

THE MODERN AGE

FRIEDEL

CHARLES FRANCIS ATKINSON

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A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MODERN AGE

THE CRISIS OF THE
EUROPEAN SOUL
FROM THE BLACK DEATH
TO THE WORLD WAR

BY

EGON FRIEDEL

Translated from the German by
CHARLES FRANCIS ATKINSON

With an introductory essay on Friedell
by ALFRED POLGAR

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in these very inversions that his origins perhaps disclose themselves most surely. That is why only his historical conclusions are absolutely compelling, and not by any means his philosophical. When, for instance, we read on the last page of his work: "It is Time whose inexorable movement embeds the ephemeral incident of the Culture, on this planet, in the incident of Man — a form wherein the incident life flows on for a time," his assertions are true and yet not true: true, that is, as vital manifestations of a definite historical variety of man, that of today, of which Spengler himself is an example, and one of the most shining; and neither more nor less true than fetishism in primitive peoples, or the Ptolemaic world-system of the Classical age.

Fruitful new ideas never come from an individual, but from the age. It is the very touchstone of its value that such ideas occur simultaneously to many people. Spengler recognizes this too when he says in his preface: "An idea that is historically essential — that does not occur within an epoch, but itself makes that epoch — is only in a limited sense the property of him to whose lot it falls to patent it. It belongs to the time as a whole and influences all thinkers without their knowing it." And, in fact, there appeared almost on the same day as Spengler's first volume a remarkable book by the Swiss writer C. H. Meray, which started from the basis that every civilization was a self-contained whole, a living thing similar to the multicellular organisms. We even find there the proposition: "so many religions, so many civilizations." The religions are said to be, as it were, the nerve-centres of individual cultures, the vital activity of which they unify and regulate. Further, every civilization has its own style; this too has its parallel phenomenon in the world of cells, where the protoplasm has likewise a specific constitution — its chemical structure — by which the genus of each individual living organism can be instantly determined. In the case of all these civilizations, now, the observer will find that after a certain time — that is, after about two to three thousand years — they die. The Egyptian, the Sumerian, the Babylonian, the Mycenæan, and the recently discovered Minoan: all these high and very individual cultures failed to pass this span. Civilizations have, therefore, just like organisms, a definite length of life, which may doubtless be curtailed through violent attacks from outside, but can in no case be extended. In

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conservative in his whole outlook, an advocate, in fact, of the suppression of other men's individualities. Upon which Ibsen smiled into his interrogator's face and said: "But have you never noticed that every idea, when you have thought it out to the end, becomes its own opposite?"

Finally, as to the question of plagiarism, crying out about intellectual borrowings is one of the most superfluous occupations in the world. Every plagiarism is in fact its own punishment. On it rests the curse which turns all stolen goods, whether of the mental or of the physical order, into joyless possessions. It fills the thief with an uncertainty and embarrassment which is visible fifty yards away. Nature countenances no dishonest dealings. It is only our own thoughts that we can really set in motion, because they alone are our *organs*. An idea which belongs, not to us, but to another, we cannot handle; it will throw us as surely as a horse a strange rider; it is like a casket with a puzzle-lock to which one has no clue, or like a passport which opens the door into foreign lands, but only for those whose portrait and signature it bears. Therefore, do not bother if people steal as much intellectual treasure as they can lay hands on, for no one will suffer more for it than they themselves, when they find that they have wasted their precious time on something hopelessly unprofitable to them.

But there are also, of course, unconscious plagiarisms, or, rather, plagiarisms committed with a good conscience, just as one might call any trader a thief with a good conscience. Whether Proudhon's mot "*La propriété c'est le vol*" is precisely correct in the field of economics is doubtful; in the domain of the intellect it undoubtedly is so. For, strictly speaking, the whole of the world's literature consists of plagiarisms. The tracing of sources, said Goethe to Eckermann, was "very absurd." "As well might one inquire of a well-nourished man as to the oxen, sheep, and pigs he had consumed and from which he had drawn his strength. We have our native talents, it is true, but our development we owe to the thousand outer influences of a great world, from which we appropriate what we can and what suits us. . . . The main thing is to have a soul which loves truth and absorbs it where it finds it. In any case the world is now so old, and for millennia so many important persons have lived and thought in it, that there is little that is new to discover or say. Even my colour theory is by no

means new. Plato, Leona: discovered and thought t that I also discovered it strove to gain admittanc that is *my* merit." And t admission on Goethe's pa he was more proud of tha

The whole intellectu: thefts. Alexander stole f Giotto from Cimabue, S from Kant. And when a is always that too little is were made only from the was not enough. In the literature were snapped a revival which took hold of when it happens that a gr it is always because he c Socrates had the rare good scrupulous thief who kne he would have remained i great interest in the case pocket lighters, but in the whatever. For, as we have good ideas which live and individual, but are always of a whole epoch. The re most crisply, illumine the their possible applications all collective natures, pose have we, and are we, tha own! . . . I owe my wor alone, but to thousands of provide me with the mat circumscribed thinkers, chi came to me and told me w how they lived and worke had, so that all I had to d had sown for me."

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historians help themselves out with a "transition period," by which they mean in a general way the fifteenth century. Breysig introduces the idea of a "late Middle Age," which he dates as "the time between about 1300 and about 1500." Houston Chamberlain goes further back in his clever if rather one-sided *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. For him the "pivot" of European history is the awakening of the Germans to their world-historical mission as founders of an entirely new civilization and an entirely new culture; and the year 1200 is the mean moment of this awakening. Scherer, it is true, adheres to a "declining" Middle Age, yet he opens his chapter on that period with the words: "The Flagellants and the first German university stand significantly at the entrance of a three-hundred-year epoch which lasts until the Peace of Westphalia." It is only natural, however, that the obvious necessity of recognizing an earlier beginning for modern times should have dawned much sooner on the "laity" than on the experts. Even Vasari placed the Rinascita at the beginning of the Trecento. Gustav Freytag writes in his *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, which remains to this day the most vivid, impressive, and convincing cultural history of the German people: "On closer examination we see that silent forces had long been actively preparing these great events . . . which determined the fate not only of the Germans, but of all the nations on earth. . . . From this point of view the time between the Hohenstaufen and the Thirty Years' War, the four hundred years between 1254 and 1648, appears as a uniform, self-contained period in German history, which stands out sharply against the periods that preceded and followed." And Fritz Mauthner, too, in his *Atheismus und seine Geschichte im Abendland*, arrives at this formula: "If by the Middle Ages we understand all the centuries in which ecclesiastical conceptions were still operative . . . then the period lasted until the Peace of Westphalia . . . but if we understand it as meaning only those centuries in which theocracy reigned undisputed . . . these Middle Ages would have to stop long before the end of the fifteenth century — about two hundred years earlier."

We see, then, that the new age entered the world at the opening of the sixteenth century, but that it came into being in the fourteenth and fifteenth. And, further, it came into being through

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These have vitality, but are not productive; they include the big battalions of the "normal" people: the peasant, the bourgeois, the honest craftsman, the capable official, and the plain scholar. Thirdly, we have the man of genius with an extremely irritable peripheral system and a proportionately hypertrophied central system; he is both vital and productive. Genius is, on this showing, nothing more than an organized neurosis, an intelligent form of madness. And thus we begin to understand why genius not only regularly displays pathological traits, but is notable for extraordinary brain power and particularly strong and delicate sense of moral values: for this surplus is *essential*. The same relations may even occasionally be noticed in highly gifted people such as the Hellenes: the Dionysiac was the peripheral system, the Apollinian the central system, of the collective genius, "Greek genius."

The necessity of the Apollinian component in all creative genius is now generally admitted; it is less easy to convince people that the Dionysiac is of equal importance. A genius is not only a latent lunatic, but also a latent criminal, who only avoids conflict with the law because his genius enables him to take refuge in production. "I have never heard of a crime that I should be incapable of committing," said Goethe. For of such is the poet made. A crime that he could not commit would lie outside his powers of description. But he does not need to commit any crime: he can construct it artificially. Hebbel was making a deeper self-revelation than he knew, perhaps, when he wrote: "By creating murderers Shakspeare saved himself from the necessity of becoming one." Hebbel's dramas are full of bloodshed, and his diaries also show a surprising delight in murder stories of every description. Wherever he found one of these, he noted it down, studied it psychologically, and turned it about with an interest that was quite disproportionate to the actual case. It seems extremely probable too that Schiller was a really clever robber and Balzac an extortioner of the first water: only their literary talent was incomparably greater than their talent for robbery or extortion. All the creative artists — Dante and Michelangelo, Strindberg and Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevski — what were they but cannibals rescued by art? Then, the "monsters" of world-history — Caligula and Tiberius, Danton and Robespierre, Cæsar Borgia and Torquemada — what were they but artists cast adrift in reality? And

*Production
as a refuge*

the primacy, and underlying every gesture was a deep symbolism that was felt far more strongly and deeply than symbolisms are by the men of later times. But side by side with this men had the honesty and forthrightness of children. They still stood in an elementary relation to nature, to field and forest, wind and cloud. And there is something strangely affecting, too, in their passionate love of animals, their wise, merry brothers, whom everywhere they honour — in sculpture and ornament, in satire and legend, at home and at court — who appear to them as like in kind to themselves, whom they regard even as full juridical persons liable to be brought up as witnesses and, for that matter, as criminals. One of the most charming stories handed down to us from the Middle Ages is that of a dog which gave its life for its master's child and was worshipped as martyr and saint by the people. In the presence of a world like this we have the sensation we so often experience in our dealings with children, the feeling that they know something which we do not know or no longer know, some magic secret or divine marvel wherein perhaps may lie the key to our whole existence.

No relation to money

Another infantile trait is the vague attitude of mediæval man to money. Sombart expresses this very wisely and kindly in saying that men stand in much the same spiritual relation to economic activities as the child to his lessons. The meaning of this is twofold: that work is purely a matter of ambition, and that it is only performed when it is absolutely imperative. The mediæval craftsman put good work and solidity above everything and had no conception of trashy goods or mass production. He stood behind his work in person and staked his honour on it like an artist. But he could afford to be much lazier as well as more conscientious than a present-day workman, and that for several reasons. In the first place, broadly speaking, needs were fewer; in the second, they were much more easily satisfied, even in a non-working existence, — which was not impossible, since almsgiving was much more widespread than now — and in the third, there would have been little point in exceeding the normal income, as the individual's standard of living was fairly well fixed, and such straining of incomes as is seen today in every small provincial town did not occur. To every class was allotted, so to say, its due measure of comfort and enjoyment, and to change one's class was practically impos-

sible in mediæval society. Condition were regarded, material world, as divinely or out of an agrarian society basis; but even in its later appeared in the organization and merchants' guilds), relation of its members: we live in order to earn. It has the Middle Ages, in which there was always a more was a creature of the Devil; instance, always roused young world was permeated work was not a blessing, what a difference it must culture when money is not that commands the uncertainties of all!

But, granted that these theless clever, gifted, material and worked in dull subject so far as the high Middle thinkers then, bright mind poetic presentation of concrete with powers of construction possessed, in all the manifest style which has never since the theory that mankind is but types. Neither in the science was there any lack personalities. The confessions reveal an almost uncanny analysis, such as is unimaginable developed and nuanced in strikingly individual figures: sculptors' talent in seizing early as the tenth century drama, that most individual

der Anschauung alter Zeiten. "It is not improbable that illnesses have a history of their own; so that each age has its particular illnesses, which had not occurred just so before and will never occur just so again." The only explanation for this, obviously, must be that every age *makes* its own illnesses, which are just as much a part of its physiognomy as everything else that it produces, just as much its specific creations as its art, its strategy, its religion, its physics, its economy, its erotic, and all its other manifestations. They are, so to say, its inventions and discoveries in the pathological domain. It is the spirit which builds itself a body: always the spirit is the prime mover, both in the individual and in the mass. If we are prepared to stand by this comparison — admittedly a lame one in more than one respect — with the individual, we shall have to say: the Black Death is no more the cause of modernity than pregnancy is the cause of a new organism; for in the one case as in the other the true cause lies in the entry of a new life-germ into the mother-body, and the result and expression of this fact constitutes pregnancy. The "new spirit" generated a sort of development-sickness in European humanity, a general psychosis; and one — the most prominent — of the forms of this sickness was the Black Death. But whence this new spirit came and why it arose just then and there, no one knows. The *Weltgeist* will not disclose that secret.

Neither has any one unravelled the immediate circumstances under which the Plague, known generally as the Black Death or the Great Death, suddenly gripped Europe. Some maintain that it slipped in in the train of the Crusades, but if so, it is strange that it should never have been even approximately so terrible among the Arabs as it was with us. Others have put its place of origin as far away as China. Contemporary opinion laid the responsibility on the constellations, the prevailing wickedness, the unchastity of the priests, and the Jews. There it was, anyhow — and suddenly, first in Italy, then slinking over the whole Continent. Part of its uncanniness lay precisely in this slow and steady progress from house to house and from land to land, which was so unlike the raging of most other epidemics. It took possession of Germany, France, England, Spain, and finally the northerly countries right up to Iceland. What made it still more horrible was its incalculable behaviour. At times it spared whole stretches

country, as, for instance, in individual houses; or it appeared after years. Richard we read in the chronicle "Death on the Rhine," tried, "Year of general Plague throughout Germany rarely children," "Great to have been a form of plague of the lymphatic system, headache, great weakness, delirium. According to the first or second, or a terrific everywhere. We deaths daily in Berne, of thirteen thousand Oxford died, and three Minorites counted the these amounted to over total losses, according millions. The men of the than those who had per

With the Plague came monks, in exaltation, in place, waving flags and cloaks and repulsive call. Their appearance in a town all the people flocked to selves down, scourging, reading out letters that which condemned the sin them to repent. Their conduct doubtedly heretical. The communion, in that the Saviour's. Priests were violence was not tolerated a terrified humanity that ing about its ears was in the Flagellants came to

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of country, as, for instance, eastern Franconia, and skipped in-
dividual houses; or it would disappear all of a sudden and re-
appear after years. Right into the middle of the fifteenth century
we read in the chronicles: "Plague in Bohemia," "The Great
Death on the Rhine," "Plague in Prussia," "Death in the coun-
try," "Year of general death," "Ten thousand die in Nuremberg,"
"Plague throughout Germany, strong men die, few women, more
rarely children," "Great pestilence in the coast towns." It appears
to have been a form of bubonic plague, manifesting itself in swell-
ing of the lymphatic glands (the so-called plague-boils), violent
headache, great weakness, and apathy, though also in some cases
delirium. According to contemporary reports, death occurred on
the first or second, or at latest the seventh, day. The mortality was
terrific everywhere. While it was at its height, we hear of sixty
deaths daily in Berne, a hundred in Cologne and in Mainz, a total
of thirteen thousand at Elbing. Two-thirds of the students at
Oxford died, and three-fifths of the Yorkshire clergy. When the
Minorites counted their dead at the end of two years of plague,
these amounted to over a hundred and twenty thousand. Europe's
total losses, according to recent calculation, amounted to twenty
millions. The men of the day found it easier to count the survivors
than those who had perished.

With the Plague came another movement. The Flagellant
monks, in exaltation, went about in great swarms from place to
place, waving flags and singing mournful songs, dressed in black
cloaks and repulsive caps, with a gleaming red cross before them.
Their appearance in a town was the signal for all bells to ring, and
all the people flocked to church. The Flagellants then flung them-
selves down, scourging, singing, and praying for hours together,
reading out letters that were said to have fallen from heaven,
which condemned the sinful ways of laity and clergy and exhorted
them to repent. Their doctrine, if such it can be called, was un-
doubtedly heretical. They taught that flagellation was the true
communion, in that their own blood became mingled with the
Saviour's. Priests were unworthy and superfluous, and their pres-
ence was not tolerated at their devotional exercises. The effect on
a terrified humanity that felt the Church and the world to be fall-
ing about its ears was immense. Gradually, however, the ranks of
the Flagellants came to be reinforced by various unclean elements,

*The parallel
epidemic*

such as adventurers, social outcasts, beggars, Manichees, and perverts. What unspeakable emotions, compounded of hope and fear, disgust and awe, must have seized the people at the advance of one of these ghastly processions of fanatics, lunatics, and criminals, whose coming was heralded from afar by their ghastly and monotonous chanting: "Lift ye up your hands and pray, God may turn this pest away. Lift ye up your arms, implore Him to veil His face no more! Jesus, through Thy name of Three, From our sins oh set us free! Let us by Thy blood so red From the Death be rescued!"

These Flagellant bands were not, however, simply a phenomenon arising out of the Plague, a mere attempt at a sort of religious therapy. It is highly probable that what they represent is a parallel epidemic or further symptom of the general psychosis, the Plague being only an external point on which it seized. In support of this theory we have the fact that widespread mental disorders made their appearance at that time quite independently of the Plague. A whole year before, men and women were to be seen dancing hand in hand in circles by the hour, working themselves up to a pitch at which they foamed at the mouth and sank down half fainting. During the dance they had epileptic fits and visions. It was the now familiar St. Vitus's dance, which quickly spread to wider circles, taking on more and more of a sexual character as it developed and finally becoming a sort of fashion, so that vagabonds could make a living by imitating the symptoms. In the same order of phenomena was the extraordinary Crusade of the Children of Schwäbisch-Hall in Germany, when as the result of a religious hypnosis a band of children set out to do homage to the archangel Michael at St. Michael's Mount in Normandy. The fixation of this idea was so strong that those among them who were forcibly kept back became seriously ill and in some cases died.

The contemporary persecutions of the Jews also had a pathological and epidemic character, though it cannot be said that this was a phenomenon which might not have taken place at any other time. The rumour, which sprang up suddenly in southern France, that the Jews had poisoned the wells, spread faster than the plague into the adjoining countries. It led to a horrible slaughter of the Jews, in which the Flagellants formed the shock-troops and the

Jews displayed that blinding whole history from the to the Russian pogrom. at the stake flung them At Esslingen the whole gogue and deliberately been baptized to escape with remorse and burn house. The Jewish persecuter, but there were, not of the world towards the biguous. Both the spirit Jews, and indeed extensive. In fact, they could not of their special talent for a far greater asset than education. The courts appear culture and, still more, full and tractable objects come allotted to the various always figure in the list money, salt-mines, and it was the Jews who killed a gentle-minded preacher to visit the guilt of this easy to reply with the continued to deny the God That the smallest, wealthy nations of the West stood aloof from the light of Christ — which, psychoanalytically over. Matters were magnified by Jewish extortion religion permitted the to appear even meritorious believing "Goy." In a them, for naturally no guilds. Thus it came that were less concerned with

The well-
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Jews displayed that blind heroism which appears throughout their whole history from the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus down to the Russian pogroms. Mothers who saw their husbands burnt at the stake flung themselves with their children into the flames. At Esslingen the whole Jewish community assembled in the syna-
gogue and deliberately set fire to it. At Constance a Jew, who had been baptized to escape death by burning, was afterwards seized with remorse and burnt himself and his whole family in his own house. The Jewish persecutions were primarily religious in character, but there were, no doubt, social causes as well. The attitude of the world towards the Jewish question in those days was am-
biguous. Both the spiritual and the temporal powers tolerated the Jews, and indeed extended to them a certain amount of protection. In fact, they could not readily do without them, not only because of their special talent for economic affairs (which, be it noted, was a far greater asset then than now), but because of their higher edu-
cation. The courts appreciated them as transmitters of Arabian culture and, still more, as physicians. Above all, they were fruit-
ful and tractable objects of taxation. Among the sources of in-
come allotted to the various feudal lords as privileges the Jews always figure in the list side by side with the right of coining, toll money, salt-mines, and the like. But the people never forgot that it was the Jews who killed the Saviour, and when here and there a gentle-minded preacher tried to point out that it was not right to visit the guilt of this upon the rest of the race for ever, it was easy to reply with the further argument that the Jews still con-
tinued to deny the Gospel and even fought it by secret means. That the smallest, weakest, and most scattered of all the civilized nations of the West should be the only one to hold obstinately aloof from the light of Christianity was a fact — a stupendous fact — which, psychoanalytically, the people of that time could not get over. Matters were made worse by the really hard oppression prac-
tised by Jewish extortioners. The Jews were the only people whose religion permitted the taking of interest, and in their eyes it might appear even meritorious to inflict the utmost damages on the un-
believing "Goy." In addition, all other callings were closed to them, for naturally none but Christians were admitted to the guilds. Thus it came about that not a few of these persecutors were less concerned with burning Jews than with burning bonds.

"Their possessions," says a contemporary chronicler, "were the poison which killed them."

Not only humanity, but heaven and earth, too, were convulsed in those days. Ominous comets appeared. In England storms raged with a fury unknown before or since. Gigantic swarms of locusts descended on the fields. Earthquakes ravaged the country — Villach was destroyed along with thirty villages around it. The earth seemed to become barren, and blight and drought caused the crops to fail everywhere. These phenomena may not be just dismissed as "accidental freaks of nature" nor yet as "superstitious popular imaginings." If it be true that at that time humanity was shaken by a great jerk, a mysterious upheaval, a profound shudder of conception, then the earth must have had some similar experience; and not the earth only, but the neighbouring planets, nay, the whole solar system. The signs and wonders witnessed by that "limited and credulous" age were real signs, distinct manifestations of a wondrous concatenation of cosmic happening.

Man, at any rate, distraught by so many calamities and contradictions in his present and future, rushed about in terror, straining his eyes for something firm. Serious people took refuge entirely in their God or their Church, fasting, praying, and doing penance. The frivolous flung themselves into a life of unrestrained worldliness, opening all the valves to vice and greed and making of life the fattest hangman's breakfast possible. Many thought the Day of Judgment was at hand. And in all this — in the pessimistic and ascetic currents as in the unwholesome, bloated merrymaking, which was merely a sort of consumptive's sensuality or "tomorrow we die" recklessness — there was a general feeling of the world's end which, expressed or unexpressed, conscious or unconscious, permeated and dominated the whole era. And men's instinct was perfectly right; the world did really come to an end. The world that had been, that strange world of the Middle Ages, so limited and so luminous, pure and depraved, soaring and fettered, foundered in misery and thunder into the depths of time and eternity, never to return.

The fundamental principle on which the mediæval world-outlook rested was: the realities are the universals. What is real is, not the individual, but the estate to which he belongs. Not the particular priest was real, but the Catholic Church, whose gifts

of grace he distributed; bauchee, the sacredness of which he had no reality. Not that he wooed his lady with sonnets but the great ideal of truth exalted him. Not the art was real, but the lofty ideal many, created. Not even evolves in solitary wrestlings truths of the faith, and to arrange, justify, and explain.

At the end of the Middle Ages the world began to waver and become fluid, opposites. The great Jol of his origin and doctor (splitting), the head of the four in 1308, was still a man must break down if universal scientific knowing, consistently explained, however, that to the general and the particular corporate both; and else individuality was not a fact the *ultima realitas*. A somewhat later and has ceptualist; he declared (ceptus), abstracted from nature; the only *Socratas*, not the humanism and the most famous Occam (the doctor *sing invincibilis*), who died in further. He too began by *conceptus mentis*, significance did not exist in things, but did not follow, merely because, that the universal succeeded to a complete phenomenon in concepts actual copies

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of grace he distributed; even if he were a rake, a liar, or a de-
bauchee, the sacredness of his office was not affected thereby, since
he had no reality. Not the knight who tilted in the tournament,
wooed his lady with song, or fought in the Holy Land was real,
but the great ideal of the knightly order which embraced and
exalted him. Not the artist who made poems in stone and glass
was real, but the lofty cathedral which he, a nameless one of
many, created. Not even the thoughts which the human mind
evolves in solitary wrestling were real, but only the everlasting
truths of the faith, and the business of that mind was simply to
arrange, justify, and expound.

At the end of the Middle Ages all these conceptions began to
waver and become fluid, and finally they turned into their exact
opposites. The great John Duns (surnamed Scotus on account
of his origin and *doctor subtilis* on account of his powers of hair-
splitting), the head of the Scotists, who died at the age of thirty-
four in 1308, was still a moderate Realist. He held that all science
must break down if universals, which were the aim and end of all
scientific knowing, consisted of mere concepts of the reason. He
explained, however, that Reality was in the relation of indifference
to the general and the particular alike and could, therefore, in-
corporate both; and elsewhere he went so far as to admit that
individuality was not a defective but a more complete reality, in
fact the *ultima realitas*. The Franciscan Pierre Aureol, who wrote
somewhat later and has remained obscure, was clearly a con-
ceptualist; he declared universals to be mere conceptions (*con-
ceptus*), abstracted from individual things and having no exist-
ence in nature; the only part of Socrates that was real being the
Socratitas, not the *humanitas*. But the real founder of Nominal-
ism and the most famous of Duns Scotus's pupils, William of
Occam (the *doctor singularis*, *venerabilis inceptor*, and *doctor*
inimicibilis), who died in the year of the Black Death, went much
further. He too began by arguing that the universal was a mere
conceptus mentis, *significans univoce plura singularia*, and that it
did not exist in things, but only in the reasoning mind; and that it
did not follow, merely because we know by the aid of universal con-
cepts, that the universal possesses reality. From this he then pro-
ceeded to a complete phenomenalism. Duns Scotus had still seen
in concepts actual copies of things, but with Occam they became

merely signs (*signa*) which were called forth in us by means of things, put by us in relation to things, and not necessarily even resembling those things, any more than smoke as a sign of fire resembles fire in any way, or sighs as a sign of pain resemble pain in any way. In the further course of his deductions Occam arrived at a peculiar type of indeterminism. God, he argued, is bound by no laws. Nothing happens of necessity, for otherwise the facts of chance and of evil in the world would be inexplicable. God was not obliged to create this particular world; He might have created a perfectly different one — or none at all. There are, therefore, no universally valid ethical forms: God might just as easily have declared unkind and selfish deeds to be meritorious. The Decalogue was not an absolute code of morals, it had only a qualified validity. It forbade murder, theft, and polygamy; but Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, the Israelites carried off the golden vessels of the Egyptians, and the patriarchs allowed themselves a number of wives — and God approved. These arguments, originating in part from Occam and in part from Duns Scotus, could have but one meaning — that God is beyond good and evil. But the crown of Occamist philosophy is its profession of irrationalism and agnosticism. All knowing that goes beyond the immediate experience of the moment is a matter of faith. God is unknowable, His existence does not follow as a consequence of the conception of Him. The existence of a first cause cannot be proved, there might have been an infinite series of causes. Several worlds with different creators are conceivable; the Trinity, the Incarnation, or the soul's immortality can never form the subject of logical demonstration.

Christ
in the
donkey

It would be a serious mistake, however, to conclude from the foregoing that Occam was a free-thinker, a sort of forerunner of Voltaire or Nietzsche. He was undoubtedly an energetic supporter of the Modernists of that day, who fought against the exclusive power of the Pope and for the independence of emperor and bishops, but at the same time he was strictly orthodox. His sceptical-critical subtleties were simply the powerful expressions of his religiousness. The thought of the unlimited divine despotism was soothing rather than irritating to him. His submissiveness would not be satisfied if he imagined any limitations, even those of causality and moral, to God's omnipotence, and by emphasizing

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the impossibility of proving the Christian mysteries he put them out of reach of attack and doubt once and for all. Faith became a virtue only when the incomprehensibility, and, indeed, the senselessness, of ecclesiastical doctrine had been realized. It was through him that the principle "*Credo quia absurdum*" was endowed with the strength and spirituality to make its last and finest rally. He laid the emphasis entirely on the "*Credo*": it was just the fact that faith and knowledge were two separate things which made the preservation of faith possible. But how if, one fine day, it occurred to someone to lay the emphasis on "*absurdum*" and so arrive at the conclusion that this fact of faith and knowledge being two different things annihilates faith and saves knowledge? — A shallow notion, but an extremely dangerous one. To Occam this possibility of shifting the accent does not seem to have occurred. Instead, with tireless energy he dragged up all possible absurdities so that he might combine them with faith. One of his propositions, which strikes us as a fearful blasphemy, though it gave not the smallest offence at the time, was: If God had pleased, He might just as well have embodied Himself in a donkey as in a man.

This instance — one of many — shows clearly how with Occam the principle of absurdity overshot itself, rebounded, and finally turned against itself, and how entirely opposed it was to the naïvely credulous faith in miracles of the Middle Ages. Quite without Occam's knowledge or intention it changes the punctuation, so to say, and reappears all at once with the opposite sign. The principle, under Occam's excessive forcing, is strained to breaking. So sharp a point as he put on to it was bound to break. But there was nothing unconscious or unintended about his Nominalism. The work of five hundred years of Scholasticism issued in one sentence that killed it: Universals were not real; they were neither *ante rem* nor *in re*, but *post rem* and even *pro re*: mere representative signs and vague symbols of things, *vocalia, termini, flatus vocis*, nothing but artificial aids to easier comprehension and at bottom verbiage without content — *Universalia sunt nomina*.

The triumph of Nominalism is the most weighty fact in modern history — much more important than the Reformation, gunpowder, and printing. It turned the mediæval world-picture back to front and the existing system of the universe upside-down.

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ter speak of their parents in language which would be repellent even in our own day. And the process of emancipation and these loosenings and underminings nowhere worked themselves out in quiet and slow evolution. On the contrary, the age is one immense battlefield, full of unceasing strife, inward and outward, open and underground — struggle of councils against popes, of popes against emperors, of emperors against princes, of princes against patricians, of patricians against guilds, of guilds against priests, and of everyone against everyone else.

In the face of such a catastrophic collapse of all values, such a radical loosening of all bonds, only two attitudes were possible: the totally uncritical, that of blind prostration before destiny — in a word, *fatalism*; or the hypercritical, which denies every sort of necessity and may be called *subjectivism*. The Scotists adopted the first of these. Turning on the Thomists, who had maintained that everything reasonable was willed by God, they asserted that everything God willed was reasonable. It was wrong to say that God did a thing because it was good; the fact was that the thing was good because God did it. The most subjective point of view was that held by the "Free-minded Brethren," the "itinerant Beghards," undisciplined hordes who carried on their mission in the Rhine lands and elsewhere, living by begging or, rather, by extortion and robbery — which they justified on the ground that private possessions were sinful. They spread the doctrine by sermons and writings and also by discussions, in which they developed great shrewdness and readiness of repartee. Their verbal arrows made them famed and feared. Their main tenets were: There is no God above the world. Man is God. Since man is like God, there is no need for intermediaries. A good man's blood was as venerable as the blood of Christ. The moral was that which the Brethren and Sisters declared to be moral. Freedom knows no rule and, therefore, no sin. For the "mind," there are no such things as theft or fornication. The kingdom of God and true blessedness are on earth, and therein consists true religion. In short the Ego, purely self-regarding and unburdened with scruples of any kind, is the true Christ.

Both standpoints were nihilistic. Scotism laid such emphasis on the omnipotence and sole reality of God as to extinguish the individual; the intellectualist Beghard laid such emphasis on the

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Their organization was still wholly patriarchal. They were no mere association of economic interests, but an ethical union. The apprentice entered not only the business, but the family of his master, who was as responsible for his pupil's moral guidance as for his technical training. Similarly the individual member's relation to his guild was less that of a judicial subjection than of piety. It was a matter of honour rather than of economics to turn out good work. On the other hand, the guild regarded it as its most important duty pledged to find adequate markets for its members and to provide care and nourishment in case of illness or disablement. Social gatherings in special meeting-rooms, corporate festivities and processions, particular forms of salutation, and guild customs strengthened the bond. In time, however, this fine spirit of fellowship inevitably degenerated into a niggling guardship and rigid lifeless routine, so that even today this sort of thing is contemptuously called "guildish" (*zünftlerisch*). Everything was scrupulously regulated, from speech-making and drinking of healths to the number of apprentices and the size of the shops. No apprentice might go out for his glass of beer before the bells struck three. Not more than six guilders were to be lost at play in one evening. Only personally finished articles were to be sold, so as to prevent the development of wholesale businesses. The workshop must give on to the street so that the work should be always open to inspection. No new work might be taken on before earlier orders had been completed. Delicate work was to be done by daylight only. All well-meant and sensible rules, but intolerably cramping in the long run. Above all, there was no possibility of grasping the broader implications of things or of organically combining opposing factors. These are the invariable drawbacks of an outlook which concentrates on immediate realities. Life in those days moved in a heavy armour of form and formulæ, forced into that armour by a professional diletantism that set itself against brains. Everywhere one sees a dogged clinging to the solid material of existence, without creative freedom, productiveness, or genius. Yet in its own domain this materialism won great victories. It was an age of loyal, conscientious, and artistic handling of materials, of endowing material with dignity and beauty, of respect and veneration for the object that was being fashioned, such as we of today can hardly imagine, an age of

craftsmen who brought more inventive genius, affection, and originality to bear on a lock or a wardrobe than is devoted to one of our modern luxury buildings. It was the heroic age of Philistinism.

A growing sense of actuality usually tends to bring a certain rationalization and increased purposefulness into the business of living, and we can detect at this stage the first, though quite modest, attempts to master the problems of life scientifically. In the domain of nature-research confusion still reigned. Valuable discoveries of all sorts were made, but they were not co-ordinated, and even so thorough and many-sided a thinker as Regiomontanus impresses us as a learned collector of curiosities who stores his precious finds side by side as unsystematically as the veriest amateur. Konrad von Megenberg's *Buch der Natur*, again, a sort of zoölogical text-book, is remarkably good in point of systematic arrangement, but has not emancipated its pictures and text from fabulous creatures — dragons, winged horses, mermaids, sphinxes, centaurs, fire-breathing dogs, and the like. In fact, the only sphere in which a fertile and unbroken empirical tradition ruled was that of craftsmanship. By dint of experimenting and perfecting, there came into existence a whole army of exquisite trifles and playthings: highly original clocks and locks, artificial waterworks, delicate instruments for goldsmith's work, and magnificent organs. But there was no scientific intention behind them, only the idea of making existence more ornamental and comfortable. In finance, too, the feeling for numerical exactitude gained strength only slowly. In the main the methods used were primitive and summary. Errors in reckoning were so common that no one worried about them. The idea of checking one's calculations was entirely lacking, the use of zero as a positional number was unknown. Reckoning was done with the clumsy and unreliable abacus. Division was an art which practically no one had mastered. Arithmetical work was a process of trial and error — that is, various results were tried in turn until one that appeared fairly plausible was obtained. Memory for figures, which we regard today as a matter of course, was then quite undeveloped.

In the field of history considerable progress was made. The need of recording present and recapitulating past events was gen-

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But the stronge ing Realism is in t mentioned the gre always in itself a r must go into facts, only in detail and to the satirical car all over Europe. T and virtues figure but even so valu conditions. The v scenes, which aff gayest and crudes taste of the day. I in it we find all the *Maitre Pathelin*, Molière in embry didactic character reached the class Chaucer, the "En map of English s its transitions an modes, their featu

that they were offered for selection like our still more various hors d'œuvres; one took a helping of one, and another of another, but only the real glutton sampled them all. It is from the standpoint of a modern gourmet that the combinations are so barbarous; in particular the little birds (presumably sparrows) in dripping with radishes must have tasted atrocious. Everyday meals were quite plain, even in well-to-do families. A guest from our epoch would probably miss sugar more than anything, for this was still a very costly article, used only on special occasions and as medicine. Then the fare included practically no vegetables, or, at the most, cabbage or millet. Green peas were considered a delicacy; rice was known, but did not often figure. Above all, there were lacking the two items without which we can hardly imagine a meal: soup and potatoes.

A good deal of drink — principally beer — was regularly consumed, especially in Germany. Wine was sour and badly kept, and honey and spices were added to improve it. The tasty Southern wines were drunk only as *apéritifs*, even by the rich. In general, wine was treated with respect and more in the light of a medicine: as a purgative, an opiate, an aid to digestion, and at the same time a gift of God.

We now come to one of the most important characteristics of the age, which we will call *diabolism* or *Satanism*. Human beings, or at least many of them, had at that time something diabolical about them. And there was something diabolical also in the external events which beat in on them. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many of these deranged and frightened creatures became obsessed with the idea that Antichrist had obtained the mastery and that the reign of evil which preluded the Day of Judgment had already set in. The fundamental feeling which possessed them is perhaps best explained by the term "world-nightmare." Outward impressions and events affected them like a huge, monstrous nightmare, an evil ghostly dream. Tortured humanity moved in a perpetual fear-neurosis, which a fear-inspired chase after riches and pleasure could only deaden by spasms. In their very exterior the men and women of that time betrayed their devastated condition. They were, to our ideas, frankly ugly, being either lean and emaciated or spongy and bloated, sometimes grotesquely combining the two extremes; as when a ponderous belly was supported

*The world-
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mammoth buildings which are never finished; their political imagination, true to its period, suffered from elephantiasis.

The reign of the first Luxemburger, Charles IV, is brightened by a wise and beneficent encouragement of science and art, and above all by the dazzling apparition of Rienzi, the "last of the tribunes," a fiery fantast belonging to the family of picturesque adventurers who leave no permanent traces in history and yet impress themselves more deeply on the memory than their most productive contemporaries. Rienzi had something of the genius's uncompromising directness and breadth in his ideas, which imposed itself on all; on the other hand, he had an undisciplined, sweeping immoderateness which caused him only too soon to transgress the bounds of possibility and brought him to his downfall. But his grandiose dreams of the rebirth of Rome's former greatness, of the restoration of a European world-empire, did not die with him; he still lives in the long line of shining fabulous beings whose portraits, falsified by legend, fertilize our imagination better than a hundred "epoch-making" facts from real history.

The last of the Luxemburgs, Sigismund, also achieved legendary fame, though of a very different nature, through his betrayal of Huss, whom he is said to have lured to his death by a letter of safe-conduct. Actually his behaviour constituted no breach of the law according to the views of the time, and there is no record of a single important contemporary raising this accusation — and this though the Council was attacked right and left in judicial, political, and even theological circles. But here, too, is a case where we are bound to accept the unhistoric, people's view as the truer one. For, in a higher and deeper sense, he did act in bad faith when he set himself against the progressive forces of the heart of his own nuclear land and — be the legal rights of the matter what they may — permitted the fall of the man who embodied the will of the people. We can see him before us, the old hypocrite, leaning this way and that, seeking shallow compromises, now persuading Huss to give in, now flattering the princes of the Church; the voluptuous fop and corrupt rhetorician with his red forked beard, the connoisseur of brilliant witticisms, elegant courtesans, and delectable fish dishes; smooth, hollow, without aim or conviction, hatred or love, a totally *unreal* person, a glittering, polished cipher.

It is a remarkable fact that these two should have been two. These were Charles V (1378–1419). The last alcoholic maniac. One of him roasted on the spot and said he just about to be beheaded. I eyes, knelt down, and The man just touched then made him kneel head at one blow. Meet his bow and shot him odd head of game that someone to write on a wrote underneath it: "are noted by Dwynter, a mon knowledge that he hero of the Czechs, dr he would not betray to his wife — clearly one are a regular concomit. was an extremely cleve with altogether excellen the *folie raisonnante* these two madmen the land, who was notorious not far removed did not rule — over C apathy, childishness drea stantinople's fall read "The Kaiser sits at ho poor creature!"

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painters, musicians, and mystics. Indeed, the Burgundian culture may be taken as the most thoroughgoing example of the "incubation period." It was a world of blood and colour, of red passions and a bright will to beauty; a world at once blooming and dim, childlike and perverse, dull and supersplendid — a big, swelled, barbaric fever-dream. The Dutch scholar Huizinga, in an excellent book recently published, has described it as the "autumn of the Middle Ages." To us it seems more of a mysterious prelude to spring, the subterranean awakening of a new life amid snow and hail and all the capricious spasms of expectant, agitated nature.

The only two positive credit-entries which European politics can show during this period are the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain and the destruction of Mongol rule in Russia.

The condition of the Church has already been frequently alluded to. A furious contempt for the clergy is the signature of the age. On every possible occasion we hear denunciation of their coarseness and ignorance, their self-indulgence and licence, their covetousness and idleness. They played, drank, hunted, thought only of their stomach, and ran after every petticoat. In Italy in particular the words "parson" and "*cicisbeo*" are almost synonyms. Innumerable public sayings, clichés, and proverbs reflect the prevailing attitude towards the clerical class. It was universally held that a bishop could not enter heaven. A specially plentiful and luscious feast was called a prelates' dinner. Of celibacy it was said that it differed from wedlock in that the layman had one wife, but the priest ten. "As long as the peasant has wives, the priest has no need to marry"; "I crucify my flesh," says the monk as he lays the ham and venison crosswise on his buttered bread." Concubines were a matter of course with most of the clergy; they were known as "soul-cows" because they were the constant entourage of the soul-pastor. Even a theological authority such as Chancellor Gerson declared the oath of chastity to mean simply the renunciation of marriage, and when it was desired to reproach anyone for particularly loose living, the phrase was: "lewd as a Carmelite." It was quite usual for priests to frequent taverns, play for dancing, and tell ribald stories; even in the Vatican reading aloud from pornographic literature was much enjoyed. The Council of Constance drew courtesans, jugglers,

Anti-
clericalism

and procurers in crowds from all quarters, and Avignon was reputed to have become a city of brothels after the popes took it for their residence. Nay, we could go further and say that part of the clergy was caught in a current of atheism to which the people reacted in their turn.

