. With food, drink, and other creature comforts to be had for the asking, they will cease to occupy the attention of human beings to an extent previously unknown in the world's history. Then for the first time will the higher aspirations and faculties of man have free play, the "something more," the "odd" trick, which is the real goal of human life, will assume a new character, and be pursued with an energy rivalling that hitherto devoted to personal gain, ambition or glory, since the path to these things, at least in the old sense, will have been closed for ever.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES:

A STUDY OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY EUROPE.

THERE is a fascination peculiarly their own attaching to the great transitional periods of history. The special characteristics of the civilisation which is expiring, seem in them to blossom out, so to speak, into rank luxuriance unknown to their days of health and vigour; they exhibit a change like the unnatural, morbid appearance of energy which in some diseases is the herald of death. The manners, customs, and beliefs of the dying epoch assert themselves in an exaggerated and altered form, and, moreover, with a certain self-consciousness, which seems to betoken a sense of insecurity and a struggle against approaching dissolution, yet strange to say often unconsciously assimilating the while some of those very tendencies which are destined to supersede them. Thus in the early centuries of the Christian era we find the dominant features of the civilisation of antiquity, appearing in the most distorted and bizarre forms. The centre and starting point of ancient life and culture, the "City," has become reduced to a grotesque meaninglessness in the great all-devouring empire-city whose citizenship is degraded to a commercial value. The religious cults of Paganism receive everywhere new and fantastic accretions and developments; weird combinations such as

Gnosticism arise; forms which were once instinct with life and meaning become crystallized into rigid shapes in which the original meaning is lost or forgotten. In the same way the period with which the present paper is concerned, which constitutes the dividing line between the mediæval and the modern worlds, exhibits the spirit and many of the institutions of the middle ages in an exaggerated yet changed and distorted form. Never before has the magnificence of the Prince, the Noble, the Ecclesiastic, been so great; never before has the poverty and degradation of the Serf been so real. Of all mediæval pageants, none have equalled in splendour the Field of the Cloth of Gold or the entry of Charles V. into Antwerp; or in barbaric indecency that of the same monarch into Bruges, including its procession of naked burgher-maidens. Even the Anabaptists of Münster inaugurated their "Kingdom of God," with all the pomp and circumstance characteristic of the age. Of all the feudal oppressions none have approached the oppressions of centralizing monarchs and potentates such as Henry VIII., Francis I., or Charles V. No mediæval baron had exceeded in lawlessness the knights of the Palatinate. Never had the Church been more wealthy or more powerful outwardly than in the decades immediately preceding the Council of Trent; never throughout the whole period of the middle ages had men's minds generally been so keenly occupied with Theological questions; never before did Astrology, Alchemy, and the "occult sciences" in general, exert such a fascination over so many minds, or the Black art excite such apprehension. Like all ages of transition, the 16th century was an age of unrest, material and intellectual; this double characteristic of

the period was embodied in one of its most noteworthy social products—the travelling scholar. The invention of printing had given wide currency to ideas which in an earlier century would have been confined to the monastery. The ideas and aspirations here referred to are immediately traceable to the new learning which had arisen in the preceding age. The emigration from Constantinople had opened up to the Western World the literature of the last period of transition, that of the fall of classical antiquity—the works of the Neo-Platonists, of the Pseudo-Orpheus of Hermestrismegistos; and last but not least, the mysteries of the Jewish Kabbala had been expounded by Reuchlin and others. Learning had now ceased to be the exclusive appanage of the clerical class, and was beginning to be pursued as a calling special to itself, with the travelling scholar as its more or less humble representative. The travelling scholar went about from town to town, and from village to village in the combined character of teacher, astrologer, divinator, and medicus, offering his services in return for entertainment and such honararium as the means or liberality of his hosts admitted. Like the minstrel of an earlier age, he was generally welcomed and treated with an amount of respect wherever he went. But the goal of a travelling scholar's ambition was always some sort of appointment, however humble, at one of the established seats of learning. The mythical embodiment of this type is Doctor Faustus.

In the following pages we propose to consider briefly, first, the question as to the historical existence of Faustus, together with such traces of the myth as are discoverable previous to its receiving literary form in the Frankfort

Faust-Book of 1587; and to attempt the portrayal in a few words of two undoubtedly historical personages who flourished at the same time, and who may be taken as living representatives of the type to which Faust belonged. If we admit an historical Faustus at all, the special interest attaches to the Faust legend of being the last instance in history of the complete incrustation of a real personality in myth. The mediæval spirit had always been inclined to assign unusual gifts or learning to an infernal origin; the notion of a compact with the Devil, itself moreover was not by any means new. It had been embodied in one form or another in sundry early Christian legends, and was generally familiar to popular mediæval thought. It nevertheless fastened itself with pre-eminent force on the German mind of the 16th century, and as a natural consequence speedily assumed the shape of a mythus. The more learned itinerant scholar of the 16th century had been preceded in the days before the invention of printing and the new learning by the itinerant fortune-teller, who is a noticeable figure in mediæval society from the 13th century onwards. It would seem that a personage of this description was notorious in the 15th century, who called himself or was called, "Faustus" or "the fortunate one." Of this individual we know nothing, and the only evidence we have of his existence is the inference from the statement of the abbot Johann von Trittenheim in 1507 respecting a certain Magister Georgius Sabellicus, then living, who described himself as Faustus the younger.[1] This letter of Trithemius is the most important piece of con-

[1] Risterhuber would seem to regard the expression Faustus minor as intended to distinguish Sabellicus Faust from the Fust or Faust the printer.

temporary evidence as to the existence of an historical Faustus which we possess. The name indeed appears therein for the first time. The Abbé is writing from Würzburg under date August 20th, 1507, to the Court Astrologer of the Elector Palatine, Johann Virdung von Hasfurt, the same who cast the horoscope of Melancthon. "The man," says he, "of whom you speak, this George Sabellicus, who impudently calls himself the Prince of Necromancers, is a vagabond and impostor who only merits the whip, to the end that in future he may cease to profess principles so odious and so contrary to the Holy Church. What indeed are the titles that he claims but the mark of a foolish and vain mind in which pride takes the place of Philosophy! Behold how he styles himself: Magister Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Minor, Prince of Necromancers, Astrologer, second Magian, Cheiromancist, Agromancist, Pyromancist, and second Hydromancist! Behold the mad audacity of this man who dares to proclaim himself the Prince of Necromancers, and who, ignorant of all letters should rather style himself fool than master! But his perversity is known to me. On my return journey last year from Brandenburg I encountered this man at the town of Gelnhausen; at the hostelry there, I heard speak of the brilliant promises he had the audacity to make. But when he knew of my arrival he left the hostelry and never dared present himself before me. The pretences of his folly which he has had transmitted to you, he has also sent to me by messenger. In the town, priests reported to me that he had vaunted in the presence of a great number of people of the possession of so great a science and memory that if all the works of Plato and

Aristotle were lost, he, like another Esdras, could resuscitate them with more elegance than before. Later, when I was at Spire he came to Würzburg, and actuated by the same vanity is reported to have said before many people that the miracles of Christ were not so marvellous but that he could do the same things as often as he pleased. During last Lent he came also to Kreuznach, and, as boastful as ever, he promised all manner of marvels, alleging that he was the first of all the Alchemists, and that he could accomplish every object of men's desires. Just at this time he obtained the post of professor which was vacant, through the interposition of Franz von Sickingen, the bailiff of your Prince and a man much given to mysticism. But soon it was discovered that his system of education consisted of debauches with the students, and he only escaped punishment by a prompt flight; such is the reliable testimony I have to offer you concerning this man whose arrival you await with so much impatience. When he presents himself before you, you will discover not a philosopher, but a rogue and a charlatan. Adieu, remember me."

The evidence afforded by this letter is manifestly of the first importance, but there are one or two points in it worthy of note, which as far as they go must be allowed to discount the value of its testimony as to the character of its hero. It is evident that Trittenheim had not personally come into contact with George Sabellicus. All that he knew concerning him was from report, and it is quite possible that the ecclesiastic himself, who although he repudiated the "Black Magic" as befitted his position, was nevertheless much addicted to the pursuit of Alchemy, may not have been above allowing him-

self to be biased by professional jealousy. That Sabellicus was a man of some learning is indicated by the reference to Plato and Aristotle, also by the Academic post given him by that most enthusiastic patron of letters and "last flower of German chivalry" Franz von Sickingen.

The next mention we find of the name Faust is in the Acta Philosophica of Heidelberg University under the year 1509, where Johannes Faustus is mentioned as having obtained the degree of batchelor on the 15th of January in that year. In 1513 Conrad Muth of Gotha, the "humanist" and friend of Reuchlin, writes in a letter to a brother ecclesiastic: "About eight days ago there came to Erfurt a Chieromancist of the name of *Georgius Faustus Hemitheus Heidelbergensis;* he is simply a braggard and a fool. . . . The unlearned, however, are dumfounded by him. It is against him that the theologians should direct their attacks rather than seek to destroy a philosopher like Reuchlin. I heard him prate at the Hostelry, but did not chastise his presumption, for what matters to me the folly of a stranger." The questions arise; is this Faust of Muth identical with the one mentioned in the Acta of Heidelberg University, and are either of them the same with the George Sabellicus Faust of Trithemius? These are questions very difficult to answer. The allusion to Heidelberg in the style and title of the Erfurt Faust of 1513 would seem to point to his identification with the student of 1509, were it not for the difference of Christian names. The one is Johannes, the other Georgius; this discrepancy, however, it is possible, might be susceptible of an explanation. Against the identification of the Heidelberg Faust of 1509 with the Trithemian Sabellicus may be urged in addition to the

discrepancy between the Christian names, the much more important fact that the latter had, it appears, some years previously already occupied a position as teacher. Finally as against the identification of the latter with the Erfurt Faust of 1513 is to be alleged, notwithstanding the omission of any mention of the name Sabellicus and also the allusion to Heidelberg of which Trithemius in his very full report says nothing whatever. The opinion expressed by Conrad Muth of the desirability of Faustus being exposed by the theologians, is not very consistent with his own conduct in allowing him to impose on the good burghers of Erfurt unrebuked, merely on the ground that he was a stranger.

In the next notice of Faust, we find him described as a guest of the Abbot of Maulbronn in 1516. A list of the Abbots of Maulbronn observes respecting Entenfuss the Abbot in question, that he gave hospitality to his fellow-countryman Faust. The worthy ecclesiastic as might be expected was an enthusiastic Alchemist, and had built a laboratory in one of the cloisters of the monastery which retained till recently the local appellation of "Faust's kitchen." One of the towers of the building was also called Faust's tower, from a tradition of its having contained the apartments he occupied during his stay there. This would seem to close the strictly contemporary evidence respecting Dr. Faustus.

A legend of a later date represents Faust as at Leipzig in 1525, and as having in that year performed his celebrated exploit of riding out of Auerbach's cellar on the wine tun. Two frescoes dating probably from the 17th century illustrative of this incident may be seen at this day on the walls of the establishment in question.

Stromer, the proprietor of the famous Gasthaus, who took the name of Auerbach from his birth-place in Bavaria, was an ardent follower of the new doctrines in religion as well as of the new leaning. It was with him that Luther dined in 1519 when he came to Leipzig to dispute with Eck. It is curious as regards this Leipzig incident that its traditional date 1525 accords with that given in some versions of the legend as the year of Faust's death ; it is also a year with which other incidents in the career of the legendary Faust are connected.

In a little book, bearing date 1539, entitled, "Index Sanitatis. Eyn schön und vast nutzliches Büchlein genant Zeyger der Gesundhet, etc. Wormbs, 1539," by one Begardi, occurs a reference to "a man of surprising boldness whose name I will not mention, notwithstanding that he does not seek to remain hidden and unknown. For but a few years ago he traversed provinces, principalities and kingdoms, offering his name to those who wished to know it, and boasting of his talents not only in medicine but in Chieromancy, Necromancy, Physiognomy, Chrystalomancy, and other such sciences. He further proclaimed himself both in speech and writing as a celebrated master who had acquired complete knowledge. He called himself Faust and claimed the title *Philosophus Philosophorum.* But a great number have complained to me of having been deceived by him. His promises were as magnificent as those of Thessallus, his renown equalled that of Theophrastus, but his acts to my knowledge were found to be trickish and deceitful."

The theologian Gast professed to have supped with Faust at Basel, and describes some miraculous dishes provided by him. It is extremely probable. however, that

his narrative is an echo of Paracelsus' residence in Basel Conrad Gesner alludes to Faust in a letter of the 16th August 1561 as having not been dead so very long and as having enjoyed an extraordinary renown. The legend which makes Faust to have been a friend of Melancthon rests on the supposed testimony of the latter's disciple Mennet or Manlius in his *Collectanea.* But the passage has been misinterpreted as a quotation from Melancthon himself, whereas Manlius is speaking in his own person. According to Manlius Faust studied at the University of Cracow in Poland at that time a renowned seat of occult learning. He also repeats an already current statement that his birth-place was the little town of Kundling or Knittlingen in Würtemberg. The passage in question from Manlius, contains the original explicit narrative of Faust's last day, and of his seizure and destruction at midnight in a village inn, by demons. Manlius also makes Faust visit Wittenberg and Nuremberg, besides connecting him with the Court of Charles V. and the battle of Pavia, all of which points are incorporated in the later Faust-book. Wier, the pupil of Cornelius Agrippa, in his *De præstigiis dæmonum* published at Basel in 1563, has two or three references to Faust, but as these are obviously second or third-hand legends, they have no special interest for us here.

We now come to the interesting question, is there any authentic evidence of Luther having referred to Faust? Widman, the author of the second independent literary redaction of the Faust legend, inserts a chapter headed "The opinion of Dr. Luther on Dr. Faust," the information contained in which he professes to have derived from a private document. The edition of Luther's

Tischreden published in 1568 at Frankfort, contains a report of conversations similar to those given by Widman, but in which the name of Faust is suppressed, except in one instance where it is apparently left in by accident. According to Widman, Luther states that Faust resided for some time at Magdeburg with the monks, who held him in great esteem. On someone's alluding to some recent achievements of the magician, Luther is reported to have replied to the effect that notwithstanding all his arts, Faust was bound to come to a bad end, inasmuch as he was possessed of a haughty and ambitious devil, "who taketh unto himself the Glory of God," &c., but adding that "neither he nor his master, the devil, could practise magic against himself." For said he, characteristically, "if the devil had willed to hurt me, he could have done it long ago; he hath often seized me by the head, but hath needs must again let me go; I do well know what sort of a comrade he is, since he hath often brought me to a state in which I knew not whether I was dead or alive. He hath also afflicted me to despair," &c., &c. Another of the company, relating how that recently Faust had visited the elector of Bavaria, and had organised a hunt, and caused to appear all manner of animals by supernatural means, Luther described how a rich noble had invited him in company with several savants of Wittenberg to his castle to participate in the chase; and how at a given signal a fine fox made its appearance running almost between the legs of the huntsmen, but that as the leader started to pursue it his horse dropped dead from under him, while the fox mounted in the air and vanished. Another present related how Faust changed a bag of game some huntsmen had brought home, during

the night into horses' heads, Luther replying, "doubtless he never organises a chase but for the purpose of playing some trick on those engaged in it; for," he added, "the devil rails at all the exercises of men, for the devil is a spirit of presumption." Commenting on the story of a quarrel between Faust and his host at an Inn at Gotha, in which Faust caused such a disturbance in the cellars, that no one dared venture down, Luther observed "that is the system of the devil, when he enters it is difficult to dislodge him." Luther also related how the Italian magician, Luk Gauric, Bishop of Civitate, had told him that once his own familiar spirit appeared to him and tried to force him to leave Italy for Germany, alleging that Dr. Faust possessed a more powerful spirit than himself, who could teach him many things; to which the Bishop diplomatically replied that it was not seemly for one devil to run after another. Of the genuineness of this alleged conversation of Luther, it is impossible to speak with certainty.

We have now given all the evidence of any importance bearing upon the legend in its course of formation, and while it was mainly an oral tradition. The basis of the literary *Faust-sage* is the Faust-book of 1587 first sold at the Frankfort fair of that year, and the title of which runs: "*History of Doctor Johann Faust, the renowned magician, and adept in the Black Arts; how he pledged himself to the devil at an appointed time, what strange adventures he passed through meanwhile, ordered and carried out by himself, till in the end he received his well-deserved reward; for the most part derived from his own writings that he left behind; and printed, as an awful example, frightful illustration, and*

earnest warning to all vain, curious, and Godless men." The work is dedicated by the writer and printer, Johann Spies, to his "most gracious dear lords and friends, Caspar, Rolln, secretary to the Kurfürst of Mainz, and Hieronymus Heff, rent-master in the County of Königstein." In this little book all the widely dispersed legends, oral and written, respecting Dr. Faustus, were brought together into literary shape. Its success was unbounded, and imitations sprang up in all directions. A year or two later appeared an English version, the *History of the damnable Life and deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus.* A continuation appeared in 1594, entitled, *The second report of Dr. John Faustus containing his appearances and the deeds of Wagner. etc.* Before the end of the century, histories of Faust were circulating throughout well-nigh every country of Western Europe. The only one of these embodying any new material, is that of Widman published at Hamburg in 1599, of which mention has already been made. Widman claims to have based his work mainly on original sources. In addition to the prose versions, numerous ballads appeared, dealing with the history of Dr. Faustus. The subject became immediately a favourite one for dramatists, and every strolling company of players was expected to have some play dealing with the career of the great magician in its repertory. The English Elizabethan poet, Christopher Marlowe, seems to have founded his famous drama on the original Frankfort book, the story of which at least was in all probability brought over to this country in the year of its publication by an English company of players who had been in the service of the Duke of Saxony. Hence-

forward the Faust mythus was established in the world's literature and art, and only awaited the final form it was to assume at the end of the 18th century from the hand of the immortal master, who in making it the vehicle of his greatest conceptions, raised it to an undying place in the higher thought of mankind.

It will be sufficiently clear from the above summary of evidence that there are many links wanting to the establishment of any definite historical personality. We cannot feel quite certain that in the Faustus referred to by Trithemius, by the Heidelberg university archives, by Conrad Muth, by the traditions of the Maulbronn Monastery, by Begardi, by Manlius, &c., respectively, we have before us one person or more than one. The most probable conclusion we can come to, would seem to be that we have to do with a type, rather than a single individual; that, to use an often quoted expression originally employed in an analogous case, early 16th century Europe presented "a glut" of Fausts, of which the historical Faustus happened to be the bearer of the traditions. One of the established laws of myth-formation probably obtained here, that namely whereby a single individual, either by accident or some slight temporary prominence, becomes the centre round which the characteristics and the traditions, in reality covering a whole class, cluster. Every story of Necromancy or of marvellous adventure, originating in great part in current beliefs, but in the first instance related of various persons henceforth attach themselves to Dr. Faustus. Faust passes out of the domain of history into that of myth. As illustrating this point we propose now to consider the careers of two well-defined historical

personages, who also lived during the first half of the 16th century, and the anecdotes told of whom bear a striking resemblance to those connected with the Faust-legend.

The most prominent name among the Necromantic scholars of the age, in which Faustus is said to have lived, is that of Theophrastus Paracelsus. The real name of this personage was Phillippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, or, as some accounts allege, Höhener, the appellation Paracelsus (above Celsus) being assumed. The birthplace of Paracelsus is said to have been Einsiedeln in Switzerland, whither his father (who was probably of a Swabian family) had emigrated from his native land, and settled down a short time before his birth in 1493.[1] Probably induced by his characteristic love of effect, Paracelsus, not content with the names he already possessed, appended thereto the name of his birthplace in a Latinized form—Eremita. The first ten years of his life were spent at Einsiedeln, after which his father repaired to Villach, where he died in 1534; he himself imparted to his son his earlier education, and almost as a matter of course his training was in the direction of his father's faculty, that of medicine. Young Theophrastus, it seems, early showed the penchant for the occult sciences which was characteristic of his age, and as he grew up, states that he received initiation therein from sundry ecclesiastics. "From childhood," he says, "I have pursued this matter and have learned of

[1] The name of his father appears to have been Wilhelm. Bombast von Hohenheim. The family was an old one, and had its seat in the plateau land to the south of Stuttgart. One of its members accompanied Count Eberhard of Würtemberg to Palestine; another member we find noticed as Forest-ranger of Kurnbach about the middle of the 15th century.

good instructors, the most deeply read in the *adepta philosophia*, and wonderfully cunning in these arts. Firstly, Wilhelmus von Hohenheim my father, who has never forsaken me, and besides him well-nigh too great a number to name; men who have busied themselves with all manner of writings, old and new, such as are of much authority; among them Bishop Scheyt von Settgach, Bishop Erhartt and his ancestors of Lavantall, Bishop Nicholas von Yppon, Bishop Matthaus Schacht, Suffrigan of Fressingen, and many abbots, as the Abbot of Spannheim, &c." This enumeration must presumably not be taken to refer exclusively to those with whom he had had personal intercourse; indeed it is possible that he only personally came into contact with the last mentioned, namely, Johann von Trittenheim (Trithemius). Whether as some assert he worked in the alchemistic laboratory of the abbot either at Spannheim or at Würzburg, whither the latter removed in 1506, is uncertain. Paracelsus subsequently turned his attention more exclusively to medicine, visiting various schools in Germany, Italy and France, but the result of his studies was the conclusion that medicine was "an uncertain art not properly to be employed." Thenceforward his dominating thought was the reconstruction of the science of medicine on an alchemistic and theosophical basis, and its rescue from the domination of Aristotle, Galen and Avicenna. About this time he commenced a series of almost incredible wanderings, in the course of which, as alleged, he visited Spain, Portugal, England, Prussia, Poland, Hungary, Wallachia and Russia. At Moscow he was captured by the Tartars and brought to Constantinople by the son of the Khan. All this, if true, must have

taken place before his twenty-fifth year, for about this time we find him again in Germany. He has little to relate respecting his journeys, save that he underwent many hardships and was employed in a medical capacity in sundry campaigns. Mining operations seem always to have attracted his attention; he occupied himself for a long time in the mines of Sigismund Fugger, at Schwatz, in the Tyrol, with researches having for their end the discovery of the great alchemistic secrets, the transmutation of metals, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life. On his return from Eastern Europe to Germany he once more entered upon the life of travelling scholar. The foundation of his fame in medicine is traceable, it would appear, to a cure he affected on a bookseller of Basel, by name Johann Probanius, who was suffering from a disease of the ankle which the Basel faculty had declared would render amputation necessary; under the treatment of Paracelsus the worthy bookseller was enabled in a few weeks to carry his wares to the annual fair at Frankfort, the same fair where some sixty years later one of his successors in the trade offered for sale the original Faust-book which in its narrative of the life of the arch-necromancer not improbably embodied many elements from that of Paracelsus. Soon after this success, in 1526, Paracelsus acquired the post of town physician at Basel and medical professor at the University. His first act on entering the chair was to consign to the flames the works of Avicenna whose treatise on medicine was then the standard authority. This demonstration was intended to point the moral of the Latin programme of his course for the session of 1527. In this document he proclaimed his intention to cast aside in its entirety all tradition and

all the textbooks of his predecessors, and alone to deliver the results of his own researches. Large numbers of students flocked from all sides to hear the renowned medicus who had pronounced himself supreme, and assured the world that his shoe latchets possessed more medical learning than Galen and Avicenna together.