Wyclif

Yet these were but scattered and separate symptoms, and opposition was as yet inert, lacking in conscious aim and in uniformity. The first massed attack against the Papal Church began with Wyclif, who with scientific orderliness and precision, temperament, sledge-hammer power of argument, and an almost poetical gift of representation, forestalled all the ideas on which the later Reformation was founded, and even, in some points, went far beyond the leaders of that movement. He started from the clear and simple principle that the Church was no longer the Church and the pope no longer the Pope. It was not for the Pope to be the imperious ruler, but the humble servant of Christ; the governance of souls was given him by God to hold as a fief, and if he were a bad vassal, failing to keep his Lord's laws and associating with His deadly enemies, worldly lust and worldly possessions, then it must be escheated. The Papacy was not demonstrably founded in the law of God, the Church had no outward and visible head. Wyclif desired, therefore, no more and no less than a popeless Church. But he made two more important points: laymen were to have the right to read the Bible (which he translated into English for the purpose), and most of the external apparatus of ecclesiastical practice was to go — pilgrimages and the use of relics, confession and extreme unction, celibacy and the hierarchy. And, lastly, he contested even the dogma of transubstantiation. Hussism added nothing to Wyclif's system and on certain points even narrowed it down. It is, indeed, no more than a weaker, emptier duplication of Wyclifism and contains no single original feature; but the figure of Huss himself acquired a terrific impressiveness by reason of his earnestness, strength of character, and unyielding determination to seek the truth, though with all this there was mingled a chaotic strain of bull-obstinacy and narrow-mindedness — characteristic of all Slav thinkers.

Papa tri-
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On the program of the Council of Constance there stood three main points: the *causa unionis*, the *causa reformationis*, and the *causa fidei*. For none of these three problems was anything even

approaching a solution to a sort of republican reducing the Papacy to dom, so to speak, and p of the Council, the parli only the victory of C Absolutism.

Thus we have the l phant than ever. It triu churches, over the her. Only in one quarter dic important and alone d it sinks all at once into Outward victories and of history. The Kaiser-defeats; the Pope-idea forth overlay the world The pope ruled witho seriously, men believed been all that really mat of Peter, the shepherd only the mighty prince with a crown, a treasu others.

What help did his Holy Father. Let every ruler of this world and, i it was all useless: for he honestly tried, in so far to become likenesses o nesses of the good ol vacillating, but so divin struggling to understand would all Europe be Cat

But the popes did no unfair advantage: to r earthly rulers; to ema ordains that the one k the other. It was this i

and unrighteous challenge to the moral system of the universe, which proved their ruin.

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The simple always wins and this case was a simple one to sum up. Here is a man who holds his court in gold and purple, commands millions, condemns millions, tries to usurp the Kaiser's rights, and all on the authority of a claim to be the earthly representative of one who lived among men despised as a beggar, who neither could nor would command anyone, who accused none and gave to Cæsar what was Cæsar's due — *Caïaphas* posing as the vicar of *Christ*!

In all this, however, there is one point that must not be lost sight of: that apart from Wyclifism, which was practically exterminated after his death by the house of Lancaster, and Hussism, which became bogged in compromise, the whole movement was at first anti-clerical only and not anti-Catholic. This is an important difference. It was not the dogmas and rituals that men attacked, but false uses and degradation of them; the abuses, not the uses. To this extent the controversy was juridical rather than theological.

Dæmons
and
magicians
While men's faith was being thus shaken and disorientated and humanity had allowed itself to become confused by the servants of the Church without finding the courage to doubt the Church itself, there rose to the surface some strange currents which had always been at work underground, but now, in the general state of helplessness, became a new power in life. Since God no longer spoke through His priests, other announcers of His will were sought, and thus there arose a very thinly masked polytheism in the form of a dæmon-worship which was reckless, often formidable, and occasionally nasty. Everywhere fantastic intermediaries plied between God and man, and the spirits of hell aroused more fear and respect than the saints. The whole atmosphere was filled with little devils, coarse and fine, wise and foolish, harmless and malicious. They were "as numerous as the dust-particles in a shaft of sunlight." They sat at table, in the workshop, on the bed-edge; they rode on goats' backs or appeared in the guise of ravens, rats, and toads. And alongside of them all manner of nature-spirits led a mysterious existence in bush and forest, in wells and lakes, in fire and wind — pale memories of the ancient mythology. All the marvellous creatures which still people our fairy-tales con-

trolled in those days ings. There were el nightmares. Even the ture-gods, heathen el the Mohammedans in and respectful awe; i of the Host, black m ever, be seriously mis stition if we were to even intentionally m God-defying actions, devil-worship, a sort with the same astoni of those days, as we l conviction that the E that they should belie a Devil's congregatio

Side by side with spread an abstruse l prophecies, the inter consultation of the l routine of daily life. ing of horses and hov and in the form of th to ban or attract; c or loose. To meet a woman or — very signous legends, too, refle triumphant powers o of the wizard Virgil: God's commands, ob art, and sees all the l the forerunner, in fac a dark dome, a world dom in passive prostr in the stars.

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trolled in those days the whole of the grown-up population's doings. There were elves, nixies, fairies, witches, kobolds, and nightmares. Even the Church's saints were transformed into nature-gods, heathen elementals. No longer did Jews, heretics, and the Mohammedans inspire mere hatred and horror, but rather fear and respectful awe; for all the world believed in the desecration of the Host, black masses, and ritual murders. We should, however, be seriously misunderstanding the real source of this superstition if we were to allocate it to crazy religious fanaticism or even intentionally malicious slander. The people regarded these God-defying actions, not as a mere negation, but as a very real devil-worship, a sort of inverted Christianity and looked up to it with the same astonishment as to the figure of Antichrist. Men of those days, as we have pointed out, held the more or less clear conviction that the Devil ruled the world, and it was only logical that they should believe in the secret existence of a Devil's church, a Devil's congregation, and a Devil's ritual.

Side by side with the grosser superstitions, there grew up and spread an abstruse but systematic belief in magic. Spells and prophecies, the interpretation of dreams and the flights of birds, consultation of the hours and the planets, were all part of the routine of daily life. Omens were seen everywhere: in the neighing of horses and howling of wolves, in the direction of the wind, and in the form of the clouds. Curses and blessings had the power to ban or attract; certain signs and gestures were able to bind or loose. To meet a hunchback brought luck; to meet an old woman or — very significantly — a priest brought ill luck. Numerous legends, too, reflect this belief in these ever present and often triumphant powers of evil, chief among them the widespread saga of the wizard Virgil: a Lucifer-like figure that successfully defies God's commands, obtains gold and dominion through the black art, and sees all the knowledge of the world in a magic mirror — the forerunner, in fact, of Faust. And over it all is the vaulting of a dark dome, a world-wide fatalism which finds the supreme wisdom in passive prostration before a destiny long ago written down in the stars.

Then to make the cup of misery full, the murky yellow flood of gold poured into this religionless world. Wealth, especially sudden wealth, is always demoralizing, but here it was a case of a

*Money
economics
with a bad
conscience*

twelve to fourteen being admitted as visitors. Married women, too, were not unusually frequenters of these places. The "pretty ones" (*Hübschlerinnen*)," it may be said, enjoyed a certain social standing. There was none of the modern "Tartufferie" that rewards these martyrs of society with contempt. At the official receptions of royalties they appeared corporatively, for (as we have seen) they were just as definitely organized as any other trade. They kept a strict control, too, over the unauthorized traffic of "*Bönhäusinnen*" — maidservants, barmaids, and middle-class girls — but their chief complaint was against the unfair competition of the convents — nun and whore being almost synonymous in the language of the day. On one occasion, when scandal concerning a Franconian convent waxed so high that the Pope ordered an investigation, the commissioner who was sent reported that he had found almost all the nuns in a state of pregnancy. The monasteries were also frequently the scene of orgies, and homosexuality was widespread among the members of the orders of both sexes.

One strange custom was that of the "trial-night," when the girl permitted her lover to take every sort of liberty without giving herself to him. By this means both parties were able to convince themselves of their partner's qualities, and the result was by no means always marriage, which was declined quite as often by the girl as by the man. There is a certain resemblance to this practice in the "*Fensterln*" or "*Gasseln*" that is to be found here and there on the country-side even today—but the point is that then it was an established custom, not amongst boors merely, but in every circle, even the highest. It was no rarity, indeed, for a husband to let a guest lie with his wife "on honour and faith." Frequently, married men not only had their official concubines, but brought up their bastards with their legitimate children.

In matters of sex, then, there was an utter absence of restraint. Indecent and licentious songs were common at public dances (as they still are amongst peasants), and kisses and embraces were the official form of gallantry. When a spa visitor wished to show his respect for a woman (whose acquaintance perhaps he had only just made), he simply thrust his hand into her bosom. Men and women undressed in front of one another in the calmest manner, not only at the baths, but on every occasion. When Louis XI en-

tered Paris, the prettiest
all kinds of pastorals be-
mention that there were

We have, of course, over these things — which continued to be done last year — the very fact that such things are symptomatic of the uncertain times.

The whole spirit of opatically on the style was the clothing of ero of form and colour w costumè. Women had their breasts naked—so as to appear fuller, skin-tight nether garr much as possible, and tatic, cod-pieces. In qu came the grotesque ho the face altogether, lea versity lay in the mo like pages, while men of egg, and even pig breasts. Where beard either forked or quit threads and twisted fumed, and were pai colour, which at othe had become the favor given a rakish upwa knees perhaps and ha wore enormous trains to the ground; men slashed doublets, fro or long, scalloped stri gold, pearls, precious clouds, triangles, sna were bright and arrest

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him equally indifferent. Even the conviction that a creed is worthy of being cursed is tantamount to a sort of creed in itself, but Frederick believed in nothing. "*Tout comprendre c'est tout mépriser*," as Nietzsche said — with a difference — and it was this *mépris* for positively everything which was the devastating root-emotion of Frederick's soul.

It is easy to see why this unfathomable personality roused as much horror as admiration in its time. Some called Frederick the Wonder of the World, *stupor mundi*; others saw in him the Antichrist. Gregory IX began an encyclical with the words: "Out of the sea there came forth a beast covered with names of offence, with the feet of a bear, the throat of a roaring lion, and in all other parts like to a panther. Examine well the head, body, and tail of this beast, which calls itself emperor." But the people made him a national saint, an imperishable saga-figure. It was said that he did not die, but would come again one day and overthrow the Papal throne, erect a kingdom of glittering splendour, and be a saviour to all the oppressed and heavy-laden. From time to time spurious Fredericks continued to appear, the last occasion being in 1546. Then again it was told that he was asleep in the Kyffhäuser cavern and it was not until the prosaic nineteenth century that this legend was transferred to his far less important grandfather Frederick I, whose red beard has been growing round the marble lake ever since, for the delight of all headmasters.

But in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Europe was simply peopled with little Rudolfs and Fredericks. Now, materialism and nihilism spring from much the same state of mind. Both of them deny the workings of higher powers of our existence: nihilism because it no longer believes in them; materialism because it does not yet believe in them. The one and the other are morbid phenomena, pathological aspects of life: nihilism because it stands *too far* from reality, seeing it in too distant a perspective, so that everything is blurred in shadowy mist and fog; materialism because it stands away *too little* from reality, seeing it in too close perspective, so that large and essential features become unrecognizable. Nihilism suffers from dilatation of the heart when it recognizes an equality of everything, which is as good as saying nothing; while materialism fails from constriction of the heart, taking account of nothing but things directly tangible and

*Coincidentia
oppositorum*

accessible to the coarsest senses — that is, the worthless and unimportant things. Both standpoints represent an un-serious view of existence; both are without foundation or root. The Philistine is just as much in the air as the free-thinker.

And it is this which constitutes the secret inward bond between these two tendencies. In their effect and outward appearance they are poles apart, two completely opposed outlooks on life; for of all the possible formulations of reality, these are the two which differ most. We ask, therefore, how it was that two such flat opposites could exist in the same age, and even in the same person; and, in asking, find the answer to lie in the *idea of the age*, the idea that filled and dominated this whole incubation period; and now we are in a far better position to discuss it, since for the fixation of representative personalities in that age we must have recourse to artificial expedients and makeshift constructions. The basic idea of the age was, in short, this: that life consisted in the union of two apparently quite irreconcilable opposites, and human beings were nothing but the meeting-point of two opposing influences.

Nicolaus
Cusanus

This basic idea was formulated with illuminating distinctness by the greatest, perhaps the only, philosopher of the age. Nicolaus, called Cusanus from his birthplace at Cues near Trier (d. 1464), was the son of a poor Moselle fisherman, became one of the most versatile scholars of his age, and rose to be an influential prince of the Church. He played a decisive part in the theological controversies of his century, championing the modern or Conciliar view, which he put before the Council of Basel in his great work: *De concordantia catholica*. (His principal opponent was John of Torquemada, who, in his treatise *Summa de ecclesia et eius auctoritate* laid down the lines that Papal doctrine followed for centuries afterwards.) Nicolaus Cusanus was also the first to dispute the genuineness of the Donation of Constantine, which was subsequently exposed as a forgery by Laurentius Valla. Amongst his works is a conversation on religion in which he argued in favour of the union of all confessions: Christian, Jewish, Turkish, Indian, and Persian. In his *De reparatione calendarii* he drew up a scheme of calendar reform which anticipated the Gregorian, and he taught that the earth was round and turned on its own axis. In his philosophy he was, as a former pupil of the Deventer fraternity, to some extent a mystic; but as his teaching system also found room

for certain trains of thought in philosophy, he was clairvoyant in his own product. In other words, the stamp of Leibniz and Hegel was in the content of his time into

It was on his return from Rome that he had been as Papal ambassador. Philosophy dawned on him everything that is, live point of intersection of *oppositorum* is God, with which He is all-embracing infinity. Everything contained in everything *oppositorum* is the Word, in which it forms an image of a unity. Every *individuum* only is it contained in the *universum*, *nihil in partibus relucet* to a microcosm, a "*parvum*" imaginable contrasts — and immortality, body and soul is, finally, Cusanus his natural science and the careful guardian of the secrets of the world and a seeker after truth of the Schoolmen and the

But how this all-rounder came to this agreement of the opposite is a mystery which we cannot penetrate: by an intuition, or by accident, again, as usual, coupled with a *docta ignorantia*, common phenomena of magnetism and electricity, otherwise he would have been an important and speaking witness. In all in all, what he introduced of *creative paradox*, which was in the domain of inward and outward, in the most telling fashion in the

It was remarked at the close of the last chapter that mediæval man makes a contradictory impression upon us. But the contradictions that there concerned us and those of the men of the incubation period differ essentially. For at first these contrasts all arose out of one great unity, faith, and had besides an objective existence for the observer only — the people themselves were not aware of them. Now it is different: the contemporaries of Cusanus were well aware of their contradictions and suffered under them. Through all the phenomena that the age produced there runs a break, a split, a great seam, the feeling of a world-ruling dualism — the *man of two souls* makes his entry into history.

We have already said that it was not until this era that the dualism between town and country comes sharply to the surface. From now on we have two contrasted cultures, a knightly and a mercantile one. The first is concentrated in the *Burg*, the second in the *Bürger*. And it is about the same time that the doctrine of twofold truth appears in theology, the theory that one and the same proposition may be right in theology and wrong in philosophy. The Middle Ages had held grimly to their great unity: "I believe what I know, I know what I believe"; but now for the first time there was opened that chasm between the scientific and religious attitudes which yawns through the whole course of modern history. "Yawns," I may well say, for it is an uncomfortable and often extremely wearisome proceeding to follow the strainings of the priests, politicians, artists, philosophers, and scientists who deal with this question, and whose deductions are mostly sophistical, now artificially and superficially reconciling the two experienced forms of faith and knowledge, and now driving them into opposite extremes. But at the same time the view that that "twofold truth" is mere Jesuitry is just one of the many shallow misjudgments of Liberal history-writing; what we should see in it rather is a new determinant of the general outlook. Here too, as the Occamist doctrine of discrepancy shows us, we are dealing with one more of the many formulations of the *coincidentia oppositorum* idea. Regarded in the light of this idea, every basic theological problem — the Fall and the Day of Judgment, the Incarnation and Virgin Birth, the Last Supper and the Resurrection — should have two conflicting views, and the supreme truth could only be attained by uniting them. It was in this same

period, too, that dualism sphere from that of the Under the newly-invented *partita doppia, loi digra*; two opposite pages *ma torum*. But the most str is found in music, wher way to polyphony, and C ment. The earliest clas who died in London in 1 coincidence of opposite *macabres*, which in the the subject of innueme Here Death plays the fi and children, peasants saints, and every imagin and round. A more imp of those days looked up dancing became brothe tion of life was at the It is thus that the wh dance of those marked life was the euphoria of

Our picture would : third tendency, not the impressive of the whol for the two antagonistic but here it is a questio hovered calmly and m This something was *m*

To all appearances men believed it to be : same feeling. But it wa and never does rule th than now, He lived as straying, seeking man burst from the depths men of the people had merchant, Rulman M

the universal priesthood of all Christian believers and declared the divinely favoured layman, the "Friend of God," to be the chosen impartor of heavenly grace. Taking this as their collective title, all those who took their Christianity seriously formed a union with no other bond than the purity of their mode of thought and the intensity of their yearning for salvation. One element above all now asserted itself in the religious movement — women, who up till then had remained almost entirely in the background and, only a short time before, had been declared by eminent religious teachers to be without souls. These women, awakened to religion, began to record their visions and trances and their mysterious experiences in contact with God, in letters, diaries, and memoirs; and in this way there grew up a wholly distinctive literature of ecstatic confession and self-revelation. Before long they too assembled in convents of their own and became known as Béguines or "praying sisters." Later on they were joined by the male Beghards, and great mystic collective experiences followed. Here we are in the presence of a weighty fact of cultural history we shall frequently meet again: the fact that great spiritual movements and emotional revivals very often originate among women. A woman possesses a natural flair for everything that may germinate, every kind of secret growth, everything, in fact, which is of the future rather than the present. This almost telepathic sense is usually more developed in her than in a man. She is also far less conservative and less one-sided than a man, who forms in himself a self-contained and definitely outlined unity. He is the born professional and expert, but a woman is a multiplicity of things; her soul is open to all possibilities, she has that gift of being everything, transforming herself into everything, which in men is the attribute of genius only; hence it has often, and rightly, been asserted that there is something feminine in every man of genius.

All the religious phenomena of that age arose out of one basic common will, the will to find the way back to God — not to the Church's God, hidden under a thousand outward ceremonies and obscured by a maze of intricate syllogisms, but to the deep, pure, serene source itself from which all life flows. Within the Church the main supporters of this movement were the monastic orders, above all the Dominicans and Franciscans. As has ever been the way, they began their reform of the Christian life and faith with a

return to the early Christians took the more themselves to "necessary" ciscans went all the who did not abjure the Apostles in his w above all to the ear wonder that Pope Jc retical. In the matte Franciscans who aim They wanted to work vividness and force, satire as means to th became the classics o Meister Eckhart, on lects that Germany h

Eckhart is a curi the poet of incompar and the religious gen his death, constitute rally, he was an agnc hensible, it could n impenetrable darkn negative assertions a fathomable, uncreate idol. God is not this God or has formed f indeed have known shouldst know Him or analogy." "If I then surely I must a just what I mean! become God." "The is as big as God. Why moment when this godliness, must mak God comes in. And you allow God to be for anything as God

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ciscans went all the way, teaching that no one could be saved
who did not abjure the world and seek to become an image of
the Apostles in his way of life, and this rule, they insisted, applied
above all to the earthly successors of Peter, the popes. Small
wonder that Pope John XXII declared their teaching to be he-
retical. In the matter of preaching, on the contrary, it was the
Franciscans who aimed at keeping in close touch with the world.
They wanted to work on the people and therefore relied on plastic
vividness and force, rejecting neither coarse realism nor harsh
satire as means to their end. The Dominicans, on the other hand,
became the classics of mystic philosophy. Their brightest light was
Meister Eckhart, one of the most profound and universal intel-
lects that Germany has ever produced.

Eckhart is a curious cross between the crystal-clear thinker,
the poet of incomparable power and plastic and original language,
and the religious genius. His teachings, banned by the Curia after
his death, constitute a *Summa* of all mystical speculation. Natu-
rally, he was an agnostic — he says of truth that were it compre-
hensible, it could not be truth. The godhead is enthroned in
impenetrable darkness, motionless, calm. We can only make
negative assertions about it, as, for instance, that it is infinite, un-
fathomable, uncreated; every positive predicate turns God into an
idol. God is not this or that. Anyone who imagines he has known
God or has formed for himself any figure whatever of God, may
indeed have known "something or other," but not God. "Thou
shouldst know Him without the help of any picturing, mediation,
or analogy." "If I ought to recognize God without mediation,
then surely I must actually become He, and He I!" "But that is
just what I mean! God must actually become I and I actually
become God." "The smallest creative picture formed within thee
is as big as God. Why? It takes from thee a whole God. For in the
moment when this picture enters into thee, God, with all His
godliness, must make way for it. But when this picture goes out,
God comes in. And is it going to do thee any harm, friend, that
you allow God to be God within thee?" "Never has man so longed
for anything as God has longed to persuade man to be one with

*The new
religion*

* God. God is ready at all times, but we are very unready; God is near to us, but we are far from him; God is inside, we are outside; God is at home with us, we are strangers with Him." To achieve pure contemplation of God, even union with him, to become "godded," all that is needed is *to be still*. Man must be silent that God may speak, man must suffer that God may take effect. All creatures are a sheer nothing: there is only God and not, as our unreason believes, God *and* the creature. Therefore we must strip off our creaturehood. This we can do by "seclusion" — that is, by liberation from all sensuality — and by poverty. A poor man is he who knows nothing, wants nothing, and owns nothing. As long as man craves for any particular thing, he is not yet really poor — that is, not yet really perfect. Therefore, our prayers, too, must be concerned with God only, not ourselves — he who prays for something prays for a nothing. The truly pious can also well dispense with the Church's grace, for to him every dish is a sacrament. It is not confession, going to mass, or the like that matters, but the birth of Christ within us. Even Mary's holiness consists not in that she bore Jesus physically, but because she bore Him spiritually, and therein every human being can imitate her at any time. Virtue does not consist in a doing, but in a being. Works should not sanctify us, but we them. But only those works will be holy which are done on their own account. "I maintain definitely: as long as thou executest thy works for the sake of heaven, of God, or of thine own salvation, thou art certainly not on the right way. It will be possible to tolerate thee, but it is not the best thou canst do." Man can attain to any heights if only he has the will, for the will is all-powerful: "No one can hinder thee except thyself."

These scanty quotations will no doubt suffice to show that what Eckhart and his school achieved was nothing less than the birth of a new religion, a complete transcreation of the previous Christian faith, in comparison with which the Lutheran Reformation stands as an earthquake to a geological recasting, or as a purifying and fertilizing storm to a world-change of climate that calls a new flora and fauna into existence. Had this movement succeeded, a new world-age would have dawned for Europe; but it was suppressed by the Church, and with a measure of success which is less a reproach to the Church's quite logical protection of

its own interests than humanity for a rebuil

Mysticism contains practical. These elementary expressive forms in J. Suso of Constance remain *Doctor sublimis*, acuteness of speculation him, the centre of gravity with rare force and so unconditional following must necessarily fly that he has been a rigid effective life and a man set before him in a picture — namely, Jesus shall be arranged, inevitably become as bitter as sweet." Suso, on the new wisdom that he of his lyrical rhapsody the bride of God, thine me," he cried, "the depth for ink, the lead out my heart's passion studded with nails on Lord."

Another influence the abbey of Groenendaal marvel of divine illumination number of works characterized and a simple profound street, they used to say: *l'uom ch'è stato all' Hell*)." Just so the profound thrill combined the serenity with the far-sightedness the beyond. His work

* D.T. and man does ¹³⁸ reject God for god cause - Because he is a blunderer and a Dumbkopf.

the most hidden things. The Church bestowed on him the title *Doctor ecstaticus*; his countrymen called him *l'admirable*, and when he died, in 1381, at the age of a hundred and seven, all the bells in the neighbourhood began to toll of themselves. One of his disciples was Gerhard Groot, who founded the lay order of the "Brethren of the Communal life" at Deventer, a free union of believers whose sole aim it was to encourage a Christian way of life and the *moderna devotio*, the new devotion to God as taught by the mystics. Soon there sprang up similar brotherhoods in all parts of Germany and the Netherlands, and it was from their ranks that Thomas à Kempis came, whose *Imitation of Christ* is, after the Bible, the most widespread book on earth, is read eagerly by Catholics and Protestants alike, and has been translated into all European and numerous non-European languages. It popularizes the doctrines of the great mystics in a very noble, free, and powerful manner, and in it the Quietist element comes out with all impressiveness and clarity. "So far as thou mayest, hold thyself aloof from the confusions of men. Why do we so gladly chatter with others, since it is but rarely that we can return to silence without injured conscience. I would that I had oft been silent and oft not among men." Too much hair-splitting and argument does no good. "Rather would I find repentance and atonement within myself than be able to argue as to the nature of repentance. For all is mere nothingness and vanity, save loving God and serving Him alone." "He is truly great who is small unto himself and counts great honours as nothing. He is truly wise who regards all temporal things as mud, so he may gain Christ. And he is truly learned who loses his own will and learns to do and fulfil the will of God."

The
"Frank-
forter"

But the finest monument to the spirit of the age is found in the anonymous *Little Book of the Perfect Life* (*Büchlein vom vollkommenen Leben*). Luther, who republished it, says in his preface: "Above all, this little book warns those who wish to read and understand it that they should not judge it over-hastily, because some of the wording may appear wrong and out of the accustomed manner of preachers and teachers. And, verily, it does not float on the surface like foam on the waves, but is called from the bed of the Jordan by a true Israelite, whose name God knows." And again, two years later: "And, to commend my good old gossip once more, never have I met with a book, apart from the Bible

and St. Augustine, from to learn of the meaning. Please God this little we shall realize that the theologians." This short is in fact one that every learned or ignorant, fit universally read, but can preferably learnt word one of the most illustrious grandeur and humility difficulty to attempt to few words.

Man ought to become is makeshift? The perfect holds in its being all perfection is that which has as a glow issues from something, as this or that only that the creature unchangeable good, and and imperfect and, ab assumes into itself anything falling away. "What falling away or his doing was something and was his own and his doing this? They say that it lost or 'fell'; but I say of his: this 'I' and 'π seven apples, he would The soul of man has two nity, the other that of and of distinguishing eternity is more pleasurable may achieve merely a will inquire no further everlasting life while which Christ spoke,

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and St. Augustine, from which I have learnt more and still intend to learn of the meaning of God, Christ, and all things that be. Please God this little book may become better known, and then we shall realize that German theologians are undoubtedly the best theologians." This short work, covering little more than five sheets, is in fact one that everyone should read, high or low, wise or simple, learned or ignorant, for it appeals to all. It should be not only universally read, but carefully studied, inwardly experienced, and preferably learnt word for word by heart; for it is of all documents one of the most illuminating on human heights and depths, grandeur and humility. This being so, it is a task of quite peculiar difficulty to attempt to reproduce the basic ideas of the work in a few words.

Man ought to become perfect. But what is perfection and what is makeshift? The perfect is the one entity which embraces and holds in its being all entities; whereas the makeshift or imperfection is that which has issued from this perfection or *is becoming*, as a glow issues from the sun or from a candle, and appears as something, as this or that. And that is called a *creature*. Sin means only that the creature has turned aside from this perfection, this unchangeable good, and turned to the particular, the changeable and imperfect and, above all, to itself. Therefore, if the creature assumes into itself any God as being its own, this constitutes a falling away. "What else did the Devil do, in what else did his falling away or his downfall consist, but in assuming that he too was something and wished to be something, and that something was his own and his due? And what else did Adam do but just this? They say that it was because he ate the apple that he was lost or 'fell'; but I say that it was on account of this assumption of his: this 'I' and 'me' and 'mine' and the like. Had he eaten seven apples, he would not have fallen, but for his assumption." The soul of man has two eyes. One is the gift of looking into eternity, the other that of looking into time and into created beings, and of distinguishing among them. And one single glance into eternity is more pleasing to God than anything that His creatures may achieve merely as creatures. He who achieves that glance will inquire no further: he has found the kingdom of God and everlasting life while still on earth. He has the *inward* peace of which Christ spoke, which prevails over all opposition and

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perversity, against oppression, poverty, and shame. He has the quiet which enables him to be joyful in the manner of the Apostles, and indeed of all chosen friends of God and followers of Christ. The "old man," as we know, stands for Adam, for disobedience, egoism, somethingness, and other such things. He who lives in his egoism and according to the "old man," is called, and is, a child of Adam. Let him live in it long enough and essentially enough, and he becomes a child and brother of the Devil. "All of this may be summed up in this short sentence: See that you be thoroughly detached from yourself." The same applies to following after Christ. He who leads a Christian life with the object of achieving or earning anything will do so as if for hire and not for love; which is to say, he does not really lead the life. God would rather have a single genuine worker for love than a thousand hirelings. As long as men seek what is "best" for them, they will not find it. For then they only seek themselves and imagine that they themselves are the best. But as they are not the best, they are not seeking the best while they seek themselves. To those who have tasted perfection, all *created* things are of no account, themselves included. And so, for the first time, a genuine inner life arises. Then, as they make steady progress, they find God becoming man, until finally there is nothing that is not God or of God. "That we may escape from ourselves and die as to our own self-will, living only for God and His will, to this may He help us who gave up His will to His heavenly Father, Jesus Christ." "Here endeth the Frankforter."

The author, "whose name God knows," was in fact a member of the Teutonic Order of knighthood, and in his last years custodian of the German Herrenhaus at Frankfurt-am-Main. The book was written about a generation after the death of Eckhart and just about as long before that of Ruysbroeck. It was placed on the Index like all the other mystical writings; but the spirit which inspired it has appeared again and again for mankind, notwithstanding a hundred excommunications. When Luther in later life became a prince of the Church himself and reverted to many an ancient dogma and ceremony, the book found other adorers. It was resuscitated by Sebastian Franck, the greatest Protestant mystic of the Lutheran age, a heretic within heresy, so to say; it was cherished in circles of the Pietists; it became a

favourite book with Scher, as he called him, be make many an appearance a book which, like the Bil

Now, there is a very mystical speculation and quently notice, and at a l that the arts of form, an first in the field with th dawning in the soul of th always, but nearly alway expression. The present individual thinkers visua of contemporary human pictures of the great Ge mysticism. Of course, th made a strong impressi wrinkle in the face, ever coat, is registered with It not infrequently hap alarmed by the positiv fiendish perversion and full of brutality and cov in pictures where the sul peasant life or martyrdo text. For instance, in th der Goes, the praying s taken to Sunday service portrayer of exciting, viv ity. In his panels of the ant-heaps of callous ruf of the anonymous "M: are a complete zoölogy of humanity left in his t vagabonds, and gaping vile and degraded pig o fied subjects the figures Eve in the Ghent "Ado: ized; with her sloping sh

idea of the Renaissance, expectation in men's souls fifteenth century." It is beginning of this chapter too, in a fanatically im- which will permanently apocalyptically as "the does not come to an end, and such moods as this are suggest: they portend a new way of seeing and

CHAPTER IV LA RINASCITA

*"Beauty is the revelation of Law."
Leon Battista Alberti*

"Problem" and "fact" are the names of the two great poles between which all human intellectual activity moves. What we do not yet feel to be a fact we call a problem; what we no longer feel as a problem we call a fact. But just as every problem tends towards melting into a fact, so every fact secretly tends to take refuge in becoming a problem again. In this endless but rising series of crystallization and sublimation, condensation and solution, consists the true inner history of the human race.

But out of this there arises, for the historian who surveys the marked-off culture-periods, a curious paradox. Each of these ages disposes of a certain store of problems and facts of its own creation, which are peculiar to itself alone, support and mould its whole existence, and are its life-destiny. But the facts which were established by the science and philosophy of those buried cultures, and were as a rule their greatest pride, appear to the eye of a later day as extremely problematical; while, on the contrary, the problems with which those earlier centuries wrestled represent for us even now perfectly positive cultural-historical facts.

A French thinker once said: "There is nothing more contemptible than a fact." We might add: or anything more uncertain and ephemeral. All the "exact" conclusions reached by former times have vanished again, securely as they seemed to be based on clean reasoning and keen observation. And it will be, precisely so with our own. The only thing about our cells, nebulae, sediments, bacilli, ether-waves, and the rest of our science's basic concepts that will interest a future world will be the fact that we *believed* in them. Truths are not lasting. It is only the souls that stood behind them that will last. And while every human philosophy is destined one-day to have "no more than a historical

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interest," our interest in human history will never cease to be a philosophical one.

Therefore we measure the power and height of a Culture not in the least by its "truths," "positive achievements," and tidy parcels of knowledge. What we ask for, in weighing them, is the intensity of their spiritual metabolism, their supplies of living energies. And just as the physical capacity of man does not depend on his girth, but on the strength and rapidity of his movements, neither is the life-force of the soul of an age determined by any other factor than its mobility and elasticity, the inward adaptability of its parts, the lability of its equilibrium: in short, by its wealth of problems. There lies the real sphere of spiritual productivity, and this is also the reason why the religious and artistic cultures come over into the succeeding age, while the purely scientific eras possess only a passing vitality. Science improves the general economy of existence, discovers new laws which simplify a little the equation of life, makes our planet a rather more comfortable and less fatiguing place of abode; but we accept her gifts as if they were bread and apples, with a certain animal satisfaction, without thereby rising to a higher state of mind or receiving the impulse towards a richer spiritual activity. The actual results of the human intellect, its finds and its hits, contain no tonic, nothing which quickens the pulse of our personal existence. We "lay them to heart," we say, but our contact with them is a matter of simple addition, not of multiplication, still less of exponents. The creations of art or religion, on the contrary, for all that they have done nothing to perfect the machine of life — have indeed further complicated the already sufficiently ambiguous business of existence, and helped to upset the sureness of the life-feeling on which man instinctively relies — have nevertheless always had at their disposal a secret capital of spiritual vigour; they are like wine, which frees our molecules to fall into a more rapid vibration, sends fresh blood coursing to our head, and quickens the whole of our circulation.

Then there have been whole eras which have the insipid taste of chemically pure water; we feel them to be too distilled, too clarified, we take no pleasure in them. They are deficient in problems. If an era is to have anything to say to posterity, it must be a living *spring*, containing not only the general elements of water,

but various saline, they acquire body, they acquire life.

The Italian Renaissance intellectual constitution these were of far more those days must have

So far we have been for Italy in the four itself. Many causes country developed. these were of far more politically split up a ern history, was always secured it very Europe: in the north sea, while the Apennine surface like a broad together. Nature's the mild climate (a abundance of navigable plants — give the same time elevate it harmony was disturbed a divergency of nature form, unique, and the tion of good natural feeling and untidiness superficiality and the And nowhere does nowhere is musical are the people so wholly adjusted to such a past or such centuries at a time Roman Cæsars, the has so well-built a rous, varied and cadences — a language Actually Italy

but various saline, *insoluble* elements besides, from which alone they acquire body, aroma, and colour.

The Italian Renaissance was an era of anarchy as regards its intellectual constitution, an era which no longer believed and had not arrived at knowing. And yet we have the feeling that life in those days must have been beautiful, rich, and vigorous.

So far we have hardly mentioned Italy. This was intentional; for Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a world to itself. Many causes contributed to the isolation in which this country developed. Pure geographical reasons first of all, and these were of far more importance then than now. The peninsula, politically split up as it has been during its whole middle and modern history, was always inwardly united because its natural boundaries secured it very markedly and definitely from the rest of Europe: in the north were the Alps, and on the other sides the sea, while the Apennine chain runs across the greater part of its surface like a broad backbone, binding its various regions firmly together. Nature's favours, too — the great fertility of the soil, the mild climate (a happy mean between North and South), the abundance of navigable rivers, the wealth of beautiful and useful plants — give the whole land a certain homogeneity and at the same time elevate it above most other European regions. And this harmony was disturbed neither by a mixture of languages nor by a divergency of nationalities. The Italian folk-character is uniform, unique, and uninterchangeable; so fascinating a combination of good nature and perfidy, liveliness and laziness, form-feeling and untidiness, frivolity and bigotry, naïveté and cunning, superficiality and talent, is to be found nowhere else in the world. And nowhere does art stand so naturally in the centre of life, nowhere is musicalness so obviously a national dowry, nowhere are the people such born actors, and nowhere is existence so wholly adjusted to eye, temperament, and fancy. No country has such a past or such a capital — a city that has twice been for centuries at a time the brain and heart of Europe: first with the Roman Cæsars, then with the Roman bishops. Lastly, no country has so well-built and beautiful a language: sparkling and sonorous, varied and clear in form, with soft liaisons and pleasing cadences — a language which can only be called a natural song.

Actually Italy was always an urban land. From Etruscan days

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maintained itself, despite the style-transformations over the rest of Europe, as the true French style — even in the height of the Baroque, of which Viollet-le-Duc, the leading art historian of France in the middle of the nineteenth century, could say that: "*Louis Quatorze clôt la renaissance.*" But even this did not go far enough, for the Classical style persisted in France until the Congress of Vienna and even (as for instance in Ingres and Puvis de Chavannes) later still. Much the same might be said of French literature, which in its essential traits always remained Classical — for the Latin spirit lives just as much in the Romanics who fought it, as in the clear, cool architectonics of a Maupassant or a Zola. The German Classicism of the eighteenth century was something altogether different from this; it leaned more towards the Greek and should really be called German Hellenism, while, as for England and the Netherlands, there has never been a real Classicism in those countries at all. We must postpone a closer inquiry into these points until we meet them in the march of history and be content for the moment to observe that the ghost of the Classical has frequently visited our continent in the course of the centuries (having never really vanished from the European vista), but that the length of its stay has varied in the various countries, and the forms it has taken have always presented great differences. But that which is understood in Italy by the *rinascita* was and remained entirely limited to that country, so that from the point of view of cultural history we ought strictly to speak of an Italian Renaissance only. The Italians themselves felt this very definitely. They were conscious of embodying a *floraison* of culture and manners such as no other nation in the world possessed, and for that reason — just like the Greeks and from a similar instinct — called all foreigners, whether Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Englishmen, or Moors, barbarians.

Here again it becomes essential to propound the question: When did the Renaissance begin?

In one of the most famous passages of his *Discourse on the Dignity of Man* Pico della Mirandola makes God say to the son of Adam: "I have set thee in the midst of the world so that thou mayst the more easily see what is therein. I have created thee neither a heavenly nor an earthly, neither a mortal nor an immortal

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being, so that thou mayst be thine own sculptor and mayst chisel thy features thyself. Thou canst degenerate into an animal; but thou canst also by the free will of thy spirit *regenerate thyself* a godlike being." This, visibly, is the primary meaning of the Renaissance: the rebirth of man in the likeness of God. In this idea there lay a colossal "*hybris*" unknown to the Middle Ages, but also a tremendous spiritual impulse such as only modern times can show. At the moment when this idea appears on the horizon, the Renaissance begins. Now, this idea had already pervaded the Trecento, and almost all the Italian writers of the Renaissance, when they survey the Italian revival in retrospect, designate the age of Dante and Giotto as the epoch, the turning-point, or the great beginning. Particularly Vasari, the first historian of Italian art, groups the three centuries — Trecento, Quattrocento, and Cinquecento — as one unit of a grand national movement. Writing in 1550, he says that Cimabue made a start with his "*nuovo modo di disegnare e dipingere*," and he goes on to differentiate between three sections: *parti*, or spaces of time: *età*, which substantially correspond to the three centuries. The first to come after the "barbarism of the Goths" were the new Tuscan masters in whom art was rediscovered, resurrected, reborn. The significance of these expressions — "*ritrovare*," "*risorgere*," "*rinascita*" — in this context is manifest; only later tradition has made them the special labels of the high Renaissance. The word "*rinascimento*" came into use much later and was unknown to Vasari, as was the now stereotyped word "Renaissance," which dates back no farther than Voltaire and the Encyclopædists of 1750. And Burdach, in his recent close and exhaustive study, has arrived at the same conclusion as the oldest Renaissance historian: "The picture of new life, of rebirth," he writes, "dominated already the age of Bonaventura, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Rienzi. It was active throughout the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth became an idea of fixed validity. . . . To exclude the fourteenth century in this connexion is arbitrarily to set aside the many statements and views of contemporary historical witnesses."