We may presume that after such an opening the further development of the course must have been awaited with breathless expectation by the assembled aspirants to the Æsculapian art. But the pompous and in some cases unintelligible jargon of which the lectures consisted—the character of which has been immortalised ever since in the word *bombastic*—before long had served effectually to thin his audience. As was naturally to be expected with a man who despised all book learning and who held so high an opinion of his own qualifications, his relations with his academic colleagues had in a little while become to the last degree strained. The unpopularity and disgust which he inspired was increased by his intemperate habits. It is alleged that he rarely ascended the professorial chair sober. We cannot therefore wonder that he had not occupied the post a year, before it had become practically untenable by him. His precipitate flight from Basel was immediately traceable to his resentment at a legal decision which was palpably animated by spite against himself or servility to his adversary or perhaps both. A wealthy canon, Cornelius von Lichtenfels, who was suffering from an attack of indigestion, offered Paracelsus a hundred gulden if he would cure him; the cure was readily effected by a small dose of laudanum which seems to have been the main constituent in a secret and wonderworking preparation

which Paracelsus employed. The canon finding himself recovered refused Theophrastus' stipulated fee; the dispute coming before the court, the case was decided against Paracelsus in favour of the customary honorarium. Upon this Paracelsus broke out into such violent invectives against the judges that he was advised by his friends to fly from the prosecution with which he was threatened. He settled down at Colmar in Elsass where he remained about two years before recommencing his wandering career. He began now to think about having his manuscripts printed. The first book of his *Grossen Wundarznei* was probably printed at Ulm, but the work was completed at Augsburg. Henceforward the places of his temporary sojourn are mainly to be gathered from the prefaces and dedications of the various works. From these we may see that he was at Nuremberg in 1529, and that within the next ten years he visited successively Zürich, St. Gallen, Pfäfers, Mönchroth, Augsburg, Kronau, &c. In the year 1540, he was summoned by the archbishop to Salzburg where he died on the 24th September, 1541.

Paracelsus was eminently a type of the travelling scholar of the period, at least in his mode of life; whether his appearance and manners may be taken as equally representative, may be doubtful, notwithstanding that it is highly probable that even the average itinerant man of learning did not possess the dignity and polish of his more fortunate brother the ecclesiastic or the academic dignatory. According to all accounts Paracelsus was exceptionally coarse in his appearance and habit. He is described as more like a labourer than a scholar; his addiction to drink is admitted on all hands. During two years it is said he never undressed himself, but late at

night after hard drinking, he would throw himself upon a couch, his great sword by his side; after an hour or two, he would rise up suddenly, whirling the sword in the air, or plunging it violently into the wall or ceiling of the apartment. His terrified famulus[1] appearing, Paracelsus, his hand on the hilt of his sword, would stand and dictate by the hour together. Oporinus, the famulus from whose narrative the account is taken, relates that he stood in hourly dread of his master even when absent, believing him to be in a sense omniscient. Another famulus he was in the habit of frightening in his midnight ravings with the threat of invoking a million devils, upon which the miserable creature would fall upon his knees and beg him not to do so. The latter subsequently in all seriousness would attribute his own escape from demonic destruction to the earnestness of his entreaties. Fire, we learn, was ever burning in his laboratory where something was always distilling or preparing. The staff of Paracelsus was universally believed to possess a demon enclosed in its handle. The name of Paracelsus descended to generations long subsequent as representing the incarnation of Alchemy and Occult medicine. He left a crowd of followers, who saw in him the prophet of the mystical-theurgic or quasi-scientific tendencies which were so popular just before the dawn of physical science proper.

As Sigwart (Kleine Schriften, vol. I. p. 41) remarks, Paracelsus in spite of his repudiation of tradition and

[1] The famulus, it is perhaps hardly necessary to explain, was a poor student who performed menial offices for a professor or man of learning in return for board and instruction. He was a recognised institution of mediæval German university life.

authority, was quite as much dependent on authority and tradition, as his orthodox opponents of the schools, though the tradition was not altogether the same. Paracelsus founded on a tradition "which had flown steadily on in a kind of under-current throughout the middle ages, and in the 15th century had, through the zeal of the humanists, suddenly come to the fore." This newer tradition was supplied by the revived Neo-Platonic philosophy, with the astrology and magic which were associated with it, especially in its later phases, and perhaps still more from the cognate doctrines of the Cabala recently opened up by the researches of Reuchlin. The Neo-Platonic notion of a tripartite division of the world, Paracelsus possibly derived more immediately from the Medicean Florentine, Marsilius Ficinus, the Nestor of the Humanist movement. The three worlds, the intelligible, the celestial, and the terrestrial, stand in continuous and mysterious communication with one another. The Heaven with its stars, has its counterpart in the Earth, with its metals, plants, and animals of which the heavenly or astral world is the prototype; that which in the heavens appears as star, or planet, exists as mineral vegetable or animal in the Earth; he who understands the signatures of things, that is, the signs denoting their connection, understands their true signification and their secret power. All three worlds are bound together by a reciprocal sympathy; on this the possibility of magic rests. Man is a microcosmos, that is, he contains within himself all the elements of the tripartite macrocosmos, his body is compounded of the terrestrial elements, his astral soul is the repository of planetary influences, his rational soul is a part of the Divine or Intelligible world-principle. As the astral soul

regulates the body, so the rational soul dominates the whole man. The carrying out of these positions is, to the last degree, fantastic. Every element has its archœus or spiritual principle. Human nature, as the unity and pinnacle of the universe, comprises within itself the characteristics of the animal world, of the world of elementary spirits, and of the angelic world. To the world of elementary spirits, belong the undines, or beings composed of the spiritual principle of water, the gnomes, kobolds,or earth spirits, beings whose dwelling place is the interior of the Earth: sylphs or lemures, the spirits of air, and salamanders or the creatures native to the element of fire. These entities being possessed only of an inferior or elementary soul, can only be rendered immortal by their marriage with human kind. According to the doctrine of Galen the four elements have their counterpart in the four cardinal humours of the human body, the relative preponderance of these gives the distinctions of temperament and constitution, as well as the basis for the diagnosis of disease. Against this Paracelsus vehemently rails, opposing thereto his own doctrine of mercury, sulphury, and salt as the three principles, which he terms the counterpart of the trinity; for with Paracelsus the recognised four elements did not constitute a hierarchy in themselves, but only one division, the terrestrial, in the triune hierarchy of the kosmos. In wood the element which passes off in smoke is mercury, the fire is sulphur, while the ash is salt. We refrain from entering with further detail into these quaint conceits. But that a man like Paracelsus should have been regarded as something like a prophet by large numbers, is significant of the intellectual atmosphere of the 16th century,

and indicates a soil ripe for development of such a myth as that of Faustus. We now pass on to the consideration of yet another figure contemporary with the rise of the Faust legend.

Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim was born of a noble family at Cologne in the year 1487. He received his early education in the university of his native town, where he entered in the faculties of Law and Medicine. Like a true son of his age, he also soon became attracted to the occult sciences. When about twenty years of age he went to Paris, full of romantic dreams as to the unknown possibilities hidden in the nature of things. In Paris, in conjunction with some other young men of divers nationalities, but all inspired by the same hopes, he instituted a secret society, having for its object the study and exploitation of the magical sciences for the ends of personal ambition. That they succeeded in obtaining credence for their pretensions is evinced by the fact that Agrippa received a commission from a noble of Catalonia to deliver one of his castles which was besieged by insurrectionary peasants. Agrippa, by dint of cunning and address, but at great personal risk, succeeded in inducing the insurgents to disperse. Escaped without loss of credit from his dangerous adventure, Agrippa seems for the time being to have had enough of the thaumaturgic profession, and accordingly we find him, in 1509, endeavouring to obtain an academic position in the Theological Faculty. The mystical doctrines he professed in this department were founded on Reuchlin, Mirandola, and the cabalistic writers of the period. His lectures, which were well attended, did not succeed in their purpose, for the Franciscan provincial, Catilinet,

denounced Agrippa before the Duchess of Burgundy who was then holding court in Ghent as a dangerous heretic; and not even an essay on the superiority of the female to the male sex, with which Agrippa sought to curry favour with the lady in question, sufficed to efface the ecclesiastical stigma cast upon him as a follower of Reuchlin. Agrippa now came to London, where he pursued more theological studies, but in a short time returned to Cologne, delivering lectures against the worship of relics, pictures, as well as against processions, the observance of feast days and other Catholic practices. He next undertook a journey for the purpose of visiting the renowned Abbot Trittenheim of St. Jacob's cloister at Wurzburg. This personage, as will have been already evident, was the centre of attraction for all students of occult lore in those days.

Encouraged by the Abbot, Agrippa wrote his first great treatise, "De Occulta Philosophia," which claimed to place magic on a philosophical basis. The whole is founded on the principles of Neo-Platonism, and on the characteristic division of the universe, into a spiritual, astral, and elementary world. The system is in all essentials similar to that of Paracelsus, but is rather more coherent, and worked out with greater literary skill. It treats of mysterious affinities, astrological, alchemical, and mystical, the influence of angels, spirits, and demons, etc., etc., in the approved fashion of the time, and of the means, the magical formulæ, and signs, etc., by which they may be subjected to man's influence. This work was no sooner finished, than we find Agrippa transformed into an officer in the Imperial army. In this capacity he seems to have attained distinction, being created a knight on

the battle field. But he soon came back to his old pursuits, accompanying the Cardinal da Santa Crochet as theologian to the council of Pisa. After returning for a short time to his military career he once more started as teacher, delivering orations on Hermes Trismegistos, in the uniform of the Imperial officer. The success of these lectures was such as to obtain for him the double Doctorate in law and medicine, and what was of still more importance to him, the hand of a noble maiden. But troubles soon followed. Francis I. retreated across the Alps; the house of Agrippa was plundered in the popular tumult, and it was only through the fidelity of one of his pupils, that his manuscripts were saved. Reduced to great straits after a temporary sojourn with the Marquis of Montferrat, he was invited simultaneously to become syndic and orator to the town of Metz and to a post with the Papal legate at Avignon. He decided upon Metz whither he repaired with his wife and child in 1519. A sceptical tendency as regards all human knowledge now came over the man whose reputation for magical practice and occult science had opened for him the gates of palaces. He became involved in disputes with the ecclesiastical authorities. In one of these he succeeded in rescuing a peasant girl, accused of witchcraft, from the Inquisition. She had been tried before the Inquisitor of Metz and bid fair to be condemned to the stake. It has been remarked as one of the singular contradictions in Agrippa's life, that the man who would spend so much time in the study and promulgation of doctrines springing from the same stem as the belief in witchcraft, should nevertheless have risked his livelihood to combat its results in the particular case in question. Soon after this,

becoming disgusted with his position, he returned once more to Cologne, where he encountered Ulrich von Hutten; but Hutten's plans for the separation of Germany from the Roman Church, displeased him. His wife dying about this time, he again set out on his wanderings; in the following year we find him at Geneva, a native of which place he married. Soon after this he obtained the post of town Physician at Freiburg, but he did not long remain here. In 1524 he received the appointment of Physician and Astrologer to the French Court. He accordingly repared to Lyons, when political events consequent on the battle of Pavia proving unfavourable to him, he began to negotiate with the Constable de Bourbon, the enemy of Francis, when the memorable campaign at Rome in 1527 threw him again on the French Court. About this time he composed his celebrated work, *Declamatio de incertitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum et artium*, in which the sceptical tendency, already alluded to, receives its fullest expression in a somewhat dreary declamation against all departments of learning, and indeed all human interests whatever. A call to Antwerp freed Agrippa from the serious financial and other difficulties which surrounded him. An Augustine monk, much addicted to magic offered him an asylum there. Although owing to delays on the journey, it was several months before he reached his destination, once arrived, it was not long before he obtained through the Duchess Margareta of the Netherlands the post of Imperial councillor, historiographer, and keeper of the archives. In this capacity he has left an account of the entry of Charles V. into Antwerp. His wife at this time died of the plague, then prevalent, and a

third marriage which he contracted shortly after, resulting in a separation, his house was broken up, and his children placed in the hands of strangers. The publication of his work on the vanity of sciences, drew upon him a storm of indignation from all sides. The orthodox men of learning, no less than the humanists, had no words severe enough for a writer who would involve all learning in a common condemnation as the off-spring of the evil one, and as fruitful in nothing but sophistry and illusion. Agrippa, apparently, did not realise the fact that it was impossible for him to remain a courtier after the wholesale attacks contained in this work on the powers that were, temporal and spiritual, though Erasmus had warned him of the rashness of his proceeding, and had written urgently begging Agrippa not to involve him (Erasmus) in the conflicts with authority which were certain to ensue. The forecast of Erasmus was soon verified. Charles V. withdrew Agrippa's pension, and drove him from the Netherlands, but not until after he had been immured for some time in the debtor's prison at Brussels. In this extremity, however, the free-thinking Archbishop of Cologne, Herman von Wied, invited him to reside in his castle near Bonn. Under the shelter of this powerful protection, he entered upon a sharp controversy with his opponents. At this time, too, under the patronage of the Archbishop, to whom it was dedicated, the manuscript treatise of Agrippa before-mentioned, "*De Occulta Philosophia,*" was for the first time printed. The inconsistency of Agrippa's proceeding, in publishing this book after his denunciation of magic in the "*De Vanitate,*" will be especially apparent when we consider a passage from the latter work which expressly repudiates the earlier treatise.