Taking all in all, we are forced to the conclusion that the "conception" of the new age occurred in Italy, as elsewhere, about the middle of the fourteenth century. It was then that

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Rienzi produced his grand scheme for the political rebirth of Rome; that Petrarch and Boccaccio developed and carried out their program of a literary revival of the Classics; and that there came into being the "new style of painting," which made it its main business to seek spirituality by way of intimate and devout absorption in human emotions and destinies. With Dante's death the Middle Ages in Italy reached their end. Burdach indeed goes so far as to see in Dante the true originator of the Renaissance. This, however, is a view we are unable to take. It seems to us rather that it was precisely Dante that was the form in which the Middle Ages — with one last terrific gesture which threw its minatory shadow over the coming centuries — said *farewell* to humanity. It is as if, at the end of their earthly span, they sought once more to gather up in one tremendous throw all that they had to say. Had nothing remained of the Middle Ages but Dante's poem, we should still know everything we could ever know of that mysterious world. His unfathomable song stands at the threshold of the new age like a huge black monument in bronze, an eternal reminder of the silenced past. So magical and incommensurable was the power of this superhuman seer that his picture, though but a comprehensive symbol of the past, nevertheless puts every newer picture in the shade. Only the Middle Ages could have provided the spiritual premises for this miracle, which both concentrated all the knowledge of the age in a purely artistic form and lifted it into the sphere of faith. *The Divine Comedy* is, in every verse, encyclopædia, sermon, and dramatic epic in one. This sublime unity of faith, knowledge, and poetic creation could only have been achieved by a mediæval mind. It has been the unrealized dream of all artists ever since; but even to attempt such a creation in our time would only be the undertaking of a madman, for the conditions of our culture will first have to be changed from the foundations up.

There are, of course, many arguments against the assumption that the Italian Renaissance set in so early, especially when (as is usually the case) the arguments are based exclusively on its art history. It is in fact quite as easy to include Giotto and the Giottoesques in the Middle Ages. The deliberate decorativeness of their composition, the naïveté of their execution, their joy in the anecdotal, their stylistic treatment of the animal world and

"E ufficio del mercante e d'ogni mestiere, il quale ha a contrattare con più persone, essere sollecito allo scrivere, scrivere ogni compra, ogni vendita, ogni contratto, ogni entrata, ogni uscita in bottega e fuori di bottega; sempre avere la penna in mano." The merchant with a pen in his hand — here was something quite new!

As early as the fourteenth century the great Florentine banking-house of the Peruzzi had sixteen European branches, stretching from London to Cyprus, and its commercial connexions penetrated into central Asia. The Florentine gold piece (*florino d'oro*) was the most valuable and esteemed coin in the whole of the West. Besides the Peruzzi there were the Capponi, the Bardi, the Pitti, the Rucellai, and the Strozzi — familiar names, some of these — from the splendid palaces that have immortalized them. The fabulous rise of the Medici did not begin until the fifteenth century, but it did not take them long to become the foremost financial power in Europe. Their only close rivals were the Pazzi, famous for the great conspiracy in 1478 in which Giuliano de' Medici fell. The attack took place within the cathedral during mass — and the Pope was one of those who had a hand in the game. One of the Pazzi threw himself on Giuliano and stabbed him so furiously with his dagger that he inflicted a considerable wound on himself. The insurrection was overcome in the course of the day, and the rule of the Medici more firmly established than ever. We see that plutocracy then differed essentially from the plutocracy of today; it was an affair of heroic passions and fanatical daring, and lives were risked for the hegemony of the firm. Our own great rival commercial houses, on the contrary, confine themselves to the tamer methods of bribing voters, buying journalists, and inspiring questions in parliament. In Rome the Chigi were the supreme banking-house. They financed a succession of popes, and their chief, Agostino Chigi, was a friend of Raphael and the builder of the Farnesina — "a merchant in earning," men said, "but a king in splendour" — and shared with Lorenzo de' Medici the surname *il magnifico*. The commercial rivalry between Venice and Genoa, which was fought out so bitterly and so brilliantly in this period, is familiar to all. But what makes the financial life of all these city republics unique in their own age is its far-seeing vigour and grandiose indifference to conscience. In the

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centre of the business moral (if this contradiction in terms is permissible) stood money-making as an aim in itself, as a passion capable of forming a life, as the strongest mode of expression of the will-to-power. And nothing is more characteristic of Italy's economic life than the fact that the Jews played only a very subordinate part in it. They were not needed—the native business talent was far greater even than theirs.

All this hangs together, as we have seen, with the development of the urban life. Italian cities were by that time real cities, something quite different from the Northern, which looked like walled-in mediæval villages by comparison. If we compare Bruges with Venice, Cologne with Milan, Lübeck with Genoa, or even the Paris of that day with Rome or Florence, we have the impression of passing from a dark and crooked side-street to a broad, airy avenue. We have seen in the previous chapter that the architects and artists made little effort to improve the decoration and comfort of private houses, but devoted themselves almost entirely to public buildings, such as churches, town halls, municipal markets—an obvious residue of the mediæval collectivist feeling. But in Italian towns it was quite otherwise. There, individualism had made great progress, and everywhere there arose palaces, villas, and private chapels which combined regal splendour and exquisite taste. The wealthy decorated their halls with the most precious paintings, and their tombs with magnificent monuments, the erection of which they superintended with care during their lifetime. In the Northern cities the characteristic building was, then as before, the cathedral, but in the Italian, the *palazzo*. Further, in Italy class prejudices were very considerably weaker. We have only to look at the rise of the Medici: a family of middle-class parvenus who never aspired to as much as the outward tokens of nobility, but for generations maintained their sovereignty over the most powerful, flourishing, and cultured city in the peninsula solely by means of their money, virtuosity in the handling of men, wit, and talent for brilliant display. In other parts of Italy also, the modern nobility of talent had triumphed over the mediæval nobility of birth. At Milan the *condottiere* family of the Sforza had risen to the highest dignity; in the Papal domain any man who possessed sufficient force and shrewdness could become a duke or a cardinal; and even in Venice,

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guest of honour had a fountain in the centre which sent up a fine spray of orange-water. Then came various meat dishes, including venison, veal, chicken, ham, pheasant, and partridge, and presented with these was a large silver dish of little birds, which flew out when the lid was lifted, and artificial peacocks, which spread their tails and burned fragrant incense in their beaks. For dessert there were various sweet dishes: tarts, marzipan, and dainty little cakes. There was Italian and Sicilian wine, and between every two guests lay a list of the fifteen vintages provided. At the end scented water was provided for the washing of hands, and a great pile of green branches was set up which, impregnated with costly essences, perfumed the whole room. On comparing this dinner with the meals described in the foregoing chapter, we feel that we have come from a peasant's wedding to a court banquet. At another feast, given in Rome by Lorenzo Strozzi, the guests were received in a darkened room hung with mourning; skulls adorned the walls, and skeletons shone with ghostly light from the four corners. In the centre was a black-covered table laid with two skulls and four large bones. The servants lifted the skulls and disclosed fresh roasted pheasant, and between the bones lay sausages. No one dared to eat except the Pope's court jester, Fra Mariano, a famous glutton whose appetite was proof against superstition. After the guests had recovered from their alarm, the folding doors opened and a brightly lighted room was seen decorated to represent the starry firmament. On taking their seats the guests had a fresh surprise. Dishes and bottles jumped up from under the table before each of them without any mechanism being visible. Agostino Chigi, the banker mentioned above, once gave a banquet in Rome at which he had all the gold and silver vessels thrown into the Tiber after use. This would suggest Russia, were it not that the whole thing was a farce, the banker having had nets placed along the shore to enable the vessels to be fished up again. At another feast, when the Pope was present, Chigi had a special fish served that had been brought alive from Constantinople. On leaving, the Pope said to him (with the witty and exquisite courtesy that is only possible in Renaissance Italy): "I always thought, Agostino, that we were on a more intimate footing." Agostino replied: "And the modesty of my hospitality has confirmed your Holiness's supposition afresh." All these accounts go to

certain breadth and dignity. We need only look at the portrait painted by his friend Titian — something both imperious and indicative of genuine intellectual force looks out of it.

*La grande
putana*

Something of this sense of personal power runs through all the men of that time. The words of Francesco Sforza, when the Milanese erected a triumphal arch in his honour, may stand as a motto for the Renaissance: "These are the superstitious trappings of kings; but I am the Sforza." But woman also awoke to an individual life. She was placed on an absolute equality with man, not only socially, but in point of education. And, as it usually happens in times of emancipation, the most emancipated of all, the grand cocotte, *la grande putana*, rose to a supreme position. One of these, characteristically named Imperia, kept house on a royal scale, read Latin and Greek, was painted by Raphael as Sappho, and became after her death an almost legendary figure. A poet sang of her: "Two gods have given great gifts to Rome: Mars the Imperium, Venus the Imperia."

*L'Uomo
universale*

A. 16
The universities naturally benefited by the general uplift of intellectual interest. Everyone now flocked to them. The jurists of Bologna and Padua and the doctors of Salerno in particular were famous all over Europe, and it became the fashion to study in Italy as it had formerly been the fashion to do in France — Germany's turn was not yet, for her young academies were then still in a very backward condition. But it was not upon this that Italy's fame principally rested. It was precisely the absence of any specializing tendencies, the fact that every leading man embodied a whole university and much more besides, that made her peculiar richness and splendour of intellectual atmosphere. For humanity was then sufficiently ripe to achieve the mastery in all things, and yet not old enough to have reached the sobering and paralysing belief that life is only long enough to achieve mastery in *one* thing. Far from this, the Renaissance ideal was the *uomo universale*. A prominent Humanist would be philologist and historian, theologian and jurist, astronomer and doctor all in one. And not only all the great artists, but many small artists as well, were at once painters, sculptors, and architects, and often highly gifted poets and musicians, acute scholars, and diplomats into the bargain. Human talent was not yet forced into special channels, but flowed beneficently as one free stream over all fields. We,

on the contrary, came holed, as it were. We care more than one thing. We are surprised, suspicious of his label. This comes from being educated by the savant (as he confines himself to a sphere the helplessness. But it is in the very nature of things to be open to all impressions. We possess in fact an encyclopaedia, a culture we find, therefore, high versatility. They thing. In Greece a man was obliged to stand as a musician or an orator, the specialist was possible (naucos); and in the Renaissance degree identical with the cultures that the specialist. Another factor was an audience waiting for them and only once before. The aura of giftedness surrounding the productively charged, tense atmosphere of its mind to its labours — theatres, pictures, and in addition to life, this ennoble us, but are in superfluities, things of no value or imports. We in Athens or Florence were sensible to his vitality, processions, games, an entertainment or an affair, a vital occasion in every active part in them —

The story of the art for himself alone, guided

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of both imperious and in-
looks out of it.

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his honour, may stand as
are the superstitious trap-
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on the contrary, came into the world with brains ready pigeon-
holed, as it were. We cannot imagine how a man can know or do
more than one thing. We paste a particular label on everyone and
are surprised, suspicious, and offended if he does not act up to
his label. This comes from our culture being so completely domi-
nated by the savant (and the mass-produced savant at that) who
confines himself to a single subject and displays in all other
spheres the helplessness and artlessness of a child or an illiterate.
But it is in the very nature of the true artist to know everything,
be open to all impressions, have access to all forms of existence,
possess in fact an *encyclopædic* soul. In any period of artistic cul-
ture we find, therefore, that its gifted men are all distinguished by
high versatility. They engage in everything and can do every-
thing. In Greece a man who wished to be considered prominent
was obliged to stand out in practically every department: as a
musician or an orator, and equally as a general and a boxer. And
the specialist was positively despised as a common fellow (*ba-
nanos*); and in the Renaissance, talent, *virtù*, was in the fullest
degree identical with many-sidedness. It is only in degenerate
cultures that the specialist appears.

Another factor was that these artists had an incomparable
audience waiting for them, such as has never been known since
and only once before — in Athens. There was an indefinable
aura of giftedness surrounding mankind of those days, a curi-
ously charged, tense atmosphere which must have spurred every
productive mind to its highest output of force. To us artistic pleas-
ures — theatres, picture palaces, novels, concerts — are a pleas-
ing addition to life, things which refresh and distract and perhaps
ennoble us, but are in the last resort only costly luxuries and
superfluities, things contributing to our well-being like cham-
pagne or imports. We could conceive of life without them. But
in Athens or Florence art was a function in man's life, as indis-
pensable to his vitality as flying for a bird. The Italian carnival
processions, games, and feasts were not, as now, a coarse popular
entertainment or an *apéritif* for jaded society, but an important,
vital occasion in everyone's life, and everyone wished to take an
active part in them — just as Americans today do in a meeting.

The story of the artist's creating solitude, out of himself alone,
for himself alone, guided solely by his inner genius and unmoved

The
Renaissance
public

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An intensified spiritual culture *can* go hand in hand with political "elevation," military "expansion," and national "up-
rising," but this is anything but the rule. The true cause of every
higher development, in any case, is some great idea, which takes
so powerful a hold on the masses that it renders them creative —
that is, spurs them to concerted action on a large scale — for
there is no other way in which the masses may be creative. This
idea may express itself in the form of politics; it may also simply
take the form of an exceptionally artistic atmosphere created by
the collective mind. We trace the flower of Greek culture back
to the Persian wars. But what were the Persian wars? An idea!
The idea that Hellas, this tiny peninsula of a peninsula, must not
be simply eaten up and digested, comfortably assimilated, by that
colossus of nearer Asia, which was big and nothing else; that the
spiritus must necessarily be stronger than the *moles*, quality more
deserving and more capable of life than quantity. The Greek
citizen who fought and won on that occasion had thought more,
felt more, observed more, and in general lived more inwardly and
intensively than the Persian with his wagon-laagers, monster
fleets, gorgeous tents and harems. At bottom, it was Homer and
Heraclitus who won the victory. But the fact of their winning was
only secondary to and consequent upon the far more important
fact of their being there at all. And then, three centuries later,
Greece was *conquered*, but this again proved to be a secondary
matter: the Romans became intellectually dependent on the
Greeks, because Homer and Heracles were still there.

In what, then, did the "idea" of the Renaissance consist? We
have already hinted at it. Man realized — or rather *thought* that
he realized — that a godlike creative nature, that he himself in-
deed, was a sort of God. It was the age-old Prometheus idea
breaking out afresh with new vigour. And the formula by which
it expressed itself was: Back to the Classical! Here, now, lies a
problem. Inevitably we wonder how it was possible that a nation,
at just the moment when a new vital current was running through
its culture, arrived at the notion of imitating another, and a long-
buried, culture.

First of all we should remember that such "rebirths" — the
re-connexions with the Classical, "receptions" of Classical cul-
tural material into the course of European history — are quite

*The re-
turn to the
Classical*

expression in the growth-
to that of the child. The
individual culture-periods
painting, sculpture, archi-
tecture and interpretation:
the new *senses* come;
after the *sense* of them.
an exception to this rule.
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e glory of the Renais-

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entific discussion, re-
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s of the Renaissance,
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se characteristics in-
that at the height of
as at last understood

in its entirety) there set in a soullessness and coldness which of necessity choked the seeds that might have progressed to fruition.

An ugly destructive crack runs through all the higher spheres of cultural activity from this point. Art became a matter for connoisseurs, wisdom was confined to the learned, and custom-ethic to good society. Neither the painter, the sculptor, nor the poet now created for all humanity as a seer and herald of great sacred and inspiring truths; his efforts were designed for the intimate circle possessed of hypotheses, appreciative of fine shades and capable of grasping "implications." Architects no longer, as in the Middle Ages, built their churches and cathedrals with the consciousness of being the executants of the universal yearning for God, but as the employees of art-loving connoisseur-popes, splendour-loving princes, or fame-loving private patrons. Thinkers meditated for a select public of experts; poets polished their verses for a privileged class of epicures; artistic handicraft brightened the houses of the rich only, music became a lofty science, and war, law, politics, and commerce were all specialized and professionalized. The *palazzi* bore the stamp of the new spirit distinctly on their faces. They all have a cold, inhospitable, barring expression. It is difficult to believe that people live in them, that there are really houses belonging to the façades, for they look like nothing but stern, haughtily repellent ornamental screens and scene-painting. The portraits show us lordly men and great ladies. The Mother of God is no more a humble maiden (*donna umile*), but the proud *Madonna*, sovereignly receiving the three kings. Christ becomes the unapproachable Lord of hosts, the infant Jesus a stiff, well-behaved crown prince, conscious of his future rank; the Apostles are cool, self-conscious cavaliers. It was a world of upper-class people painted for upper-class people: for people with "nurseries," people to whom violent words, hasty movements, and unrestful lives are a horror; who have grown up in the atmosphere of wealth, comfort and *bon ton*; who never let themselves go, never become intimate, and know how to control themselves even in moments of terror and shock. Only that is painted which is in good taste. No emotions — emotions are vulgar; no story — stories are for the masses; no detail — detail smacks of the market stall; no uncleanness, ambiguity, or backgrounds — a gentleman is never ambiguous; no loud colours and harsh

of the Mother-of-God ideal for Philistines, and Manet declared that a Raphael made him literally seasick. So it will be seen that there was never any lack of connoisseurs ready to say with Velasquez: "To tell the truth, I don't like Raphael at all."

The year 1517 is known to all as the birth-year of the Reformation, when Luther nailed his ninety-five articles on the door at Wittenberg. In that same year Raphael painted his Sistine Madonna, of which everyone thinks when his name is mentioned. And about the same time Count Balthasar Castiglione finished his *Courtier*, a work which might be called a sort of Renaissance Bible. It is the "Knigge"¹ of those days, its hero is the Gentleman as the time conceived him: adroit, dignified, with a public manner and a tact that is equal to every occasion, the counterpart of the modern gentleman, but a gentleman full of elegance, serene and unworried. It was this perfect cavalier, radiating charm, beloved of princes and women and gods, whom Raphael painted and Raphael lived. And so the picture has gone marching on through four centuries.

But Raphael the darling of the gods had, for our ideas of life, one great fault. Darlings of the gods are, in fact, insipid. They are as tiresome as the "blue sea of the South," the "pure spring day," the "sweet baby in the cradle," and all perfectly pure, perfectly balanced, perfectly happy things. We desire something different in life and in art.

Raphael once said: "To paint a beauty I must have several before me, and as I have not enough models, I paint from memory, from an idea that I have in my head." What he means is that, as there is no female beauty alive in nature that is perfect in every part, he resorts to assembling an ideal beauty in his imagination from individual reminiscences. This view that it was the mission of art to represent perfection was Raphael's fundamental error and the fundamental error of the whole of Classicism. Great artists are always appearing from time to time who seem to prove to us for the moment that Classicism (that is, strict order, unity, straight lines, harmony, colourless transparency) is the flowering of art. But they prove it more or less *in usum delphini* — that is, for themselves alone. The fact is that there are

¹ Adolf Freiherr von Knigge's *Über den Umgang mit Menschen* (1788), a well-known book of manners. *Tr.*

here and there "Classical" real a beauty that our eyes find them the summit of art: less successful groping after it. But it is a delusion. The incarnations of the rule (the most regular), but in *irregularity* that is the essence; it is an artificial distillation form produced by nature. We know that the perfect approach to regularity is actually we meet such things radially symmetrical animals; but these are more Classical creations with glacier; but we should not if we would. We pitch the lower mountains, on less water. We are, in consequence, this is inevitable because things.

Raphael sets no protest against him. Hermann (says: "Raphael has no insight. He creates, like nature, no more and no less. We need to probe any deeper personal additions. With present absolutely no perception had been worked in to emerge." Let us accept confess that rose and not about them. They are a lovely. Involuntarily we all?" Raphael affects us with something we can deal with lazy majesty itself with lazy majesty itself." It must point beyond

The
"darling of
the gods,"

The basic
error of
Classicism

it has been said that all modern history is a "running commentary" on Machiavelli.

Machiavelli was as imaginative and passionate — and as corrupt and false — a reviver of the Classical as any of his contemporaries. In his mind he always saw the Polis, and in its Latinized form to boot. At the head of his theory of politics stands the proposition: "The State is power." He wished for a return to the armed nation, the Old Roman civic patriotism, the national kingship. He forgot that such a reconstruction was impossible in an age that had the revolutionary experience of Christianity behind it and pan-European and even world-politics imminent on its horizon. His ideal, as everyone knows, was Cæsar Borgia, who was not only a conscienceless rascal, but — what in a statesman was far more compromising — an adventurer without guiding principles.

"Immoral-
ism"

This brings us to the moral balance-sheet of the Renaissance. The mysterious atmosphere of beauty and vice, wit and violence, charm and rottenness in which the Renaissance is embedded has always stirred the imagination of posterity. It has evoked an expansive indignation in the bourgeois brain, which has not the power to conceive of a world other than its own well-lighted, policed, and paragraphed one; and equally it has fired the enthusiasm of every incurable adolescent brain, which all its life never gets beyond a certain perverted puberty-imagination. Obviously both are wide of the mark.

We have first to take into account that most of the Renaissance crimes were committed by official personages — that is, more or less in an official capacity — and that these same people were, outside this professional practice of robbery and murder, often quite charming and even of a noble disposition. It is even said of that most brilliant specimen of a Renaissance horror, Pope Alexander Borgia, that in private life he was good and gentle, without rancour, a friend and benefactor of the poor. Most people who were not concerned with politics led as peaceful and harmless an existence as the people of any other period. Among artists particularly, in whom, if anywhere, the characteristic features of the time were represented, there is practically none of the proverbial Renaissance immoralism to be found. There was never any lack, either, of great opponents of public immorality; the big non-

compromisers, gloomily, narola above all, the "dæmonic vigour he embodied ideal of the *soave aus* Christ's own sense, for forgiveness, and chari

Because we fail to talent and depravity, of lains, this rivalry between the perfect, we are wardly these people must ought to say, on the contrary felt guiltless and happy these things. The naïveté vices. On reading those forced, in spite of our thoroughbred ease, the say, with which these people murdering each other.

economy of existence, in our party organization, things — all these are built lying, "getting away with" ception to this. If a politician of his party, poured cup of chocolate, the whole we take it quite as a matter of motives deceives, for Italians of the fifteenth state of mind which comment in the social metabolism it as a part of the social considered an indispensable course. It is only a question

At the same time it is Renaissance "guilt." But

The men of the Renaissance life into one great dance The saying of Lorenzo

D.P.
* The murder
authoritative
as sound as ca

compromisers, gloomily heroic supermen of moralism — Savonarola above all, the "conscience of Florence," although in his dæmonic vigour he embodied but the second half of the Florentine ideal of the *soave austero*. A great prophet, but no Christ in Christ's own sense, for he lacked proportion, humanity, the grand forgivingness, and charm.

Because we fail to understand this peaceful juxtaposition of talent and depravity, of superlative taste and refinements of villainy, this rivalry between the completest trained intellectuality and the perfect, we are apt to say: it cannot have been so; inwardly these people must have felt guilty and unhappy. What we ought to say, on the contrary, is: these people must positively have felt guiltless and happy, otherwise they could never have done these things. The naïveté of the Renaissance is at the root of its vices. On reading those descriptions of infamous deeds we are forced, in spite of our moral shudderings, to admire the grace and thoroughbred ease, the formal perfection, the rhythm, one might say, with which these people went about plotting, plundering, and murdering each other. Murder was then simply a part of the economy of existence, just as lying is now. Our press organization, our party organization, our political diplomacy, our business dealings — all these are built up on a comprehensive system of mutual lying, "getting away with it," and corruption. No one takes exception to this. If a politician, for reasons of State or in the interests of his party, poured cyanide of potassium into another man's cup of chocolate, the whole civilized world would be horrified; but we take it quite as a matter of course when a statesman from similar motives deceives, forges facts, dissembles, and intrigues. The Italians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries still lived in a state of mind which could regard an occasional murder as a ferment in the social metabolism — one might almost say, could accept it as a part of the social code; just as today "corruption" is considered an indispensable ingredient of public and private intercourse. It is only a question of grades.

At the same time it is permissible to speak of a certain kind of Renaissance "guilt." But it lies much deeper than all this.

The men of the Renaissance were bent on turning their whole life into one great dance festival, and they succeeded — brilliantly. The saying of Lorenzo de' Medici: "*Facciamo festa tuttavia!*"

A. H.
conclusion
D.P.*

The
"guilt"
of the
Renaissance

D.P.:
* the murder must be as complete, as
authoritative and as immune to retribution
as sound currency is to counterfeit printing

floated above them like a blazing motto, and when Leo X became Pope he exclaimed: "*Godiamoci il papato, poichè Dio ce l'ha dato* (Let us have a merry Papacy, since God has given it to us)." This frivolity was not personal to him; he was only expressing the universal attitude towards a pope's rights and duties. A passionate greed for pleasure — though a pleasure ennobled by art and intellect — consumed the people of that age; an insatiable hunger for beauty, beauty in everything: beautiful sayings and writings, beautiful deeds and misdeeds, beautiful entries and exits, beautiful thoughts and passions, beautiful lies and scandals — for beauty as the material of life, making not only individual details, such as houses, statues, banquets, poems, but all existence a work of art. But — any wiser or more inward relation with the secrets of creation they neither desired nor attempted.

In his book *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*, which is full of new points of view, Friedrich Gundolf writes: "Here a worldly nobility takes all things, lightly or hardly, according to a worldly standard and does not ask: What does God say to it?" Whether this fully applies to Shakspeare or not is an open question; but it does apply exactly to Renaissance Italians. The question: "What does God say to it?" — the most profound and indeed the only problem of the Middle Ages — had never any interest for them. And yet were we really deposited in the world merely as clowns and jesters, upholsterers and amusement caterers?

Beauty or
goodness

We touch here upon a great rift, perhaps the greatest of all rifts in the existence of the earth's inhabitants. It consists in the terrifically solvent question: What is the meaning of life — beauty or goodness? It is in the nature of these two forces that they usually find themselves in conflict with each other. Beauty desires itself, always and only itself; goodness never desires itself and always has its aim in the non-ego. Beauty is form, and only form; goodness is content, and only content. Beauty appeals to the senses, goodness to the soul. Is it mankind's most blissful and noble task to make the world constantly richer, more desirable and precious, to fill it with an ever greater fascination of wit and brilliance? Or is it not rather best, most natural and God-pleasing simply to be a good creature, take others by the hand and serve them and be of use to them? What is the aim of this our earthly pilgrimage?

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But that can only be
saving of the soul en
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lived life in full. Who
conqueror?

This conflict is di
dreamer and creator,
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Dante's divine poe
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Is it the unlimited affirmation of this world's power and beauty?
 But that can only be done at the cost of our purity. Or is it the
 saving of the soul entrusted to us by God, its purification and
 liberation from the earthly? But then we should not perhaps have
 lived life in full. Who, then, is right? Artist or saint? Creator or
 conqueror?

This conflict is displayed in the life of Tolstoi, that mighty
 dreamer and creator, who suddenly conceived an ardent hatred
 for art and became a peasant and a hermit. Its dark traces are
 visible in Shakspeare's last works; its anxious voice is heard in
 Ibsen as he grows old, and rings stridently, like the beats of a brass
 gong, through the whole of Strindberg. Bernard Shaw, the strong-
 est and warmest brain of our own times, tries to formulate it in
The Doctor's Dilemma, one of his finest, richest, and most out-
 spoken comedies, and Oscar Wilde puts it before us with over-
 whelming plastic effect in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
 Dorian Gray is a man for whom the dream of eternal beauty is
 fulfilled. No wickedness, no age, no filth can touch his body; but
 the body is only the shadow of the soul, and the soul can only be
 beautiful through purity and goodness, and so Dorian Gray is
 nothing but a deceived deceiver: the world sees him in his incor-
 ruptible youth and charm, but the invisible picture in the locked
 attic records none the less, trait by trait, every step which his soul
 has taken towards ugliness.

The Renaissance was the second and true Fall of man, as the
 Reformation was his second and perhaps definitive exclusion from
 paradise. The Reformation engendered the dogma of the *sacred-*
ness of work; the Renaissance produced the man *who enjoys*
 and ends by worshipping, *himself*. And the two together, working
 with a good conscience and a narcissist self-regarding and self-
 glorification, are responsible for the modern boredom under which
 the earth is gradually congealing. And the correlative of this
 boredom is the "interestingness" (or otherwise) of objects —
 a conception as unknown to the Classical as to the mediæval
 age.

Dante's divine poem hangs like a blazing danger-signal at the
 entrance to the Renaissance. In describing the fate of those who
 were condemned to live at the greatest distance from God, he was
 describing the future of his own country. Held in the eternal ice,

*The second
 Fall of man*

197
 * However, A. H. is haunted because
 he has not lived life in full. (Celi Roubal)

A. H. v
 D. T. *

...they cannot
...he stumbles
...of all. The
...It was

CHAPTER V

REASON TAKES CHARGE

"Man is therefore nothing but a heap of errors, powerless without grace. Nothing shows him truth, everything deceives. The two chief supports of truth, the reason and the senses, each deceive the other."

Pascal

We will pause for a moment to cast a brief glance over what has been said, to indicate what is to come and elucidate somewhat the purpose and content of our method.

World-history is a *dramatic* problem: it is nothing but the destiny of the collective soul of humanity, pursuing a path that is varied and full of confusion and change, but yet runs on in accord with definite psychological laws. The individual stages — the epochs, as we call them — follow not merely after one another, but arise one out of the other, and their passage has a scenic continuity: each one is definitely marked off from the preceding and the following, but yet forms with them an organic continuity, for it fulfils the earlier and conditions the latter. The drama of human history is dominated by a clear and ineluctable necessity; but, not being a lifeless work of the study but a poem conceived by a hand of genius, this necessity is not a rigid, barren piece of logic, nor a calculated piece of psychological schematism. Only distance enables us to get an inkling of it, for its throne is in the background and it works only mediately through a luxuriant chaotic jungle of life, never actually entering the consciousness of the actors, but (only later) laid bare and described in feeble and disillusioned words by the historian, whose rôle is that of the dramatic critic.

What we are trying in these pages to investigate is the course of the development of the European soul during that period which we call the "modern age." So far we have tried to depict briefly the condition of "traumatic neurosis" which was the immediate consequence of the great trauma of the Black Death; the plague itself in its turn being only the external expression of an inner

*World-
history as a
dramatic
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*The drama
of the
modern age*

disturbance and psychological transformation — namely, the dethronement of the mediæval world-view by Nominalism, the definite, though generally unconscious, rejection of all earlier dominants of existence. There is a sudden collapse of all the standards and "truths" — religious, ethical, philosophical, economical, erotic, and artistic — which, till then firmly established and believed, had guaranteed, seemingly for ever, the orientation of man in past, present, and future. And amidst the ruins everyone, according to his peculiar characteristics, sought to carry off among his booty some last piece of still doubtful value, or in dull stupefaction renounced all the goods of this world, or, tossed between passion and pleasure, had eyes only for the enjoyment of the moment; but not one was able to find a way out. On the other hand, we have seen how in the fifteenth century in Italy there began to emerge what we have called the "psychomotor superstructure" — that is, the regulation, balancing, and organization of what had so far been just a neurosis. The labile becomes stable, the pathological condition becomes normally physiological, while the positive quality of the new spiritual condition gradually emerges, and indications of the directions become visible. Thus, what had had the appearance of a devastating and even fatal disease had, after all, been a healthful fever through which the organism was renewed, a pregnancy in which new germs were maturing in preparation for exposure to the light of day. This process of consolidation is already reaching its height in the early Cinquecento in Italy, and in the course of the century it affects the whole western half of Europe.

The new
look

And this new quality, which passed gradually into the European consciousness, consisted simply in the rise of an extreme, exclusive, and all-embracing *Rationalism* — Sensualism, if the term is preferred, for fundamentally both are the same. The sensualist has faith only in what his senses tell him, but the counselor of his faith is his reason. The rationalist builds only by the light of his reason, yet it is only sense-impressions which give him his basis. Each is a somewhat modified and differently orientated expression of the same position, the unconditional reliance of man on himself and his auxiliaries in nature.

This attitude to reality, however self-evident it appeared to a later age, was till then wholly unprecedented in the history of the

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Christian group of nations; only the Greeks and Romans had had anything like it; indeed, this extreme sharpness of delineation was, so far as our knowledge of past history goes, something utterly new, for even the Classical attitude was only a rationalized mysticism, which never wholly transcended its oriental origin.

The turn of the fifteenth century, then, saw a remarkable achievement, when man, till then surrendered in unthinking reverent servitude to the secrets of God, eternity, and his own soul, opened his eyes and looked round. His glance no longer goes *upwards* to be lost in the sacred mysteries of Heaven; no longer *downwards* to start back before the fiery horrors of Hell; no longer *inwards* to delve into the questions of his uncertain origin and still more uncertain future; but *forwards*, traversing the earth, which he knows to be his. The earth is his and he finds pleasure therein—for the first time since the happy days of Greece. *

This outlook is queerly profound in its superficiality. It is the outlook of an untragic contentment, a Philistine complacency, practical shrewdness, unpuzzled common sense, a sort of mixture of the view of a Yankee and a ruminant: the world is fair and green and full of sap, smelling delicious and tasting better still. Drink in as much of it as you can, for God, the special patron of all ruminants, undoubtedly gave it to you for that purpose.

Still the world is more than a tasty plot of grass: it is a building-site for building everything conceivable that is useful, beneficial, and serviceable: laboratories of medicine, physics, and chemistry; institutes and devices for the refinement, raising, and relief of existence, for ~~Towers of Babel that rise to heaven and tear its secrets from it.~~ It is a field of operations, inconceivably wide and inexhaustibly rich, for the realization and intensification of the power of pure reason, the reason that takes its stand wholly upon itself, all-confident, unfrightened, undeluded. This is the *heroic* side of the new attitude as opposed to its animal side.

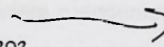
In short, man discovered for the first time for many ages that he had reason and that reason is all-powerful. He discovered himself as a thinking being, an "*ens rationale*," or rather, he regenerated these forces in himself; that, if we will, is the meaning of the "Renaissance." Reason, thus awakening, begins to penetrate everything: heaven and earth, water and light, the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the relations of men among

The curve
from 1500
to 1900

* P. T. New India greater have been
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suffered after World War I.

themselves and their relation to God and the hereafter, the sway of nature and the laws of art. What wonder, then, that it thinks itself alone upon the world? The whole history of the modern age is nothing more than the increasing intensification and super-intensification of this strict and unidirectional evolutionary rationalism. The occasional set-backs are only superficial.

From 1500 to 1900 the European spirit describes a magnificent curve, exhausting in systematic progression almost every intellectual possibility. In the sixteenth century, it attained in Italy that extreme rationalization of art which we have already dealt with, and in the North the rationalization of faith known by the name of the Reformation. In the Counter-Reformation and Baroque movements there seems at first sight a will to return to irrationalism and mysticism, but that is a mere optical delusion. For Jesuitism is a creation of supreme logic and intellectual vigour, and what does the Baroque signify if not the dominance of a systematizing, calculating, and analytical logic — since it is its very effort to deny this dominance that drives it to take refuge in a thousand grotesque masks and artificial disguises, rationalism in fact drinking itself into intoxication so as to escape the prosaic tediousness of a culture of undiluted common sense. The eighteenth century brings with it the undisputed triumph of pure reason in all departments, the century of Voltaire and Kant, of Racine and Winckelmann. This quality of extremism would, one would think, be unsurpassable, yet surpassed it was by the “young Germany” and associated movements in other countries, which successfully transmuted art, religion, science, and the whole of life into pure political theory, thereby robbing it of its last irrational features. Entwined with it is the counter-thread of Romanticism, which, like Baroque, though far more impotent, is only a revolt against intellectualism, undertaken with purely intellectual weapons; a literary *Putsch* against literature, completely academic, doctrinaire, programmatic, a clever *aperçu*, of which the origins lie in a taste for paradox, for polemics, and for novelty in fashions. And then the second half of the nineteenth century brings the victory of the “scientific outlook” of technology, and development in the sense of the Marxian “negation of negations” ends in suicide and the catastrophe — as inevitable as it was meaningless — of the World War.



In itself, however and the prelude to : regarded as one of the historical species. It crisis, or, more exactly European soul which beginning of a new write modern history period of development. millennium man is becoming as to whether he possesses by which he is still distant today, as on the horizon, that outlook.

We have grown so logical functions the absurd or lower than assumption, for, on the world intellectually the unnatural. An in published in 1910, by *tions mentales dans* most comprehensive to give us a psychology of peoples, it is maintaining every tree, animal, invisible existence, and dream experiences, more real than waking natural man more than souls, with the invisible round him on all sides consciousness a great materials of his ideas. And dream a lower place : on the contrary, the cause in it the part of and therefore comm

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In itself, however, that war was both the finale of a closing age
and the prelude to a new. As has been pointed out, it is to be
regarded as one of those traumas which herald the birth of a new
historical species. It signifies at once a world-downfall and a
crisis, or, more exactly, the end of that long unbroken Crisis of the
European soul which we call the modern age. We stand at the
beginning of a new epoch, and for that reason it is possible to
write modern history as a backward glance over a completed
period of development. For the first time for nearly half a mil-
lennium man is becoming displeased with the world, doubtful
as to whether he possesses it, doubtful of the reason and the
senses by which he has possessed it hitherto. These are signs, if
still distant today, and possibilities, beginning to glimmer palely
on the horizon, that prelude a complete reversal of our world-
outlook.

We have grown so accustomed to the usurped supremacy of the
logical functions that any other attitude of mind strikes us as
absurd or lower than our own. But this is an entirely gratuitous
assumption, for, on the contrary, it is *our* method of grasping the
world intellectually that is the great exception, the abnormal, and
the unnatural. An instructive instance in this respect is the work,
published in 1910, by the French scientist Lévy-Bruhl: *Les Fonc-
tions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, which on the basis of
most comprehensive and conscientious observations undertakes
to give us a psychology of the so-called “primitive peoples.” Such
peoples, it is maintained, give to every thing and every being, to
every tree, animal, man, picture, implement, a visible and an
invisible existence, of which the latter is the more important;
dream experiences, moreover, are regarded as real—indeed, as
more real than waking. “What is for us perception is for the
natural man more than anything a communion with spirits and
souls, with the invisible and intangible secret forces which sur-
round him on all sides, determining his fate and occupying in his
consciousness a greater place than the tangible and visible mate-
rials of his ideas. Accordingly, there is no reason to ascribe to the
dream a lower place as being a suspiciously subjective imagining;
on the contrary, the dream is a privileged form of perception, be-
cause in it the part of material elements is reduced to a minimum,
and therefore communion with the invisible powers is the most

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immediate and most complete." "Hence also the respect and reverence given to visionaries, seers, prophets, sometimes even to lunatics, to whom are ascribed special capacities of communicating with the invisible reality." "For us the surest proof of objectivity of a perception is the fact that under given identical conditions all observers will receive it at the same time and in the same manner. But, for the primitive man, it is a constant experience that beings or objects manifest themselves to certain individuals to the exclusion of all others present. There is no cause for surprise, for it strikes everyone as natural." "Primitive man does not need experiential evidence to convince himself of the invisible qualities of things, and therefore he is wholly unmoved by the contradictions which experience offers to these ideas. For this experience restricted to the visible, tangible, concrete in reality leaves unobserved just the most important things; the secret powers and spirits evade it." In fact, primitive man lives in a world which is not perceptible, but is yet real; a *mystical* world. "When a doctor accomplishes a cure, it is the spirit of the remedy which works on the spirit of the illness, and the physical action is unintelligible without the mystical. Or, rather, there are in reality no physical actions, there are only mystical acts."

Pre-logical
or super-
logical?