"I, being also a young man," says Agrippa (I quote from the English translation of 1569), "wrote of magical matters three books in a sufficient large volume, in which books, whatsoever was then done amiss through curious youth, now being more advised, I will that it be recanted with this retractation, for I have in times past consumed very much time and substance in these vanities. At length I got this profit thereby, that I know by what means I should discourage and dissuade others from this destruction."

It is amusing that after having written thus, Agrippa consented to the publication of the work in question, for, it must be remembered, he never doubts of the reality of magic; the "vanity" that he finds in its pretensions consisting in the fact, that these lure men on to their souls' destruction, instead of fulfilling the promises held out to them. Whether on this particular matter, the Archbishop Herman succeeded in modifying the opinions of Agrippa as expressed in his more recent treatise, or whether a desire of doing honour to his patron, outweighed his concern for the spiritual welfare of his contemporaries, we are unable to say. Agrippa for some unknown reason left Bonn in 1535. He was desirous of visiting Lyons and presumably of again paying his attentions to the French king, but he had no sooner crossed the frontier, than he was arrested by order of Francis, on the ground of some disrespectful letters concerning the Queen mother he had had printed. His friends before long procured his release, whereupon he repaired to Grenoble on the invitation of a friend of position in the town, in whose house he died, in 1536, after a short illness, in the 49th year of his age.

Legend soon began to fasten itself on to the memory of Cornelius Agrippa. He too was reported as having sold himself to the devil, and as having become possessed of miraculous powers. By means of his incantations it was said, that during the war in Italy events occurring in Milan were simultaneously known in Paris. The story which connects Faust with the battle of Pavia, is, we think, clearly traceable to a legend which relates that the arts of Agrippa contributed to the success of the Imperialists in the engagement. Other stories connecting Faust with the court of Charles V. also in all probability have their origin in Agrippa's relations with that monarch. It was said that Agrippa discoursed daily between nine and ten o'clock at Freiburg and between ten and eleven near Mentz. This and other marvellous deeds recorded of him, he is reported to have effected through the agency of a small black dog which remained always close beside him, lying on his writing table and sleeping in his bed, and which was believed to be an incarnate demon that Agrippa had bound to his service by means of a collar whereon were engraved mysterious formulæ and signs. Here again, there can be little doubt that we have the origin of the demon-poodle's part in the Faust-legend. After the death of its master the animal was said to have sprung into the river and never to have been seen again. The character and career of Cornelius Agrippa, so wayward, so contradictory, and so romantic, is an interesting study in itself, but with it we are not here concerned. We have taken Agrippa as we have taken Paracelsus, as the embodiment of a tendency which reached the height of its development in the earlier half of the 16th century. At periods like the

one we speak of, at what we may term the "great divides" of history, the most opposite tendencies co-exist or are separated from each other only by an interval of a few years. In the previous century, the science and philosophy of the middle ages proper, had been undermined by the new learning. The pseudo-science based on the ancient literatures newly opened up, which had come into vogue, though apparently opposed to the science which preceded it, was really opposed not so much to this as to the science of modern times which succeeded it. The period of its zenith was also the period when its decline was already written on it. The same century, the first half of which produced a Paracelsus, an Agrippa, a Trithemius, as men representative of its conceptions of nature, produced in its second half a Bacon, a Galilei, a Kepler. Nay, while Paracelsus and Agrippa were still alive, and at that seat of occult learning, Cracow—at the very time too when Doctor Faustus was alleged to have been studying there—a Copernicus was pursuing the unpretentious researches which were destined to revolutionise in a modern sense at least one department of science. There is no century in which the antithesis of old and new is more sharply manifested than in the 16th.

With the 16th century and its Faust-legend, the mythos proper finally disappears, as one of the factors of the evolution of human culture. There have been of course plenty of legendary anecdotes, that have arisen and been current concerning various personages, since then; but there has been no great legendary cyclos, whose influence has made itself felt throughout the most advanced nations, which has embodied any special conception, or which has taken complete possession of any

personality, since the Humanism and awakening aspirations toward an understanding of nature were seized upon by the theological ideas of the time ("reformed" even more than Catholic) from their own point of view and embodied in the legend of the "Life and Death of the Arch Conjuror and Necromancer, Dr. Faustus." Speaking broadly, we may characterise the Faust myth as portraying the antagonism between the "Reformation" and the "New Learning." To the dogmatic reformers, to a Luther, a Calvin, a Zwingli, and their followers, the scholarship of an Erasmus, a Conrad Muth, a Reuchlin, with their indifference to the claims of the rival dogmatic systems, (although for the most part nominally adhering to the older church) was an impiety only to be accounted for on the ground of diabolic influence. Any special skill in art or in science, or any new discovery being immediately attributed by the thought of the age to a supernatural source, it is not difficult to see that the materials for the myth were at hand, for whichever side happened to take them up.

In thus taking farewell, so to speak, of the ages of myth for that modern period, in which physical science, commerce, and personal gain, succeeds to the old world learning and fancy, with its labour for use and pleasure, rather than exchange, and with its dependence on status, it is impossible one would think for any one to avoid putting to themselves very pointedly, the question. How much has the world gained by the improvements of which we are accustomed to hear so much bepraised? There are probably few who have considered the matter at all, who at least, at times, have not been inclined to answer in the negative. Who is there, for

instance, who as the evening closes comes upon a view of one of those quaint mediæval towns (which survive, even to the present day, in some parts of Southern Germany, where the break with the past has been more recent than in this country) does not feel as someone recently expressed it, that he would give twenty years of his life to be transported back, even to the period we have been considering, in which, although in many respects corrupt, the main fabric of the middle ages was still intact—so preferable does the rest and peace of the world, typified in those narrow-gabled streets, and tiled buildings, seem to him to the turmoil of that other world, typified in the bran new Bahn, and the shunting yard and factory chimney, which will probably not be far off? This may be sentiment, but sentiment here as elsewhere, has a meaning, which may not be blinked. This sentiment is after all only the ideal expression in one form of the utter and complete failure of modern civilisation, so far as human happiness is concerned, even with those who are not materially crushed by it. Looking at it apart from its broader issues, and merely on its artistic and sentimental side, the hideousness of the machine-world of to-day only requires a contrast like that indicated, to become apparent to the most casual observer. We feel irresistibly under such circumstances, that even the middle ages in their decay —the world in which a Faustus, a Paracelsus, an Agrippa, lived and wandered from town to town—would compare favourably, with all its superstition, and straightforward ferocity, with the matter-of-fact, hypocritical 19th century. In taking leave of the world of the Faust-mythos, we cannot help feeling, we are

taking leave to a great extent of contact with reality, the naive simplicity of human nature, and entering upon the beginning of the modern age of shams. There are no three centuries in history which have witnessed so great a change, not only in the surroundings of life, but in human nature itself, as those between the 16th and the 19th centuries inclusive. But it is of no use looking back. The hope for humanity of those who think with the present writer is that the 22nd century will exhibit a vaster and more complete contrast to the 19th century, than the latter does to the age which produced a Faust-mythos.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND A FUTURE LIFE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the threadbare nature of the subject of the future life of the individual, as matter of discussion, one is constantly reminded of the fact that few of those who so confidently take one side or the other, really apprehend what the question involves, or indeed the meaning of the problem they are talking about. We propose briefly to analyse what the conception of post-mortem existence really implies, before offering a few remarks on the general question.

The belief in what is conventionally called "a future life," implies the assumption of the possibility of the existence of the individual consciousness apart from the material organism, which is *prima facie* its correlative condition. This belief, as a matter of fact, denies the correlation of this mental object or phenomenon with the material object or phenomenon with which, in given experience, it is invariably found associated as a primary condition. Now, in the first place, we have to inquire in what this mental object—that Kant termed, "the object of the internal sense," that philosophers generally call the empirical ego, and that we, as ordinary persons, speak of, as "myself"—in what this object essentially exists. Apart from all theories on the question, what is the ultimate nature of the mental

object, "myself," as presented to us in experience? In the first place, although in a sense it appears as an object given in consciousness, it is, nevertheless, as an object, unique. It exists in time merely, and it appears as inseparably correlated with consciousness itself which is true of no other object whatever. But further, if we examine this object in introspective reflection we find that its ultimate condition is what we term Memory. Self-consciousness, *i.e*, the consciousness of the object called "myself," simply means the consciousness of a definite thread of memory associated with a definite material organism or body as its instrument. In other words, the individual-consciousness as such, the empirical ego, or "soul" (according as we choose to term it) evinces itself as at basis nothing but a memory-synthesis, that is, as a succession of perceptions, thoughts, and volitions, knit together by memory, and conceived by reflexion as a concrete object, under the category of "substance." The memory-synthesis means primarily the connecting or binding together of a definite quantum of the infinite possible moments of consciousness, actualised under the form of time, as constituting one whole of "self-reference" in such wise that the past is intuitively connected with the present, and both are identified as elements of one single and indivisible experience. There may be interruptions in the course of this memory-synthesis or synthesis of personal experience more or less (though we have reason to believe these are never quite complete), such as in normal sleep, and still more in catalepsies, anæsthesia, and other abnormal states. On the resumption of the normal waking-consciousness, however, the memory-synthesis, the thread of personal identity and experience, appears

again, unbroken as before, and resumes its sway. Its continuity during these intervals is afterwards inferred by reflective thought. This is aided by a reference to the continuous existence of the body or material organism in a living state throughout the apparent breaks, as the representative of the personality in the world of space. The last is an important point.

It is clear from the foregoing that philosophical or psychological analysis of personal identity, as given in experience, discloses memory as the essential element therein, and hence indicates that the memory-synthesis and the personality are essentially identical. The future life of the individual personality, therefore, must, if it is to have any meaning at all, imply the continued existence of the memory-synthesis intact as it is here and now. Once this synthesis is definitively dissolved, the personality as such is extinguished. It is well to emphasise this point, inasmuch as it is seldom fully realised in the loose and vague popular notions which pass current for ideas on this subject. The thread of memory connecting the "thisness" of the individual experience in time is the condition of personal identity, and its complete lapse would necessarily be the final extinction of the given individual consciousness. The notion of its existence, irrespective of the continuance of the present memory-synthesis, is a confusion of thought, due to a survival of primitive animistic ideas in the popular mind, by which the soul is conceived in a vague way as an object subsisting in space, in fact, as a kind of rarified material duplicate of the body.