The distinguished author of the work is unfortunately a modern savant who carries on his observations of primitive peoples from a superior height and sees in the mind-forms of these societies only immature forerunners of his own kind of thought; and so he calls the intellectual attitude (though, as he admits, for lack of a better name) "pre-logical," emphasizing at the same time that it is neither antilogical nor alogical. "By the term 'pre-logical' I only mean to imply that there is no compulsion as there is with us to avoid contradictions. This kind of thinking does not, indeed, take any pleasure in wilful contradictions — if it did, it would be to us simply absurd — but it makes no effort to eradicate them." Nevertheless the word is misleading, since it gives the impression that we have before us a sort of preliminary or experimental stage of logical thinking, which is destined to be overcome by the kind of thinking dominant among us. It would be far more justifiable to talk of a "super-logical" thought, for in fact this way of perceiving the world is not by any means limited to primitive peoples; they merely employ these ideas more easily and

naturally because they there never has been a visionary have not held Greeks, who can hardly in a double aspect: in visible double, the psychic and the Greeks consider genuine validity. More a hall-mark of all creative philosophy, even all truth. All nature is miraculous fact of experience is not. The philologist is occupied with the wonder of the world's course: all succeeded in deciphering. I continually find myself deeper a science has produced domains of the miraculous miracles no longer occur that we have lost some instinct are weakened, that in a word, that we are because we live, not in degraded and God-forsaken

Rationalism, the will and validates only those "experience" and the impressions with a definite more than a temporary definite period of super not the one and only pr humanity has to pass the assumption that it is a sensible one, or, still more obsession of modern Europe

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naturally because they themselves are nearer to nature. Probably there never has been a culture-people among whom the seer and visionary have not held a similarly privileged position; even the Greeks, who can hardly be classed among the primitives, saw man in a double aspect: in his perceptible appearance and in his invisible double, the psyche, which was only liberated after death; and the Greeks considered dream-figures also as realities with genuine validity. Moreover, the pre-logical form of thinking is the hall-mark of all creative activity: all art, all religion, all true philosophy, even all true science; for life in itself is "pre-logical." All nature is miraculous, and every penetrating explanation of a fact of experience is nothing but the enunciation of some miracle. The philologist is occupied with the wonder of language, the botanist with the wonder of plants, the historian with the wonder of the world's course: all of them secrets which no one has yet succeeded in deciphering. Even the physicist, if he is a man of genius, continually finds himself face to face with some new wonder. The deeper a science has proved itself capable of penetrating into the domains of the miraculous, the more scientific it is. The fact that miracles no longer occur does not prove that we are cleverer, but that we have lost some vital quality, that our imagination and instinct are weakened, that we have become spiritually emptier — in a word, that we are stupider. Miracles have ceased to happen because we live, not in so advanced and enlightened, but in so degraded and God-forsaken an age.

Rationalism, the will-o'-the-wisp, which arbitrarily illumines and validates only those sections of reality which do not contradict "experience" and the "laws of thought" (that is, raw sense-impressions with a defective logic fitted on to them), is nothing more than a temporary *prejudice*, destined to disappear after a definite period of supremacy. It is undeniable that rationalism is not the one and only prejudice, but only one of the many which humanity has to pass through in the course of its history; but the assumption that it is a better prejudice than the rest, or the only sensible one, or, still more, that it is no prejudice at all, is a local obsession of modern Europe.

What I shall try to present, therefore, is the story of a brief interlude of the supremacy of reason between two irrationalisms of the Middle Ages and of the future, with no more significance in

The
rationalist
intermezzo

achievements. There are no "chance" inventions; for instance, it is not true that the late nineteenth century owed its extraordinarily accelerated tempo of life to the telephone, the telegraph, express trains, and the like—it was the new tempo that was primary, and the new feeling of space and time was an inborn attribute of the generation which made magnetism, electricity, and steam-power useful. It *had* to create these life-forms.

Moreover, the discovery of America was not even the most important of the events which introduced the new age—quite apart from the fact that that generation did not in any real sense discover America, for it merely landed, not to say stranded, there—and for the psychological constitution of an age only *conscious* achievements enter into account. The decisive metamorphosis was rather the result of three other facts: the generalized use of the gunpowder invented by Berthold Schwarz, the use of movable letter type for the mass production of books, and the passionate interest in the secrets of alchemy. These three "black" arts significantly heralded the modern age.

And besides these well-known phenomena the last third of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth produced a series of other remarkable advances of knowledge and technics. In 1471 the first astronomical observatory was built, in 1490 Martin Behaim constructed the first globe, in 1493 Hartman Schedels *Liber chronicarum*—an epoch-making work on geography and history—was published with more than two thousand woodcuts. The year 1505 saw the first postal service, 1506 the issue by Reuchlin of his Hebrew grammar; in 1510 Peter Hale conceived his spring-driven watch, the famous "Nürnberg egg," which could be carried in the pocket; in 1515 wheel-lock fire-arms came into use. There are indications, too, of the modern conception of time: public clocks began to strike the quarters. The later years of the century, too, breathed an energetic intellectual life, for Servetus discovered the pulmonary circulation in 1540, and three years later—the date of the publication of the Copernican system—the great anatomist Vesalius issued his fundamental work *De humani corporis fabrica*, Christopher Rudolff wrote the first algebraic treatise in German, Adam Riese the first text-books of practical arithmetic, George Agricola laid the foundations of mineralogy, and Konrad Gesner of scientific zoölogy, while

Gerhard Kremer, cosmographer and etcher (celebrated under his Latin name of Mercator), rediscovered Ptolemy's discovery of how to project the grid of meridians and parallels on to a conical envelope, and not only so, but improved it so much that "Mercator's projection" is in use to this day.

But the fact that, when all is said and done, the period is still transitional between the Middle Ages and Rationalism is evident from the numerous mystics, cabalists, and thaumaturges who really set the tone of the intellectual aspirations of the age. All these have the aspect of a new zoological species which carries about with it the survival of an earlier form from which it sprung: in the same way, for instance, that creatures who have completed the transition from a water to a land existence may still have swimming-bladders, and the double breathing-mechanism of gills and lungs. The most popular of these figures were Agrippa von Nettesheim and Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim. Von Nettesheim published in 1510 under the title *De occulta philosophia* a sort of text-book of magic, which he divided up into natural, heavenly, and religious: the first telling us how to gain mastery over the earth forces, the second how to penetrate the secrets of the heavens, the third how to obtain power over the dæmons. Paracelsus is one of the most original figures of the whole age, humanist and physicist, alchemist and astrologer, chiromancer and necromancer, chirurge and theurge, discoverer of hydrogen and rediscoverer of scientific medicine. In his incessant wanderings as doctor, teacher, and alchemist he was courted by the whole world and surrounded by a noisy following, in which genuine disciples of science mingled indiscriminately with adventurers and beggars who hunted for the Philosophers' Stone — indeed it is very difficult at that period to distinguish between vulgar thirst for gold and noble thirst for knowledge. On all sides he accomplished sensational cures, gathered and disseminated knowledge, and aroused such scandal and admiration that in the end he fell a victim to a villainous plot concocted by some of his graduate colleagues who saw in his genius a danger to their own business. Later generations have seen in him, on the one hand, a typical charlatan, the low and contemptible quack of the fairs, and, on the other, the typical seer, martyr of science, and benefactor of humanity; and both views are right.

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His own works themselves disclose this double character. Bombastic and artificial, portentous and prolix, obscure and overladen, they fully justify his name of Bombastus; yet he also honoured the name of Theophrastus, for he was a sincere messenger from heaven, an apostle of deep learning and pure wisdom. Again and again he emphasizes that it is not in books but in the Book of Nature that wisdom is to be found: that what we may find in the works of Galen is like some fungoid growth on a tree and that only a fool could confuse the fungus and the tree. Briefly, he taught a *pantheistic medicine* — everything is interdependent, and the duty of the doctor is to unravel this interdependence, for the world, too, is one great organism, with life and disturbances of life, with its own look and its own disease, respiration, pulse, fever, and convalescence.

The Philosophers' Stone was an article of faith with him; for he knew nothing, poor man, of the law of the conservation of the elements, and yet — has not this very law been lately upset by radium, which, as everyone knows, can turn itself into another element, helium? Thus does what was once a pillar of science become "unscientific"; thus does what was crude superstition become "scientific." Such is the history of the so-called sciences, and the consideration of it should lessen the conceit of learned pedants, if they were at all capable of allowing healthy human reason to operate without bias.

Furthermore, alchemy was by no means only concerned with the making of gold, for the secret substance, the arcanum which was the object of its search, was to be a panacea for all ills, like the theriaca of antiquity. In fact, the general view of the time was that there must be some universal formula which would at a single stroke reveal the secret of the world, a master-key which was to open the door of all riddles: that is the real significance of the Philosophers' Stone.

The two other "tendencies of the period," gunpowder and printing, undoubtedly had a far more pernicious influence than alchemy. The use of fire-arms brought into warfare an influence hitherto unknown which made of it something vulgar, barbarous, and mechanical, and gunpowder took from courage its select, aristocratic, and individual quality. Knightly mounted combat, man against man, with specialized defensive and offensive

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equipment, which required a particular aptitude, or at least a training and practice lasting for years and even generations, produced a definite class, even a race, to whom courage was a sort of calling. The definitive introduction of fire- and infantry-tactics put an end to war as the business of a particular kind of individual, temperament, and capacity; and courage, in becoming common, vanished as a characteristic. Weapons were no longer an organic part of the man, like the limbs of his body, but man was an impersonal function of his weapons, a cog in the great military machine. Hence a twofold result: first, an enormously increased unscrupulousness and brutality in warfare, since each man had become an easily replaceable particle of the whole, a mass-production piece, as it were; and second, the extension of military duty to far larger sections of the population and finally to the whole. The idea of "man-power" was only created by the invention of gun-powder, and so, too, universal compulsory service; for we cannot make a thing a duty unless it is within the possibilities of everyone. Thus the history of the modern age is the history of the progressive disruption of the conception of war in its original meaning and significance. The last step, World War, exhibits the last phase of this dissolution — the war fought for business reasons.

The printing-press — which, incidentally, would never have had so universal an importance if it had not synchronized with the invention of cheap and good paper — has a similar levelling and mechanizing effect. Gutenberg, or whoever it may have been, broke up the wood-blocks through which first pictures, then signatures, and finally even books had been produced, into the constituent letters. Here, indeed, one's first thought is, we have an achievement of individualism, a liberation from the restrictions, the associate and corporate life, of the Middle Ages. The elements — cells, as it were — which build up the organism of the word, the sentence, and the thought, become independent and free, each a life in itself capable of infinite combinations. Everything had hitherto been a rigid datum, static and conventional; henceforward all is fluid, variable, dynamic, and individual. Movable type is the symbol of Humanism. But the reverse of the picture is that everything is mechanized, becoming mechanized, controllable, uniform, and of equated value. Every letter is a unit with equal rights in the organism of the book, but it is at the same

time something in among atoms. Their departments. We 1 knight had been a l anonymous unit. In *subject*, the artisan soldier, subject, wo: that they are equa added, shifted, and much on their persc same, too, as regar conduct of life. Th furniture, quicker ti nation, more comf than had mediæval less other) means c existence. But thes the like completely tory as in nature individuality and le

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among atoms. There are similar products of the new spirit in other
departments. We have just spoken of warfare, in which each
knight had been a battle in himself, but the soldier is merely an
anonymous unit. In the same way the citizen is replaced by the
subject, the artisan by the workman, goods by gold; and all four,
soldier, subject, workman, and money, have the common quality
that they are equal magnitudes, mere quantities which can be
added, shifted, and exchanged at will; their value depends not so
much on their personal properties as on their number. We see the
same, too, as regards personal comfort and the whole outward
conduct of life. The man of the modern age has more practical
furniture, quicker transport, better methods of heating and illum-
ination, more comfortable houses, better centres of education,
than had mediæval man, and we are assured by these (and count-
less other) means of a freer, less burdened, and more individual
existence. But these furnishings, these methods of transport, and
the like completely equate one another. The truth is that in his-
tory as in nature we have to pay for everything: we acquire
individuality and lose personality.

Such were the decisive transformations in the world-view, and
to them was now added the astronomical reinterpretation which
began with Copernicus. The treatise *De revolutionibus orbium
cælestium, libri VI*, which contained his new analysis of the
cosmic system, was only published in the year of his death; and,
even so, it contained an introduction by the Protestant theologian
Osiander, who arbitrarily declared the whole thing to be merely
a hypothesis — obviously because Luther and Melancthon had
expressed themselves adversely: "The fool is trying to overthrow
the whole art of astronomy," said Luther; "but the Bible tells us
that Joshua made the sun and not the earth stand still." In fact
the work had been written far earlier — as Copernicus himself
said, in his dedication (which, paradoxically, was addressed to
Pope Paul III), it had been lying four times nine years in his study
— and it must have long been available to the public through
secret channels. As soon as a piece of knowledge is actually *there*,
it is irrepressible; it infects the whole atmosphere and spreads
like a bacillus.

The discovery, for that matter, was not wholly new. Two

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Copernicus

hundred and fifty years before Christ a similar system had been worked out by Aristarchus of Samos — the sun and stars unmoving, the earth rotating round itself and round the sun — and Plutarch says even of Plato that he had “not left the earth in the centre of the cosmos, but had assigned this place to a better star.” The Greek, however, wanted to regard the world as a limited, closed circle, with himself as observer in the centre; he wanted a “cosmos,” a beautiful, artistically organized whole, easy to imagine and comfortably synoptic, like a temple, a statue, or a city-state: the heliocentric idea failed to correspond to his view of the world and was, therefore, *false*. In the time of Copernicus man was beginning to feel the passion for distances, at the same time as the passion for order, similarity, and regularity, and thus wanted a universe that could be expressed in formulæ, one that spoke, as it were, the language of mathematics. The new astronomy, that seemed to reduce man to nothingness, made him in reality the unveiler, the seer, and even the legislator of the cosmos. A world — however terrible in its infinity, however vast in relation to an earth that swam in it like a faintly lighted bubble — that he could *calculate* and subject to his intellect, he preferred to one which was well rounded, but veiled in darkness and secrecy and subject to an impenetrable destiny. It is one of the greatest falsifications of history to harp again and again on the idea that the heliocentric system made man more modest and humble, for the contrary is the truth.

In any case, what Copernicus taught was a universe that was heliocentric indeed and, therefore, immeasurably vaster than Ptolemy's, but was certainly not infinite; for it had not only a fixed sun enthroned at its centre, but a fixed outermost shell (the “eighth sphere”) beyond which nothing else existed. His world was thus still essentially different from ours, not only smaller, but simpler, more stable, more solid, more synoptic, than our universe of countless solar systems that, disparate by infinite distances, rush with colossal speed through an abyss of which all we can say is that it never comes to an end.

The really symbolic instrument, however, of the rising age was not the astronomical chart, not even the printing-press or the retort or the cannon, but the *compass*. Discovered long ago, it was only now that it began to be trusted. As we have stressed

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The culture of Mexico is to be imagined as being more or less in the same stage as that of the Empire in Rome. It is evident that it had already reached the phase which Spengler calls "Civilization" and which is characterized by a life of huge cities, of refined comforts, of autocratic forms of government and expansionist imperialism, of massiveness in architecture and extravagance in ornament, of ethical fatalism and barbarized religion. The capital, Tenochtitlan, built on platforms in a wondrous lake, displayed huge temples and obelisks, extensive arsenals, hospitals, barracks, zoölogical and botanical gardens, barbers' shops, vapour-baths, and fountains, tapestries and paintings of gorgeous feather-mosaic, costly goldsmith's work and finely tooled plates of tortoise-shell, splendid woollen cloaks and leather gear, ceilings of fragrant carved wood, hot-plates, scent-sprayers, and hot-water systems. In the weekly markets, attended by hundreds of thousands, wares of every conceivable kind were exposed for sale. A wonderfully organized postal service, of fast couriers, plying on the network of well-built highways and ramps which traversed the land, carried every item of news with amazing speed and precision; police and fiscal arrangements worked with the greatest accuracy and reliability. The kitchens of the wealthy were fragrant with the most select foods and drinks, game, fish, waffles, preserves, delicate soups, spiced dishes; and withal a number of things unknown to the Old World, turkey, *chocolatl*—the favourite dish of the Mexicans, to them no drink, but a fine *crème*, eaten cold with vanilla and other spices—*pulque*, an intoxicating drink made from aloes (which also yielded a tasty artichoke-like vegetable and first-class sugar), and *yetl*, tobacco, smoked either mixed with liquidambar in gilded wooden pipes, or like a cigar in fine silver holders. The streets were so clean, a Spanish text tells us, that in passing along them one soiled one's feet no more than one's hands. The population was as honest as it was clean: all houses were left open, and when a dwelling was unoccupied, its owner merely set up a reed on the door-mat to indicate his absence, without fear of theft; in fact, the courts were almost never called upon to deal with cases of violating property. Writing was by means of a very elaborate picture-writing, and there were also lightning painters who could fix all occurrences with amazing rapidity in almost speaking designs. The mathematical

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The American cu of cultures which e are for us prehistori Asia over India and including the two pr the Ægean. Under th belt of cultures has e port, and as a matt similarity to the Bal writing, and their st series of things whi type of government, potism, the bureauc pedantic guardiansh and ceremonious eti animal forms of the traiture, combined w the higher forms, the ness of their building

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that some even of his own bandits protested. Such was the achievement of Christians in the year 1533, exactly fifteen hundred years after the crucifixion of their Saviour.

Pizarro ended his career like most murderers, being killed by one of his own boon companions. And all Spain had loss and not profit by his deeds of shame, for it fell more and more a victim to the enervating and stupefying habit of living on stolen goods, so that within a bare hundred years it lay as it has lain ever since, a soulless, mortifying corpse, gloomy, sullen, self-consuming, a victim of its own dullness of intellect, its own appalling barrenness of heart, its own fierce brutality. The rest of Europe, too, has fallen to the divine nemesis, for from the New World it imported not only maize and tobacco, tomatoes and bananas, cocoa and potatoes, vanilla and cochineal, but—*gold and syphilis*.

The penalty of lust, the "venerie," rapidly became the fashionable disease. Almost all the outstanding figures of the age, according to contemporary evidence, were syphilitics — Alexander and Cæsar Borgia, Julius II and Leo X, Celtes and Hutten, Charles V and Francis I, the last of whom, indeed, acquired the disease quite romantically, for, according to Mézeray, author of the famous *Histoire de France*, the husband of the beautiful Ferronière, with whom the King was carrying on an intrigue, intentionally infected himself so that he might destroy the King: and the disease did actually hasten his death. So widespread was it that no one was ashamed to confess to the fact; it was a common topic in society talk and became a theme for poets. It is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the darkening of Europe which begins with the close of the Middle Ages, and it introduced into the highest and the lowest, the most physical and the most metaphysical activity of man, an element of suspicion that doubled the poison.

American gold became perhaps an even worse curse than syphilis. The sudden colossal influx of the valuable metals, of which there had been a great dearth during the Middle Ages, was an immediate cause in the extension of money-economy. Indeed, it made a real capitalistic organization for the first time possible, enormously increasing the gulf between rich and poor and bringing about a universal rise of prices with which the rise of wages could not keep pace. The first half of the sixteenth century saw

prices rising a hundred and a hundred and fifty, in some cases even two hundred or two hundred and fifty per cent. The gift and vengeance of America for Europe were plague and poverty; or rather two plagues, syphilis and gold-fever. Everyone wanted to get rich as quickly and with as little effort as possible; even the soil of their native land was greedily searched for treasure, and actually new sources of the noble metals were discovered here and brought under exploitation by improved mining technique.

We see, then, that the period of incubation is over, the poison begins to work and grips the European organism, head, heart, and marrow.

Faust

All the tendencies of the dawning era were effectively concentrated by popular imagination in the figure of Faust. Faust is an *alchemist* and a black magician; what he aims at by means of his science and his magic is wealth and worldly power; he is a *Protestant* and a theologian, a fellow-countryman of Melancthon, contemporary of Luther and for a time resident in Wittenberg. He is also a *Humanist* and a lover of the classics, offers to recover the lost comedies of Plautus and Terence, summons the shades of the Homeric heroes from Hades, unites himself, secretly rejuvenated, with Helena and so symbolically fulfils the intent of the Renaissance, the regeneration of the Gothic spirit by its union with the Classical. For centuries Faust was even reputed to be the real inventor of book-printing, for according to one tradition he made the matrices for the casting of movable types while Gutenberg was still printing with whole wood-blocks. This claim is disputed nowadays, but it was a sound popular instinct, nevertheless, that made him the creator of that invention by which, more than by any one other, men's autocratic impulse to intellectual expansion was nourished and satisfied. Faust, in contracting himself to the Devil, demands a written bond from him to answer all questions and to answer always truly; in this he is, therefore, the very personification of the deepest and most fundamental element of the time, an unbounded lust for knowledge, coupled with the belief that there are secret formulæ which can answer every riddle. And in another way, too, the legend proves its sureness of insight, in displaying Faust as the ally and bondsman of the Devil and so giving profound expression to the fact that all "pure reason" is of the Devil, and all striving for it a

sort of blind hope serpent Satan, the "*eritis sicut Deus*" presses the basic 1 that what concern good fortune consi:

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sort of blind hope roused in man by the ensnaring words of the serpent Satan, the words written on the first page of the Bible: "*eritis sicut Deus*." The very name Faustus, the Fortunate, expresses the basic tendency which heralds a new age, the belief that what concerns us in this world is good fortune, and that good fortune consists in power, sense-satisfaction, and knowledge.

The extraordinary quality in Goethe's Faust-poem is the genius with which (perhaps even unconsciously) he has made it a compendium of the whole cultural history of the new age. Faust begins in mysticism and ends in *Realpolitik*. He stands for the whole temptation of modern man, which seduces him in a thousand forms and disguises, alcohol, sex, *Weltschmerz*, superman-yearnings; and withal he is the type of man unsatisfied, recognizing himself in every individual being, straining in agony after the unity beneath the appearances, but always in vain. The tragedy of Faust is the tragedy of modern man, of rationalism, scepticism, and realism. At Faust's side is the Devil, but Mephisto is not at all evil; he is merely frivolous, cynical, materialistic, and, above all, clever; the embodiment of pure, cold, barren intelligence, a highly differentiated brain-being and the completely logical representative of self-regarding genius. The intellectual, the purely intellectual, is the destructive dæmon in modern man, and Mephisto has the fatal keenness of intellectualism, sensualism, and nihilism. He displays to the wrestling genius of Faust the whole world and lays it at his feet, but Faust has to confess that he has been deceived, that this world only seemingly belongs to him, that in fact it belongs to his reason, which is itself unreal. Mediæval man, whose idea of the world was narrow and in some ways distorted, was possessed by the vision, for it was to him concrete and grasped by the heart as well as the head; but since the close of the Middle Ages there were no realities more. The last great reality which Europe had lived through was the madness of the incubation period. Then men did still live in a world that was real, for the mad do not, as superficial observers imagine, live in a world of phantoms, but, on the contrary, in one where everything is vivid and real, even their dreams, their hallucinations, their obsessions. But since that time everything that has happened has been but a desperate and unsuccessful attempt to grasp reality.

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and deceitful men, called them gods, and through these gods found their ruin. The Indians, once deeply sure of the meaningless unreality of this world, henceforth had faith only in Nothingness, and their faith became their truth — unaffected by the passage of history, their glorious land became and remains a vast nothingness.

Christianity, we are accustomed to be told, brought all the peoples of western Europe into a common faith. But is it really so? Superficially, indeed, yes. But a deeper insight will show that there are national gods, national destinies, as there were of old. This is the real dividing line between peoples and not race or custom or outward custom, not politics or social structure. It is these, precisely these things, that are common to the civilized world. Top-hats and boas, music and street-scavenging are alike in Greece and Ireland, in Portugal and Sweden, and ideas of agriculture and etiquette and parliamentary government too. But the god is everywhere another god.

True, they are all Christians; and therein lies the enormous power and vitality of Christianity, that it has a message for every time, that it has a form which can find a place within it for all thoughts and all feelings. Had it been something that could live itself out in a trifle of nineteen hundred years, Christianity could never have been a world religion at all. What common basis is there for Tertullian's "*Credo quia absurdum*" and the almost mathematical rationalism of Calvin? For the doctrine of the Satanists and the almost familiar terms on which the Quakers live with their God? Was it only a matter of chance — related perhaps to the dictatorial temper of Louis XIV and Cromwell — that France was restored to Papistry while England held to the Reformation? The God for France, of France, was absolutist; the God for England, of England, Puritan.

In an earlier chapter it was stated that, fundamentally, the only Renaissance was the Italian, and that the Renaissance in other countries justified the name only in an unreal and impure sense. It is equally justifiable to say that the Reformation was in its essence and being a *German* phenomenon, and all other Reformations — English, French, Scandinavian, Hungarian, Polish — were but duplicates or caricatures. "The German," Moritz Heimann acutely observes in one of his essays, "does

not regard the world. He takes it several of the same token, more psychological attitude during the whole Reformation which it received from that developed into the reversals of the original in translating these a remissness that a Reformation too serious to its own great harm the other great movement of historical influence — a extraordinary energy revolution of economic Jesuitism, with and rigour of spirit at birth. The German, mature enough for a and, therefore, historical with the future, the power to give a vast the fruit. All the stirrings its stamp were born on other lands.

So far from being nation was the result often enough regarded was linked from the was *national*. Rome was to be, not "*welsch*," but political significance that no longer to receive it appears the third considerable extension, for it which sought to bring culture on the model of the fourth influence, the first

* D. T. Anderson
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not regard the world of ideas, as other nations do, as a banner. He takes it several degrees more literally, and the real world, by the same token, more casually." This gives with precision the psychological attitude which distinguished the German people during the whole Reformation period; it absorbed the war-cries which it received from its religious leaders with a literalness that developed into obstinacy and misunderstanding, even to reversals of the original tendency; at the same time, paradoxically, in translating these new norms into political reality it displayed a remissness that astounds us. In short, it took the spiritual Reformation too seriously, the practical too lightly, and the result, to its own great harm, was that it fell between the two stools of the other great movements of the time which had the greatest historical influence — namely, Anglo-Saxon Calvinism, whose extraordinary energy and logical quality brought about a vast revolution of economic, political, and social practice, and Romanic Jesuitism, which with an equally wonderful force of soul and rigour of spirit called into being a moral and intellectual re-birth. The German, at that stage of his development, was not mature enough for *action* which would be practically successful and, therefore, historically effective. Dreamer of dreams, pregnant with the future, but incoherent and irresolute, he only had the power to give a vast new stimulus of which others have reaped the fruit. All the stirring thoughts which give the Reformation age its stamp were born on German soil, all worked themselves out in other lands.

So far from being a unitary movement, the German Reforma-
tion was the resultant of at least four components. The first —
often enough regarded as the only one — was religious, but this
was linked from the outset with a second of equal vigour, which
was national. Rome was no longer to control, and the Church was
to be, not "*welsch*," but German. A foreign sovereign — for in his
political significance the ruler of the Papal States was such — was
no longer to receive a great part of German tax-revenues. And so
appears the third component, the economic, which had a very
wide extension, for it was the common stream of all the tendencies
which sought to bring about trenchant changes in the social struc-
ture on the model of the primitive Church. Finally, there was the
fourth influence, the ferment in scientific circles, Humanism and

* D. T. Anderson got over it; never forgive
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the birth of scholarship — this last the weakest component, but all the same not to be underestimated, since it was this which provided the method, the material, the intellectual weapons for the whole struggle. There was, however, a common focus and crucible of all these different elements in the appeal to the Gospel. There was nothing in the Bible about monasteries and monks, bishops and prelates, masses and pilgrimages, confession and absolution — here the religious aspect found foothold. Nothing about a supreme shepherd in Rome — here the national movement stood to fight. Nothing about fish- and game-preserves, tithes and feudal service — here the social reform found its justification. And nothing at all of the dogmas which the Church during the thousand years of its activity had created — here the philologists and historians drove their mines.

*The Night-
ingale of
Wittenberg*

The presentiment, whether obscure or clear, conscious or unconscious, of a great revolution and transvaluation of values roused in almost all parts of the nation a vast, and predominantly a joyous, enthusiasm. Numerous writings of the time express the feeling of "the dawn," best of all Hans Sachs's famous poem "The Wittenberg Nightingale":

Awake, awake! The day is near,
And in the woods a song I hear.
It is the glorious nightingale,
Her music rings on hill and dale.
The night falls in to Occident,
The day springs up in Orient.
The dawn comes on and sets alight
The gloomy clouds of parting night,
And soon thereout the sun will shine
And moon depart in pale decline.

In a drama of the same name Strindberg completes the famous words of Ulrich von Hutten: "The spirits wake, there is a joy of living," with the cry: "Ah! something new draws near."

This something new was Martin Luther.

There is probably no personality in history of whom such conflicting opinions have been and still are held, as the Antipope of Wittenberg. There are Catholics who have rendered enthusiastic praise and there are Protestants who have regarded him with a

fierce abhorrence; the pious have called "the German Cati" factors. Goethe saw a peasant bounded warrior in the bat. Great a raving made to prove him phemer, a syphilitic have painted him w

Many hostile creative originality had been put forth many "reformers" than he. And indeed Reformation flower drawn attention in anti-clerical feeling could it be otherwise burst forth around before it could disclose the end of the century gathered power. In 1494, we find, among

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fierce abhorrence; atheists have called him a spiritual saviour, and
 the pious have called him a corrupter of religion. To some he is
 "the German Catiline," to others the greatest of humanity's bene-
 factors. Goethe saw in him a highly significant genius, Nietzsche
 a peasant bounded by the limits of his clogs. Schiller called him a
 warrior in the battle for the freedom of thought. Frederick the
 Great a raving monk and literary barbarian. Attempts have been
 made to prove him a glutton, a drunkard, a liar, a forger, a blas-
 phemer, a syphilitic, a paranoiac, a suicide; and German artists
 have painted him with a halo.

Many hostile critics have been at pains to deny him even all
 creative originality and to show that all the ideas he supported
 had been put forward before his time, and that there had been
 many "reformers before the Reformation," more important far
 than he. And indeed it is obvious that the currents from which the
 Reformation flowed were far older than Luther. We have already
 drawn attention in chapter iii to some of the many expressions of
 anti-clerical feeling with which the fifteenth century teems; nor
 could it be otherwise, since so huge an eruption as that which
 burst forth around Luther must have been brooding long and deep
 before it could discharge with such elemental violence. Towards
 the end of the century the anti-priestly feeling more and more
 gathered power. In Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, published in
 1494, we find, amongst countless others, the following lines:

For priests there's little reverence;
 Their worth is reckoned but in pence.
 Many a fine young clerk today
 Knows no more than a donkey may,
 And shepherds of men's souls one sees
 That tend the flock but for the fleece.

And in the almost contemporary satirical poem, written in collo-
 quial German, *Reinke de Vos*, already mentioned, occur these
 remarks about Rome:

Of law in Rome they boast and cant,
 But money's what they really want.
 No case so crooked, so obscure,
 That gold a verdict can't secure.

Reformers
 before the
 Reformation

He wins who bribes — so much the worse
For the poor fool with empty purse.

And the whole thing is summed up in the famous doggerel:

So blind lead other blind today
And both from God must surely stray.

Furthermore, we have already heard how "Enlightenment," the habit of satirizing the Catholic Church, propagated and raised to the height of fashion by the Humanists, set the general tone of all cultured circles in Italy and even of the Pope's own immediate entourage. In the year before the Theses of Wittenberg Pietro Pomponazzi, a famous philosopher, produced a small work on the immortality of the soul wherein it was taught that the founders of religions had invented immortality for the benefit of the masses, who would only practise virtue if there were rewards or punishments of some sort — as a nurse invents a tale to induce good behaviour in a child, or a doctor deceives his patients for their own benefit. In another work Pomponazzi declares the efficiency of relics to be imaginary and says the same results would follow if the bones were a dog's; and the argument that belief in immortality is necessary because otherwise religion would be a deception he answers with the remark that such is actually the case: for, there being three codes (Mosaic, Christian, and Mohammedan), either all three are false, in which case the whole world is deceived; or two are false, and then the majority are. These and suchlike views were tolerated by the Curia, for anything might be spoken or written if only it was "*salva fide*" — that is, without affecting external subjection to the Church.

Wyclif too, as we have already remarked, anticipated the whole of the Reformation, and in some material points even went beyond it: for among his doctrines are the following: images should not be adored nor relics held holy; the pope is not the successor of Peter, and not he, but God alone, is the forgiver of sins; the blessing of bishops is worthless; priests should be allowed to marry; the bread and wine at the Holy Communion do not change into the real body of Christ, for true Christians receive the body of Christ daily by their faith; prayer should not be offered to the Virgin; prayer may be offered elsewhere besides churches. Johann

Wessel (1419-89) depended on the heavenly supreme ruler; on earth and even Councils session, absolution works, and pictures spiritual kind, upon the pope could decide the vicar of Christ, of Christ would depend pregnant words, he The Erfurt theologian even further, object unction, and mainly more than that in vain perfluous, and a de better sale for his life." Erasmus of Rotterdam the adoration of saints entire dogmatics obtained, would be sacraments, in his Bible in many places intelligible; nor could be proved from it. "But the popes, for by the

But the case of enormous difference merely taught the uniqueness and origin all these doctrines. esque, the broader universal, and even a thinker. It never a single one of his ideas and reforming temper appeared in person as fully denied it on

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Wessel (1419-89) maintained that the unity of the Church de-
pended on the community of the faithful with Christ, their
heavenly supreme Head, and not on their subordination to a vis-
ible ruler; on earth most Popes had been caught in the net of error,
and even Councils were not infallible. He rejected auricular con-
fession, absolution, and "*satisfactio operis*," or justification by
works, and pictured purgatory as a purificatory process of a wholly
spiritual kind, upon which the pope could have no influence. "If
the pope could decide according to his own will, he would not be
the vicar of Christ, but Christ would be his vicar, for the judgment
of Christ would depend on his will." In fact, as he says himself in
pregnant words, he believes *with* the Church, not *in* the Church.
The Erfurt theological professor Johann von Wesel (d. 1480) went
even further, objecting even to the Communion and to the extreme
unction, and maintaining that the consecrated oil was worth no
more than that in which cakes were baked; fasting he thought su-
perfluous, and a device introduced by Peter that he might have a
better sale for his fish; finally, he called the pope an "empurpled
ape." Erasmus of Rotterdam, too, the glory of the century, scorned
the adoration of saints, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the
entire dogmatics of the Schoolmen, whose subtleties, he main-
tained, would be unintelligible to Christ and all His disciples. The
sacraments, in his view, were ceremonies of neutral value, the
Bible in many places forged and in parts contradictory and unin-
telligible; nor could the divinity of Christ and the Trinity be
proved from it. "But the Church has no more deadly enemies than
the popes, for by their evil life they slay Christ a second time."

But the case of Erasmus, more than any other, discloses the
enormous difference between Luther and his predecessors, who
merely *taught* the Reformation, whereas Luther *lived* it. His
uniqueness and originality lay in the boiling blood he infused into
all these doctrines. Erasmus was beyond doubt the more pictur-
esque, the broader and keener mind, the most logical, the more
universal, and even the bolder thinker; but he was no more than
a thinker. It never entered his head to give practical evidence of
a single one of his ideas, and though he was of a far more radical
and reforming temper than most of the reformers, he never ap-
peared in person as the defender of the new movement, but fear-
fully denied it on every occasion. He repeated, over and over

Words and
Deeds

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driving force was the *unconscious*; without having willed it, he found himself the hero of his time; without having sought for it, he spoke the word which found a home on every lip; he moved with the certainty of a sleep-walker on the way which had brought so many others to ruin. In the midst of an age that was disintegrated, fumbling, and fermenting, he was a whole man, a fragment of unfissured mediæval force and self-sufficiency. His gaze looked into the far future, while his feet were planted firmly on a well-worn path. And this is what made him the leader that he was, and enabled him to stand like a second Moses at the parting of the ages, dividing with his staff the waters of the old and the new. He was, in a word, the *last great monk* of Europe, just as Winckelmann in the age of a dying Classicism was the last of the Humanists, or Bismarck in the years of victorious Liberalism the last great Junker.

On the other hand, Luther's consciousness perceived spiritual relationships which were only to be fully developed and realized in the course of centuries. The modernness of Luther's thought came from three main influences. The first is his *individualism*. By making religion a matter of inner experience he accomplished in the highest sphere of the human soul what Italian artists had done in the sphere of fantasy. Luther's belief that each soul must create its own God afresh out of its innermost being involves the final and deepest emancipation of personality. The second, connected with this, was a *democratic* motive; by his declaration that every one of the faithful was truly of clerical status, and every member of the Church a priest, Luther destroyed the representative system of the Middle Ages, which allowed the laity access to Christ only through the special mediation of the deputies of Christ and the hierarchy of his servants; and he thus introduced into Church life the same equalitarian principle which the French Revolution afterwards brought into political life. Thirdly, by his declaration that the whole of our ordinary life was a divine service, he introduced into religion a new *worldly principle*. Once admit that it was possible, everywhere and at all times, in every class and every craft, every profession or station, to find favour with God, and we have a sort of consecration of work: an achievement in its immeasurable effects, which we shall have to discuss later in fuller detail.

Jung
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* D.T. and what they never take into account is that each soul must also create his own devil

Marcionites, the most lucid and incisive thinkers among the early Christians, maintained quite logically that there were two Gods, the Demiurge, who had created the world — by the world they understood the Jews and therefore pictured the Creator as evil — and the “Highest God,” who had sent His Son to redeem the world. They felt, quite rightly, that if they could not bring themselves to deny the god of the Jews as completely as any other national God, the only logical alternative was the acceptance of a dual divinity, after the Persian fashion, in which the Jewish God naturally became the spirit of darkness; but, as such a solution was nothing but a veiled relapse into paganism, the Church naturally found it unacceptable. The Marcionites, as well as others, had, moreover, suggested the total rejection of the Old Testament — and they were not alone in this — yet there also they failed, for Jehovah, a true Jew as ever, refused to be thrown out. Hence, even up to the present day, the purest doctrine that has ever been or ever will be put before the world was corrupted and confused by the spectre of a fierce and jealous Bedouin chieftain.

Luther's
Damascus

Luther, too, had his Damascus; but the Saviour's words were not now: “Why persecutest thou Me?” but “Why thinkest thou I persecute thee? My Father is not Jehovah.” He saw that the Christian God was not a “just” God, but a God of mercy, and that the meaning of the evangel was not the Law, but Grace.

It shakes us to the core to see how Luther at the time of this inner struggle was actually filled by a sort of *hatred* against God: there were moments in his life when his will strained to banish God from the world. The fact is that what we would love with our whole heart we must some time have hated passionately, or at least have striven for both eagerly and hopelessly, and piety is certainly among the first things of which we can say that it must be conquered before it can be possessed. Fundamentally Luther's battle of faith was against the comfortable, cheap, cud-chewing complacency of *God-saturated* people, against the deep immorality that lies at the core of the unreflecting self-satisfaction and the taken-for-granted inertia of average religiousness.

Luther's
heroic
period

The youth of Luther is truly dramatic in character; his taking of the vow amid lightning and thunder, his nailing-up of the Theses, his disputation at Leipzig, his burning of the papal ban, his defence at the Diet of Worms. These are scenes of a cosmic

vastness and impiety in brush-strokes. Another's unerring instinct for the Church which was but the most obvious. In the course of time sins had developed rape, murder, false omy was rated in legious robbery at at four. It was even tice, to pay in advance deposit-account or farmed out to big business with the most monstrous ship; in a lottery prizes” to be won commercialization this, and even the had nothing to do official and cynical

The climax of his published the *Christian Nobility* *Captivity of the Church* all of which have a lucidity and originality propounds with reason. Christian is a true priest world (for had not of this world instituted by Christ Holy Communion claims to universal rejection to a foreign Babylon; that a change in all things and second through his

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vastness and impressiveness, each of which sums up its own circumstances in powerful strokes, pregnant and unforgettable brush-strokes. And how dramatic, too, in its own way was Luther's unerring instinct in attacking just that abuse of the Catholic Church which was not merely the most irritating and absurd, but the most obvious and startling — the traffic in absolutions! In the course of time a regular stock-exchange for remission of sins had developed, in which everything had its price: perjury, rape, murder, false witness, fornication practised in church; sodomy was rated in Tetzel's instructions at twelve ducats, sacrilegious robbery at nine, witchcraft at six, parricide (a bargain!) at four. It was even possible, if not in theory, certainly in practice, to pay in advance for certain sins and hold, as it were, a deposit-account of absolutions; and the whole business was farmed out to big banking-houses and merchant firms who worked with the most modern methods of advertisement and salesmanship; in a lottery at Bergen-op-Zoom, for instance, the "valuable prizes" to be won included absolutions. The degradation and commercialization of religion could not possibly go further than this, and even the meanest intelligence could see that these usages had nothing to do with Christianity, or rather that they were an official and cynical denial and contempt of it.