But if philosophical analysis points to the memory-

synthesis as the *sine quâ non* of the individual consciousness or personality, it can discover nothing in experience or in the nature of its subject-matter in this connection that would lend colour to the possibility of its subsistence separate from its material base—or accompaniment (if one will). Analogies between the conditions of the individual consciousness in sleep or trance and after the dissolution of the material organism, with which it is *prima facie* identified, by death, are vitiated by the circumstances:—(1) that in the former case we have good reason to suppose that the interruption, however great it may be comparatively, is yet never complete, that the thread of memory, however thin it may have run, is still there, while, in the latter case, we have no evidence of this; (2) in the former case the material organism, however much it may be temporarily modified on certain sides, remains, nevertheless, substantially intact and ready to resume its functions. Hence here no conclusion can be drawn as to separable subsistence of individual consciousness and bodily organism.

The theory of the continued existence of the memory-synthesis or personality in separation from its material instrument is handicapped with the difficulty, as already hinted, of disentangling it even in thought from the latter. Many readers may suppose it easy enough by a flight of imagination to conceive oneself as disembodied. But a very little examination of our imaginings in this connection shows us that while we may succeed in thinking away for the nonce certain superficial inconveniences of this much despised body, yet that is all we can do. Our imagination presupposes all the time sensibility, and even the special senses which are the

attributes of the body, and which are essential elements of the individual consciousness, and yet these are inconceivable save as functions of the body with its special organs—more obviously inconceivable indeed, if not really so, than thought is inconceivable otherwise than as connected with the brain. Yet any theory of the possible independent subsistence of the individual consciousness or memory-synthesis apart from the organism, whether it take the form of a belief in future life in the ordinary sense, or of the idea of a double personality during this mundane life, such as Théophile Gautier has made the basis of one of his most effective stories—any theory of separate subsistence, I say, has to face this apparently insuperable difficulty.

It is necessary to distinguish between the mere belief in a continuance of the memory-synthesis after death, and the doctrine of immortality as such; the first, while assuming the separability of the personal consciousness from its concomitant bodily organism, merely draws the conclusion that the dissolution of the latter, does not, as is apparently the case, involve the extinction of the former. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the memory-synthesis is in its nature eternal or immortal. It merely denies its dependence on the bodily organism, in such wise that the death of the one involves the lapse of the other. The theory of personal immortality, on the contrary, postulates the memory-synthesis as in its nature indestructible; this latter position, therefore, of a *never-ending* continuance throughout all future time, at least demands a separate consideration from that of a simple continuance after death. While the latter theory is,

from a philosophical point of view, undoubtedly possible, however improbable many may consider it from a scientific standpoint, the latter, the immortality-doctrine, would seem *per se* philosophically untenable.

The individual consciousness or memory-synthesis, as we know it, is a particular fact that has arisen in time. It has begun on the hither side of the birth of the particular human body with which it is associated. My memory-synthesis, that thread of memory which constitutes the personal identity expressed in the term "myself," I can trace back and back in time until I arrive at a period about which it is lost. Now, every particular fact or object arising in time, partakes of the nature of a chance product, and it is subject to the conditions of chance and change to which the entire content of time is subordinate. Experience teaches us that all things arising in time invariably perish in time, and this is a rule that knows no exception. Philosophy recognises time and space as the forms in which the chance world of phenomena manifests itself.

Time and space constitute the arena of the passing, not of the abiding; the fact of any particular object having arisen—that is, having come into being when before it was not—shows plainly that its existence has no inherent necessity attaching to it, in other words, that it is not *necessary* but *contingent*. It must, in short, be contingent on the infinity of things constituting the content of time. In its origin it is contingent on a collocation of favourable circumstances, and throughout its course it is uninterruptedly exposed to the possibility of the occurrence of an adverse collocation of circumstances incompatible

with the continuance of its existence. In the case of the animal body, indeed, the mere maintenance of the functioning, which is what we call its life, in the end destroys that very life, or as we say, it wears itself out. The same remark applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to inorganic products, although in organic bodies it is more strikingly noticeable. In a word, time being the form of transiency, we are forced to assume that all that *arises* in time will also *perish* in time. That which is necessary does not begin or arise, but is equally present throughout all time, past, present, and future.

Now the personality, as given in the memory-synthesis, experience tells us, has arisen in time, and hence, I argue, it partakes of the nature of transiency; in other words, it is a particular like other particulars, and, as such, possesses no necessity of existence, but is subject to the conditions of chance and change, of coming and going, of arising and passing away, which govern the content of time generally. Its existence hinges upon a concurrence of other particulars, and this is again conditioned by others, and so on to infinity. Hence, among the infinity of possible changes which Reality, or the content of time, presupposes, some changes must arise, at some time or other, which involve its destruction (as particular object among other particular objects), for this is what is meant by the law that what arises in time must also perish in time, that what begins in time must also end in time.

There are, however, one or two special reasons, apart from the desire for immortality, which conduce to the belief that the memory-synthesis, the "myself" as object, forms an exception in this respect to the objects

of the world of space that arise and perish in time. Firstly, as already remarked, it is unique in character. Unlike the particular objects of the outer world, but like the outer world considered as *universum*, it is a totality within itself, embracing also within itself in its turn a world of particulars, to wit, the flux of its own thoughts and feelings and volitions. Furthermore, just as the mind can assign no definite limits to the external universe either in space or time, so we can assign no precise moment in time when our memory-synthesis or personal consciousness can be said to have begun. *All individual experience or memory by its very nature presupposes a known past.*

Memory, therefore, for this reason can never strictly be thought of as beginning, since it always presupposes memory. This is not affected by the fact that I may possibly be able to recall approximately a time when I was first aware of myself, *i.e.*, before which I cannot recall being aware or conscious; for in the first place the time we recall is merely approximative and not precise, and in the second place I am bound to assume that my *then* awareness or self-consciousness must have involved a remembered past, just as does my memory-synthesis at the present moment, although the past at the back of this earliest remembered experience is now lost to me. On the same grounds that it is impossible to conceive of the Self or memory-synthesis springing into being out of a previous nothing, it is impossible to conceive of it, once there, as lapsing into nothing. This, however, is, properly speaking, merely an instance of the irrationality, so to say, of the world of objects of sense generally, and is of similar nature to the old Greek puzzles anent the infinite divisibility of space,

the impossibility of assigning the exact moment when motion ceases, and the rest.

The above considerations, therefore, although they explain a vague tendency in the mind to conceive of its particular self as immortal, truly speaking have no specific bearing on the question. Although I may not be able to assign any precise moment of beginning to my memory-synthesis or to explain its coming into being, yet I know for practical purposes that it has begun, and begun as before said, on the hither side of the coming into being of the organic body which is its organ. The *prima facie* assumption, of the origination of the memory-synthesis, or so-called soul, in connection with a certain stage in the growth of the bodily organism is not rebutted by a reference to the phenomena of sleep and waking. Behind my soundest sleep lies my past life, known to me as mine; behind my present life lies no life known to me as mine. My personal identity or memory-synthesis carries me back to a certain year beyond which I cannot trace it; it carries me back, through all the changes of mental development, up to the aforesaid year, and there it disappears after having got gradually thinner and thinner as it approached this year. Were I conscious of a pre-existence of my personality as such, behind my present life, in a similar way that I am conscious of such behind my soundest and longest sleep *during* the present life, a plausible case would certainly be made out for its post-existence after the termination of that life.

Could I find myself in memory, no matter how dimly or transiently, in (say) the London of Dr. Johnson, in the salons of pre-revolutionary eighteenth-century Paris, amid the society of the monks, knights, or guildsmen of the

middle ages, in the Roman villa of the second century, on the Acrōpolis of Athens during the Peloponesian war, or, if you will, in some supra-mundane "sphere of influence," at some other period, I could readily conceive as probable, my appearance, after the close of this present life during portions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in some other capacity, at some other time and some other place. But this I cannot do. My memory-synthesis, my personal consciousness, is, up to date, strictly correlated with my organic synthesis or body. Hence the conclusion will naturally suggest itself that, to adapt to the present subject the words of the poet, the body being its "wedding garment," the body is also to be regarded as its "shroud." This is, however, it must not be forgotten, at best a probable inference, where the data for a certain conclusion are wanting. With the question of Immortality, it is somewhat different.

It would seem inevitable then, in spite of the fact being somewhat obscured by the unique characteristics of the memory-synthesis, which we have above referred to in passing, that we are nevertheless bound to regard this Self as essentially belonging, like other objects, to the world of fleeting particulars in time. Hence it is plain that to ascribe to it, an object originating in past time, continuance throughout all future time, involves us in a fallacy of misconception.

In the foregoing, we have spoken of the memory-synthesis recognised as such in its own reflection, as being an object of experience or as known. Now the question arises, what is meant by this? What is this consciousness or experience which recognises the Self

or memory-synthesis as object to itself, and yet seemingly identifies itself therewith as its Subject-self? In this question is involved the whole crux of philosophy and theory of knowledge. Consciousness-in-general, while as regards the world of space it proclaims itself "common to all," as Kant has it, nevertheless, as regards the Self-object, appears in a peculiar manner as special to each. This it is which for the thinker really gives the Self its unique character as object. It is not merely object like objects in space, but is identified in an especial manner with the knowing Subject-in-general.

External objects themselves, as perceived, mere syntheses of feelings and thoughts, sense-impressions (visible extension, hardness, colour, etc.) united into one whole by means of certain thought-forms or categories, are intuitively postulated as reality, to which universal appeal can be made. Reflective thought, *i.e.*, philosophy, interprets this intuitive postulate of reality as the determination of Consciousness-in-general. It is this same power of universal consciousness within us which experiences the inward object we call "self" no less than the manifold objects of the outward world. But in the latter case this universal Power of consciousness (or to use the language of philosophy the Pure Subject) seems itself bounded by the immediacy or thisness of that very memory-synthesis which is its object. Here is partly an illusion. The universal element in consciousness, the element that perceives the memory-synthesis as object of its immediate experience, just as it also perceives the things of space as objects of its mediate experience, is not itself limited by any particular memory-synthesis arising in time. If the foregoing

line of argument be correct, any given memory-synthesis is merely an accident, merely the transitory form this element assumes, just as the particular objects of space are merely transitory forms. The universal element in consciousness is the alone abiding. The particular personality, as which it is determined, under certain particular conditions of time and space is as such its mere temporary and local manifestation.

This universal element in experience, this universal principle of knowledge, constitutes the permanent possibility of consciousness, irrespective of time, and it is this element in consciousness which is the ultimate basis of the whole, which, continually realising itself anew as memory-synthesis, yet never exhausts itself. This once admitted, we are forced back to the old Oriental position of regarding the Self or personality merely in the light of one of the infinitude of evanescent particulars or individuals of which all sensible reality is made up—of regarding it, as it were, one of those innumerable ripples in which the great lake reveals itself at a particular moment, and in a particular spot of its surface. The universal element, the water of the lake, is the substance of the ripple; but, nevertheless, its form, its individuality, so long as it lasts, is peculiar to itself. Ripples accompany one another, and ripples succeed one another, but each and all having spent their course pass into the oblivion of the lake, which, nevertheless, is no oblivion, since it is continually determining itself anew to fresh ripples, substantially, though not individually, the same. Thus the universal element in consciousness, in which the real world displays itself, which constitutes the permanent possibility of all experience, is continuously

determining itself in countless memories or "selves," each of which, however, has its individuality as this "myself" here and now. The latter point, the immediacy, the *thisness* of the self-reference is identical in them all; it is given in the mere fact of the determination of consciousness as memory-synthesis, but the particularity of each individual, or so to say, the specific *who-ness*, the special determination of each individual, myself, yourself, and himself, is dependent for its existence on the chance meeting of two parents, and on a variety of other circumstances up to the moment of birth, or, at least, of conception.

If, then, we are compelled to abandon the belief in immortality, in the sense of an eternally unbroken, or rather unlapsed, continuance of this particular individual consciousness or thread of memory, the mere question of post-mortem existence, that is its continuance for a shorter or a longer span of time after the death of the body, loses a large measure of its interest and importance. Whether physical death involves the extinction of the memory-synthesis, or in other words, of this particular self-consciousness; or whether we suppose the latter to subsist a while longer, if we are convinced that in the end, it too must, as part of the content of time, finally succumb to the condition governing that content generally, is a comparatively secondary matter. It may be an interesting problem, but, if it is to be dealt with at all, it is a problem for science to deal with, and up to the present time the conclusions of science, in so far as it has touched the matter at all, though they may not have been dogmatic on the negative side, have yet certainly not been favourable to the affirmative.

These things being so, the individual as such, loses the

particular kind of importance he assumes in the great ethical religions of the world. But at the same time, if he loses importance as an immortal being having definite relations with the soul of the universe (considered also as, in some sense, a self-conscious personality), he gains in value as entering into a great social life, the ultimate *telos* of which we cannot foresee and but dimly imagine. The two points of view are essentially antithetic. We notice this in common life. A man whose interests lie in the work of social progress is almost invariably indifferent to the question of his own personal prospects after death. On the other hand, he who is given to meditating on his latter end, and for whom the question of a post-physical future life for himself as individual is of primary importance, is generally speaking indifferent, where not positively hostile, to social ideals.

At the same time, the desire for the continuance of individual life, or consciousness after death, is natural enough, and there are occasions when most men experience it to some extent. We are all of us naturally prone to regard our own personal thoughts, deeds, friendships, and loves, as the main facts of the universe, instead of being as they are, the temporary and particular manifestations of certain, relatively to the latter, permanent human traits. Our tendency is to ignore the fact that every object of our affection, himself or herself, is a synthesis of the matter of human nature in general, and a form constituted out of certain special traits of human nature, which are not limited to any one individual, but must continue to manifest themselves in our descendants' ages after the present generation has passed away. Of course, it may be objected, this does not

concern me. I am concerned only with my particular memory-synthesis and with what falls within it, be it persons or things.

The "I" (the self of memory-synthesis) has been saying this since the rise of the introspective spirit, in other words, since man first learned to separate himself, his existence and interest as individual, from himself as element of a social whole, as embodied in his clan or tribe. After being once stated, the objection must doubtless be allowed up to a certain point. "I," as individual, can never be compensated for the loss of a friend or child so long as "I," to wit, this particular memory-synthesis including the friend or child among its objects, may subsist. But even from this point of view, it is surely some consolation to recognise that the memory-synthesis in question is itself transient no less than the objects of its content.

The universal possibility or power of consciousness is eternally determining itself as memory-synthesis, and though this form of selfhood (so to speak), can never again be united with the same particular content which constitutes my concrete individual self as at present existing in a particular content of time, yet the same general traits must recur in countless new memory-contents. "When other lips and other hearts their tales of love shall tell," the same qualities will obtain in other "friends," in other "selves," in other "children," throughout an indefinite futurity. If it be objected to this consolation that it is only known persons, such, that is, as come within the purview of memory that we can care for or feel any interest in, I need only point out that such a view is entirely incompatible with the recognition of any duty whatever

towards an unborn posterity. If anyone admits a duty towards a being unborn or even unconceived, if, for instance, he admits an obligation not to procreate children to conditions of certain misery, he perforce admits that his moral solicitude is not limited to the actual concrete or real, but that he can also concern himself for a human nature which is purely potential, and hence abstract, since it is at present unrealised in any actual human being.

Natural though it may seem from the ordinary point of view, it is nevertheless to the psychologist a curious problem why men should concern themselves with a continuance of memory after death, which they are quite content to know did not obtain before birth. The whole stream of history familiar even to the most learned of us only in sections, and these only in more or less general outlines, was flowing on, while these concrete memory-syntheses here and now, were not. Its countless details, the loves, hates, cares, joys, of myriads of particular memory-syntheses in every period, have passed forever into oblivion, and yet these countless threads of self-consciousness, these countless individual minds, together with the interests bound up with them, do not in the least disturb any human self to-day. Whoever gives a thought to the joys or sorrows, pleasures or pains, of the vast stream of nameless memory-syntheses, myselves, who thought, acted, loved, and hated, during, let us say, those four centuries of Roman London, the city Augusta? Its remains are beneath our feet, but its domestic and personal tragedies and comedies, nay, its very history and mode of life must remain for ever a total blank for us. The thinker is content with the knowledge that the

universal element within him, that is, all that does not concern the particularity of the content of his memory-synthesis as such, survives and is immortal; even though he is constrained to admit that he himself, as particular personality that has come into being in time, must come to his end in time, and that even the survival of his memory-synthesis in time, beyond the dissolution of his organic synthesis in space—the body with which it is so intimately connected—is, to say the least, highly doubtful.

We remarked above that the man whose thoughts are turned to matters of social progress, to ideals which concern the future of the human race, or the goal of its evolution, is rarely other than indifferent to the question of his post-physical continuance as individual. On the other hand, as we also pointed out, the man who finds his main interest beyond the grave, is not precisely the man who signalises himself by his zeal in political and social matters except it be perhaps in such as conduce to the aggrandisement of the special creed or church-organisation to which he subscribes. Hence although there may be no conceivable objection to any man entertaining the belief or hope if he pleases, that he, as particular memory-synthesis, will survive his body, yet those who view social development as the supreme object of human solicitude, cannot regard the occupation of the mind with such a theory as other than at best a harmless personal idiosyncrasy, which, however, may become objectionable should it assume a position as the mainspring of thought and action. The moment this belief in an after-death existence is erected into a dogma, the moment it comes to be looked upon as an article of faith, which it is a duty to

hold, or at least which it is the evidence of an ignoble disposition of mind not to hold, then it becomes an enemy to be combated.

In itself, so long as it is the expression of a personal theory recognised by the holder distinctly as such, to wit, as his own private opinion on an open question with regard to which certainty is in the nature of things unattainable, no one has any cause to quarrel with it. But where any sort of slur is so much as suggested on those not holding this belief, or when the holder of it says, "What a brave boy am I!" accounting himself nobler or better than one holding the contrary opinion, then what is otherwise a harmless theory becomes an intolerable and morally pernicious dogma with which no parley should be held, and against which war to the knife should be proclaimed by all who value human progress and intellectual freedom. The man who believes in a continuance of his personal consciousness after death, rather than in its extinction at death, is not on this account any more a nobler or better man than he who takes the opposite view, any more than the man who holds that the cradle of the Aryan race was the plateau of central Asia is on that account a nobler or a better man than one who is convinced that the said cradle was the pine forests of northern Europe. Both are alike matters of opinion destitute of any necessary moral bearing whatever. I will even go further and maintain that if there is any question of moral superiority connected with the view held on this purely speculative question, it must be rather on the side of the man who has an impersonal ideal in place of a personal one. Though the mere disbelief in a future life may in itself denote no

moral superiority, yet when the disbeliever devotes himself to a social ideal, he necessarily stands on a higher, a more impersonal, moral level, than any to which the believer, as such, can ever attain.

A FREE FANTASIA ON THINGS DIVINE AND HUMAN

Our theme is "God," and his "Works," a subject certainly not exactly new and perhaps not exactly true, but possessing a perennial interest with a certain order of mind up to date. The first point to determine is what the word "God" connotes for us. A favourite device for justifying the employment of the word is to whittle it down into meaning the correlate of the feeling of awe, of immensity and incomprehensibility with which the universe, or the problems of life and knowledge inspire most of us. The "God" we are now concerned with is not, however, this hypostasised incomprehensibility, and we cannot discover any justification, popular or historical, for a use of the word in such a sense. Without going in detail into the philosophical senses of the term, all of which have had as their first object that of being a shield against the charge of heterodoxy, we may briefly recall the Spinozistic substance-God—Nature, or the sum-total of all Reality. In itself this was as preposterous a perversion of the word as could well be found, and led naturally to the persistent misunderstanding of Spinoza. But it is connected with the popular usage with which we are here dealing, in so far as there is a natural and unconscious tendency, apart from any theory, to personify the nature of things in general, and we might

add to damn the nature of things as thus personified. For the *real* object of objurgatory phraseology, when not a human personality, is generally, *in foro conscientiæ*, this very personified "nature of things" to which the objurgators, when in an elevated frame of mind, and pressed on the subject of theism, would apply the word "God." The popular formularised theory of God, and one unconsciously adopted in a refined shape by many theists who profess to repudiate it, is that of a demiurge, the creator, producer, artificer and general-director of all things. This is the connotation which ninety-nine out of a hundred persons in the present day connect with the word "God." It is the connotation which obtains in all the great "ethical religions" of the world (Christianity Judaism, Islamism, &c.) as well as in a more limited sense though not so often, in the old nature-cults. But at all events one thing is to me clear, as established at once by history and popular usage, to wit, that the word "God" must always imply a personality, that God must always be a person in the fullest sense of the word—otherwise he is no God. No one thought of making him anything else (*i.e.*, of excluding the notion of personality) until Spinoza, who was followed after an interval by the German post-Kantian thinkers in whose wake came a crowd of literateurs and heterodox sentimentalists; until in the present day among the *élite* of culture the word is emptied of all significance whatever. This exordium is necessary, as when we use the word God here, we mean a personality, and as the fullest and only personality, properly speaking, of which we have any conception is the human, we mean in accordance with popular conception, a personality in some way analogous to the human

in kind, however differing in degree. As such we exclude all mere objectivised incomprehensibilities, all "sort-of-a somethings;" those fraudulent simulacra of the divinity, which have nothing really whatever to do with the question of Theism. Pantheism, we may observe, in the ordinary sense of the word, we take to be the formulated expression among cultivated persons of the anthropomorphic or personified nature of things in general, before spoken of as an instinctive theory with most men.

There is a traditional prejudice that Monotheism is a great advance in nobleness of conception on Polytheism. This is based apparently on the belief that though you cannot have *too much* of God yet you can have *too many* of him. The Monotheist looks down with lofty contempt on the Polytheist as a being of inferior, not to say depraved conceptions. Now, seriously, we would really like to know in what consists the superiority of Monotheism over Polytheism? If we are to assume the existence of extra-natural personality at all, what is there superior in the notion of one irresponsible despot reigning in a solitary, and as one would think, somewhat dreary grandeur, to that of a society of extra-natural beings equal among themselves, or a hierarchy of such beings each having an appointed status and function culminating, if you will, in a supreme intelligence, but not directly subordinated to its will or caprice? The first of these last-mentioned conceptions generally corresponds to the earlier period of Polytheism, the second to the later, but either of them to my mind offer a more cheerful and agreeable theory of the universe than that of the demiurge seated all alone on high. In the first place the sense of friendship with and nearness to the

unseen being is infinitely greater. The god is felt to have a peculiarly intimate and direct relation to his votary. Though powerful he is not omnipotent, his system of action is limited, but within that sphere, and as far as his power extends, his worshippers are under his direct protection. It is all very well to say that the same feeling obtains with the devout Monotheist who believes in the "fatherhood of God," but as a matter of fact it does not, as is proved historically by the circumstance that the great Monotheistic religions have been unable to maintain their Monotheism unimpaired. Thus the immediate object of the Catholic's devotion is not the Christian God but his tutelary saint or the Virgin. Even the Protestant shows his want of appreciation of Monotheism by preferring in his meditations and devotions the definite human personality embodied in his conception of Jesus to the lofty but vague one of the Omnipotent Demiurge. The Oriental similarly finds relief from his invocations of Allah in doing homage to some departed dervish of local renown. Then again, owing to the absence of the notion of Omnipotence, and in general even that of creation, the difficulties connected with the existence of evil which beset the Monotheist at every turn are entirely obviated on a Pagan theory of the universe. The Pagan had no need to resort to subterfuges in order to exculpate his divinity or to seek to explain away what refuses to be explained away, for his god was not necessarily a creator, moreover he admitted among his society or hierarchy of supernatural beings some which were avowedly evil, and he did not postulate any absolute power in the rest to hold these in check. So that there was no necessary or even apparent contradiction between his religion and the facts of life.