The climax of Luther's work as a publicist came in 1520, when he published three small but decisively significant works: *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *Of the Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, and *Of the Freedom of the Christian*, all of which have a force and depth, a compactness and richness, a lucidity and orderliness, such as he never achieved again. He propounds with resistless oratory his doctrines that every Christian is a true priest; that the pope is not at all the ruler of the world (for had not Christ said before Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world"?); that the only valid sacraments are those instituted by Christ himself — namely, baptism, repentance, and Holy Communion; that the other added sacraments and the papal claims to universal dominion had brought the Church into subjection to a foreign and hostile power like that over the Jews in Babylon; that a Christian is a wholly free, serviceable labourer in all things and servant of all, the first through his faith, the second through his humility. A true Christian life is to be found

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marked, like some useless vestigial organ which belongs to an earlier stage of development and whose function has long been lost. Moreover, he interpreted the "Word" by his own often mistaken and limited explanation. This narrow literalness of his finds a classic example in the famous debate about the Last Supper at the religious discussion at Marburg. When the discussion came to the words of institution: "τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ δῶμά μου, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ αἶμά μου," Zwingli explained them as being symbolical, the ἐστι not expressing any identity, but being translatable as "significant." During the discussion Luther incessantly tapped on the table in his indignation and repeatedly muttered: "est, est." It was the outer grammatical form which was alone decisive for him.

And yet even in this rigid superstition of words we may detect the modern stamp that equally characterizes Luther. For the hitherto highest authority, the pope, who was a living authority of flesh and blood, he substitutes the dead authority of the writing, which consists of printer's ink and paper. In place of the false infallibility of a fallible human being we have false dogma in a *scientific* and utterly inhuman form. Theology gives way to philology — in the end to micrology — and for the Holy Church we have of all things the unholy, the school. In the unconsciously maturing fact that the centre of faith was no longer the life and suffering of the Saviour, but the record thereof contained in a *book*, is signalized the victory of the new type of man, who writes, prints, reads — and is scientific. It is the herald of a literary age. In the same way, according to Protestant interpretation, the sacraments do not work by some secret magic, but only by the word. And so Gutenberg humanity triumphs over Gothic. Thenceforward it is a straight line to the civilization and religion of pure reason, to the age of Enlightenment. Luther was neither an incarnation of, nor even a prophet of, these inevitable consequences, but the Church he established fulfilled them. His own activity and work are unintelligible without the printing-press. He is the first great publicist of Germany, and his ninety-five Theses are the first "late extra" of the history of the world.

Harnack says somewhere in his *History of Dogma* that Luther behaved in the Church like a young child in his home; and this remark almost completely covers both the strength and the weakness of the reformer. His work displays the inco-ordination and

Triumph of
Gutenberg
man over
Gothic man

clumsiness of a child, its limitations and manner of thought, but at the same time its purity and intuitiveness, its enthusiasm and its irresistibility. Because he was a child he was enabled to give his people a religion, but because he was a child he was unable to build a religious structure. Because the driving force in him was a childlike impulsiveness and elasticity and wilfulness, his work lacked all continuity and logic. Later he relapsed in many points, becoming unfaithful to himself and to true Protestantism. Protestantism is clear and courageous protest against every forced belief, formula, and lip-service, a return to the purity of the early gospel doctrine and the essential facts of Christianity; it is the rejection of all mediators that would interpose between God and the believer, it is the piety and discipleship of Christ, constituting the true and only priesthood. But even in his own lifetime, and not without his own co-operation, a great deal of what it had been his historical mission to fight had come back again: a new system of clerical lust for power and of dull numbing by empty forms began to spread abroad, a new façade-Christianity received homage, a new dialectic, far surpassing the Catholic in hair-splitting and absurdity, came in for the second time and — with far more ignoble apparatus — made the Gospel dark. For the second time humanity was divided into first- and second-class Christians: but while the Catholic priest derived his superiority from a transcendent source, the hegemony of the Protestant pastor and theologian was based on the far weaker and more fragile claim that he was superior to the laity in true scientific understanding of the Bible.

And what understanding could Luther or his followers have of the real meaning of the phenomenon of the Saviour? The appearance of Christ in his environment is wholly strange to, and almost incomprehensible by, the modern (and especially to the European) feeling. It is a magic radiance, having the enchanted glow of opal, in which endless brown wastes, *fata morgana*, and the quivering stillness of noon are reflected. It is a life-form to the echo of which our imagination is almost insensitive. More, it is the undoing of that form itself. All the glittering yet almost voiceless variety, the vast, dignified simplicity and unambiguousness of the East are in early Christendom; and with it an almost hysterical sympathy with the heart-beat of every creature, a de-

nial of individualness the ruling passion or extremely primitive: us out of the Gospels with the wisdom of the Christian faith of the baric misunderstand easier to survey and g and delicacy, the sup is inaccessible to a he ologian could not rea of this world of ima newspaper age recap of belief for which tl evidently home.

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nial of individualness of such unqualified clarity as could become
the ruling passion only in the soul of a very late humanity. An
extremely primitive and yet immemorially old Culture speaks to
us out of the Gospels — the simplicity of natural man combined
with the wisdom of the ages. A Luther may be able to clear the
Christian faith of the surface-coating produced by centuries of bar-
baric misunderstandings, concentrate it, simplify it, so that it is
easier to survey and grasp by the reason; but the infinite tenderness
and delicacy, the supersensitiveness, of such a spiritual condition
is inaccessible to a healthy German peasant. An honest Saxon the-
ologian could not react to the sparkling colour and exotic variety
of this world of imagination; nor could the child of a dawning
newspaper age recapture the fathomless prime-wisdom of a world
of belief for which this life is a sojourn, and the infinite is self-
evidently home.

So, too, with Luther's translation of the Bible, an achievement,
which may be regarded, according to the standpoint from which
we approach it, as a failure or as a masterpiece. Very little of the
scent and local colour and setting of the Biblical world, or even
of the feelings and thoughts of the authors, has been salvaged in
it, but on the other hand Luther did succeed with his very de-
cidedly Germanized Bible in writing the most German book in
German literature. Hence the exaggerated claim has often been
set up that he was the creator of modern German, and no less an au-
thority than Jacob Grimm agrees with that judgment: "Luther's
language, by reason of its wonderful purity and its enormous
influence, may be regarded as the kernel and foundation of the
New High German idiom." Now, we should certainly not forget
that Luther, as he himself admitted, employed the "language of
the Saxon Chancellery," a sort of common idiom meant to hold
a balance between the language of central and south Germany,
which originated in the court of the Luxemburg kings in Prague
about 1350, and thence spread to the other German courts. Two
points should, however, be noted: firstly, that in the time of
Luther there really was no common tongue among the people,
but only innumerable dialects, and that it was only because of
the amazing circulation and influence of his works, above all of
his Bible, that this common language gradually penetrated into all
circles and was adopted as the universal written German; and,

Luther as
creator of a
language

secondly, that this pooled Saxon was a dry, heavy-footed, and jejune office-language, and that Luther moulded it into an instrument for the expression of the highest, deepest, most powerful and delicate feelings and forced it into use for every conceivable experience. Out of the material at his disposal he created the very reverse of a protocol-language. He tells us in his *Table-talk* how he questioned the mother in her home, the children in the street, and the common man in the market-place, and noted how they answered him; and by such means, thanks to his sensibility and an imitative power nearly related to the actor's, he brought off the *tour de force* of expressing both the most subtle and learned ideas and also the simplest and most ordinary things in a language that is thoroughly natural, vivid, intelligible, and effective. We meet here yet another indication of that peculiar dramatic gift that dwelt in Luther. It finds utterance also in his polemic and doctrinal works, which, assuming a fictitious opponent, have an underlying character of dialogue that reminds us of Lessing. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that but for Luther Germany would today be a bilingual nation, half Low and half High German.

Luther and
the arts

His musical ability, too, which was considerable, echoes in his style, and he excels especially in working up to the *furioso* climax. He composed the tunes for several of his own hymns, played the lute and the flute, understood and appreciated polyphony, and intensely admired the Dutch contrapuntalists. He made the German hymn into a basic element of the Protestant service, and his wish was that the schools should assiduously practise it. On every occasion he praised "*Musica*," "the glorious, beautiful gift of God, sister of theology," with an enthusiastic gratitude.

But immediately we turn to the other arts, we are struck by the great limitations of this great man. Even to poetry his attitude was unsure. Of all the kinds of poetry he gave first place to the didactic fable because it was the most useful for the understanding of ordinary life — a banal attitude, which, however, was of the time. His views on the drama were no less utilitarian: Terences' comedies, he said, are an instructive mirror of the real world, Latin school plays a good training in language, religious plays an efficient means for the propagation of evangelical truth. The arts of form simply had no existence for him: in 1511 he travelled through northern Italy to Rome, at the height of the

Renaissance, but he Italy's works of art. cleanliness of the ho so much German mo ings. Even in the ca he was only intereste divine service. For tl little understanding friend Melanchthon, the historical sense. but praised Cicero as ~~he used his powers in~~ contrast was a "lazy these — concerning t Rome, and the most the mind that gather sical knowledge and merely labelling them only be the result of.

This crucial defect the crudest form in l has left an ugly blemi the supreme attempt has ever experienced, the peasants and the prevented its reaching lay in the ideas of prin against the wealthy temporal princes, an it was even hoped that ment. Luther also, w Gospels, was assumed ous feature of the risi limited to the open c there had long been letariate and with the whole Fourth Estate dinary extension and.

The demands of

Renaissance, but he has not one single word for the beauty of Italy's works of art. In Florence he was most impressed by the cleanliness of the hospitals, and in Rome he only complains that so much German money flowed thither to pay for the great buildings. Even in the cathedral of Cologne and the Minster of Ulm he was only interested in the bad acoustics, which interfered with divine service. For the historical significance of Rome he had as little understanding as for the artistic; in fact, in contrast to his friend Melanchthon, he seems to have been completely lacking in the historical sense. Thus he called Julius Cæsar "a mere ape," but praised Cicero as a philosopher far above Aristotle, because he used his powers in the service of the State, while Aristotle in contrast was a "lazy ass." To explain away such judgments as these — concerning the greatest strategic and political genius of Rome, and the most universal and active mind of ancient Greece, the mind that gathered, ordered, and set down the sum of Classical knowledge and founded half a dozen new sciences — by merely labelling them as "subjective" is insufficient. They could only be the result of a complete blindness to historical relations.

This crucial defect of historical understanding shows itself in the crudest form in his attitude to the revolted peasants, which has left an ugly blemish on his whole life. The Peasants' War was the supreme attempt towards a social revolution that Germany has ever experienced, and it was only rawness of discipline among the peasants and the dark jealousy among their leaders which prevented its reaching its goal. Its source, as we have said before, lay in the ideas of primitive Christianity. Primarily it was directed against the wealthy clerical hierarchy, much less against the temporal princes, and not at all against the aristocracy; and it was even hoped that the Emperor himself might head the movement. Luther also, who had always preached the return to the Gospels, was assumed to be the obvious leader. The most dangerous feature of the rising was the fact that from the first it was not limited to the open country-side, but spread to the towns, where there had long been a violent ferment going on among the proletariat and with them the poorest of the clergy; in a word, the whole Fourth Estate was concerned in a movement of extraordinary extension and depth.

The demands of the famous Twelve Articles of 1525 were

*Luther and
the Peasants' War*

moderate enough: each parish was to choose its own pastor, tithedues were to be maintained, but other dues were to be removed, serfdom to be abolished, the rights of hunting, fishing, and collecting wood to be unrestricted. As the movement proceeded, further perfectly reasonable demands were put forward—for example, unity of standards of coinage and of measures throughout Germany, removal of all tolls, the reform of the judicial system. The nobility were to be indemnified for their losses under these heads out of the property of the Church, the complete secularization of which was one of the most important points in the program. The opposition, however, refused any concession, war burst forth, and, like bees when they swarm, the peasants poured in from all sides. There was no real resistance in the towns, all the princes in Franconia and on the Rhine submitted within a few weeks, and a vast peasants' Parliament was called at Heilbronn to discuss the reform of the Empire in detail. But at the same time a far more radical group, with communistic tendencies, the "Anabaptists" under the leadership of Thomas Münzer, was making victorious progress. If Thuringia and Franconia had united for a final stroke, the collapse of the "Whites" would have been almost inevitable, but, squandering and dissipating their strength in sieges and plunderings, they were defeated—chiefly by the cavalry, in which they were themselves wholly lacking—in seven battles that followed in rapid succession; and by September the revolt was practically at an end. The narrowness, selfishness, and cruelty with which the whole question of the peasants had been handled in the war left their traces through all the following centuries and are not unconnected even with the confusion of the present day.

At this decisive moment in German history Luther failed completely. He quoted Jesus Sirach: "give the ass food, a load, and the whip," and applied these words to the peasants; he thought of the countryman, not as the feeder, but as the beast of burden of human society. Atrocities were committed by both sides during the war—though certainly more by the opposition—and such things were quite in keeping with the character of the age. Luther's attitude of extreme hostility to the peasants may be explained to some extent by the fact that he received very one-sided accounts of their activities; and, moreover, must have felt a justifi-

able resentment at his position of ill-will even reply to the Twelve's claims. Thus, to the poor the plunder and highway selves the tithe, which with what they will. In your own goods." (Avided the tithes, that often reached as much by any chance employ service he maintained—as usual being drawn had bondservants, and in that calling to which when there had come kindest that we can say. In his pamphlet *Against* wrote: "It were high t dogs" and "Now she murder, openly or secretly a prince can deserve his prayer." In this there and tyrant that lived, of Luther's soul, and what that in this God-forsaken the great age of Christianity extinct.

The worst side of this astonishing violence is influenced by mere opposition a quality which should to be rebuked too strictest characters, whom this sphere makes over-anxious to compromise with

its own pastor, tithes were to be removed, hunting, fishing, and col- movement proceeded, put forward — for ex- measures throughout of the judicial system. their losses under these the complete seculariza- tant points in the pro- by concession, war burst peasants poured in from the towns, all the princes within a few weeks, and at Heilbronn to discuss at the same time a far tendencies, the "Ana- Münster, was making anconia had united for a would have been almost ing their strength in sieges

by the revolt. In August — in seven battles by September the revolt of the peasants had been through all the following with the confusion of the history Luther failed com- the ass food, a load, and the peasants; he thought but as the beast of burden mitted by both sides during the opposition — and such character of the age. Lu- the peasants may be ex- he received very one-sided ver, must have felt a justifi-

able resentment at his purely religious work being side-tracked into politics. But it is utterly inexcusable in him that he took up this position of ill-will even before the outbreak of hostilities. In his reply to the Twelve Articles he flatly rejected almost all their claims. Thus, to the quite legitimate claim that the tithe should be used in the first place to pay the minister and secondly to support the poor of the parish, his answer was: "This article is mere plunder and highway robbery; for they want to seize for themselves the tithe, which is not theirs, but the masters', and do therewith what they will. If you wish to give and do good, do it from your own goods." (And whose goods, if not the peasant's, provided the tithes, that iniquitous and oppressive burden, which often reached as much as a third of the harvest and was never by any chance employed for purposes of common weal?) Bond-service he maintained was a God-pleasing institution — the Bible as usual being drawn on for the arguments, since Abraham had had bondservants, and Paul taught that every man should remain in that calling to which God has called him. But later on, too, when there had come to be some reason for disapproval, the kindest that we can say about his tone was that it was mistaken. In his pamphlet *Against the Peasant Robbers and Murderers* he wrote: "It were high time that they should be strangled like mad dogs" and "Now should every man that can, smite, strangle, murder, openly or secretly. . . . So wondrous are the times that a prince can deserve heaven better by bloodshed than others by prayer." In this there bursts out the raw heathen, the barbarian and tyrant that lived, subdued only with difficulty, in the depths of Luther's soul, and we are brought up against the appalling fact that in this God-forsaken sixteenth century — which counts as the great age of Christianity's renewal — Christians became practically extinct.

The worst side of the whole business, however, was that in his astonishing violence and unwisdom Luther was to a large extent influenced by mere opportunism. Now opportunism is, of course, a quality which should not be judged too harshly, it is too human to be rebuked too strictly, and it is often the defect of the strongest characters, whom the very fact of living so fully in their own sphere makes over-anxious for its security and only too often inclined to compromise with the claims of the external world so as to

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tant theology, of which an example can be seen already in his views on the nature of Communion.

The conception of Transubstantiation presented no difficulty to the mediæval world-view, since for it, as we have explained at length, only universals had real existence. Therefore, not the individual Host, but the highest universal of the omnipresent God that appears in it possessed, and alone possessed, reality. There were, of course, free-thinkers even in early days who opposed the doctrine of real change of substance, but they had no success. Most famous was the Berengarian struggle in the middle of the eleventh century led by Berenger of Tours, who taught that the words of institution were to be understood as ennobling the elements through the spiritual presence of Christ. His doctrine was condemned and he himself forced to a recantation in which he declared that the body of Christ was bitten in pieces in Communion by the teeth of the faithful. On the other hand the Swiss Zwingli, Calvin, and their followers declared that the Communion was only a symbolical act, a memorial ceremony, so that the Host merely *represented* the body of Christ. Both views are clear in themselves, and a clear decision between the two is possible. Even today anyone can make really his own the idea of an actual transubstantiation, and, equally, anyone can conceive Communion as a purely spiritual act. Luther, with the mediæval bent of his mind, was undoubtedly inclined to the former view, which indeed he stubbornly maintained at the Marburg conference. But he would not allow that the Catholics might be right in a single point; yet the Calvinistic view, again, was for him too modern. Thus he chose a middle interpretation, and this was such that no man can imagine anything whatever by it. The body of Christ was in the consecrated material in the sense that fire is in a heated iron, and as heat and iron subsist together, so too do the Host and the body of Christ. Thus — as Voltaire put it jestingly, but expressively — the Papists enjoy God, the Calvinists bread, the Lutherans bread and God. A more hopeless confusion than Luther’s it is impossible to conceive. He eliminated the mystery — through pure anti-papalism — and rejected the philosophical explanation; he taught a transubstantiation in which the elements undergo and do not undergo change.

But the central problem of the whole reform movement and the key to all its later development was the question of the essence of justification. Catholic doctrine bases repentance on three stages, the "*contritio cordis*," the "*confessio oris*," and the "*satisfactio operis*." Luther admitted only the first of these, repentance of the heart, and fanatically — and what was worse, unintelligibly — opposed the other two, confession and works. But this involved a still deeper complication. The point on which, obviously, every solution depends is the decision between free-will and the rule of predestination. This is the primary problem, for before we can approach the question of the form and manner of justification, we must make the preliminary decision whether the human will is free at all. Here Luther, as he often and gladly admitted, was influenced deeply and enduringly by two of the greatest teachers of the Church, Paul and Augustine.

Paul

Paul is the first figure in the world of the New Testament whom we can concretely grasp. The Gospels display to us figures in a flickering, uncertain, one is almost tempted to say impressionistic light, at one time in misty veiling, at another in dazzling over-brightness; but the letters of Paul are like a voice that we can hear close by, his is a dramatic figure that we see striving, stumbling, victorious; a mortal who personifies that most fundamental quality of all life, paradox; a man, like all earthly creatures, now harsh, now gentle, here boundless, there narrow, fool and yet saint. And it is just because he is the most human of all figures whom we know in the history of early Christianity that he became at all later turning-points the leader and the type. All the great renewers of Christianity have linked themselves on to Paul, and among them, inevitably, Luther.

There are two diametrically opposite views of the rôle that Paul played in the development of Christianity. One, which maintains that without Paul the teachings of the Gospels would never have conquered the world, and that Paul is, therefore, the real founder of Christianity, is so absurd and so contemptible that it is not worth our while to refute it. The other view derives from Nietzsche, the most intellectually powerful of all the opponents of ecclesiastical Christianity, who, with an unflinching instinct, made this greatest of all the Fathers the target of his main offensive. In his posthumous fragment *The Antichrist* he paints the de-

velopment of early Christianity as the brush of a Dante *not* to 'redeem' man . . . He does not reach no single step to war it. . . . And he prays to him evil. . . . *No* to condemn . . . but *love* them. . . . And he died on the cross and what since that of what he lived, an 'it was just the essence how to die after this above all resentment giving his death — the sense.' (We might re- who can write words of the Saviour than their Christianity by that they have lost all such atheists as Nietzsche a passion for the truthfulness and patience, would do by confession

May we, then, say more than a single great — a barbarization of it? Such a view would story of Jesus gave rise to this lay the supremely wonderful fact, that the world had not been a teacher, and their kindful death of a slave — question then arose answer, the only answer the grand reversal of us who are unjust to

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velopment of early Christianity, as it presents itself to him, with the brush of a Dante. "This glad messenger lived as he taught, not to 'redeem' mankind, but to show how man ought to live. . . . He does not resist, he does not assert his rights, he takes no single step to ward off his final destiny; rather, he challenges it. . . . And he prays, suffers, loves *with* those and *in* those who do him evil. . . . Not to defend oneself, not to show anger, not to condemn . . . but yet not to resist those that are evil, but to love them. . . . At bottom there has been only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The 'glad tidings' died on the cross, and what since that day has been called so was the very opposite of what he lived, an 'ill tidings,' a *dysangelium*. . . . Manifestly, it was just the essential that the primitive community missed: how to die after this fashion, in freedom from and sublimation above all resentment. . . . But his disciples were far from *for- giving* his death—that would have been evangelical in the highest sense." (We might remark, parenthetically, that an antichristian who can write words like this may be far nearer the understanding of the Saviour than those Christian ministers who seek to prove their Christianity by babbling the phrases of the Gospels so long that they have lost all feeling for them. God grant us many more such atheists as Nietzsche! If they possess so noble a soul, so pure a passion for the truth, and if they live so exemplary a life of saint- liness and patience, they deserve God better thereby than they would do by confessing Him.)

May we, then, say with Nietzsche that Paulinism is nothing more than a single great act of vengeance of the "Chandala-soul" — a barbarization and complete dechristianization of Christian- ity? Such a view would certainly be wrong. For that which in the story of Jesus gave most profoundly to think was his death. In this lay the supremely new, the inconceivably terrible and won- derful fact, that the greatest whom God had ever sent into the world had not been elevated above all men as their guide, their teacher, and their king, but brutally executed, put to the shame- ful death of a slave — and that of his own will and seeking. The question then arose how all this was to be explained; and the answer, the only answer, was that it was for our sakes that the grand reversal of the world-order had been allowed, that for us who are unjust the justest had suffered injustice, that the

innocent had suffered so that we might find atonement and blessedness. There was no other way in which Paul could make the thing intelligible, and all the creeds right up to the present day, true or false, have found no other explanation.

If we would sum up Paul's historical significance in a single phrase, we might say that he was the first Christian theologian. He took the religious ideas which were spread about in early Christian communities and brought them into a sort of system, into a logical sequence of ideas which could be easily impressed, retained, and propagated. But in so defining this achievement of Paul we must not commit the error of belittling it. Every genius uses his own language, a private idiom which is naturally intelligible to only a few beyond himself. He therefore needs an *interpreter*, an intellectual power that will try to speak forth the ineffable, to express the inexpressible, to put into earthly, comprehensible forms the eternal, infinite idea. A good formula is not to be despised, for it also is spirit — the spirit which preserves for later times what would otherwise have vanished. This is the sort of service which Aristotle rendered to Greek thought. The formula of the crucified Son of God, who has washed away the sin of the world, gave to thousands who were not ripe for the purer doctrine of Christ a symbol that was not an empty fancy, but something by which they could benefit both in practice and in theory.

*The Judaic
apostle*

But there is one word in Paul's doctrine which will not readily fit into the spirit of the Gospels — the notion of sin. The God of Jesus is grace, infinitely deep and infinitely wide, reigning beyond good and evil — grace not as reward or recompense, but simply grace as itself. God is not the judge who acquits, but the Father who forgives. But for Paul, God and man are somehow engaged in a mysterious balancing of accounts; he could not endure the thought that God was, not just, but *above justice*; and indeed to most men this idea would have meant no liberation, but a tormenting riddle. It was an idea too wide, too great, too difficult, and too deep. Jews could not grasp it because for thousands of years God and law had been the same thing — and in Paul himself it was the Pharisee that responded so willingly to the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ. The Romans, for their part, were far too well broken in to legalism for it to be possible for them to give up the idea of a satisfaction, and the Greeks, with their

concrete corporeal formalism, would have found it prehensible.

Therefore it is with some apparently paradoxical : of all the Apostles. The : original sin except by the : Old Testament God of : still works on the plan : tooth; it makes the Aton : it is only this fundamer : be bought save by the de : bought at all — which w : of salvation Paul comp : mudic standpoint and e : not justified by works bu : Epistle to the Romans : ' sinned and come short o : by His grace through the : Therefore we conclude th : deeds of the law "; and i : through faith, and that : not of works, lest any m : a negation of the freedor : of James we have the d : working together of faith : little favour with Luthe : though a man say he hat : if it hath not works is : faith wrought with (*δυνή*, : made perfect? " Thus th : flict of opinion on the do

Augustine, the second absolute definiteness the tion. For him man is a "*perditionis*," of which, th*numerus electorum* " is dom not to sin ("*posse* sin mankind is in the co

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significance in a single Christian theologian. spread about in early Christianity into a sort of system, which could be easily impressed, making this achievement of Paul belittling it. Every genius which is naturally inclined to it. He therefore needs an effort to try to speak forth the truth and put into earthly, concrete form. A good formula is not easily found, which preserves for itself the spirit which preserves for itself. This is the sort of Greek thought. The formula is washed away the sin of the past, and the purer doctrine is not fancy, but something concrete and in theory.

the which will not readily admit of sin. The God of the Bible is wide, reigning beyond all recompense, but simply acquits, but the Father and Son are somehow engaged in a struggle which he could not endure the consequences of; and indeed to him there is no liberation, but a torture, too great, too difficult, because for thousands of years — and in Paul himself — so willingly to the doctors, for their part, were it to be possible for them and the Greeks, with their

concrete corporeal form of thinking and their all-defining rationalism, would have found a God of boundless grace incomprehensible.

Therefore it is with some justification that Lagarde made his apparently paradoxical statement that Paul is the most Jewish of all the Apostles. The assumption that God could not wipe out original sin except by the sacrifice of His Son goes back to the Old Testament God of Jewry, who is above all a just God, who still works on the plan of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; it makes the Atonement something of a business deal. Yet it is only this fundamental premiss that God's grace could not be bought save by the death of the innocent — that it had to be bought at all — which was repellent; *within* the actual doctrine of salvation Paul completely abandoned the juristic and Talmudic standpoint and emphasized again and again that man is not justified by works but only by grace and by faith. Thus in the Epistle to the Romans: "For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"; and in Ephesians: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast"; here there is already a negation of the freedom of the will. But already in the Epistle of James we have the doctrine of what is called *synergism*, the working together of faith and grace: a combination which found little favour with Luther. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? . . . Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. . . . Seest thou how faith wrought with (*συνήργει*) his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Thus the New Testament itself contains a conflict of opinion on the doctrine of satisfaction.

Augustine, the second great teacher of Luther, asserted with absolute definiteness the unfreedom of the will and predestination. For him man is a "*massa peccati*," and, therefore, a "*massa perditionis*," of which, through the "*gratia gratis data*," a "*certus numerus electorum*" is saved. Adam alone possessed the freedom not to sin ("*posse non peccare*"), and because of original sin mankind is in the condition of unfreedom ("*non posse non*

Augustine

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tainly — that it should bring forth fruit. The reproach that Catho-
lic doctrine demands sanctification by works and thus encourages
self-righteousness has been handsomely answered by Adam
Möhler in his "*Symbolik*" with the thesis that the destination of
the doctrine is precisely to call forth *holy* works, and to bring it
about that we *ourselves* become just.

If, now, we attempt to review the meaning and content of all
this in an unprejudiced spirit, a strange conclusion emerges.
Protestantism denies justification by works and puts repentance
in the heart, in mere faith, and yet at the same time it demands a
practical, active Christianity and thus again comes back to a sort
of sanctity of works; more, as we shall soon see, it sanctifies even
profane works, thus achieving the last degree of sanctimonious-
ness. Catholicism accepts justification by works, but means by
the latter only performances of a minor sort, and thus it arrives
at apotheosizing the unworldly and other-worldly life, which is
concentrated on inner penitence and meditation, and which
knows nothing of profane works in the ordinary sense. Thus,
starting from opposite standpoints, each ends in the contrary view
from that with which it began: Protestantism, opposed to works,
ends in a glorification of the most worldly tasks, the State, the
magistrates, the family, manual work, science, even war; the
more worldly Catholicism rises to complete contempt for all these
things: emperor, wife, learning, property, and the active life are
things from which it flees to its heights. In addition we have the
further paradox that reactionary Catholicism was often more
tolerant, conciliatory, and accommodating than freedom-loving
Protestantism. Even so unprejudiced a judge as Zinzendorf em-
phasized that "Catholics carry upon their lips and their banner
an anathema against their opponents, but in practice are often
very complaisant towards them; we Protestants have liberty upon
our lips and as our watchword, and yet in practice, though I say
it with regret, there are amongst us many conscience-hangmen."

Actually in this question of justification the issue is really only
theological; no Catholic who was a true Christian ever believed
that works only suffice, and no Protestant if he was a true Chris-
tian believed that faith alone was enough; for faith in Christ and
imitation of Christ are completely identical. If we believe in Him,
we must live His life, or at least try to live it, and whoever does

this is Christian and has proved his faith in the surest fashion. To assert one-sidedly the value either of works or of faith is to fail in the understanding of Christ, to whom doctrine and works were inseparable. It was precisely because He lived out His teaching to its uttermost consequences that He became the Saviour, and it was precisely because His life was such that it was elevated to a doctrine.

But if we balance Protestantism and Catholicism against each other in this way, the former still suffers a serious defect in its fundamental rejection of monasticism. In a world of cheating, murder, and lust the possibility must be given for a certain class to live only for God, both for their own sakes and for the sake of their example to others. Obviously, not all Catholic monks have been true monks. Doubtless only a fraction of them have been urged to the cloister by a passion to live for God. But it is the fact that Protestantism has provided no room for such people that is so serious. The suspicion is unavoidable that bare utilitarian tendencies played their part here, and that the beginning of a mercantile age was unwilling to allow any justification for the existence of "idlers."

Calvinism

In the religiousness of the Reformation period we may trace, broadly, three stages. The lowest stage was the current Catholicism, which, if not in theory, at any rate in practice, was nothing but the crudest worship of external forms and ceremonies, mechanical repentances and services. Opposed to this was the doctrine of the reformers, in whom we may see the second stage, and who emphasized the unique power of faith, although to a considerable degree (especially in the interpretation later given to it) their teaching remained narrowly and rigidly doctrinaire, compressed dogmatism. The highest stage was seen in the so-called radicals, who were deadly serious in their desire to return to primitive Christianity; they included in various shades and tones the whole spectrum of unqualified religiousness, from the extreme revolutionary fantasies of the Anabaptists to the purest speculation of Protestant mysticism. If the reformers were heretics to Catholicism, the radicals were heretics in the second degree, heretics of the Reformation; the former aimed at a Church without a pope, the latter at a Christianity without any Church at all.

The second, Prot in Calvinism. In his Calvin founded a sys of supervision or inq ever attempted. Cler pression of natural e suspect, forbidden, occupation, games, d novels, was forbidde without decoration, Christ to beautify it. talk were punished b unlike Luther, had intellect. In him the ment and method, b nism, for the first tim throughout the later difference of outwar tween Calvin's Gen Remove the veneer community was coat half-terrible figure o premisses, both fooli naturally alike or a properly handled di taking, and even ob truth its essence is j that which the indiv secondary difference as a theocracy and there are even certai tion of religion.

On the one side wholly realize the sp which had always be riably old, for it is a side it is very mo namely, in the muc iconoclasm and of i

Catholicism, but one that was far more square-toed, far more local, sectarian, and petty.

Though there were plenty of men, certainly, who like Melancthon would have preferred the vision of the secrets of the Divinity to their intellectual research of them and started from the principle that "to know Christ is to know His deeds, not to reflect on His natures and the manner of His incarnation," yet, taken all in all, the Reformation did not mean the outburst of a purer, deeper, more fundamental relation to the Godhead, but, on the contrary, the victory of knowledge about faith over Faith itself. *Theology* triumphed at the last over religion.

In practice, too, it was *party* that triumphed. Faith became more and more a matter of community and co-membership. Now, it may be possible to break stones or visit a music-hall in common, or to eat and drink in common, even to murder and take part in politics in common, but one cannot have mass-worship of God any more than one can have mass-love. The characteristic but senseless prejudice of modern man, that all human activities can, nay, must be carried out in common, the ambition of the modern age to make of all humanity a factory, a barrack, a vast hotel, a trust, a reformatory, began to infest religion too. The consequence of this massive mass-religiousness was the Thirty Years' War.

The Reformation was not a creative religious movement. There have been some who quite seriously wished to include Luther among those who have inaugurated new religions, but such men were possible only in the East and in the Classical age—though perhaps again possible in Russia today. The atmosphere of the sixteenth century was not a religious one, it was far too dry, too cool and sharp; it was a world of merchants, diplomats, antiquaries, scribblers, far removed from all craving for eternity, devoted wholly to this world; and even a Luther could not remain uninfluenced by the spirit of the age.

The men of that age almost make us believe the sad words of Goethe: "Men exist only to trouble and kill each other; so was it, so is it, and so shall it ever be." Yet post-Christian humanity has one vast superiority over the man of antiquity—it has a bad conscience. Human beings have not altered; they live for the senses, act for their own advantage, are selfish, use force,

deceit, and injustice in good faith, but half possess the humour of achievement of Christ.

Here we touch upon an immense question: Is it deniably an evil creature? Why does it be evil? Why does it possibilities? He is a moral scruple, all the angel possesses a creature neither one thing nor natural. Thus, it is a grotesquely unique and whole. He is a huge good, why does he do it? The destiny of every creature.

J. V. Jensen, in an illuminating paper classes remind Chinese might quite Reformation period but inwardly full vigour and its cov traits of the time were preserved for us right in vain to give me though we know for able to see and hear them is possible, for thing of the mask Middle Ages, for dawdling wilfully even today and, a time was peasant educated classes, understand that a sure sense of nature

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of the age.

us believe the sad words of
and kill each other; so was
Yet post-Christian human-
he man of antiquity — it
have not altered; they live
stage, are selfish, use force,

deceit, and injustice; but they no longer do so thoughtlessly and in good faith, but haltingly, secretly, and fearfully. They no longer possess the humour of the beast of prey. That is perhaps the one achievement of Christianity, so far.

Here we touch upon the nuclear problem of Christianity, the immense question: How is it that, on the one hand, man is undeniably an evil creature, and yet, on the other, does not *will* to be evil? Why does not he make a clear decision between his two possibilities? He is neither beast nor angel; the beast does, without moral scruple, all that is of service to itself and its posterity; the angel possesses a conscience and acts accordingly. Mankind does neither one thing nor the other, he lives a life neither God-pleasing nor natural. Thus, through this portentous dilemma, he is a grotesquely unique and contradictory absurdity in creation as a whole. He is a huge abortion, a walking question-mark. If he is good, why does he do evil? If he is evil, why does he love the good? The destiny of every one of us puts these two terrifying questions anew.

J. V. Jensen, in his description of Peking, makes the striking and illuminating remark that the present-day Chinese of the upper classes remind us of the men of that time. "Many a crafty old Chinese might quite well have been one of the great men of the Reformation period, as we see them in their portraits — reserved, but inwardly full of the religious ambitions of the time, of its vigour and its covetousness. . . . In spite of the splendid portraits of the time which we possess, in spite of all that history has preserved for us right down to the smallest particulars, I have tried in vain to give myself a picture of these men as they lived, although we know for certain that they did live. I have never been able to see and hear them convincingly. Some sort of contact with them is possible, perhaps, through the peasant of today — something of the mask — but only in China can one really relive the Middle Ages, for thus it was that they lived, queerly hesitant, dawdling wilfully and from a sense of their style, as peasants will even today and, above all, slow." Indeed, the whole culture of the time was peasant-like; even the rulers, even the artists and the educated classes, were only better-class peasants, and we can well understand that a subtler and more complicated individual, with a sure sense of nuances and an inkling of the deeper irony of things,

Grobianism

such as Erasmus had, must have felt the world to be an intolerable place. Further, there was in the men of that age something of the wily shrewdness of the Mongol — which strikes us as a natural product needing no explanation and therefore is in no wise unmoral — though certainly they had none of the psychological flair and adaptability which Jensen so praises in the Chinese. The period had an extreme coarseness, and the nascent rationalism, which is its mark, gives to its products an impression of something primitively artificial, childishly mechanical. The Humanists, who gave the science and the poetry its special quality, seem like poorish copies of the Italian Humanism, which they reproduce in cheaper colours. There were, of course, extraordinary talents among them, and one of the most interesting of these — if for no other reason, for his amazing many-sidedness — was Konrad Celtes, the German arch-Humanist. He was the first German poet to be crowned as poet laureate, the first German professor who lectured on general world-history and on German imperial history; he was the discoverer of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a Roman map of the third century after Christ. He reformed the Nürnberg woodcut craft, inspired a new musical form, the so-called ode style; and published (indeed for a time was believed to have composed) the Latin dramas of the nun Hroswitha.

Among the most outstanding traits of the time is the so-called "Grobianism," a term popularized, though not invented, by Sebastian Brant: "We have now a new saint, Grobian, whom everyone likes to parade." Almost all the writers of the age hurled pig's language at each other. Luther's polemical language was rarely anything but immoderate (for instance, he says of Erasmus: "Anyone who suppresses Erasmus stamps out a bug, and then it stinks worse dead than alive"); Fischart attacks the fashion of coarseness, but so coarsely that he belies his own efforts; and even so refined a scholar as Reuchlin called his opponents dogs, horses, mules, pigs, foxes, ravening wolves. With this desire to be popular and this wish to hit the object as telling a blow as possible, satire attained to a veritable hegemony and let itself go in a way that has never been paralleled in Germany before or since. The favourite reproach is that of folly: "fool" is perhaps the commonest word in printed and everyday language alike. Brant's chief work bears the title *The Ship of Fools*, Thomas Murner's best-known product is

The Conspiracy of Praise of Folly by pilloried as folly, uncouthness, but Church, the State.

The satirical g seriously or unconsciously many, but in France style is unpalatable, a powerful force, he French call "*la naïveté*" logical pleasure arising into all his natural moral standpoint, it may be said to the "*à-tout-prix*," or the thing is forceful or unappetizing. Quite a complex complexity, with which he deals, badness of taste, as went so far that even words — he put on "*Beati, qui mori*" all he writes has little courage, and gluttony apply to him the petite for life and death, and his only ending-over vitality in and anti-scholasticism with anything a sort of satirical hypocritical priests "*esprit gaulois*," and elemental out as arguing with the French, since he elegant sureness of

Antichrist, every Papist a son of Satan, while Catholics for their part saw in Luther and his adherents the servants of hell. In addition Protestantism had increased the consciousness of sin; no one could know if he was justified. Works were of no value; yet faith was rather an unending task imposed on the human soul than a pillar of certainty. In Calvinism, with its rigid dogma of predestination, no one could say whether he was among the fore-chosen or among those eternally fore-doomed. Luther used to declare about Doctor Eck, and many more of his opponents, that they had signed a pact with the Devil, and the Breslau Doctor John Cochläus asserted in his biography of Luther — appearing only three years after his death — that he was the son of the adulterous union of the Devil with Margaret Luther. It is the fashion now to doubt whether Luther ever hurled his ink-bottle at the Devil on the Wartburg, but it is quite obvious from innumerable remarks of his that he pictured the world as full of devils, and in the same way he believed in the Devil's harlots, the witches, whom he cursed and threatened from his pulpit. But in that as in everything else he was only the true son of his times. For just then, when faith in Christian doctrine was riven asunder and began to crumble, there was a recrudescence in the depth of men's souls of an obscure and terrifying undercurrent of paganism.