His god was his "patron" who would exert his powers to protect his client,but who was not all-powerful, and, therefore, not accountable for any and every evil which might befall him. As against this, Monotheism postulates a god who is sponsor for every atrocity in nature and its laws. The only consolation the Monotheist has is in persuading himself that to use a popular metaphor "it will all come out in the washing." His theistic faith pays him with bills realisable in an indefinite futurity. The evil is real; the "good" which is to be "the final goal of ill" is, to say the least, hyperbolically ideal.

But says the Monotheist, "you would then conceive nature as without an all-pervading mind? What can be sublimer than the thought of the universe as the work of one supreme intelligence?" &c., &c. Our Monotheist here surely confounds sublimity with mere abstractness. That Monotheism implies a larger and more abstract generalisation than Polytheism is out of question, but that sublimity is necessarily involved in this increased scope is not altogether out of question. If barrenness and abstraction mean sublimity then Monotheism is sublime—"if not, not." For what is gained in extension is lost in fertility of conception. The god of Monotheism, though far removed from humanity, is barren and dull as compared with the more concrete inhabitants of Olympus, of the Pantheon, of the city, or of the domestic hearth of the ancient world. Hence the difficulty already pointed out of Monotheistic creeds maintaining their principle intact. Mediæval Catholicism was in point of doctrine but a thinly veiled Paganism, not only amongst the people but even in its most formulated shape. The work of the pseudo-Dionysius which was one of its textbooks was

little more than a version of the Neoplatonist Proclus with a Christian terminology. The hierarchy of *status* obtained in the theological as much as in the social world of the middle ages.

But the strangest claim of all on the part of the Monotheist is that there is anything edifying in the notion of nature as having been consciously produced by a mind. Yet this is often put forward as an added charm, nay, an indispensable adjunct to the full æsthetic appreciation of nature. On this principle the singing of a mechanical nightingale ought to be infinitely more enjoyable than that of a real one, since the former, it must be admitted even by the "natural theologians," is much more obviously the product of conscious intelligence than the latter. But it seems to the present writer that what gives the charm to the contemplation of nature—to the glittering summer sea, the forest glade in the twilight, the Alpine sunrise, the evening pasture, is just the absence of mind—of the design or conscious intention of an artificer. We instinctively impute to the whole of nature a naïve life of its own, of impulse and feeling, a spontaneity as it were. But the moment you introduce your "divine artificer" nature becomes mechanical, and the poetry of nature is destroyed. The fact is one may have too much of "consummate wisdom." "Consummate wisdom" may become consummately boresome to us weak mortals. So far from nature without God being dead, it becomes not merely dead but mechanical the moment it leads up to a "divine author." Probably the most thorough-going Monotheist that has ever lived was the conventional eighteenth century deist, and he, though full of sentiment of a certain order, was assuredly also the most thorough-going Philis-

tine in matters of æsthetics that the world has ever seen.

Now let us take the ordinary natural-theological apologetics. One of the great aims of "natural theology" is to string together a number of natural facts which can be twisted into an argument for benevolent design in nature. Some of these are naturally of the most trivial character, as may be seen by reference to any work on natural theology. But has it never suggested itself to the natural theologian that an equal number of facts might be adduced in favour of a theory of malevolent design and yet another set which would bring the character of the Demiurge and regulator of mundane affairs out in that of a *Spottgeist*, a *Rübezahl*, full of mischief and schoolboy tricks? Let us deal with the latter aspect of the case first.

We will put ourselves in the position of the theologian and see everything in God, that is, everything as though it happened by design, and trace the experience of the average (as opposed to the exceptionally "lucky") man. One of his earliest objects of conscious interest is bread and jam, and that object sometimes drops out of his childish fingers on to the floor. There being no apparent reason why it should fall on one side rather than another, one would naturally suppose in accordance with the theory of probabilities that in a long series of cases it would fall equally on the jammed and on the non-jammed surface. But does it? Ask any child whether on almost every occasion it does not fall on the jammed surface? Myself, I know this phenomenon early attracted my attention. Now here, on theological principles, is clearly a case of Providence—a playful

disposition of Providence which amuses itself at the infant's expense. As the average human being grows up he finds the same principle holds. Nine out of every ten "coincidences" coincide the wrong way for him. We will enumerate a few instances in point, which will be familiar with most people and which are admitted by all those I have questioned on the subject. There is no apparent causation involved in any of them. They are in the true sense of the word coincidences, and yet they do not seem to follow the law of probabilities. If we admit a Providence at all, therefore, they would appear to fall specially within the scope of Providence or a Supernatural Will, directing human affairs. Among the common occurrences of life referred to, is something of this sort: (1) a particular thing, a letter, a book, or what-not, otherwise constantly obtruding itself on one's notice, is impossible to be found when urgently wanted. This everyone must have noticed as an almost invariable occurrence. Again every one must have observed the following; (2) He is generally at home, say on a certain day, but on one occasion for the first time in a twelve-month, happens to be out. A friend whom he has not seen for a long time, happens to call that very day, on important business. (3) After repeated experience that letters forwarded by the Post Office from some old address contain nothing but worthless circulars or such-like postal flotsam and jetsam, one refuses to receive any more, only to learn that the next missive, *i.e.* the first one refused, had contained a cheque or post-office order for a large sum, that it has gone back to the sender, who being in urgent need of it has spent it. (4) Again one is searching for a particular house in a street, say

No. 361, one carefully watches the odd numbers, as they progress from 1 onwards till one arrives at 359. What follows 359 is not 361 but 363, or perhaps a blank wall or a hoarding. No one has heard of 361, till at last after infinite time and labour spent, one discovers that No. 361 has been pulled down, or that it is up some corner or bend of the street, the existence of which no one would have ever guessed. This has occurred so often in my experience that I am now surprised if on some rare occasion the number I am in search of, follows in the natural order. Now, here is a most striking apparent violation of the law of probabilities, the normal chances being prodigiously against it. (5) Who that has ever entered a railway station without knowing the starting times of the trains, has not discovered that the train he wanted has not left five minutes before, or who that has missed a train owing to its extreme punctuality, has not found that the next one for which he has had to wait, is considerably behind its given time? (6) One of the most extraordinary instances of apparently designed coincidence is in gambling. Two persons sit down to a game of chance, involving little or no skill, or where the skill, if there is any, is equal, and where the possibility of fraud is excluded. Yet one of them will always win three out of four games, in despite of all shuffling of cards, changing of pack or of hands. This case of the persistently winning man and the persistently losing man, no uncommon one, seems almost irresistibly to suggest a "hand unseen" so utterly inexplicable is it on any theory of probabilities. (7) It is a trite observation that married couples who earnestly desire children have the greatest difficulty in acquiring them, while those who do not

want them endeavour in vain to dam the surging influx.

I conclude the few cases mentioned, out of the innumerable instances of which life is made up, of coincidences which seem to violate the theory of probabilities in a sense adverse to one's interest or convenience, with one which may seem to be grotesque but which in spite of its triviality is significant. On putting on a pair of boots one instinctively raises one's foot as one picks up one of the boots. I have calculated that nineteen times out of twenty the foot raised is the opposite to the boot picked up. Thus if the right foot be raised the left boot will be lifted and *vice versa.*

Now if theologians were really in earnest with their "evidences" they might find in these "coincidences" a mine of plausibility in favour of the theory of a superintending providence. But as a matter of fact they ignore an argument which would appeal far more powerfully to many persons than far-fetched attempts to prove benevolent design in Nature, for the simple reason, that though it might lead many to believe in the existence of a deity, it would make the deity appear in a ridiculous light. Instead of the glorified metropolitan police magistrate of the churches, who stands upon his dignity and has a rooted aversion to any chaff at his expense, Providence would come out as a knavish sprite, a veritable poltergeist made up of mischievous and ill-natured pranks.

We now come to the point as to the benevolent intention, the wonderful adaptation of means to good ends, alleged by theologians to exist in Nature. Here again it is easy enough to read design into natural forms and processes if one is determined to do so. But I maintain

that for every instance of apparently beneficent design in Nature there are two of malevolent design. I do not propose here to go into the cruelty, the wanton pain and destruction which enters into the scheme of Nature as an essential element in that scheme, the strong animal preserving itself at the expense of the weaker, the existence of parasitism, etc., etc. This has been often and ably done before, and this, of course, constitutes the gravamen of the indictment of Theism. But I wish to point out a few cases of apparently elaborately organised design in Nature to ends which are not precisely beneficent. Take the nerves of the teeth and face, the complicated network which connects the lower wisdom teeth with the temples. Now here is an exquisite piece of workmanship beautifully adapted to an end—to wit, the production and perpetuation of neuralgia. It is through this arrangement that the tortures of neuralgia are rendered possible, and the arrangement has no other visible purpose. Of course, I am aware that the champion of Nature, driven hard, is quite capable of alleging that he thinks neuralgia rather a good thing. In answer to this I need only say I write for the majority of men who have no argument to subserve and who do not think so. The mere existence of nerves in the teeth can but be viewed from the teleological standpoint, as an institution designed for the exclusive purpose of producing toothache, for there is no conceivable reason why the means of mastication should not have been furnished outside the nervous system, like the hoof in animals, the nails, or the hair. The only answer that can be given to this is that it was not and therefore it could not be, which, though otherwise valid, is from the present standpoint merely a

begging of the question. Again, the mucous membrane of the human urethra is liable to a fibrous deposit producing what is known as *stricture, i.e.,* a narrowing of the passage, which, besides often directly or indirectly setting up other mischief may increase so as to seriously interfere with the function of the organ in question. Now from a teleological point of view it is noteworthy that the disease in question is peculiar to the one mucous surface where it can do any serious harm in obstructing a vital function. If the same peculiarity attached to other mucous surfaces it would matter little. From the natural theological point of view it looks therefore as though the particular surface were carefully selected with a view to the injury of the organism. Yet again, take the disease of rabies. The animals among which this disease originates are dogs and those of a cognate race whose weapon of offence and defence is their teeth, that is to say, precisely that class of animals by whom a disease transmissible through the saliva would be most readily communicated both to other animals and to human beings. Were rabies a disease affecting sheep, oxen or even horses or pigs or indeed any non-canine animal, the danger of contagion would be infinitely reduced, since with no other animal is the biting instinct developed as with the so-called "friend of man." So here we have another instance of the beautiful adaptation of means to ends in nature. Just that animal has been selected by Providence as the seed-ground of rabies, whose instincts are best adapted to transmit the disease. If we consider the consummate wisdom displayed in Nature what shall we say of the eye which according to Helmholtz (the first living authority in optics) is so de-

fective a piece of work that any ordinary mechanician would be ashamed of it? What shall we say of the workmanship of a divine artificer who has so arranged the animal organism that a mere change of temperature (a chill) will often produce disease and even lead to fatal results? What shall we say of the watering of the earth from above by the clumsy and often disastrous process of rain, rather than by internal springs, or as in Egypt by the overflowing of rivers at necessary intervals?

The Esquimaux always speak of the Polar bear with reverence, out of fear lest the beast which they credit with supernatural power should resent any slight cast upon him. We are inclined to think a relic of this class of superstition is at the bottom of the apologetic attitude of the ordinary man towards Nature. We all know the indignation real or feigned with which the aforesaid ordinary man of "natural religion" greets any suggestion that Nature is not perfect. His zeal for the honour and glory of the author of Nature finds vent under such circumstances commonly in irrelevant rudeness to his interlocutor. Thus, he will tell the latter he supposes he thinks he could have arranged things better—it's a pity he hadn't the doing of them, &c. &c., all of which may be very true but does not in the least exonerate the creator for having arranged them badly. On this principle when our friend has ordered a pair of shoes and finds that they don't fit him, that they have nails left protruding, or that they are otherwise so ill-constructed that after half-an-hour's walking the epidermis has disappeared from the most salient portions of his foot, let him by no means blame the shoemaker, lest the shoemaker retort "it's a pity you didn't make your own

shoes." Naturally the rejoinder of him of the wounded foot would be, "If I were a shoemaker I would undertake to make better shoes than you do, but as I am a tailor (a candlestick maker or what not) I don't profess to make shoes at all." Similarly, the impugner of the creative excellence, may fairly retort on its rude apologist, "I have never been brought up to the demiurgic profession, but if I had and had had the disposal of the amount of power which is displayed in Nature, I should regard it as a discredit not to have turned out something better."