Belief in witches is to be found among the Persians, in the Old Testament, in Greek and Roman mythology, and in some form perhaps in every religion. In the Middle Ages, however, the burning of witches had been rare: it was then still regarded as human sacrifice, and Charlemagne forbade it. In Italy during the Renaissance there was a special witches' tract at Norcia, which proved attractive to foreigners, and the witch, the *strega*, with her art of *stregheria*, received almost official recognition and was persecuted only in exceptional cases. It was only towards the end of the fifteenth century that this witch-mania, beginning in the Northern lands, became a scourge of humanity. The decisive date is 1487, the year of publication by the two papal inquisitors Henry Institor and Jacob Sprenger of the notorious *Malleus maleficarum*; a work in which witchery, if one may say so, is handled in a spirit of technology and scientific system. In the first part of the work various questions are put, answered, and elaborately

discussed, as, for instance: Is there a black art? Does the Devil cooperate with witches? Can men be procreated by incubi (that is, devils who "lie upon" women in the form of men) and succubi (that is, devils who lie under men in the form of women)? Can black magic drive men to love or hate? Can the black art obstruct the marriage act? Can witches treat the *membrum virile* by magic so as to separate it from the body? Can witches turn men into animals? The second part treats more of details; for instance, how witches raise thunder-storms and hail-storms, how they rob cows of their milk, how they make fowls egg-bound, how they produce abortion, how they cause illness in cattle, how they produce frenzy, how they maim limbs by "witches' darts," why they especially love to kill unbaptized children (the answer to this last being that such cannot enter into heaven, and as the kingdom of God and the overthrow of the Devil can only be fulfilled when a definite number of the blessed is in heaven, the murder of newly born children postpones that time).

Witch-
mania and
psycho-
analysis

Witches were assumed to meet on special dates, above all on the eve of May 1, Walpurgis Night, when they flew on broomsticks or he-goats to certain infamous hills, to worship their master by dances and kisses on his genitals or hind quarters (the Devil repaying this court by breaking wind upon them) and then to take their pleasure with devil-lovers in extravagant feasting and wild orgies. The ordeal of witches consisted usually in laying the accused, tightly bound, on the surface of some water and condemning any who remained afloat. Any outstanding quality — good and bad eminence, physical defects and rare beauty, alike — might lead to suspicion of witchcraft. Gradually men became habituated to torturing for a confession, and the vicious circle enclosed them, for, of course, these methods produced numerous proofs of witchcraft, and then increasing fear led to further accusations and trials. Even if avarice and revenge occasionally played some part, there can be no doubt that most of the judges acted in entire honesty, just as a lawyer of today feels himself to be a guardian of law and morality in obtaining the conviction of prisoners for crimes, the punishing of which will seem quite unintelligible to future ages. Protestantism became quite as fanatical as Catholicism (though German historians of a liberal and nationalist tendency like to gloss over the fact), the most blatant

instance being probably Hoensbroech, *Das Papst-samkeit* (*The Papacy and its misdeeds*) and in the sternest spirit about the Protestant pe was a universal disease o lower classes, to papists cusers and inquisitors, n many of the victims beli the quality of Kepler, who of scientific thought, ma witchcraft, and it was a of his relatives was burn times in danger of the s craft is probably the rest sexuality, manifesting i psychoanalysis, which s trivialities, might do wel foundations, for it wou *Hammer*. The question among women than men i other than the ruin of fr necessary disaster, a fas domestic peril, a desirab ours?" What emerges he mysterious companion, th sinfulness and unseen co intercourse, the dark fearl gathers into itself all the passions, of erring human ormation period it is a lo Strindberg. It is clear fro which we have given that sexual one under religioi subterranean fantasy, cor its religious veneer of s riasis or perversity. This ful and grotesque forms

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instance being probably the learned propaganda work of Graf Hoensbroech, *Das Papsttum in seiner sozial-kulturellen Wirk-samkeit* (*The Papacy in its Sociological Aspect*), in which the misdeeds of the Roman Inquisition are treated at great length and in the sternest spirit of description; while there is not a word about the Protestant persecution of witches. The fact is that it was a universal disease of the time, common to the learned and the lower classes, to papists and reformers, princes and subjects, ac-cusers and inquisitors, not to mention the witches themselves, for many of the victims believed themselves guilty. Even a genius of the quality of Kepler, who can hardly be said to have lacked the gift of scientific thought, maintained that it was impossible to deny witchcraft, and it was a serious enough matter for him, for one of his relatives was burnt as a witch, and his mother was many times in danger of the same fate. The whole question of witch-craft is probably the result of a mass-psychosis due to repressed sexuality, manifesting itself in the form of gynophobia; and psychoanalysis, which so often occupies itself with unprofitable trivialities, might do well to investigate the whole problem to its foundations, for it would find valuable hints in the *Witches' Hammer*. The question why the black art is more widespread among women than men is answered as follows: "What is woman other than the ruin of friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary disaster, a fascinating evil, a natural temptation, a domestic peril, a desirable danger, a universal evil in fine col-ours?" What emerges here is that deep fear of man in face of his mysterious companion, the appalling sensation of the unavoidable sinfulness and unseen corruption that lies at the back of sexual intercourse, the dark fearful maelstrom which blindly and eagerly gathers into itself all the many deeds and miseries, dreams and passions, of erring humanity. From the witch-madness of the Ref-ormation period it is a long line, but a straight line, that leads to Strindberg. It is clear from the few quotations from the *Malleus* which we have given that the problem was not a religious, but a sexual one under religious disguise; in most of them we see a subterranean fantasy, completely unrestrained and emphasized by its religious veneer of sexual unsatisfaction or impotence, saty-riasis or perversity. This effusion of sex-hatred in such dread-ful and grotesque forms was one of the consequences of the

much-lauded "liberation of the individual" by the Renaissance and Reformation.

In conclusion we must answer the question as a whole: What, then, taking all in all, must we conclude was the importance of the Reformation for European civilization? It signifies no more, no less, than the attempted secularization of all the life, thought, and faith of mankind. It introduces into all spheres a superficial practicality, a dull utilitarianism, material, gloomy, insipid, ordinary; in its futile, short-sighted rationalism it denied, deliberately and intentionally, a whole set of higher activities which had hitherto flowed from religion and which from the mere standpoint of practical efficiency may be hard to justify — for instance, "barren" asceticism, not merely the asceticism that flees from the world and hates it, but its highest form, the *franchise of the universe*; "unnatural" celibacy, "meaningless" pilgrimages, "superfluous" splendour of ceremonial, "useless" monasteries, "ridiculous" carnivals, "waste of time" in feast-days, "superstitious" adoration of the saints, who had accompanied man through the daily round, shedding light about him and helping him as God's friendly staff of assistants; "unjustifiable" charity to the poor, which gives for the sake of giving, without inquiring too much about worthiness and need. All childlike qualities vanish from life, which becomes logical, systematic, just, and efficient, or, in other words, unendurable.

It must be repeated that to many, though not to all, of these things Luther's attitude was still mediæval. His greatness, in fact, lay precisely in this, that he always felt the Reformation as something religious, never political, social, or "organizational." It must be admitted, all the same, that partly through pressure of popular opinion, partly through his stubborn opposition on principle to anything Catholic, he approved or at least admitted all these changes.

The Reformation in the first place sanctifies work; in the second, a man's profession and thus indirectly the money which proceeds therefrom; thirdly, marriage and the family; lastly, the State. Superficially, it put the last of these lower than the Middle Ages had done, by splitting State from Church, but this actually made it more important, because the State gained thereby a basis of its own for its sovereignty. *Exemption* — that is, *emancipation*

of State from Church-age, the supreme State citizen's property, an liberty, and a military doubt that the clear dis which Luther aimed at the opposite resulted, f the dominion of the p of the churches in thei their subjects, in exactly stead of one vicar of C to God, there were now by reason of their more sible. That was the wh sition to the tendency almost all the countrie system of the stiffest in erential treatment acco — from its very nature can be.

As for marriage, Lut flesh and obviously did married, not from any liberal example and to a he chose a nun for his w ing, emphatically, noth his real view of wome: the household economy simply fall to pieces." (of his fight for the faith of crassly material cult reads these chronicles v the whole story of the paralleled, in every way been in the whole worl ing never so common a so splendid that it ca ever seen such trading up the whole world? "

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ifies work; in the ly the money which e family; lastly, the ver than the Middle ch, but this actually ined thereby a basis hat is, emancipation

of State from Church — thus created that scourge of the modern age, the supreme State, which has a fiscal system to claim the citizen's property, an omnipresent police system to restrict his liberty, and a militarism to demand his life. There can be no doubt that the clear distinction between temporals and spirituals which Luther aimed at was intended to emancipate religion; but the opposite resulted, for while Protestant rulers got away from the dominion of the pope, they regarded themselves as masters of the churches in their own land and behaved, as guardians of their subjects, in exactly the same way as Rome had done. But instead of one vicar of Christ who prescribes to men their relation to God, there were now several such vicars, far less competent and, by reason of their more limited sphere of action, far less responsible. That was the whole difference. In the most flagrant opposition to the tendency that had begotten it Protestantism, in almost all the countries in which it was victorious, developed a system of the stiffest intolerance, which grew up out of the preferential treatment accorded to the State's Church; for the State — from its very nature — is the most intolerant creation there can be.

As for marriage, Luther regarded it as a mere concession to the flesh and obviously did not set any high value on it. He himself married, not from any real internal compulsion, but to set a liberal example and to annoy the Catholics; it is illuminating that he chose a nun for his wife. But in the simple Kate he was marrying, emphatically, nothing but a housekeeper; indeed, this was his real view of women: "If we had not this race of women, the household economy and everything concerned with it would simply fall to pieces." On the other hand, in 1521, in the middle of his fight for the faith, he writes enthusiastically about the rise of crassly material culture which marked the period: "Whoever reads these chronicles will find that from the birth of Christ on, the whole story of the world in these hundreds of years is unparalleled, in every way. Such building and planting have never been in the whole world, such fine and varied eating and drinking never so common as they are now. Clothing, too, has become so splendid that it cannot become finer. Who, moreover, has ever seen such trading as now journeys round and swallows up the whole world?" There is, in fact, *a priori*, a subterranean

relationship between the Protestant and the Capitalist attitudes to things, though it only comes right to the surface in English Puritanism. The spiritual father of this union of Bourse and Bible was Calvin, who bitterly opposed the canonical veto of usury; even Luther had said in answer to questioning on this point that "a bit of usury" was permissible.

Luther too, as Hans Sperber has pointed out, is responsible for the change in the meaning of the word "*Beruf*" (profession, vocation), which until his day really meant a "calling"; it is in his works that it has for the first time its present-day meaning of manual and specialized occupation, and he saw in the practice of industrial occupations — which the Classical age had regarded as degrading and banal, and the Middle Ages as profane and ungodly — a divine moral mission. Till his day work had been regarded as a penalty, at best a necessary evil; but henceforward it is elevated and even sanctified. This attitude, first brought into the world by Protestantism, leads in a direct line to Capitalism and Marxism, the two most powerful darkeners of Europe, each of which, though with contradictory aims, has the same ethical and social foundations as the other.

The anti-
evangelical
Evangelical

It is very noteworthy that the Reformation, which professed to be a return to the pure word of the Bible, was in all these points in the sharpest opposition to the Bible. At the very beginning of the Old Testament the Lord said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying: 'Thou shalt not eat of it,' cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Of the holiness and blessedness of work there is not a word here; rather, Adam is cursed to work, the worst punishment which God, who is still a God of vengeance, could conceive for the sin of the first man. The New Testament teaches in almost every line the blessedness and godliness of doing nothing. Christ Himself never did any work, nor His apostles and companions; Peter and Matthew were taken away from their work — in fact, their Master warns them specifically against work: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they

grow: they toil not, neither do they grieve. Even Solomon in these. Wherefore, if thou art able to bear, today is and tomorrow more clothe you, O ye

This explains why the Reformation took to the "social question" of the poor to the rich and the Kingdom of Heaven; but the poor are more likely to be helped because the conditions of the world, more favourable than it or not, must occupy the poor man is in the form of a gradually putting the poor man occupied by the rich should work. But Jesus in the field and the spirit in the blessing of work of power and material rich, Jesus aims to make Jesus pities them. So workers and possessors: when no one works or the social question is that the distribution of wealth, the conditions, are what the mathematicians ascertain Him. His mission while the mind of a man Hence it is the greatest to put Him on a level with man by economic means but in kind. His good is as little reasonable to compare, say, the creations of Edison. Jesus never target in modern society

the Capitalist attitudes to the surface in English Union of Bourse and Bible Canonical veto of usury; reasoning on this point that

ated out, is responsible for "Beruf" (profession, vocation) a "calling"; it is in his present-day meaning of he saw in the practice of the Middle Ages as profane and un-Christian. The day work had been revealed; but henceforward it is a new attitude, first brought into a direct line to Capitalism. The darkeners of Europe, each of them, has the same ethical

information, which professed itself, was in all these points. At the very beginning of the Gospel: "Because thou hast not eaten of the tree of life, thou shalt not eat of it, nor shalt thou eat of it all thy life; thy face shalt thou eat of work there is not a work, the worst punishment of hell, could conceive for the man who reaches in almost every thing nothing. Christ Himself and companions; Peter and Paul — in fact, their work: "Behold the fowls of the field, how they

grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? "

This explains with perfect clearness the attitude which Jesus took to the "social question." It is true that He preferred the poor to the rich and said that a rich man could not enter the kingdom of Heaven; but this saying has no socialistic application. The poor are more likely to enter the kingdom of Heaven than the rich because the conditions for a godly life, turned away from Mammon, are more favourable in them. A rich man, whether he means it or not, must occupy himself with his earthly goods, while the poor man is in the fortunate position of not owning things which might turn him from God. Socialism, on the contrary, aims at gradually putting the poor into the advantageous place at present occupied by the rich and insists that every man, rich or poor, should work. But Jesus sets before man the example of the lilies in the field and the sparrows on the housetop, for He knows that in the blessing of work a secret curse lies hidden, the greed of gold, of power and materialism. Socialism aims at making the poor rich, Jesus aims to make the rich poor. Socialism envies the rich, Jesus pities them. Socialism aims at the largest number of workers and possessors possible, Jesus looks to an ideal state when no one works or owns anything. Thus Jesus' attitude to the social question is that He simply disregards it: to Him things like the distribution of wealth, property, the just ordering of industrial conditions, are what the Stoics called an "*adiaphoron*" and the mathematicians a "*quantité négligeable*": they do not concern Him. His mission as He sees it is to lead man to the divine, while the mind of a social reformer is ever set on this world. Hence it is the greatest blasphemy against Christ that is possible, to put Him on a level with those dwarf-souls that want to redeem man by *economic* means; He differs from them all, not in degree, but in kind. His good deeds were spiritual, not material, and it is as little reasonable to compare Him with such people as to compare, say, the creations of Plato or Dante with those of Marconi or Edison. Jesus never strove against the powers which are the target in modern social polemics, such as the bourgeoisie,

*Jesus and
the "social
question"*

reforming anything: there was no room in it for so shallow an idea. The Reformation is nothing but a deeply irreligious attempt to renew religion — though it is fair to add that in this it only followed the trend of the times — and therefore could do nothing else but move away from real religion. Even the Counter-Reformation is only an attempt to re-Catholicize the world by the same instruments as those which Protestantism employed. The “pagan” Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Counter-Reformation have all the same basic meaning: they lead away from God.

Holy
idleness

The consecration of earthly life which was accomplished by the Reformation was, in its way, undeniably an act of liberation, but it was to an equal degree a desecration, futilization, and emptying. The sanctification of everyday life, lock, stock, and barrel, leaves no room for the noble, sublime, even heroic dualism which was the essential idea of the Middle Ages. Such a religious attitude, if we disregard the great personal piety of its founder, is in obvious danger of ending in Philistinism, of becoming the favourite creed of the bourgeoisie, which in the name of God and to the honour of God mines coal, begets children, and draws up balance-sheets. The greater truth that State, economics, profession, industry, society, and family are unholy things is likely to vanish from sight. And it did so vanish in fact.

There is an old Jewish story, not included in the Bible, according to which not only Cain, but his brother Abel also roused the ill-will of God, “for he beheld the glory of God more than was lawful” in idle contemplation. The God of the Jews, quite naturally, was jealous, but at bottom Abel was the first poet and also the first “*homo religiosus*.” The Christian answer, at any rate, to the question of which is better, action or contemplation, work or idleness, is answered clearly in the story of Martha and Mary. Mary sat at the feet of the Lord and listened to His words, but Martha was dragged away by many occupations. And she said to the Lord: “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath let me serve alone? Bid her, therefore, to help me.” But the Lord said: “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

All work has the great drawback that it diverts man, divides him, separates him from himself. Therefore all saints, founders of

religion, all men who
into the solitude. What
nothing contained far
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mirror — no trembling
clean, quiet one which
Blessed are the idle, for
are the hours of idleness

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a means for their protection which was unfortunately only a cause of further brutality. They proposed the import of Negro slaves from Africa, with the result that even in the first half of the sixteenth century that odious trade, in which almost all European nations partook, flourished exceedingly. It goes without saying that the Spaniards behaved no less heedlessly and madly with regard to the dumb natives of America; everywhere their track was marked by wanton annihilation of the natural fauna, vandal deforestation, and planless exhaustion of the forces of the earth.

The behaviour of the Spaniards in the Netherlands, which was the richest, most vital and cultured area of the North, was as bad as if they were dealing with some subject dominion of Negroes. It took a long time before their perverse folly, their blind avarice and inhuman brutality, could rouse to a passionate revolt that peace-loving and slowly moving people, these merchants with their account-books and pedagogues with their school-books. But once roused, there was no suppressing them. Alba's tactics, adopted at the express instructions of his king, were not merely despicable, but incomprehensible. The Council of Unrest, or the Bloody Council, as the people justly nicknamed it, was to deal with the punishment of traitors, and the term "traitor" included all who had signed a petition for the relaxation of the Inquisition or had failed to prevent such a petition, or who even under compulsion had listened to an evangelical sermon, or had said that the King had not the right to take from the provinces their liberty, or had disputed whether the Council of Unrest was above the law, or had asserted that one must obey God more than man, or any who had listened to such remarks in silence. Obviously it was almost impossible not to commit at least one of such crimes, and it was only the logical conclusion of these frenzied premisses when all inhabitants of the Netherlands were condemned to death on February 16, 1568 as heretics: an action which is probably unique in history. After thousands had been hanged, burned, imprisoned, exiled, or had had their property confiscated, a royal amnesty was issued promising immunity to all who could prove that they had never committed the slightest offence, on condition that they repented and asked for pardon within a definite period: such an amnesty also is probably without its match in history.

Now, it is illuminating for the student of human nature that

the Netherlands were ures, but only by an ac cial nature, which ma lessness, but which or tolerable. Alba had pre a fathom deep from th decree that taxes shou ring income-tax on a "twentieth penny" or and of a "tenth penny goods. This last claus meant the complete r rigidly enforced. And pence, and the grea cry: "Rather Turk th fight of a small nation power of Europe. All t Freedom, faith, even l come, wealth, and bus: administrative methoc of the Spanish régime different sort of attitu their suppression of pu mass-executions, but l structive effects on tra the assignats and not t

The revolt of the Philip's decline; after i was briefly this: encir lands possessions on tl and with Spain on the internally by backing Ligue, and thus in th a member of some Frer In this way the only c was to become a sort c to make his own either existed during his mar ority of his fleet. He al

* A. H. will boast that he was even more unrelenting toward the Jews than Philip II had been to the Netherlands.

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the Netherlands were not driven to revolt by any of these measures, but only by an administrative edict of the governor of a financial nature, which may have equalled the rest in folly and shamelessness, but which one would have imagined to be at least more tolerable. Alba had promised Philip he would send a stream of gold a fathom deep from the Netherlands to Spain, and he published a decree that taxes should be raised, of one per cent as a non-recurring income-tax on all movable and immovable property, of a "twentieth penny" or five per cent on all property that was sold, and of a "tenth penny" or ten per cent on every sale of movable goods. This last clause, more even than the others, would have meant the complete ruin of Netherlands commerce if it had been rigidly enforced. And then at last the country declared its independence, and the great Revolt of the Netherlands began with the cry: "Rather Turk than Papist." It was a victorious and heroic fight of a small nation of shopkeepers against the greatest military power of Europe. All this is very remarkable, but man is built so. Freedom, faith, even life may be taken from him sooner than income, wealth, and business. In the same way the Jacobins, whose administrative methods remind us by their stupidity and cruelty of the Spanish régime (though this was the outcome of a wholly different sort of attitude), made themselves intolerable, not by their suppression of public opinion, their scorn for religion, or their mass-executions, but by their attacks on property and their destructive effects on trade, industry, and finance: it was, in fact, the assignats and not the guillotine that ruined them.

The revolt of the Netherlands marked the beginning of Philip's decline; after it, all went awry. His imperialistic program was briefly this: encircling France as he did with the Netherlands possessions on the north, with Franche-Comté on the east and with Spain on the south side, to keep it in a disrupted state internally by backing the power of the papist and anti-dynastic Ligue, and thus in the end to put one of his own kindred, or a member of some French house dependent on him, on the throne. In this way the only continental power that might be dangerous was to become a sort of Spanish protectorate. England he hoped to make his own either by such personal union as had previously existed during his marriage to "Bloody Mary" or by the superiority of his fleet. He already possessed a great part of Italy, and

*Collapse of
Philip's
system*

developing upwards, even if its inhabitants do not always wear the appearance of a professor of astronomy.

Francis
Bacon

It is quite natural that Bruno, who is in advance even of our own times, should have been regarded by his contemporaries either as a diabolical seducer or a mad fantastic. The philosopher who gave clear and definite expression to what all the world was thinking was Francis Bacon: no fathomless volcano like Bruno, no God-seeker, struggling in the darkness, like Böhme, no sensitive psychological atom like Montaigne, no fiery world-eye like Shakspeare, but a deliberate and impressive speaker who had the gift of comprehending and brilliantly formulating the effort of his own age. It was of his essence that he was English, for such a philosophy as his could only come out of England.

The rise
of England

During the sixteenth century England developed from a mediæval city-state into a modern European great power, not as patriotic legend pretends, thanks to its rulers, but in spite of them, for they were generally mediocre, often contemptible. Henry VIII we have come across several times already. Not even Shakspeare's court poetry with all its retouching could depict him except as a coarse and treacherous despot. Holbein's portrait is enough to give a complete idea of this bejewelled butcher, this overpowering incarnation of bestial energy and insatiable vitality. His son, Edward VI, who gave promise of talents, died in youth; he was succeeded by "Bloody Mary," an embittered old maid and intense bigot, who, completely under the influence of her husband, Philip II (for whom she had a lifelong and ill-requited passion), strove by the most brutal means to bring about a Catholic restoration and — what her subjects resented far more even than her cruel attempts at reaction — lost Calais in the war with France which she carried on as an ally of Spain. If she had lived a few years longer, revolution would have followed. Her successor was Elizabeth, a prudent and clear-sighted but immoderately vain and egoistic woman, with the brutal unscrupulousness, cool deceit, and self-righteous prudery which England's enemies regard as her national characteristics. Certainly "cant" was developed in her, even so soon, to sheer artistry. It is a quality for which no other language has a word, because no other people has the characteristic. Cant is neither lying nor hypocrisy: it is something far more complicated. It is a talent — namely, that of feeling everything

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to be true and good which brings immediate practical advantage. When an Englishman feels anything for any reason to be unpleasant, he concludes—in his subconsciousness—to call it wrong or untrue. Thus he has the singular faculty of being perfidious not only to others, but to himself, and he exerts his talent with the clearest conscience, which is perfectly natural since it is an instinct that he is satisfying. Cant is something that may be described as honest deceit or the gift of cheating oneself.

The two most infamous blots on the reign of Elizabeth are the executions of Essex and of Mary Queen of Scots. On both occasions she was, as queen and as politician, in the right, for Essex was a traitor, and Mary the head of many dangerous conspiracies. What does bring discredit on her is that she not merely pursued justice to its bloody end, but that she sought to get a reputation for womanly gentleness and Christian mercy out of it all as well. Nor can any reasonable man reproach her for her many lovers, but only for the cool *tartufferie* with which she allowed herself throughout her reign to be celebrated as the Virgin Queen and permitted Walter Raleigh (who must himself have known better) to call the first English colony Virginia in her honour. In this respect she fell far lower than her deadly rival Mary, who probably committed as many crimes in her life, but none with such coldblooded deliberation, and certainly "strayed" both less often and more frankly. When Mary's lover Bothwell blew her husband Darnley into the air, the whole of Scotland rose in insurrection, but when Elizabeth's favourite Leicester poisoned his wife, public opinion was silent, for things had been managed far more cleverly; still, cleverness has never yet been regarded as an extenuating circumstance in a murder case.

On Elizabeth's death, after fifty-five years' reign, she was succeeded by James I, son of Mary Stuart and great-grandson of Margaret Tudor; he united both crowns, uniting, however, at the same time the evil qualities of both the rival houses—the domineering obstinacy and arrogance of the Tudors and the inertia and moral irresponsibility of the Stuarts. His father was probably Mary's secretary, the ugly David Rizzio, who was bestially murdered by Darnley. His figure was fat and ungainly, his head thick, and his beard thin, his eyes bulging, his speech stammering and unmusical; men said that he spat out rather than articulated

his words. He was unusually timid and distrustful, could not look on a naked sword, and spent his life in fear of conspiracy and assassination. He was as childishly vain as his predecessor, but far less intelligent, for he tolerated only views that agreed with his own. He was particularly proud of his theological education, and frequently used it to the horror of his court in the most hair-splitting debates. His second passion was for handsome young men, and such could get anything from him, however insignificant or common they might be. Despite the nervous movements, his clumsy gait and boorish manners that made him the reverse of royal, no ruler was ever so convinced of his divine right as he. He regarded himself as the unlimited dictator over the life, property, and thoughts of his subjects, and that at a time anything but propitious, and among a people anything but amenable, to such views. As, further, he lacked all political insight and ability, he was continuously at loggerheads with his Parliament, though open revolt was postponed till his successor's time. At the end of his reign the saying was that Great Britain is smaller than Britain.

Nevertheless these hundred years form the first great age of England's glory. Trade, industry, seamanship, science, art, and literature developed even to over-ripeness. London in Elizabeth's time was a city of three hundred thousand souls, with countless shops, an important Exchange, a permanent market, and almost twenty permanent theatres. The streets were carefully laid out, the water-supply regulated through wooden pipes, lighting and fire-police much improved. There were many well-ordered schools, apothecaries' shops, printing establishments, and even something like newspapers. The Thames was packed with gaily decorated boats; an unbroken stream of pedestrians, horsemen, and litters enlivened the city; the upper classes already used coaches, and their new country-houses, of the Tudor style, were effective, practical, inviting, and (in contrast to the continental villas) built primarily to be lived in: already the Englishman's taste for prosperous and pleasant domesticity was displaying itself. Clothes were brave, rich, well looked after, and not lacking in taste. Ordinary comforts, however, were not much in advance of the Middle Ages; sleeping-arrangements were still primitive, table-forks were not used, and meals were chiefly remarkable for the quantity consumed; for ordinary use wooden utensils were

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1348 Black Death (*death of William of Occam*)
c. 1350 *Büchlein vom vollkommenen Leben*
1351 Konrad von Megenberg: *Buch der Natur*
1354 Death of Rienzi
1356 Golden Bull
1358 French Jacquerie
1361 Death of Tauler. Fall of Adrianople
1365 Death of Suso
c. 1370 *Piers Plowman*
1372 Death of Meister Wilhelm
1374 Death of Petrarch
1375 Death of Boccaccio
1377 End of the Babylonish Captivity
1378 Death of Charles IV: Wenceslas. Beginning of the
Great Schism
1381 Death of Ruysbroeck
1384 Death of Wyclif
1386 Battle of Sempach. Poland-Lithuania
1389 Battle of Kossovo
1396 Battle of Nicopolis
1397 Union of Kalmar
1399 House of Lancaster in England
1400 Wenceslas deposed: Rupert of the Palatinate. The
Medici in Florence. Death of Chaucer
1405 Death of Froissart
1409 Council of Pisa: three popes
1410 Death of Rupert: Sigismund. Battle of Tannenberg
1414 Beginning of the Council of Constance
1415 Burning of Huss. The Hohenzollerns in Brandenburg
Battle of Agincourt
1417 End of the Great Schism
1420 Beginning of the Hussite wars

1426 Death of Hubert van Eyck
 1428 Death of Masaccio
 1429 Joan of Arc
 1440 Frederick III, German Emperor. Nicolaus Cusanus:
De docta ignorantia. Death of Jan van Eyck. Platonic
 Academy of Florence
 1441 Imitatio Christi finished
 1445 Cape Verde
 1446 Death of Brunelleschi
 1450 Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan
 c. 1450 Gutenberg: book-printing
 1452 Birth of Leonardo da Vinci
 1453 Fall of Constantinople. Death of John Dunstaple
 1455 Death of Fra Angelico. Death of Ghiberti
 1458 Æneas Sylvius, Pope
 1459 Beginning of the Wars of the Roses
 1461 Louis XI of France. House of York in England
 1464 Death of Cosimo de' Medici. Death of Nicolaus Cu-
sanus. Death of Rogier van der Weyden
 1466 Cession of West Prussia to Poland; East Prussia a
 Polish fief. Death of Donatello
 1471 First observatory. Birth of Dürer
 1472 Death of Alberti
 1475 Birth of Michelangelo
 1477 Fall of Charles the Bold; the Netherlands become
 Habsburg by marriage. Birth of Titian
 1478 Introduction of the Inquisition
 1479 Castile-Aragon
 1480 Overthrow of the Mongol domination in Russia
 1483 Death of Louis XI: Charles VIII. Birth of Rabelais.
Birth of Raphael. Birth of Luther
 1485 House of Tudor in England: end of the Wars of the
 Roses
 1487 Cape of Good Hope
 1488 Death of Verrocchio
 1489 *The Witches' Hammer*
 1490 Martin Behaim: globe
 1492 Discovery of America. Conquest of Granada. Rodrigo
 Borgia Pope. Death of Lorenzo de' Medici

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- 1494 Sebastian Brant: *Narrenschiff*. Death of Pico della Mirandola
- 1495 Death of Memling
- 1498 Sea route to the East Indies. Burning of Savonarola. *Reinke de Vos*
- 1499 Independence of Switzerland
- c. 1500 Spinetti: the spinet
- 1500 Discovery of Brazil
- 1505 First postal service
- 1506 Reuchlin: Hebrew grammar. Death of Mantegna
- 1509 Accession of Henry VIII of England. Erasmus: *Encomium moriae*
- 1510 Pocket-watches. Death of Botticelli
- 1513 Leo X, Pope
- 1514 Death of Bramante. Machiavelli: *Il Principe*
- 1515 Francis I, King of France. Battle of Marignan. *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*
- 1516 House of Habsburg in Spain. Ariosto: *Orlando Furioso*. More: *Utopia*
- 1517 Luther nails the theses to the church-door at Wittenberg. Egypt conquered by the Turks
- 1519 Death of Maximilian I: Charles V. Death of Leonardo da Vinci
- 1520 Death of Raphael. Blood-bath of Stockholm
- 1521 Conquest of Mexico. Diet of Worms. Capture of Belgrade
- 1522 End of the first circumnavigation of the globe. Luther's Bible
- 1523 House of Vasa in Sweden. Fall of Sickingen. Death of Hutten
- 1524 Death of Perugino
- 1525 German Peasants' War. Battle of Pavia
- 1526 Battle of Mohacs
- 1527 Death of Machiavelli. Sack of Rome
- 1528 Death of Dürer
- 1529 Death of Grünewald. The Turks before Vienna
- 1530 Diet of Augsburg: *Confessio Augustana*
- 1531 Fall of Zwingli. Church of England
- 1532 Conquest of Peru. Religious Peace of Nürnberg

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1533 Death of Ariosto
 1534 Death of Correggio
 1535 The Anabaptists of Münster
 1537 Wullenweber beheaded
 1540 Foundation of the Jesuit Order. Servetus: pulmonary circulation
 1541 Death of Paracelsus. Calvin at Geneva: Knox in Scotland
 1543 Death of the younger Holbein. Copernicus: *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*. Vesalius: *De humani corporis fabrica*
 1545 Death of Sebastian Franck. Beginning of the Council of Trent
 1546 Death of Luther
 1547 Battle of Mühlberg. Death of Francis I. Death of Henry VIII
 1553 Death of Rabelais. Burning of Servetus
 1555 Religious Peace of Augsburg
 1556 Abdication of Charles V: Ferdinand I becomes Emperor, and Philip II King of Spain. Death of Loyola
 1557 Battle of Saint-Quentin
 1558 Accession of Elizabeth in England. Battle of Gravelines
 1560 Death of Melanchthon. Nicot: tobacco
 1561 Birth of Francis Bacon
 1564 Death of Ferdinand I: Maximilian II. Death of Calvin.
 1564 Death of Michelangelo. Birth of Shakspeare
 1568 Execution of Egmont
 1569 Mercator's map of the world
 1571 Battle of Lepanto. London Stock Exchange
 1572 Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Death of Knox
 1576 Death of Maximilian II: Rudolf II. Death of Hans Sachs. Death of Titian
 1577 Birth of Rubens
 1579 Union of Utrecht
 1580 Death of Palladio. Portugal becomes Spanish. Montaigne: Essais
 1581 Tasso: *Gerusalemme liberata*
 1582 Gregorian calendar
 1584 William of Orange murdered

1586 Stevinus: the paradox; con
 1587 Execution of
 1588 The Spanish
 1589 Henry IV: F
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	1586	Stevinus: theory of the inclined plane; the hydrostatic paradox; communicating tubes
	1587	Execution of Mary Queen of Scots
	1588	<u>The Spanish Armada</u>
Servetus: pulmonary	1589	Henry IV: House of Bourbon in France
	1591	Death of Fischart
eneva: Knox in Scot-	1592	Death of Montaigne
	1593	Death of Marlowe
pernicus: <i>De revolu-</i>	1594	Death of Orlando Lasso. Death of Palestrina. Death of Tintoretto. Birth of opera
lius: <i>De humani cor-</i>		
ning of the Council	1595	Death of Tasso
	1596	Birth of Descartes
	1597	<u>Galileo: the thermometer</u>
	1598	Edict of Nantes. <u>Birth of Bernini</u>
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rvetus	1601	Death of Tycho de Brahe
and I becomes Em-	1602	Dutch East India Company
n. Death of <u>Loyola</u>	1603	Death of Elizabeth: personal union of England and Scotland. Shakspeare: <u>Hamlet</u>
	1606	Birth of Rembrandt
Battle of Gravelines	1608	Lippershey: the telescope. Protestant Union
bacco	1609	Cervantes: <i>Don Quixote</i> . Catholic League
	1610	Murder of Henry IV
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Shakspeare	1612	Death of Rudolph II: Matthias
	1613	<u>House of Romanov in Russia</u>
Exchange	1614	Napier's logarithms
ath of Knox	1616	<u>Death of Cervantes</u> . Death of Shakspeare
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THE MODERN AGE

FRIEDEL

CHARLES FRANCIS ATKINSON

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PUBLISHER

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MODERN AGE

THE CRISIS OF THE
EUROPEAN SOUL
FROM THE BLACK DEATH
TO THE WORLD WAR

BY

EGON FRIEDEL

Translated from the German by
CHARLES FRANCIS ATKINSON

With an introductory essay on Friedell
by ALFRED POLGAR

VOLUME I

NEW YORK · ALFRED · A · KNOPF · 1953

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conservative in his whole outlook, an advocate, in fact, of the suppression of other men's individualities. Upon which Ibsen smiled into his interrogator's face and said: "But have you never noticed that every idea, when you have thought it out to the end, becomes its own opposite?"

The legiti-
mate pla-
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Finally, as to the question of plagiarism, crying out about intellectual borrowings is one of the most superfluous occupations in the world. Every plagiarism is in fact its own punishment. On it rests the curse which turns all stolen goods, whether of the mental or of the physical order, into joyless possessions. It fills the thief with an uncertainty and embarrassment which is visible fifty yards away. Nature countenances no dishonest dealings. It is only our own thoughts that we can really set in motion, because they alone are our *organs*. An idea which belongs, not to us, but to another, we cannot handle; it will throw us as surely as a horse a strange rider; it is like a casket with a puzzle-lock to which one has no clue, or like a passport which opens the door into foreign lands, but only for those whose portrait and signature it bears. Therefore, do not bother if people steal as much intellectual treasure as they can lay hands on, for no one will suffer more for it than they themselves, when they find that they have wasted their precious time on something hopelessly unprofitable to them.

But there are also, of course, unconscious plagiarisms, or, rather, plagiarisms committed with a good conscience, just as one might call any trader a thief with a good conscience. Whether Proudhon's mot "*La propriété c'est le vol*" is precisely correct in the field of economics is doubtful; in the domain of the intellect it undoubtedly is so. For, strictly speaking, the whole of the world's literature consists of plagiarisms. The tracing of sources, said Goethe to Eckermann, was "very absurd." "As well might one inquire of a well-nourished man as to the oxen, sheep, and pigs he had consumed and from which he had drawn his strength. We have our native talents, it is true, but our development we owe to the thousand outer influences of a great world, from which we appropriate what we can and what suits us. . . . The main thing is to have a soul which loves truth and absorbs it where it finds it. In any case the world is now so old, and for millennia so many important persons have lived and thought in it, that there is little that is new to discover or say. Even my colour theory is by no

means new. Plato, Leonardo discovered and thought that I also discovered it strove to gain admittance that is *my merit*." And the admission on Goethe's part he was more proud of than

The whole intellectual thefts. Alexander stole from Giotto from Cimabue, S from Kant. And when a is always that too little is were made only from the was not enough. In the literature were snapped revival which took hold of when it happens that a great it is always because he Socrates had the rare good scrupulous thief who knew he would have remained a great interest in the case pocket lighters, but in the whatever. For, as we have good ideas which live and individual, but are always of a whole epoch. The re most crisply, illumine the their possible applications all collective natures, pose have we, and are we, the own! . . . I owe my work alone, but to thousands of provide me with the material circumscribed thinkers, who came to me and told me how they lived and worked had, so that all I had to do had sown for me."

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means new. Plato, Leonardo, and many other excellent men have discovered and thought the same in detail before me. Yet the fact that I also discovered it, that I said it over again, and that I strove to gain admittance for truth to a world in confusion — that is *my* merit." And this must have been a very considerable admission on Goethe's part, for we know that there was nothing he was more proud of than his theory of colour.

The whole intellectual history of mankind is a history of thefts. Alexander stole from Philip, Augustine from St. Paul, Giotto from Cimabue, Schiller from Shakspeare, Schopenhauer from Kant. And when a period of stagnation sets in, the reason is always that too little is being stolen. In the Middle Ages, thefts were made only from the Christian Fathers and Aristotle: that was not enough. In the Renaissance all the odds and ends of literature were snapped up: hence the tremendous intellectual revival which took hold of European humanity at that time. And when it happens that a great artist or thinker fails in his mission, it is always because he cannot find enough people to rob him. Socrates had the rare good fortune to find in Plato a perfectly unscrupulous thief who knew his trade thoroughly: without Plato he would have remained unknown. The question of priority is of great interest in the case of vacuum cleaners, quick cookers and pocket lighters, but in the sphere of intellect it is of no importance whatever. For, as we have pointed out in the case of Spengler, the good ideas which live and fructify are never hacked out by a single individual, but are always the work of the collective consciousness of a whole epoch. The real point is, who will formulate them most crisply, illumine them most clearly, follow them up in all their possible applications. "At bottom," said Goethe, "we are all collective natures, pose individually as we may. For how little have we, and are we, that we can in the purest sense call our own! . . . I owe my works by no means to my own wisdom alone, but to thousands of things and persons outside myself, who provide me with the material. Fools and wise men, clear and circumscribed thinkers, childhood, youth, and maturity: all these came to me and told me what they were like, what they thought, how they lived and worked, and what store of experience they had, so that all I had to do was to turn to and reap what others had sown for me."

the primacy, and underlying every gesture was a deep symbolism that was felt far more strongly and deeply than symbolisms are by the men of later times. But side by side with this men had the honesty and forthrightness of children. They still stood in an elementary relation to nature, to field and forest, wind and cloud. And there is something strangely affecting, too, in their passionate love of animals, their wise, merry brothers, whom everywhere they honour — in sculpture and ornament, in satire and legend, at home and at court — who appear to them as like in kind to themselves, whom they regard even as full juridical persons liable to be brought up as witnesses and, for that matter, as criminals. One of the most charming stories handed down to us from the Middle Ages is that of a dog which gave its life for its master's child and was worshipped as martyr and saint by the people. In the presence of a world like this we have the sensation we so often experience in our dealings with children, the feeling that they know something which we do not know or no longer know, some magic secret or divine marvel wherein perhaps may lie the key to our whole existence.

No relation to money

Another infantile trait is the vague attitude of mediæval man to money. Sombart expresses this very wisely and kindly in saying that men stand in much the same spiritual relation to economic activities as the child to his lessons. The meaning of this is twofold: that work is purely a matter of ambition, and that it is only performed when it is absolutely imperative. The mediæval craftsman put good work and solidity above everything and had no conception of trashy goods or mass production. He stood behind his work in person and staked his honour on it like an artist. But he could afford to be much lazier as well as more conscientious than a present-day workman, and that for several reasons. In the first place, broadly speaking, needs were fewer; in the second, they were much more easily satisfied, even in a non-working existence, — which was not impossible, since almsgiving was much more widespread than now — and in the third, there would have been little point in exceeding the normal income, as the individual's standard of living was fairly well fixed, and such straining of incomes as is seen today in every small provincial town did not occur. To every class was allotted, so to say, its due measure of comfort and enjoyment, and to change one's class was practically impos-

sible in mediæval society. Condition were regarded, material world, as divinely or out of an agrarian society basis; but even in its later appeared in the organization and merchants' guilds), calculation of its members: we live in order to earn. It has the Middle Ages, in which there was always a more was a creature of the Devil; instance, always roused young world was permeated work was not a blessing, what a difference it must culture when money is not that commands the unprinciples of all!

But, granted that these theless clever, gifted, mature and worked in dull subject so far as the high Middle thinkers then, bright mind poetic presentation of concrete with powers of construction possessed, in all the manifest style which has never since the theory that mankind is but types. Neither in the science was there any lack personalities. The confessions reveal an almost uncanny analysis, such as is unimaginably developed and nuanced in strikingly individual figures: sculptors' talent in seizing early as the tenth century drama, that most individual

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versals. What is real
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of grace he distributed; even if he were a rake, a liar, or a de-
bauchee, the sacredness of his office was not affected thereby, since
he had no reality. Not the knight who tilted in the tournament,
wooed his lady with song, or fought in the Holy Land was real,
but the great ideal of the knightly order which embraced and
exalted him. Not the artist who made poems in stone and glass
was real, but the lofty cathedral which he, a nameless one of
many, created. Not even the thoughts which the human mind
evolves in solitary wrestling were real, but only the everlasting
truths of the faith, and the business of that mind was simply to
arrange, justify, and expound.

At the end of the Middle Ages all these conceptions began to
waver and become fluid, and finally they turned into their exact
opposites. The great John Duns (surnamed Scotus on account
of his origin and *doctor subtilis* on account of his powers of hair-
splitting), the head of the Scotists, who died at the age of thirty-
four in 1308, was still a moderate Realist. He held that all science
must break down if universals, which were the aim and end of all
scientific knowing, consisted of mere concepts of the reason. He
explained, however, that Reality was in the relation of indifference
to the general and the particular alike and could, therefore, in-
corporate both; and elsewhere he went so far as to admit that
individuality was not a defective but a more complete reality, in
fact the *ultima realitas*. The Franciscan Pierre Aureol, who wrote
somewhat later and has remained obscure, was clearly a concep-
tualist; he declared universals to be mere conceptions (*con-
ceptus*), abstracted from individual things and having no exist-
ence in nature; the only part of Socrates that was real being the
Socratitas, not the *humanitas*. But the real founder of Nominal-
ism and the most famous of Duns Scotus's pupils, William of
Occam (the *doctor singularis*, *venerabilis inceptor*, and *doctor*
invincibilis), who died in the year of the Black Death, went much
further. He too began by arguing that the universal was a mere
conceptus mentis, *significans univoce plura singularia*, and that it
did not exist in things, but only in the reasoning mind; and that it
did not follow, merely because we know by the aid of universal con-
cepts, that the universal possesses reality. From this he then pro-
ceeded to a complete phenomenalism. Duns Scotus had still seen
in concepts actual copies of things, but with Occam they became

merely signs (*signa*) which were called forth in us by means of things, put by us in relation to things, and not necessarily even resembling those things, any more than smoke as a sign of fire resembles fire in any way, or sighs as a sign of pain resemble pain in any way. In the further course of his deductions Occam arrived at a peculiar type of indeterminism. God, he argued, is bound by no laws. Nothing happens of necessity, for otherwise the facts of chance and of evil in the world would be inexplicable. God was not obliged to create this particular world; He might have created a perfectly different one — or none at all. There are, therefore, no universally valid ethical forms: God might just as easily have declared unkind and selfish deeds to be meritorious. The Decalogue was not an absolute code of morals, it had only a qualified validity. It forbade murder, theft, and polygamy; but Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, the Israelites carried off the golden vessels of the Egyptians, and the patriarchs allowed themselves a number of wives — and God approved. These arguments, originating in part from Occam and in part from Duns Scotus, could have but one meaning — that God is beyond good and evil. But the crown of Occamist philosophy is its profession of irrationalism and agnosticism. All knowing that goes beyond the immediate experience of the moment is a matter of faith. God is unknowable, His existence does not follow as a consequence of the conception of Him. The existence of a first cause cannot be proved, there might have been an infinite series of causes. Several worlds with different creators are conceivable; the Trinity, the Incarnation, or the soul's immortality can never form the subject of logical demonstration.

Christ
in the
donkey

It would be a serious mistake, however, to conclude from the foregoing that Occam was a free-thinker, a sort of forerunner of Voltaire or Nietzsche. He was undoubtedly an energetic supporter of the Modernists of that day, who fought against the exclusive power of the Pope and for the independence of emperor and bishops, but at the same time he was strictly orthodox. His sceptical-critical subtleties were simply the powerful expressions of his religiousness. The thought of the unlimited divine despotism was soothing rather than irritating to him. His submissiveness would not be satisfied if he imagined any limitations, even those of causality and moral, to God's omnipotence, and by emphasizing

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the impossibility of proving the Christian mysteries he put them out of reach of attack and doubt once and for all. Faith became a virtue only when the incomprehensibility, and, indeed, the senselessness, of ecclesiastical doctrine had been realized. It was through him that the principle "*Credo quia absurdum*" was endowed with the strength and spirituality to make its last and finest rally. He laid the emphasis entirely on the "*Credo*": it was just the fact that faith and knowledge were two separate things which made the preservation of faith possible. But how if, one fine day, it occurred to someone to lay the emphasis on "*absurdum*" and so arrive at the conclusion that this fact of faith and knowledge being two different things annihilates faith and saves knowledge? — A shallow notion, but an extremely dangerous one. To Occam this possibility of shifting the accent does not seem to have occurred. Instead, with tireless energy he dragged up all possible absurdities so that he might combine them with faith. One of his propositions, which strikes us as a fearful blasphemy, though it gave not the smallest offence at the time, was: If God had pleased, He might just as well have embodied Himself in a donkey as in a man.

This instance — one of many — shows clearly how with Occam the principle of absurdity overshot itself, rebounded, and finally turned against itself, and how entirely opposed it was to the naively credulous faith in miracles of the Middle Ages. Quite without Occam's knowledge or intention it changes the punctuation, so to say, and reappears all at once with the opposite sign. The principle, under Occam's excessive forcing, is strained to breaking. So sharp a point as he put on to it was bound to break. But there was nothing unconscious or unintended about his Nominalism. The work of five hundred years of Scholasticism issued in one sentence that killed it: Universals were not real; they were neither *ante rem* nor *in re*, but *post rem* and even *pro re*: mere representative signs and vague symbols of things, *vocalia, termini, flatus vocis*, nothing but artificial aids to easier comprehension and at bottom verbiage without content — *Universalia sunt nomina*.

The triumph of Nominalism is the most weighty fact in modern history — much more important than the Reformation, gunpowder, and printing. It turned the mediæval world-picture back to front and the existing system of the universe upside-down.

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ter speak of their parents in language which would be repellent even in our own day. And the process of emancipation and these loosening and underminings nowhere worked themselves out in quiet and slow evolution. On the contrary, the age is one immense battlefield, full of unceasing strife, inward and outward, open and underground—struggle of councils against popes, of popes against emperors, of emperors against princes, of princes against patricians, of patricians against guilds, of guilds against priests, and of everyone against everyone else.

In the face of such a catastrophic collapse of all values, such a radical loosening of all bonds, only two attitudes were possible: the totally uncritical, that of blind prostration before destiny—in a word, *fatalism*; or the hypercritical, which denies every sort of necessity and may be called *subjectivism*. The Scotists adopted the first of these. Turning on the Thomists, who had maintained that everything reasonable was willed by God, they asserted that everything God willed was reasonable. It was wrong to say that God did a thing because it was good; the fact was that the thing was good because God did it. The most subjective point of view was that held by the "Free-minded Brethren," the "itinerant Beghards," undisciplined hordes who carried on their mission in the Rhine lands and elsewhere, living by begging or, rather, by extortion and robbery—which they justified on the ground that private possessions were sinful. They spread the doctrine by sermons and writings and also by discussions, in which they developed great shrewdness and readiness of repartee. Their verbal arrows made them famed and feared. Their main tenets were: There is no God above the world. Man is God. Since man is like God, there is no need for intermediaries. A good man's blood was as venerable as the blood of Christ. The moral was that which the Brethren and Sisters declared to be moral. Freedom knows no rule and, therefore, no sin. For the "mind," there are no such things as theft or fornication. The kingdom of God and true blessedness are on earth, and therein consists true religion. In short the Ego, purely self-regarding and unburdened with scruples of any kind, is the true Christ.

Both standpoints were nihilistic. Scotism laid such emphasis on the omnipotence and sole reality of God as to extinguish the individual; the intellectualist Beghard laid such emphasis on the

Sickening
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A. H.
(in
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Their organization was still wholly patriarchal. They were no mere association of economic interests, but an ethical union. The apprentice entered not only the business, but the family of his master, who was as responsible for his pupil's moral guidance as for his technical training. Similarly the individual member's relation to his guild was less that of a judicial subjection than of piety. It was a matter of honour rather than of economics to turn out good work. On the other hand, the guild regarded it as its most important duty pledged to find adequate markets for its members and to provide care and nourishment in case of illness or disablement. Social gatherings in special meeting-rooms, corporate festivities and processions, particular forms of salutation, and guild customs strengthened the bond. In time, however, this fine spirit of fellowship inevitably degenerated into a niggling guardship and rigid lifeless routine, so that even today this sort of thing is contemptuously called "guildish" (*zünflerisch*). Everything was scrupulously regulated, from speech-making and drinking of healths to the number of apprentices and the size of the shops. No apprentice might go out for his glass of beer before the bells struck three. Not more than six guilders were to be lost at play in one evening. Only personally finished articles were to be sold, so as to prevent the development of wholesale businesses. The workshop must give on to the street so that the work should be always open to inspection. No new work might be taken on before earlier orders had been completed. Delicate work was to be done by daylight only. All well-meant and sensible rules, but intolerably cramping in the long run. Above all, there was no possibility of grasping the broader implications of things or of organically combining opposing factors. These are the invariable drawbacks of an outlook which concentrates on immediate realities. Life in those days moved in a heavy armour of form and formulæ, forced into that armour by a professional diletantism that set itself against brains. Everywhere one sees a dogged clinging to the solid material of existence, without creative freedom, productiveness, or genius. Yet in its own domain this materialism won great victories. It was an age of loyal, conscientious, and artistic handling of materials, of endowing material with dignity and beauty, of respect and veneration for the object that was being fashioned, such as we of today can hardly imagine, an age of

craftsmen who brought more inventive genius, affection, and originality to bear on a lock or a wardrobe than is devoted to one of our modern luxury buildings. It was the heroic age of Philistinism.

Dawn of
Rationalism

A growing sense of actuality usually tends to bring a certain rationalization and increased purposefulness into the business of living, and we can detect at this stage the first, though quite modest, attempts to master the problems of life scientifically. In the domain of nature-research confusion still reigned. Valuable discoveries of all sorts were made, but they were not co-ordinated, and even so thorough and many-sided a thinker as Regiomontanus impresses us as a learned collector of curiosities who stores his precious finds side by side as unsystematically as the veriest amateur. Konrad von Megenberg's *Buch der Natur*, again, a sort of zoölogical text-book, is remarkably good in point of systematic arrangement, but has not emancipated its pictures and text from fabulous creatures — dragons, winged horses, mermaids, sphinxes, centaurs, fire-breathing dogs, and the like. In fact, the only sphere in which a fertile and unbroken empirical tradition ruled was that of craftsmanship. By dint of experimenting and perfecting, there came into existence a whole army of exquisite trifles and play-things: highly original clocks and locks, artificial waterworks, delicate instruments for goldsmith's work, and magnificent organs. But there was no scientific intention behind them, only the idea of making existence more ornamental and comfortable. In finance, too, the feeling for numerical exactitude gained strength only slowly. In the main the methods used were primitive and summary. Errors in reckoning were so common that no one worried about them. The idea of checking one's calculations was entirely lacking, the use of zero as a positional number was unknown. Reckoning was done with the clumsy and unreliable abacus. Division was an art which practically no one had mastered. Arithmetical work was a process of trial and error — that is, various results were tried in turn until one that appeared fairly plausible was obtained. Memory for figures, which we regard today as a matter of course, was then quite undeveloped.

In the field of history considerable progress was made. The need of recording present and recapitulating past events was gen-

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that they were offered for selection like our still more various hors d'œuvres; one took a helping of one, and another of another, but only the real glutton sampled them all. It is from the standpoint of a modern gourmet that the combinations are so barbarous; in particular the little birds (presumably sparrows) in dripping with radishes must have tasted atrocious. Everyday meals were quite plain, even in well-to-do families. A guest from our epoch would probably miss sugar more than anything, for this was still a very costly article, used only on special occasions and as medicine. Then the fare included practically no vegetables, or, at the most, cabbage or millet. Green peas were considered a delicacy; rice was known, but did not often figure. Above all, there were lacking the two items without which we can hardly imagine a meal: soup and potatoes.

A good deal of drink — principally beer — was regularly consumed, especially in Germany. Wine was sour and badly kept, and honey and spices were added to improve it. The tasty Southern wines were drunk only as *apéritifs*, even by the rich. In general, wine was treated with respect and more in the light of a medicine: as a purgative, an opiate, an aid to digestion, and at the same time a gift of God.

We now come to one of the most important characteristics of the age, which we will call *diabolism* or *Satanism*. Human beings, or at least many of them, had at that time something diabolical about them. And there was something diabolical also in the external events which beat in on them. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many of these deranged and frightened creatures became obsessed with the idea that Antichrist had obtained the mastery and that the reign of evil which preluded the Day of Judgment had already set in. The fundamental feeling which possessed them is perhaps best explained by the term "world-nightmare." Outward impressions and events affected them like a huge, monstrous nightmare, an evil ghostly dream. Tortured humanity moved in a perpetual fear-neurosis, which a fear-inspired chase after riches and pleasure could only deaden by spasms. In their very exterior the men and women of that time betrayed their devastated condition. They were, to our ideas, frankly ugly, being either lean and emaciated or spongy and bloated, sometimes grotesquely combining the two extremes; as when a ponderous belly was supported

*The world-
nightmare*

mammoth buildings which are never finished; their political imagination, true to its period, suffered from elephantiasis.

The reign of the first Luxemburger, Charles IV, is brightened by a wise and beneficent encouragement of science and art, and above all by the dazzling apparition of Rienzi, the "last of the tribunes," a fiery fantasm belonging to the family of picturesque adventurers who leave no permanent traces in history and yet impress themselves more deeply on the memory than their most productive contemporaries. Rienzi had something of the genius's uncompromising directness and breadth in his ideas, which imposed itself on all; on the other hand, he had an undisciplined, sweeping immoderateness which caused him only too soon to transgress the bounds of possibility and brought him to his downfall. But his grandiose dreams of the rebirth of Rome's former greatness, of the restoration of a European world-empire, did not die with him; he still lives in the long line of shining fabulous beings whose portraits, falsified by legend, fertilize our imagination better than a hundred "epoch-making" facts from real history.

The last of the Luxemburgs, Sigismund, also achieved legendary fame, though of a very different nature, through his betrayal of Huss, whom he is said to have lured to his death by a letter of safe-conduct. Actually his behaviour constituted no breach of the law according to the views of the time, and there is no record of a single important contemporary raising this accusation — and this though the Council was attacked right and left in judicial, political, and even theological circles. But here, too, is a case where we are bound to accept the unhistoric, people's view as the truer one. For, in a higher and deeper sense, he did act in bad faith when he set himself against the progressive forces of the heart of his own nuclear land and — be the legal rights of the matter what they may — permitted the fall of the man who embodied the will of the people. We can see him before us, the old hypocrite, leaning this way and that, seeking shallow compromises, now persuading Huss to give in, now flattering the princes of the Church; the voluptuous fop and corrupt rhetorician with his red forked beard, the connoisseur of brilliant witticisms, elegant courtesans, and delectable fish dishes; smooth, hollow, without aim or conviction, hatred or love, a totally *unreal* person, a glittering, polished cipher.

It is a remarkable fact that these two should have been two. These were Charles V (1378-1419). The late alcoholic maniac. One of them roasted on the spit and said he just about to be beheaded. His eyes, knelt down, and the man just touched then made him kneel head at one blow. Meet his bow and shot him odd head of game than someone to write on a wrote underneath it: 'are noted by Dinter, a mon knowledge that he hero of the Czechs, dr he would not betray to his wife — clearly one are a regular concomit was an extremely clever with altogether excellent the *folie raisonnée* these two madmen the land, who was notoriously not far removed did not rule — over (apathy, childishly dramatic Constantinople's fall read "The Kaiser sits at his poor creature!"

The histories of Europe not be studied separately termingled. They present treacherous murders, of political villainess. horrors with a mystify

and procurers in crowds from all quarters, and Avignon was reputed to have become a city of brothels after the popes took it for their residence. Nay, we could go further and say that part of the clergy was caught in a current of atheism to which the people reacted in their turn.

Wyclif

Yet these were but scattered and separate symptoms, and opposition was as yet inert, lacking in conscious aim and in uniformity. The first massed attack against the Papal Church began with Wyclif, who with scientific orderliness and precision, temperament, sledge-hammer power of argument, and an almost poetical gift of representation, forestalled all the ideas on which the later Reformation was founded, and even, in some points, went far beyond the leaders of that movement. He started from the clear and simple principle that the Church was no longer the Church and the pope no longer the Pope. It was not for the Pope to be the imperious ruler, but the humble servant of Christ; the governance of souls was given him by God to hold as a fief, and if he were a bad vassal, failing to keep his Lord's laws and associating with His deadly enemies, worldly lust and worldly possessions, then it must be escheated. The Papacy was not demonstrably founded in the law of God, the Church had no outward and visible head. Wyclif desired, therefore, no more and no less than a popeless Church. But he made two more important points: laymen were to have the right to read the Bible (which he translated into English for the purpose), and most of the external apparatus of ecclesiastical practice was to go — pilgrimages and the use of relics, confession and extreme unction, celibacy and the hierarchy. And, lastly, he contested even the dogma of transubstantiation. Hussism added nothing to Wyclif's system and on certain points even narrowed it down. It is, indeed, no more than a weaker, emptier duplication of Wyclifism and contains no single original feature; but the figure of Huss himself acquired a terrific impressiveness by reason of his earnestness, strength of character, and unyielding determination to seek the truth, though with all this there was mingled a chaotic strain of bull-obstinacy and narrow-mindedness — characteristic of all Slav thinkers.

causa tri-
umphans

On the program of the Council of Constance there stood three main points: the *causa unionis*, the *causa reformationis*, and the *causa fidei*. For none of these three problems was anything even

approaching a solution to a sort of republican reducing the Papacy to dom, so to speak, and p of the Council, the parli only the victory of C Absolutism.

Thus we have the l phant than ever. It triu churches, over the her Only in one quarter dic important and alone d it sinks all at once into Outward victories and of history. The Kaiser-defeats; the Pope-idea forth overlay the world The pope ruled without seriously, men believed been all that really mat of Peter, the shepherd only the mighty prince with a crown, a treasure others.

What help did his Holy Father. Let every ruler of this world and, it was all useless: for he honestly tried, in so far to become likenesses o nesses of the good ol vacillating, but so divi struggling to understand would all Europe be Cat

But the popes did no unfair advantage: to r earthly rulers; to ema ordains that the one ki the other. It was this i

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him equally indifferent. Even the conviction that a creed is worthy of being cursed is tantamount to a sort of creed in itself, but Frederick believed in nothing. "*Tout comprendre c'est tout mépriser*," as Nietzsche said — with a difference — and it was this *mépris* for positively everything which was the devastating root-emotion of Frederick's soul.

It is easy to see why this unfathomable personality roused as much horror as admiration in its time. Some called Frederick the Wonder of the World, *stupor mundi*; others saw in him the Antichrist. Gregory IX began an encyclical with the words: "Out of the sea there came forth a beast covered with names of offence, with the feet of a bear, the throat of a roaring lion, and in all other parts like to a panther. Examine well the head, body, and tail of this beast, which calls itself emperor." But the people made him a national saint, an imperishable saga-figure. It was said that he did not die, but would come again one day and overthrow the Papal throne, erect a kingdom of glittering splendour, and be a saviour to all the oppressed and heavy-laden. From time to time spurious Fredericks continued to appear, the last occasion being in 1546. Then again it was told that he was asleep in the Kyffhäuser cavern and it was not until the prosaic nineteenth century that this legend was transferred to his far less important grandfather Frederick I, whose red beard has been growing round the marble lake ever since, for the delight of all headmasters.

But in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Europe was simply peopled with little Rudolfs and Fredericks. Now, materialism and nihilism spring from much the same state of mind. Both of them deny the workings of higher powers of our existence: nihilism because it no longer believes in them; materialism because it does not yet believe in them. The one and the other are morbid phenomena, pathological aspects of life: nihilism because it stands too far from reality, seeing it in too distant a perspective, so that everything is blurred in shadowy mist and fog; materialism because it stands away too little from reality, seeing it in too close perspective, so that large and essential features become unrecognizable. Nihilism suffers from dilatation of the heart when it recognizes an equality of everything, which is as good as saying nothing; while materialism fails from constriction of the heart, taking account of nothing but things directly tangible and

*Coincidentia
oppositorum*

accessible to the coarsest senses — that is, the worthless and unimportant things. Both standpoints represent an un-serious view of existence; both are without foundation or root. The Philistine is just as much in the air as the free-thinker.

And it is this which constitutes the secret inward bond between these two tendencies. In their effect and outward appearance they are poles apart, two completely opposed outlooks on life; for of all the possible formulations of reality, these are the two which differ most. We ask, therefore, how it was that two such flat opposites could exist in the same age, and even in the same person; and, in asking, find the answer to lie in the *idea of the age*, the idea that filled and dominated this whole incubation period; and now we are in a far better position to discuss it, since for the fixation of representative personalities in that age we must have recourse to artificial expedients and makeshift constructions. The basic idea of the age was, in short, this: that life consisted in the union of two apparently quite irreconcilable opposites, and human beings were nothing but the meeting-point of two opposing influences.

Nicolaus
Cusanus

This basic idea was formulated with illuminating distinctness by the greatest, perhaps the only, philosopher of the age. Nicolaus, called Cusanus from his birthplace at Cues near Trier (d. 1464), was the son of a poor Moselle fisherman, became one of the most versatile scholars of his age, and rose to be an influential prince of the Church. He played a decisive part in the theological controversies of his century, championing the modern or Conciliar view, which he put before the Council of Basel in his great work: *De concordantia catholica*. (His principal opponent was John of Torquemada, who, in his treatise *Summa de ecclesia et eius auctoritate* laid down the lines that Papal doctrine followed for centuries afterwards.) Nicolaus Cusanus was also the first to dispute the genuineness of the Donation of Constantine, which was subsequently exposed as a forgery by Laurentius Valla. Amongst his works is a conversation on religion in which he argued in favour of the union of all confessions: Christian, Jewish, Turkish, Indian, and Persian. In his *De reparatione calendarii* he drew up a scheme of calendar reform which anticipated the Gregorian, and he taught that the earth was round and turned on its own axis. In his philosophy he was, as a former pupil of the Deventer fraternity, to some extent a mystic; but as his teaching system also found room

for certain trains of the philosophy, he was claim own product. In other stamp of Leibniz and F content of his time into

It was on his return had been as Papal ambassador philosophy dawned on him everything that is, live point of intersection of *oppositorum* is God, w He is all-embracing infinity contained in everything *oppositorum* is the Whences in it forms an im a unity. Every *individuum* only is it contained in *universis partibus relucet* t a microcosm, a “*parvum* imaginable contrasts – and immortality, body is, finally, Cusanus his natural science and the careful guardian of the the world and a seeker of the Schoolmen and t

But how this all-round this agreement of the outer tery which we cannot dental vision: by an again, as usual, coupled *docta ignorantia*, commonena of magnetism otherwise he would have important and speaking all in all, what he introduced of *creative paradox*, whole domain of inward and the most telling fashion in

It was remarked at the close of the last chapter that mediæval man makes a contradictory impression upon us. But the contradictions that there concerned us and those of the men of the incubation period differ essentially. For at first these contrasts all arose out of one great unity, faith, and had besides an objective existence for the observer only — the people themselves were not aware of them. Now it is different: the contemporaries of Cusanus were well aware of their contradictions and suffered under them. Through all the phenomena that the age produced there runs a break, a split, a great seam, the feeling of a world-ruling dualism — the *man of two souls* makes his entry into history.

We have already said that it was not until this era that the dualism between town and country comes sharply to the surface. From now on we have two contrasted cultures, a knightly and a mercantile one. The first is concentrated in the *Burg*, the second in the *Bürger*. And it is about the same time that the doctrine of twofold truth appears in theology, the theory that one and the same proposition may be right in theology and wrong in philosophy. The Middle Ages had held grimly to their great unity: "I believe what I know, I know what I believe"; but now for the first time there was opened that chasm between the scientific and religious attitudes which yawns through the whole course of modern history. "Yawns," I may well say, for it is an uncomfortable and often extremely wearisome proceeding to follow the strainings of the priests, politicians, artists, philosophers, and scientists who deal with this question, and whose deductions are mostly sophistical, now artificially and superficially reconciling the two experienced forms of faith and knowledge, and now driving them into opposite extremes. But at the same time the view that that "twofold truth" is mere Jesuitry is just one of the many shallow misjudgments of Liberal history-writing; what we should see in it rather is a new determinant of the general outlook. Here too, as the Occamist doctrine of discrepancy shows us, we are dealing with one more of the many formulations of the *coincidentia oppositorum* idea. Regarded in the light of this idea, every basic theological problem — the Fall and the Day of Judgment, the Incarnation and Virgin Birth, the Last Supper and the Resurrection — should have two conflicting views, and the supreme truth could only be attained by uniting them. It was in this same

period, too, that dualism sphere from that of the Under the newly-invented *partita doppia, loi digra*, two opposite pages *ma torum*. But the most striking is found in music, whether way to polyphony, and (ment. The earliest class who died in London in coincidence of opposite *macabres*, which in the the subject of innumerable Here Death plays the father and children, peasants, saints, and every imaginable and round. A more impressive of those days looked upon dancing became brotherhood of life was at the It is thus that the whole dance of those marked life was the euphoria of

Our picture would show a third tendency, not the impressive of the whole for the two antagonistic but here it is a question hovered calmly and m This something was *m*

To all appearances men believed it to be the same feeling. But it was and never does rule that than now, He lived as straying, seeking man burst from the depths men of the people had merchant, Rulman M

the universal priesthood of all Christian believers and declared the divinely favoured layman, the "Friend of God," to be the chosen imparters of heavenly grace. Taking this as their collective title, all those who took their Christianity seriously formed a union with no other bond than the purity of their mode of thought and the intensity of their yearning for salvation. One element above all now asserted itself in the religious movement — women, who up till then had remained almost entirely in the background and, only a short time before, had been declared by eminent religious teachers to be without souls. These women, awakened to religion, began to record their visions and trances and their mysterious experiences in contact with God, in letters, diaries, and memoirs; and in this way there grew up a wholly distinctive literature of ecstatic confession and self-revelation. Before long they too assembled in convents of their own and became known as Béguines or "praying sisters." Later on they were joined by the male Beghards, and great mystic collective experiences followed. Here we are in the presence of a weighty fact of cultural history we shall frequently meet again: the fact that great spiritual movements and emotional revivals very often originate among women. A woman possesses a natural flair for everything that may germinate, every kind of secret growth, everything, in fact, which is of the future rather than the present. This almost telepathic sense is usually more developed in her than in a man. She is also far less conservative and less one-sided than a man, who forms in himself a self-contained and definitely outlined unity. He is the born professional and expert, but a woman is a multiplicity of things; her soul is open to all possibilities, she has that gift of being everything, transforming herself into everything, which in men is the attribute of genius only; hence it has often, and rightly, been asserted that there is something feminine in every man of genius.

All the religious phenomena of that age arose out of one basic common will, the will to find the way back to God — not to the Church's God, hidden under a thousand outward ceremonies and obscured by a maze of intricate syllogisms, but to the deep, pure, serene source itself from which all life flows. Within the Church the main supporters of this movement were the monastic orders, above all the Dominicans and Franciscans. As has ever been the way, they began their reform of the Christian life and faith with a

return to the early Christians took the more themselves to "necessary" Franciscans went all the who did not abjure the Apostles in his w. above all to the ear wonder that Pope John retical. In the matter Franciscans who aim They wanted to work vividness and force, satire as means to th became the classics of Meister Eckhart, on lects that Germany h

Eckhart is a curious the poet of incompar. and the religious genius his death, constitute rally, he was an agnost hensible, it could not impenetrable darkness negative assertions a fathomable, uncreated idol. God is not this. God or has formed f indeed have known ' shouldst know Him or analogy." "If I then surely I must a just what I mean! (become God." "The is as big as God. Why moment when this godliness, must make God comes in. And you allow God to be (for anything as God

the most hidden things. The Church bestowed on him the title *Doctor ecstaticus*; his countrymen called him *l'admirable*, and when he died, in 1381, at the age of a hundred and seven, all the bells in the neighbourhood began to toll of themselves. One of his disciples was Gerhard Groot, who founded the lay order of the "Brethren of the Communal life" at Deventer, a free union of believers whose sole aim it was to encourage a Christian way of life and the *moderna devotio*, the new devotion to God as taught by the mystics. Soon there sprang up similar brotherhoods in all parts of Germany and the Netherlands, and it was from their ranks that Thomas à Kempis came, whose *Imitation of Christ* is, after the Bible, the most widespread book on earth, is read eagerly by Catholics and Protestants alike, and has been translated into all European and numerous non-European languages. It popularizes the doctrines of the great mystics in a very noble, free, and powerful manner, and in it the Quietist element comes out with all impressiveness and clarity. "So far as thou mayest, hold thyself aloof from the confusions of men. Why do we so gladly chatter with others, since it is but rarely that we can return to silence without injured conscience. I would that I had oft been silent and oft not among men." Too much hair-splitting and argument does no good. "Rather would I find repentance and atonement within myself than be able to argue as to the nature of repentance. For all is mere nothingness and vanity, save loving God and serving Him alone." "He is truly great who is small unto himself and counts great honours as nothing. He is truly wise who regards all temporal things as mud, so he may gain Christ. And he is truly learned who loses his own will and learns to do and fulfil the will of God."

The
"Frank-
forter"

But the finest monument to the spirit of the age is found in the anonymous *Little Book of the Perfect Life* (*Büchlein vom vollkommenen Leben*). Luther, who republished it, says in his preface: "Above all, this little book warns those who wish to read and understand it that they should not judge it over-hastily, because some of the wording may appear wrong and out of the accustomed manner of preachers and teachers. And, verily, it does not float on the surface like foam on the waves, but is called from the bed of the Jordan by a true Israelite, whose name God knows." And again, two years later: "And, to commend my good old gossip once more, never have I met with a book, apart from the Bible

and St. Augustine, from to learn of the mean: Please God this little we shall realize that Ge theologians." This shor is in fact one that every learned or ignorant, f universally read, but c preferably learnt word one of the most illur grandeur and humility difficulty to attempt to few words.

Man ought to becor is makeshift? The per holds in its being al fection is that which ha as a glow issues from something, as this or th only that the creature unchangeable good, an and imperfect and, ab assumes into itself an falling away. "What e falling away or his dov was something and wi was his own and his d this? They say that it lost or 'fell'; but I say of his: this 'I' and 'π seven apples, he would The soul of man has tw nity, the other that of and of distinguishing eternity is more pleasir may achieve merely a will inquire no further everlasting life while s which Christ spoke,

idea of the Renaissance, expectation in men's souls "fifteenth century." It is the beginning of this chapter too, in a fanatically im- which will permanently apocalyptically as "the does not come to an end, such moods as this are suggest: they portend new way of seeing and

CHAPTER IV LA RINASCITA

"Beauty is the revelation of law."

Leon Battista Alberti

*The two
poles*

"Problem" and "fact" are the names of the two great poles between which all human intellectual activity moves. What we do not yet feel to be a fact we call a problem; what we no longer feel as a problem we call a fact. But just as every problem tends towards melting into a fact, so every fact secretly tends to take refuge in becoming a problem again. In this endless but rising series of crystallization and sublimation, condensation and solution, consists the true inner history of the human race.

But out of this there arises, for the historian who surveys the marked-off culture-periods, a curious paradox. Each of these ages disposes of a certain store of problems and facts of its own creation, which are peculiar to itself alone, support and mould its whole existence, and are its life-destiny. But the facts which were established by the science and philosophy of those buried cultures, and were as a rule their greatest pride, appear to the eye of a later day as extremely problematical; while, on the contrary, the problems with which those earlier centuries wrestled represent for us even now perfectly positive cultural-historical facts.

A French thinker once said: "There is nothing more contemptible than a fact." We might add: or anything more uncertain and ephemeral. All the "exact" conclusions reached by former times have vanished again, securely as they seemed to be based on clean reasoning and keen observation. And it will be precisely so with our own. The only thing about our cells, nebulae, sediments, bacilli, ether-waves, and the rest of our science's basic concepts that will interest a future world will be the fact that we *believed* in them. Truths are not lasting. It is only the souls that stood behind them that will last. And while every human philosophy is destined one-day to have "no more than a historical

Culture
consists
in wealth
of problems

interest," our interest in human history will never cease to be a philosophical one.

Therefore we measure the power and height of a Culture not in the least by its "truths," "positive achievements," and tidy parcels of knowledge. What we ask for, in weighing them, is the intensity of their spiritual metabolism, their supplies of living energies. And just as the physical capacity of man does not depend on his girth, but on the strength and rapidity of his movements, neither is the life-force of the soul of an age determined by any other factor than its mobility and elasticity, the inward adaptability of its parts, the lability of its equilibrium: in short, by its wealth of problems. There lies the real sphere of spiritual productivity, and this is also the reason why the religious and artistic cultures come over into the succeeding age, while the purely scientific eras possess only a passing vitality. Science improves the general economy of existence, discovers new laws which simplify a little the equation of life, makes our planet a rather more comfortable and less fatiguing place of abode; but we accept her gifts as if they were bread and apples, with a certain animal satisfaction, without thereby rising to a higher state of mind or receiving the impulse towards a richer spiritual activity. The actual results of the human intellect, its finds and its hits, contain no tonic, nothing which quickens the pulse of our personal existence. We "lay them to heart," we say, but our contact with them is a matter of simple addition, not of multiplication, still less of exponents. The creations of art or religion, on the contrary, for all that they have done nothing to perfect the machine of life — have indeed further complicated the already sufficiently ambiguous business of existence, and helped to upset the sureness of the life-feeling on which man instinctively relies — have nevertheless always had at their disposal a secret capital of spiritual vigour; they are like wine, which frees our molecules to fall into a more rapid vibration, sends fresh blood coursing to our head, and quickens the whole of our circulation.

Then there have been whole eras which have the insipid taste of chemically pure water; we feel them to be too distilled, too clarified, we take no pleasure in them. They are deficient in problems. If an era is to have anything to say to posterity, it must be a living *spring*, containing not only the general elements of water,

but various saline, they acquire body, and

The Italian Renaissance intellectual constitution not arrived at know those days must have

So far we have looked for Italy in the four itself. Many causes country developed. these were of far more politically split up a ern history, was always secured it very Europe: in the north sea, while the Apennine surface like a broad together. Nature's the mild climate (an abundance of navigable plants — give the same time elevate it harmony was disturbed a divergency of nature form, unique, and variation of good nature feeling and untidiness superficiality and taste. And nowhere does nowhere is musical are the people so wholly adjusted to such a past or such centuries at a time Roman Cæsars, the has so well-built and rous, varied and cadences — a language

Actually Italy was

but various saline, *insoluble* elements besides, from which alone they acquire body, aroma, and colour.

The Italian Renaissance was an era of anarchy as regards its intellectual constitution, an era which no longer believed and had not arrived at knowing. And yet we have the feeling that life in those days must have been beautiful, rich, and vigorous.

So far we have hardly mentioned Italy. This was intentional; for Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a world to itself. Many causes contributed to the isolation in which this country developed. Pure geographical reasons first of all, and these were of far more importance then than now. The peninsula, politically split up as it has been during its whole middle and modern history, was always inwardly united because its natural boundaries secured it very markedly and definitely from the rest of Europe: in the north were the Alps, and on the other sides the sea, while the Apennine chain runs across the greater part of its surface like a broad backbone, binding its various regions firmly together. Nature's favours, too — the great fertility of the soil, the mild climate (a happy mean between North and South), the abundance of navigable rivers, the wealth of beautiful and useful plants — give the whole land a certain homogeneity and at the same time elevate it above most other European regions. And this harmony was disturbed neither by a mixture of languages nor by a divergency of nationalities. The Italian folk-character is uniform, unique, and uninterchangeable; so fascinating a combination of good nature and perfidy, liveliness and laziness, form-feeling and untidiness, frivolity and bigotry, naïveté and cunning, superficiality and talent, is to be found nowhere else in the world. And nowhere does art stand so naturally in the centre of life, nowhere is musicalness so obviously a national dowry, nowhere are the people such born actors, and nowhere is existence so wholly adjusted to eye, temperament, and fancy. No country has such a past or such a capital — a city that has twice been for centuries at a time the brain and heart of Europe: first with the Roman Cæsars, then with the Roman bishops. Lastly, no country has so well-built and beautiful a language: sparkling and sonorous, varied and clear in form, with soft liaisons and pleasing cadences — a language which can only be called a natural song.

Actually Italy was always an urban land. From Etruscan days

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maintained itself, despite the style-transformations over the rest of Europe, as the true French style — even in the height of the Baroque, of which Viollet-le-Duc, the leading art historian of France in the middle of the nineteenth century, could say that: "*Louis Quatorze clôt la renaissance.*" But even this did not go far enough, for the Classical style persisted in France until the Congress of Vienna and even (as for instance in Ingres and Puvis de Chavannes) later still. Much the same might be said of French literature, which in its essential traits always remained Classical — for the Latin spirit lives just as much in the Roman-tics who fought it, as in the clear, cool architectonics of a Mau-passant or a Zola. The German Classicism of the eighteenth century was something altogether different from this; it leaned more towards the Greek and should really be called German Hellenism, while, as for England and the Netherlands, there has never been a real Classicism in those countries at all. We must postpone a closer inquiry into these points until we meet them in the march of history and be content for the moment to observe that the ghost of the Classical has frequently visited our continent in the course of the centuries (having never really vanished from the European vista), but that the length of its stay has varied in the various countries, and the forms it has taken have always presented great differences. But that which is understood in Italy by the *rinascita* was and remained entirely limited to that country, so that from the point of view of cultural history we ought strictly to speak of an Italian Renaissance only. The Italians themselves felt this very definitely. They were conscious of embodying a *floraison* of culture and manners such as no other nation in the world possessed, and for that reason — just like the Greeks and from a similar instinct — called all foreigners, whether Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Englishmen, or Moors, barbarians.

Here again it becomes essential to propound the question: When did the Renaissance begin?

In one of the most famous passages of his *Discourse on the Dignity of Man* Pico della Mirandola makes God say to the son of Adam: "I have set thee in the midst of the world so that thou mayst the more easily see what is therein. I have created thee neither a heavenly nor an earthly, neither a mortal nor an immortal

The
rebirth to
godlikeness

being, so that thou mayst be thine own sculptor and mayst chisel thy features thyself. Thou canst degenerate into an animal; but thou canst also by the free will of thy spirit *regenerate thyself* a godlike being." This, visibly, is the primary meaning of the Renaissance: the rebirth of man in the likeness of God. In this idea there lay a colossal "*hybris*" unknown to the Middle Ages, but also a tremendous spiritual impulse such as only modern times can show. At the moment when this idea appears on the horizon, the Renaissance begins. Now, this idea had already pervaded the Trecento, and almost all the Italian writers of the Renaissance, when they survey the Italian revival in retrospect, designate the age of Dante and Giotto as the epoch, the turning-point, or the great beginning. Particularly Vasari, the first historian of Italian art, groups the three centuries — Trecento, Quattrocento, and Cinquecento — as one unit of a grand national movement. Writing in 1550, he says that Cimabue made a start with his "*nuovo modo di disegnare e dipignere*," and he goes on to differentiate between three sections: *parti*, or spaces of time: *età*, which substantially correspond to the three centuries. The first to come after the "barbarism of the Goths" were the new Tuscan masters in whom art was rediscovered, resurrected, reborn. The significance of these expressions — "*ritrovare*," "*risorgere*," "*rinascita*" — in this context is manifest; only later tradition has made them the special labels of the high Renaissance. The word "*rinascimento*" came into use much later and was unknown to Vasari, as was the now stereotyped word "Renaissance," which dates back no farther than Voltaire and the Encyclopædists of 1750. And Burdach, in his recent close and exhaustive study, has arrived at the same conclusion as the oldest Renaissance historian: "The picture of new life, of rebirth," he writes, "dominated already the age of Bonaventura, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Rienzi. It was active throughout the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth became an idea of fixed validity. . . . To exclude the fourteenth century in this connexion is arbitrarily to set aside the many statements and views of contemporary historical witnesses."