But, as we said, the ordinary man has a lurking superstitious dread of offending Nature and God, and so tries to persuade himself, like Dr. Pangloss, that everything is on the whole, "for the best in the best possible of worlds." The professed Theist swells himself out to his largest possible dimensions on hearing such a criticism as we have attempted, and in indignant tones pompously declaims against "the finite intellect presuming to measure itself with the infinite." The finite intellect when it produces results flattering to the demiurgic pretensions, may, without hesitation, proceed to deal with these matters. Theists, and they sometimes have very finite intellects indeed, may descant with unction on the beneficence displayed in Nature, and on their conviction of everything being ordained for a good purpose. It is only when the result happens to be unfavourable to the pretensions of demiurgic wisdom or goodness, that the argument from the finitude of the intellect comes into play. The Theist assumes all-wisdom and all-goodness in the ordering of the cosmos, and claims the right to support his assumption by arguments drawn from Nature. The worst he can say of the Anti-Theist (as

we may call him) is that he traverses the original assumption with arguments of the same nature as those used in support of it.

Given the right of the finite intellect of the Theist to assume the existence of "God, the Creator" and his perfections, the Anti-Theist has an equal right, on his side, to assume (in the words of one of the first of our living poets) that

> "There is a creator called God,
> And his ways are remarkably odd,"

and to support this assumption by counter-arguments. The contention of the Anti-Theist as we have stated it, that the ordering of the cosmos does not display wisdom or goodness commensurate with the power visible in it (and his case against the Theist who claims perfect wisdom and perfect goodness is made out by a single instance to the contrary) is perfectly justified from the anthropomorphic standpoint which the ordinary Theist occupies. The Theist cannot rebut the Anti-Theist's argument which gives him the alternative of viewing the demiurge as either pre-eminently foolish or pre-eminently wicked. For if he postulates such a being at all his opinions respecting this being may reasonably be expected to be based, like all other opinions, on available evidence, and not on abstract possibilities which run counter to this evidence. Yet the latter is what the Theist invariably does. In the teeth of facts he *assumes* good, that is, moral and righteous intention, in Nature.

Once we are outside the vicious circle of Theism the case is otherwise. The Pagan, although he, too, views the universe anthropomorphically, is not open to the

above criticism, since the idea of conscious creation is absent or subordinate with him ; and, besides, as already observed, his gods are limited each to his own sphere, they form a society or hierarchy and are all subordinated to that special bogie of the Theist, an irresistible and impersonal Fate. Hence the Polytheist might consistently, and without any self-deception, worship his god as perfectly good in intention even if his acts fell short. Again, the Atheist who rejects entirely the notion of a personal demiurge (not as according to the common and convenient misrepresentation because he thinks he can *prove* the negative proposition, but because he finds the positive absurd and unsatisfactory as a theory of the universe) is in still better case since he does not read morality into nature at all. He does not postulate like the Theist a benevolent demiurge, nor like the Anti-Theist, a malevolent demiurge. Nature for him is neither moral nor immoral, but extra-moral. To the Atheist, nature is not like the works and deeds of men, the product of conscious and willing intelligence, but the outcome of an immanent necessity.

Below and beyond all actuality, reality or finitude of things is presupposed the infinite potentiality, the Eternal Becoming involved in all experience ; of which, concrete consciousness with its *time* is the supreme expression, but which for this very reason can never be adequately manifested in any *particular* or actual consciousness, or in any *particular* or actual time. We try to fix the I or subject which we find posited as the core and root of all thinking and knowing, and we find we have merely got an object, a particular memory-synthesis, *i.e.*, a particular body of thoughts or experiences which pre-

supposes an infinity of other thoughts and experiences not expressed in them. The true *I* is never object, but yet all *object* exists merely in its consciousness, that is, as its determination or *pro tanto* its negation. We try to define or explain the undetermined *nisus*, or Becoming presupposed in all conscious action of the individual, and we find in any given case we have merely got a given determining motive or motives. So the Becoming, the necessity, in nature, to which no beginning nor ending can be assigned, when we analyse it in any given case, resolves itself into a chain of modifications of matter in motion. This is the ultimate fact discernable in the world of space, that is, on the plane of external nature.

"Above the gods is fate." If we accept the ancient Greek motto as translated into the terms of modern thought, we have no need to perplex ourselves with specially pleading the goodness of a hypothetical creator, nor is there any point in "damning the nature of things," although the apparent malice discernable in the ordering of the world does, it must be admitted, offer strong temptations to personify with a view to objurgation. If we personify we have *Dieu l'ennemi*. If we do not personify we have no *Dieu* but then we have no *ennemi*. Supposing, then, we reject the demiurgic view as an ultimate theory of the universe and thus reject the Theistic theory, are we driven to Pessimism? The true statement of the case as regards this point it seems to me is that Optimism and Pessimism are alike abstract and one-sided theories of Teleology, just as the old dogmatic metaphysics and modern Empiricism or Agnosticism are alike one-sided and abstract theories of Knowledge. Many

persons are doubtless led to Pessimism, or at least Cynicism, by the reflection that the categories of Good and Evil, with the subordinate ones of knowledge and ignorance, beauty and ugliness, are correlative, and therefore both equally necessary and eternal, in the nature of things. But does such a reflection justify the attitude in question? Is the fable of the victory of Ormuzd over Arhiman therefore devoid of meaning? Can we no longer believe that—

> " . . . good shall fall—
> At last—far off—at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring?"

Perhaps not in the old sense, but not the less so in a sense. The metaphor of the light in which is no darkness may, it is true, cease to be apt when we reflect that such a light would be indistinguishable from darkness. The conception of an absolute happiness, an absolute knowledge and an absolute beauty, such, namely, which exclude all further possible increase, is obviously abstract and unreal and must be abandoned. A happiness, (knowledge, beauty,) which had no vista before it, which was static, would lose its character as such, as a very little reflection will show. The abstraction in question leaves out of sight the true nature of the concepts themselves. What shall we say then? What is the nature of these concepts? Shall good not be the final goal of ill? Our answer is the "good" (*i.e.*, happiness, knowledge, beauty,) partakes of the nature of all reality. It is essentially a process, an eternal Becoming which is never complete. Evil is always pre-supposed as an element by good, *e.g.*, ignorance by knowledge, ugliness by beauty. Viewed

universally and abstractedly the one of these concepts is as necessary as the other. This is true; but what is not true is that any particular or real evil shall not give way to good. The moment these things put on the vesture of reality or concreteness, the moment they are so particularised, the moment they have become embodied in *this* evil, they have become mortal. Every evil falling within human experience must pass away. All unknownness that has become definite must vanish in knowledge. The fact that it is known as unknown is the first step towards its extinction. The ugliness that is recognised as ugly is already doomed. All evils, physical, moral or æsthetic that are at any moment within the field of experience are in the nature of things transitory. What remains is the universal, abstract evil. The fallacy of the modern Agnostic consists in laying out an enclosure and saying, within is the knowable, without is the unknowable. Inasmuch as he can say this is the unknowable, he shows that he is not dealing with an unknowable. The unknown may always be with us, but any *this* unknown we may rest assured must one day cease to be unknown. You cannot formulate a problem as unknowable. The fact of your being able to formulate it is sufficient proof that it is not *per se* incapable of solution. I am here speaking, of course, of *real* problems and not such as have their origin in a misunderstanding or a false assumption. We may never be able to explain the process of creation out of nothing or to form an inventory of the feathers in the wings of the angel Gabriel, to know whether the devil really has a tail or not, but we may reasonably expect to find a rational formula expressing the essential nature of reality or the concrete world. and of man's relations

thereto—of Thought and Being, Will and Necessity. When I say "we" I mean, of course, humanity, not necessarily this generation or the next.

History affords numberless empirical illustrations of what we here have been saying. The concrete realisation of evil in any given thing has been the signal for its destruction. A physical fact no sooner assumes the character of an evil in the social mind than conscious energy is aroused against it, and sooner or later it disappears. As an illustration take epidemic disease. As soon as Zymosis loomed big as an evil in human consciousness the improved sanitary science began to arise which has found increasingly successful means of checking it with every prospect of its ultimate extinction. The recognition by a William Morris and a Burne Jones and others of the ugliness of modern English decoration has denoted the beginning of its end. But this is particularly noticeable in the moral and social sphere. Any institution, form of society, belief or practice, which man has become conscious of as evil has speedily disappeared. Three centuries ago, and more or less until the French Revolution, the evils of Feudalism filled the mental horizon of good and thoughtful men. It seemed to them that, were the cruelties and abuses of the Feudal noble, the tyranny of priesthoods, the restrictions of the guild system, of local jurisdictions, and the unrestrained caprice of monarchs abolished or mitigated all would be well. Those evils have been all at least mitigated, and some of them abolished. Earnest men to-day see another and totally different set of evils, and the fact of their seeing them as evil is one indication of their disappearance within a measurable distance of time.

But it may be said if "evil" as concrete or particularised is necessarily absorbed through the pressure of the Dialectic or Logic of Reality, and thus passes away, is this not also true of its opposite? The good of to-day becomes the evil of to-morrow. The abolition of chattel and serfage slavery paves the way for wage-slavery. As a matter of fact the case is not precisely the same. The "good" in any evolutionary process is always the last term in that process, is its *telos* or end. The evil which that "good" may engender or which may ensue, is the beginning of a new process, or a phase of an incomplete process which in its turn is absorbed in another "good," organically higher than the preceding. Again, taking the evolution of human society in illustration and speaking as a Socialist, one might say—a co-operative social state, in which use was for each and possession for all, in which the powers of nature were employed for the common advantage, the maximum of production with the minimum of labour; a society of equals interpenetrated by a true culture, a culture not an exotic adjunct to, but an intrinsic element in, everyday life; a society in which superstition while regarded with interest and even affection as an historical phenomenon had ceased to be operative as a thought-factor—such a society, let us say, is the end, *telos* or "ultimate good" of human evolution regarded as one process from its beginnings in the darkness of pre-historic ages till the realisation of that society. All the evils we now see around us will then have disappeared for ever, every good we can even imagine for human society will then be realised never again to be completely lost. Mankind will be happier than ever before. For an indefinite period there will be no consciousness of anything but

satisfaction. Sooner or later, however, we cannot doubt that new needs and new longings, and therefore new present evils, of which we now can have not the remotest conception, will dawn on the horizon of consciousness, which will indicate the beginning of a new process opening up the vista of a still higher "good" or *telos*, and so on, till may-be our time-consciousness itself shall enter upon a completely new phase. If the above be admitted it will thus be seen that supposing we could fix an end to all things in time, a final stage to evolution, optimism would in a measure be justified, for the "last things" would be the embodiment of the highest "good." The final stage of consciousness would be that of absolute happiness. It is because we cannot fix this *terminus ad quem*, either in the logical process or its temporal manifestation that we cannot pronounce for optimism. All that analysis of this process discloses to us is an infinite spiral ascent. We have to do with no mere circle continuously returning in upon itself, but with a movement which never touches the same actual spot twice, though it continuously recurs to one analogically the same. All concrete evil passes away never to return, and the issue of the process of which it forms part is a relative "good." That a new cycle arises out of this, also embodying the category of evil in another shape, need not trouble us, since we know that here also the final result must be similar, and that the end of every cycle is the "good."

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