Taking all in all, we are forced to the conclusion that the "conception" of the new age occurred in Italy, as elsewhere, about the middle of the fourteenth century. It was then that

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Rienzi produced his grand scheme for the political rebirth of Rome; that Petrarch and Boccaccio developed and carried out their program of a literary revival of the Classics; and that there came into being the "new style of painting," which made it its main business to seek spirituality by way of intimate and devout absorption in human emotions and destinies. With Dante's death the Middle Ages in Italy reached their end. Burdach indeed goes so far as to see in Dante the true originator of the Renaissance. This, however, is a view we are unable to take. It seems to us rather that it was precisely Dante that was the form in which the Middle Ages — with one last terrific gesture which threw its minatory shadow over the coming centuries — said *farewell* to humanity. It is as if, at the end of their earthly span, they sought once more to gather up in one tremendous throw all that they had to say. Had nothing remained of the Middle Ages but Dante's poem, we should still know everything we could ever know of that mysterious world. His unfathomable song stands at the threshold of the new age like a huge black monument in bronze, an eternal reminder of the silenced past. So magical and incommensurable was the power of this superhuman seer that his picture, though but a comprehensive symbol of the past, nevertheless puts every newer picture in the shade. Only the Middle Ages could have provided the spiritual premises for this miracle, which both concentrated all the knowledge of the age in a purely artistic form and lifted it into the sphere of faith. *The Divine Comedy* is, in every verse, encyclopædia, sermon, and dramatic epic in one. This sublime unity of faith, knowledge, and poetic creation could only have been achieved by a mediæval mind. It has been the unrealized dream of all artists ever since; but even to attempt such a creation in our time would only be the undertaking of a madman, for the conditions of our culture will first have to be changed from the foundations up.

There are, of course, many arguments against the assumption that the Italian Renaissance set in so early, especially when (as is usually the case) the arguments are based exclusively on its art history. It is in fact quite as easy to include Giotto and the Giottoesques in the Middle Ages. The deliberate decorativeness of their composition, the naïveté of their execution, their joy in the anecdotal, their stylistic treatment of the animal world and

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centre of the business moral (if this contradiction in terms is per-
missible) stood money-making as an aim in itself, as a passion
capable of forming a life, as the strongest mode of expression of
the will-to-power. And nothing is more characteristic of Italy's
economic life than the fact that the Jews played only a very sub-
ordinate part in it. They were not needed — the native business
talent was far greater even than theirs.

All this hangs together, as we have seen, with the development
of the urban life. Italian cities were by that time real cities, some-
thing quite different from the Northern, which looked like
walled-in mediæval villages by comparison. If we compare Bruges
with Venice, Cologne with Milan, Lübeck with Genoa, or even the
Paris of that day with Rome or Florence, we have the impression
of passing from a dark and crooked side-street to a broad, airy
avenue. We have seen in the previous chapter that the architects
and artists made little effort to improve the decoration and com-
fort of private houses, but devoted themselves almost entirely
to public buildings, such as churches, town halls, municipal
markets — an obvious residue of the mediæval collectivist feeling.
But in Italian towns it was quite otherwise. There, individualism
had made great progress, and everywhere there arose palaces,
villas, and private chapels which combined regal splendour and
exquisite taste. The wealthy decorated their halls with the most
precious paintings, and their tombs with magnificent monuments,
the erection of which they superintended with care during their
lifetime. In the Northern cities the characteristic building was,
then as before, the cathedral, but in the Italian, the *palazzo*.
Further, in Italy class prejudices were very considerably weaker.
We have only to look at the rise of the Medici: a family of middle-
class parvenus who never aspired to as much as the outward
tokens of nobility, but for generations maintained their sov-
ereignty over the most powerful, flourishing, and cultured city in
the peninsula solely by means of their money, virtuosity in the
handling of men, wit, and talent for brilliant display. In other
parts of Italy also, the modern nobility of talent had triumphed
over the mediæval nobility of birth. At Milan the *condottiere*
family of the Sforza had risen to the highest dignity; in the
Papal domain any man who possessed sufficient force and shrewd-
ness could become a duke or a cardinal; and even in Venice,

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An intensified spiritual culture *can* go hand in hand with political "elevation," military "expansion," and national "up-
rising," but this is anything but the rule. The true cause of every
higher development, in any case, is some great idea, which takes
so powerful a hold on the masses that it renders them creative —
that is, spurs them to concerted action on a large scale — for
there is no other way in which the masses may be creative. This
idea may express itself in the form of politics; it may also simply
take the form of an exceptionally artistic atmosphere created by
the collective mind. We trace the flower of Greek culture back
to the Persian wars. But what were the Persian wars? An idea!
The idea that Hellas, this tiny peninsula of a peninsula, must not
be simply eaten up and digested, comfortably assimilated, by that
colossus of nearer Asia, which was big and nothing else; that the
spiritus must necessarily be stronger than the *moles*, quality more
deserving and more capable of life than quantity. The Greek
citizen who fought and won on that occasion had thought more,
felt more, observed more, and in general lived more inwardly and
intensively than the Persian with his wagon-laagers, monster
fleets, gorgeous tents and harems. At bottom, it was Homer and
Heraclitus who won the victory. But the fact of their winning was
only secondary to and consequent upon the far more important
fact of their being there at all. And then, three centuries later,
Greece was *conquered*, but this again proved to be a secondary
matter: the Romans became intellectually dependent on the
Greeks, because Homer and Heracles were still there.

In what, then, did the "idea" of the Renaissance consist? We
have already hinted at it. Man realized — or rather *thought* that
he realized — that a godlike creative nature, that he himself in-
deed, was a sort of God. It was the age-old Prometheus idea
breaking out afresh with new vigour. And the formula by which
it expressed itself was: Back to the Classical! Here, now, lies a
problem. Inevitably we wonder how it was possible that a nation,
at just the moment when a new vital current was running through
its culture, arrived at the notion of imitating another, and a long-
buried, culture.

First of all we should remember that such "rebirths" — the
re-connexions with the Classical, "receptions" of Classical cul-
tural material into the course of European history — are quite

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individual culture-periods
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tecture and interpretation:
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in its entirety) there set in a soullessness and coldness which of necessity choked the seeds that might have progressed to fruition.

An ugly destructive crack runs through all the higher spheres of cultural activity from this point. Art became a matter for connoisseurs, wisdom was confined to the learned, and custom-ethic to good society. Neither the painter, the sculptor, nor the poet now created for all humanity as a seer and herald of great sacred and inspiring truths; his efforts were designed for the intimate circle possessed of hypotheses, appreciative of fine shades and capable of grasping "implications." Architects no longer, as in the Middle Ages, built their churches and cathedrals with the consciousness of being the executants of the universal yearning for God, but as the employees of art-loving connoisseur-popes, splendour-loving princes, or fame-loving private patrons. Thinkers meditated for a select public of experts; poets polished their verses for a privileged class of epicures; artistic handicraft brightened the houses of the rich only, music became a lofty science, and war, law, politics, and commerce were all specialized and professionalized. The *palazzi* bore the stamp of the new spirit distinctly on their faces. They all have a cold, inhospitable, barring expression. It is difficult to believe that people live in them, that there are really houses belonging to the façades, for they look like nothing but stern, haughtily repellent ornamental screens and scene-painting. The portraits show us lordly men and great ladies. The Mother of God is no more a humble maiden (*donna umile*), but the proud *Madonna*, sovereignly receiving the three kings. Christ becomes the unapproachable Lord of hosts, the infant Jesus a stiff, well-behaved crown prince, conscious of his future rank; the Apostles are cool, self-conscious cavaliers. It was a world of upper-class people painted for upper-class people: for people with "nurseries," people to whom violent words, hasty movements, and unrestful lives are a horror; who have grown up in the atmosphere of wealth, comfort and *bon ton*; who never let themselves go, never become intimate, and know how to control themselves even in moments of terror and shock. Only that is painted which is in good taste. No emotions — emotions are vulgar; no story — stories are for the masses; no detail — detail smacks of the market stall; no uncleanness, ambiguity, or backgrounds — a gentleman is never ambiguous; no loud colours and harsh

of the Mother-of-God ideal for Philistines, and Manet declared that a Raphael made him literally seasick. So it will be seen that there was never any lack of connoisseurs ready to say with Velasquez: "To tell the truth, I don't like Raphael at all."

The year 1517 is known to all as the birth-year of the Reformation, when Luther nailed his ninety-five articles on the door at Wittenberg. In that same year Raphael painted his Sistine Madonna, of which everyone thinks when his name is mentioned. And about the same time Count Balthasar Castiglione finished his *Courtier*, a work which might be called a sort of Renaissance Bible. It is the "Knigge"¹ of those days, its hero is the Gentleman as the time conceived him: adroit, dignified, with a public manner and a tact that is equal to every occasion, the counterpart of the modern gentleman, but a gentleman full of elegance, serene and unworried. It was this perfect cavalier, radiating charm, beloved of princes and women and gods, whom Raphael painted and Raphael *lived*. And so the picture has gone marching on through four centuries.

But Raphael the darling of the gods had, for our ideas of life, one great fault. Darlings of the gods are, in fact, insipid. They are as tiresome as the "blue sea of the South," the "pure spring day," the "sweet baby in the cradle," and all perfectly pure, perfectly balanced, perfectly happy things. We desire something different in life and in art.

Raphael once said: "To paint a beauty I must have several before me, and as I have not enough models, I paint from memory, from an idea that I have in my head." What he means is that, as there is no female beauty alive in nature that is perfect in every part, he resorts to assembling an ideal beauty in his imagination from individual reminiscences. This view that it was the mission of art to represent perfection was Raphael's fundamental error and the fundamental error of the whole of Classicism. Great artists are always appearing from time to time who seem to prove to us for the moment that Classicism (that is, strict order, unity, straight lines, harmony, colourless transparency) is the flowering of art. But they prove it more or less *in usum delphini* — that is, for themselves alone. The fact is that there are

¹ Adolf Freiherr von Knigge's *Über den Umgang mit Menschen* (1788), a well-known book of manners. *Tr.*

here and there "Classical" a beauty that our intellects reach the summit of art: less successful groping a But it is a delusion. The incarnations of the rule (the most regular), but in *irregularity* that is the *essence* of art is an artificial distillation form produced by nature knows that the perfect approach to regularity *materially* we meet such things radially symmetrical and *animate*; but these are more Classical creations with glacier; but we should not if we would. We *pit* the lower mountains, on less water. We are, *inculcated* this is inevitable because things.

Raphael sets no *pro* against him. Hermann (says: "Raphael has no *in* glance. He creates, like *no* no more and no less. *Ni* need to probe any deeper personal additions. With present absolutely no *per* *ence* had been worked in to emerge." Let us *accep* confess that rose and *ni* about them. They are a *li* lovely. Involuntarily we all?" Raphael affects us, us something we can *dea* itself with lazy majesty *t* ful." It must point beyon

it has been said that all modern history is a "running commentary" on Machiavelli.

Machiavelli was as imaginative and passionate — and as corrupt and false — a reviver of the Classical as any of his contemporaries. In his mind he always saw the Polis, and in its Latinized form to boot. At the head of his theory of politics stands the proposition: "The State is power." He wished for a return to the armed nation, the Old Roman civic patriotism, the national kingship. He forgot that such a reconstruction was impossible in an age that had the revolutionary experience of Christianity behind it and pan-European and even world-politics imminent on its horizon. His ideal, as everyone knows, was Cæsar Borgia, who was not only a conscienceless rascal, but — what in a statesman was far more compromising — an adventurer without guiding principles.

"Immoral-
ism"

This brings us to the moral balance-sheet of the Renaissance. The mysterious atmosphere of beauty and vice, wit and violence, charm and rottenness in which the Renaissance is embedded has always stirred the imagination of posterity. It has evoked an expansive indignation in the bourgeois brain, which has not the power to conceive of a world other than its own well-lighted, policed, and paragraphed one; and equally it has fired the enthusiasm of every incurable adolescent brain, which all its life never gets beyond a certain perverted puberty-imagination. Obviously both are wide of the mark.

We have first to take into account that most of the Renaissance crimes were committed by official personages — that is, more or less in an official capacity — and that these same people were, outside this professional practice of robbery and murder, often quite charming and even of a noble disposition. It is even said of that most brilliant specimen of a Renaissance horror, Pope Alexander Borgia, that in private life he was good and gentle, without rancour, a friend and benefactor of the poor. Most people who were not concerned with politics led as peaceful and harmless an existence as the people of any other period. Among artists particularly, in whom, if anywhere, the characteristic features of the time were represented, there is practically none of the proverbial Renaissance immorality to be found. There was never any lack, either, of great opponents of public immorality; the big non-

compromisers, gloomily narola above all, the "dæmonic vigour he embodied of the *soave aus* Christ's own sense, for forgiveness, and char

Because we fail to talent and depravity, of lainy, this rivalry between the perfect, we are wardly these people must ought to say, on the content felt guiltless and happy these things. The naïveté vices. On reading those forced, in spite of our thoroughbred ease, the say, with which these murdering each other.

economy of existence, ju our party organization, cings — all these are built lying, "getting away with" ception to this. If a political ests of his party, poured cup of chocolate, the whole we take it quite as a matter of motives deceives, for Italians of the fifteenth state of mind which could ment in the social metaphor it as a part of the so considered an indispensable course. It is only a question

At the same time it is Renaissance "guilt." But

The men of the Renaissance life into one great dance. The saying of Lorenzo d

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floated above them like a blazing motto, and when Leo X became Pope he exclaimed: "*Godiamoci il papato, poichè Dio ce l'ha dato* (Let us have a merry Papacy, since God has given it to us)." This frivolity was not personal to him; he was only expressing the universal attitude towards a pope's rights and duties. A passionate greed for pleasure — though a pleasure ennobled by art and intellect — consumed the people of that age; an insatiable hunger for beauty, beauty in everything: beautiful sayings and writings, beautiful deeds and misdeeds, beautiful entries and exits, beautiful thoughts and passions, beautiful lies and scandals — for beauty as the material of life, making not only individual details, such as houses, statues, banquets, poems, but all existence a work of art. But — any wiser or more inward relation with the secrets of creation they neither desired nor attempted.

In his book *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist*, which is full of new points of view, Friedrich Gundolf writes: "Here a worldly nobility takes all things, lightly or hardly, according to a worldly standard and does not ask: What does God say to it?" Whether this fully applies to Shakspeare or not is an open question; but it does apply exactly to Renaissance Italians. The question: "What does God say to it?" — the most profound and indeed the only problem of the Middle Ages — had never any interest for them. And yet were we really deposited in the world merely as clowns and jesters, upholsterers and amusement caterers?

We touch here upon a great rift, perhaps the greatest of all rifts in the existence of the earth's inhabitants. It consists in the terrifically solvent question: What is the meaning of life — beauty or goodness? It is in the nature of these two forces that they usually find themselves in conflict with each other. Beauty desires itself, always and only itself; goodness never desires itself and always has its aim in the non-ego. Beauty is form, and only form; goodness is content, and only content. Beauty appeals to the senses, goodness to the soul. Is it mankind's most blissful and noble task to make the world constantly richer, more desirable and precious, to fill it with an ever greater fascination of wit and brilliance? Or is it not rather best, most natural and God-pleasing simply to be a good creature, take others by the hand and serve them and be of use to them? What is the aim of this our earthly pilgrimage?

Is it the unlimited aff But that can only be saving of the soul en liberation from the ea lived life in full. Who conqueror?

This conflict is di dreamer and creator, for art and became a visible in Shakspeare's Ibsen as he grows old, gong, through the who est and warmest brain *The Doctor's Dilemm* spoken comedies, and whelming plastic effec Dorian Gray is a mai fulfilled. No wickedne the body is only the sl beautiful through pur nothing but a deceive ruptible youth and ch attic records none the has taken towards ugl

The Renaissance w Reformation was his s paradise. The Reform *ness of work*; the Re and ends by worshipping with a good conscienc glorification, are respo the earth is gradually boredom is the "inte a conception as unkn age.

Dante's divine poe entrance to the Renai were condemned to liv describing the future c

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disturbance and psychological transformation — namely, the dethronement of the mediæval world-view by Nominalism, the definite, though generally unconscious, rejection of all earlier dominants of existence. There is a sudden collapse of all the standards and "truths" — religious, ethical, philosophical, economical, erotic, and artistic — which, till then firmly established and believed, had guaranteed, seemingly for ever, the orientation of man in past, present, and future. And amidst the ruins everyone, according to his peculiar characteristics, sought to carry off among his booty some last piece of still doubtful value, or in dull stupefaction renounced all the goods of this world, or, tossed between passion and pleasure, had eyes only for the enjoyment of the moment; but not one was able to find a way out. On the other hand, we have seen how in the fifteenth century in Italy there began to emerge what we have called the "psychomotor superstructure" — that is, the regulation, balancing, and organization of what had so far been just a neurosis. The labile becomes stable, the pathological condition becomes normally physiological, while the positive quality of the new spiritual condition gradually emerges, and indications of the directions become visible. Thus, what had had the appearance of a devastating and even fatal disease had, after all, been a healthful fever through which the organism was renewed, a pregnancy in which new germs were maturing in preparation for exposure to the light of day. This process of consolidation is already reaching its height in the early Cinquecento in Italy, and in the course of the century it affects the whole western half of Europe.

The new
look

And this new quality, which passed gradually into the European consciousness, consisted simply in the rise of an extreme, exclusive, and all-embracing *Rationalism* — Sensualism, if the term is preferred, for fundamentally both are the same. The sensualist has faith only in what his senses tell him, but the counselor of his faith is his reason. The rationalist builds only by the light of his reason, yet it is only sense-impressions which give him his basis. Each is a somewhat modified and differently orientated expression of the same position, the unconditional reliance of man on himself and his auxiliaries in nature.

This attitude to reality, however self-evident it appeared to a later age, was till then wholly unprecedented in the history of the

Christian group of anything like it; was, so far as our utterly new, for ever mysticism, which

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Christian group of nations; only the Greeks and Romans had had anything like it; indeed, this extreme sharpness of delineation was, so far as our knowledge of past history goes, something utterly new, for even the Classical attitude was only a rationalized mysticism, which never wholly transcended its oriental origin.

The turn of the fifteenth century, then, saw a remarkable achievement, when man, till then surrendered in unthinking reverent servitude to the secrets of God, eternity, and his own soul, opened his eyes and looked round. His glance no longer goes *upwards* to be lost in the sacred mysteries of Heaven; no longer *downwards* to start back before the fiery horrors of Hell; no longer *inwards* to delve into the questions of his uncertain origin and still more uncertain future; but *forwards*, traversing the earth, which he knows to be his. The earth is his and he finds pleasure therein—
for the first time since the happy days of Greece.

This outlook is queerly profound in its superficiality. It is the outlook of an untragic contentment, a Philistine complacency, practical shrewdness, unpuzzled common sense, a sort of mixture of the view of a Yankee and a ruminant: the world is fair and green and full of sap, smelling delicious and tasting better still. Drink in as much of it as you can, for God, the special patron of all ruminants, undoubtedly gave it to you for that purpose.

Still the world is more than a tasty plot of grass: it is a building-site for building everything conceivable that is useful, beneficial, and serviceable: laboratories of medicine, physics, and chemistry; institutes and devices for the refinement, raising, and relief of existence, for ~~Towers of Babel that rise to heaven and tear its secrets from it.~~ It is a field of operations, inconceivably wide and inexhaustibly rich, for the realization and intensification of the power of pure reason, the reason that takes its stand wholly upon itself, all-confident, unfrightened, undeluded. This is the *heroic* side of the new attitude as opposed to its animal side.

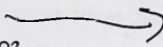
In short, man discovered for the first time for many ages that he had reason and that reason is all-powerful. He discovered himself as a thinking being, an "*ens rationale*," or rather, he regenerated these forces in himself; that, if we will, is the meaning of the "Renaissance." Reason, thus awakening, begins to penetrate everything: heaven and earth, water and light, the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the relations of men among

The curve
from 1500
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* P. T. New India & greater & how been
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themselves and their relation to God and the hereafter, the sway of nature and the laws of art. What wonder, then, that it thinks itself alone upon the world? The whole history of the modern age is nothing more than the increasing intensification and super-intensification of this strict and unidirectional evolutionary rationalism. The occasional set-backs are only superficial.

From 1500 to 1900 the European spirit describes a magnificent curve, exhausting in systematic progression almost every intellectual possibility. In the sixteenth century, it attained in Italy that extreme rationalization of art which we have already dealt with, and in the North the rationalization of faith known by the name of the Reformation. In the Counter-Reformation and Baroque movements there seems at first sight a will to return to irrationalism and mysticism, but that is a mere optical delusion. For Jesuitism is a creation of supreme logic and intellectual vigour, and what does the Baroque signify if not the dominance of a systematizing, calculating, and analytical logic — since it is its very effort to deny this dominance that drives it to take refuge in a thousand grotesque masks and artificial disguises, rationalism in fact drinking itself into intoxication so as to escape the prosaic tediousness of a culture of undiluted common sense. The eighteenth century brings with it the undisputed triumph of pure reason in all departments, the century of Voltaire and Kant, of Racine and Winckelmann. This quality of extremism would, one would think, be unsurpassable, yet surpassed it was by the "young Germany" and associated movements in other countries, which successfully transmuted art, religion, science, and the whole of life into pure political theory, thereby robbing it of its last irrational features. Entwined with it is the counter-thread of Romanticism, which, like Baroque, though far more impotent, is only a revolt against intellectualism, undertaken with purely intellectual weapons; a literary *Putsch* against literature, completely academic, doctrinaire, programmatic, a clever *aperçu*, of which the origins lie in a taste for paradox, for polemics, and for novelty in fashions. And then the second half of the nineteenth century brings the victory of the "scientific outlook" of technology, and development in the sense of the Marxian "negation of negations" ends in suicide and the catastrophe — as inevitable as it was meaningless — of the World War.



In itself, however and the prelude to : regarded as one of th historical species. It crisis, or, more exactl European soul which beginning of a new write modern histor period of developme lennium man is bec as to whether he pe senses by which he l still distant today, a on the horizon, that outlook.

We have grown sc logical functions tha absurd or lower thar assumption, for, on t world intellectually t the unnatural. An in published in 1910, by tions mentales dans most comprehensive to give us a psycholo peoples, it is maintai every tree, animal, : invisible existence, c dream experiences, r more real than waki natural man more th souls, with the invis round him on all side consciousness a grea rials of his ideas. Acc dream a lower place : on the contrary, the cause in it the part of and therefore comm

immediate and most complete." "Hence also the respect and reverence given to visionaries, seers, prophets, sometimes even to lunatics, to whom are ascribed special capacities of communicating with the invisible reality." "For us the surest proof of objectivity of a perception is the fact that under given identical conditions all observers will receive it at the same time and in the same manner. But, for the primitive man, it is a constant experience that beings or objects manifest themselves to certain individuals to the exclusion of all others present. There is no cause for surprise, for it strikes everyone as natural." "Primitive man does not need experiential evidence to convince himself of the invisible qualities of things, and therefore he is wholly unmoved by the contradictions which experience offers to these ideas. For this experience restricted to the visible, tangible, concrete in reality leaves unobserved just the most important things; the secret powers and spirits evade it." In fact, primitive man lives in a world which is not perceptible, but is yet real; a *mystical* world. "When a doctor accomplishes a cure, it is the spirit of the remedy which works on the spirit of the illness, and the physical action is unintelligible without the mystical. Or, rather, there are in reality no physical actions, there are only mystical acts."

Pre-logical
or super-
logical?

The distinguished author of the work is unfortunately a modern savant who carries on his observations of primitive peoples from a superior height and sees in the mind-forms of these societies only immature forerunners of his own kind of thought; and so he calls the intellectual attitude (though, as he admits, for lack of a better name) "pre-logical," emphasizing at the same time that it is neither antilogical nor alogical. "By the term 'pre-logical' I only mean to imply that there is no compulsion as there is with us to avoid contradictions. This kind of thinking does not, indeed, take any pleasure in wilful contradictions — if it did, it would be to us simply absurd — but it makes no effort to eradicate them." Nevertheless the word is misleading, since it gives the impression that we have before us a sort of preliminary or experimental stage of logical thinking, which is destined to be overcome by the kind of thinking dominant among us. It would be far more justifiable to talk of a "super-logical" thought, for in fact this way of perceiving the world is not by any means limited to primitive peoples; they merely employ these ideas more easily and

naturally because there never has been visionary have not the Greeks, who can hard in a double aspect: i visible double, the ps; and the Greeks cons genuine validity. Mor hall-mark of all crea philosophy, even all tr All nature is miracul fact of experience is n The philologist is oc botanist with the won of the world's course: ceeded in deciphering. continually finds him deeper a science has p domains of the mirac miracles no longer occ that we have lost son instinct are weakened, in a word, that we are because we live, not i degraded and God-fors

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ideas more easily and

naturally because they themselves are nearer to nature. Probably there never has been a culture-people among whom the seer and visionary have not held a similarly privileged position; even the Greeks, who can hardly be classed among the primitives, saw man in a double aspect: in his perceptible appearance and in his invisible double, the psyche, which was only liberated after death; and the Greeks considered dream-figures also as realities with genuine validity. Moreover, the pre-logical form of thinking is the hall-mark of all creative activity: all art, all religion, all true philosophy, even all true science; for life in itself is "pre-logical." All nature is miraculous, and every penetrating explanation of a fact of experience is nothing but the enunciation of some miracle. The philologist is occupied with the wonder of language, the botanist with the wonder of plants, the historian with the wonder of the world's course: all of them secrets which no one has yet succeeded in deciphering. Even the physicist, if he is a man of genius, continually finds himself face to face with some new wonder. The deeper a science has proved itself capable of penetrating into the domains of the miraculous, the more scientific it is. The fact that miracles no longer occur does not prove that we are cleverer, but that we have lost some vital quality, that our imagination and instinct are weakened, that we have become spiritually emptier — in a word, that we are stupider. Miracles have ceased to happen because we live, not in so advanced and enlightened, but in so degraded and God-forsaken an age.

Rationalism, the will-o'-the-wisp, which arbitrarily illumines and validates only those sections of reality which do not contradict "experience" and the "laws of thought" (that is, raw sense-impressions with a defective logic fitted on to them), is nothing more than a temporary *prejudice*, destined to disappear after a definite period of supremacy. It is undeniable that rationalism is not the one and only prejudice, but only one of the many which humanity has to pass through in the course of its history; but the assumption that it is a better prejudice than the rest, or the only sensible one, or, still more, that it is no prejudice at all, is a local obsession of modern Europe.

What I shall try to present, therefore, is the story of a brief interlude of the supremacy of reason between two irrationalisms of the Middle Ages and of the future, with no more significance in

The
rationalist
intermezzo

than a passing fashion or history. It is more than future — possessed of an and uninterrupted consciousness compared to which a five-times table compared a hundred other faculties in our modern age with is befogged, barren, and is known. Nay, peoples a splendid art which we us, unattainable maturity with their irrecoverable nation; the Indians with — would probably feel analogous activities of our they may appear as the would have felt about us about the Greeks, that we more sensitive ear than adertone to the whole of accompaniment to all of the East.

th we have to depict was nsula of Asia, one of the ve periods in the history of under the name of the grey antiquity, a sort of od of prehistory.

to what is taught in all of America. Actually it po often repeated that a th its new passion for ad-reawakened realism and ound, by the same com-discoveries and inventions, picture or a lyric poem in the academic mind by same with its technical

achievements. There are no "chance" inventions; for instance, it is not true that the late nineteenth century owed its extraordinarily accelerated tempo of life to the telephone, the telegraph, express trains, and the like — it was the new tempo that was primary, and the new feeling of space and time was an inborn attribute of the generation which made magnetism, electricity, and steam-power useful. It *had* to create these life-forms.

Moreover, the discovery of America was not even the most important of the events which introduced the new age — quite apart from the fact that that generation did not in any real sense discover America, for it merely landed, not to say stranded, there — and for the psychological constitution of an age only *conscious* achievements enter into account. The decisive metamorphosis was rather the result of three other facts: the generalized use of the gunpowder invented by Berthold Schwarz, the use of movable letter type for the mass production of books, and the passionate interest in the secrets of alchemy. These three "black" arts significantly heralded the modern age.

And besides these well-known phenomena the last third of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth produced a series of other remarkable advances of knowledge and technics. In 1471 the first astronomical observatory was built, in 1490 Martin Behaim constructed the first globe, in 1493 Hartman Schedels *Liber chronicarum* — an epoch-making work on geography and history — was published with more than two thousand woodcuts. The year 1505 saw the first postal service, 1506 the issue by Reuchlin of his Hebrew grammar; in 1510 Peter Hale conceived his spring-driven watch, the famous "Nürnberg egg," which could be carried in the pocket; in 1515 wheel-lock fire-arms came into use. There are indications, too, of the modern conception of time: public clocks began to strike the quarters. The later years of the century, too, breathed an energetic intellectual life, for Servetus discovered the pulmonary circulation in 1540, and three years later — the date of the publication of the Copernican system — the great anatomist Vesalius issued his fundamental work *De humani corporis fabrica*, Christopher Rudolff wrote the first algebraic treatise in German, Adam Riese the first text-books of practical arithmetic, George Agricola laid the foundations of mineralogy, and Konrad Gesner of scientific zoölogy, while

Gerhard Kremer, cosmographer and etcher (celebrated under his Latin name of Mercator), rediscovered Ptolemy's discovery of how to project the grid of meridians and parallels on to a conical envelope, and not only so, but improved it so much that "Mercator's projection" is in use to this day.

But the fact that, when all is said and done, the period is still transitional between the Middle Ages and Rationalism is evident from the numerous mystics, cabalists, and thaumaturges who really set the tone of the intellectual aspirations of the age. All these have the aspect of a new zoological species which carries about with it the survival of an earlier form from which it sprung: in the same way, for instance, that creatures who have completed the transition from a water to a land existence may still have swimming-bladders, and the double breathing-mechanism of gills and lungs. The most popular of these figures were Agrippa von Nettesheim and Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim. Von Nettesheim published in 1510 under the title *De occulta philosophia* a sort of text-book of magic, which he divided up into natural, heavenly, and religious: the first telling us how to gain mastery over the earth forces, the second how to penetrate the secrets of the heavens, the third how to obtain power over the dæmons. Paracelsus is one of the most original figures of the whole age, humanist and physicist, alchemist and astrologer, chiromancer and necromancer, chirurge and theurge, discoverer of hydrogen and rediscoverer of scientific medicine. In his incessant wanderings as doctor, teacher, and alchemist he was courted by the whole world and surrounded by a noisy following, in which genuine disciples of science mingled indiscriminately with adventurers and beggars who hunted for the Philosophers' Stone — indeed it is very difficult at that period to distinguish between vulgar thirst for gold and noble thirst for knowledge. On all sides he accomplished sensational cures, gathered and disseminated knowledge, and aroused such scandal and admiration that in the end he fell a victim to a villainous plot concocted by some of his graduate colleagues who saw in his genius a danger to their own business. Later generations have seen in him, on the one hand, a typical charlatan, the low and contemptible quack of the fairs, and, on the other, the typical seer, martyr of science, and benefactor of humanity; and both views are right.

His own work Bombastic and artful, laden, they fully justified the name of from heaven, an ap and again he emphasized Nature that wisdom works of Galen is like a fool could confuse pantheistic medicine duty of the doctor is too, is one great or its own look and convalescence.

The Philosophers knew nothing, poor men, and yet — dium, which, as evenment, helium? The "unscientific"; the "scientific." Such consideration of it if they were at all operate without bi

Furthermore, the making of gold was the object of the theriacal art was that there must single stroke reveal was to open the door the Philosophers'

The two other printing, undoubtedly alchemy. The use hitherto unknown and mechanical, aristocratic, and man against ma

hundred and fifty years before Christ a similar system had been worked out by Aristarchus of Samos — the sun and stars unmoving, the earth rotating round itself and round the sun — and Plutarch says even of Plato that he had “not left the earth in the centre of the cosmos, but had assigned this place to a better star.” The Greek, however, wanted to regard the world as a limited, closed circle, with himself as observer in the centre; he wanted a “cosmos,” a beautiful, artistically organized whole, easy to imagine and comfortably synoptic, like a temple, a statue, or a city-state: the heliocentric idea failed to correspond to his view of the world and was, therefore, *false*. In the time of Copernicus man was beginning to feel the passion for distances, at the same time as the passion for order, similarity, and regularity, and thus wanted a universe that could be expressed in formulæ, one that spoke, as it were, the language of mathematics. The new astronomy, that seemed to reduce man to nothingness, made him in reality the unveiler, the seer, and even the legislator of the cosmos. A world — however terrible in its infinity, however vast in relation to an earth that swam in it like a faintly lighted bubble — that he could *calculate* and subject to his intellect, he preferred to one which was well rounded, but veiled in darkness and secrecy and subject to an impenetrable destiny. It is one of the greatest falsifications of history to harp again and again on the idea that the heliocentric system made man more modest and humble, for the contrary is the truth.

In any case, what Copernicus taught was a universe that was heliocentric indeed and, therefore, immeasurably vaster than Ptolemy's, but was certainly not infinite; for it had not only a fixed sun enthroned at its centre, but a fixed outermost shell (the “eighth sphere”) beyond which nothing else existed. His world was thus still essentially different from ours, not only smaller, but simpler, more stable, more solid, more synoptic, than our universe of countless solar systems that, disparate by infinite distances, rush with colossal speed through an abyss of which all we can say is that it never comes to an end.

The really symbolic instrument, however, of the rising age was not the astronomical chart, not even the printing-press or the retort or the cannon, but the *compass*. Discovered long ago, it was only now that it began to be trusted. As we have stressed

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The culture of Mexico is to be imagined as being more or less in the same stage as that of the Empire in Rome. It is evident that it had already reached the phase which Spengler calls "Civilization" and which is characterized by a life of huge cities, of refined comforts, of autocratic forms of government and expansionist imperialism, of massiveness in architecture and extravagance in ornament, of ethical fatalism and barbarized religion. The capital, Tenochtitlan, built on platforms in a wondrous lake, displayed huge temples and obelisks, extensive arsenals, hospitals, barracks, zoological and botanical gardens, barbers' shops, vapour-baths, and fountains, tapestries and paintings of gorgeous feather-mosaic, costly goldsmith's work and finely tooled plates of tortoise-shell, splendid woollen cloaks and leather gear, ceilings of fragrant carved wood, hot-plates, scent-sprayers, and hot-water systems. In the weekly markets, attended by hundreds of thousands, wares of every conceivable kind were exposed for sale. A wonderfully organized postal service, of fast couriers, plying on the network of well-built highways and ramps which traversed the land, carried every item of news with amazing speed and precision; police and fiscal arrangements worked with the greatest accuracy and reliability. The kitchens of the wealthy were fragrant with the most select foods and drinks, game, fish, waffles, preserves, delicate soups, spiced dishes; and withal a number of things unknown to the Old World, turkey, *chocolatl* — the favourite dish of the Mexicans, to them no drink, but a fine *crème*, eaten cold with vanilla and other spices — *pulque*, an intoxicating drink made from aloes (which also yielded a tasty artichoke-like vegetable and first-class sugar), and *yetl*, tobacco, smoked either mixed with liquidambar in gilded wooden pipes, or like a cigar in fine silver holders. The streets were so clean, a Spanish text tells us, that in passing along them one soiled one's feet no more than one's hands. The population was as honest as it was clean: all houses were left open, and when a dwelling was unoccupied, its owner merely set up a reed on the door-mat to indicate his absence, without fear of theft; in fact, the courts were almost never called upon to deal with cases of violating property. Writing was by means of a very elaborate picture-writing, and there were also lightning painters who could fix all occurrences with amazing rapidity in almost speaking designs. The mathematical

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The American cu of cultures which er are for us prehistori Asia over India and including the two pr the Ægean. Under th belt of cultures has e port, and as a matt similarity to the Bal writing, and their st series of things whi type of government, potism, the bureauc pedantic guardiansh and ceremonious eti animal forms of the traiture, combined w the higher forms, the ness of their building

Most remarkable Mexican and Christi was at the same tim with the papal tiara. the serpent, the Flc altered form they k and communion, ar in vigil, fasting, and they had even a dir Their ethical comm identity with the Bit with all men, endur all, will avenge the

and deceitful men, called them gods, and through these gods found their ruin. The Indians, once deeply sure of the meaningless unreality of this world, henceforth had faith only in Nothingness, and their faith became their truth — unaffected by the passage of history, their glorious land became and remains a vast nothingness.

Christianity, we are accustomed to be told, brought all the peoples of western Europe into a common faith. But is it really so? Superficially, indeed, yes. But a deeper insight will show that there are national gods, national destinies, as there were of old. This is the real dividing line between peoples and not race or custom or outward custom, not politics or social structure. It is these, precisely these things, that are common to the civilized world. Top-hats and boas, music and street-scavenging are alike in Greece and Ireland, in Portugal and Sweden, and ideas of agriculture and etiquette and parliamentary government too. But the god is everywhere another god.

True, they are all Christians; and therein lies the enormous power and vitality of Christianity, that it has a message for every time, that it has a form which can find a place within it for all thoughts and all feelings. Had it been something that could live itself out in a trifle of nineteen hundred years, Christianity could never have been a world religion at all. What common basis is there for Tertullian's "*Credo quia absurdum*" and the almost mathematical rationalism of Calvin? For the doctrine of the Satanists and the almost familiar terms on which the Quakers live with their God? Was it only a matter of chance — related perhaps to the dictatorial temper of Louis XIV and Cromwell — that France was restored to Papistry while England held to the Reformation? The God for France, of France, was absolutist; the God for England, of England, Puritan.

In an earlier chapter it was stated that, fundamentally, the only Renaissance was the Italian, and that the Renaissance in other countries justified the name only in an unreal and impure sense. It is equally justifiable to say that the Reformation was in its essence and being a *German* phenomenon, and all other Reformations — English, French, Scandinavian, Hungarian, Polish — were but duplicates or caricatures. "The German," Moritz Heimann acutely observes in one of his essays, "does

not regard the world. He takes it several (the same token, more psychological attitude during the whole Reformation which it received from that developed into the reversals of the original in translating these a remissness that a Reformation too serious to its own great harm the other great movement of historical influence — extraordinary energy revolution of economic Jesuitism, with and rigour of spirit in birth. The German, mature enough for a and, therefore, historical present with the future, the power to give a value to the fruits. All the stirrings of its stamp were born on other lands.

So far from being reaction was the result often enough regarded was linked from the time was national. Rome was to be, not "*welsch*," but political significance that no longer to receive a appears the third worldwide extension, for it was which sought to bring culture on the model of the fourth influence, the f

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of the
Reformation

* D. T. Anderson
The Other

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not regard the world of ideas, as other nations do, as a banner. He takes it several degrees more literally, and the real world, by the same token, more casually." This gives with precision the psychological attitude which distinguished the German people during the whole Reformation period; it absorbed the war-cries which it received from its religious leaders with a literalness that developed into obstinacy and misunderstanding, even to reversals of the original tendency; at the same time, paradoxically, in translating these new norms into political reality it displayed a remissness that astounds us. In short, it took the spiritual Reformation too seriously, the practical too lightly, and the result, to its own great harm, was that it fell between the two stools of the other great movements of the time which had the greatest historical influence — namely, Anglo-Saxon Calvinism, whose extraordinary energy and logical quality brought about a vast revolution of economic, political, and social practice, and Romanic Jesuitism, which with an equally wonderful force of soul and rigour of spirit called into being a moral and intellectual re-birth. The German, at that stage of his development, was not mature enough for *action* which would be practically successful and, therefore, historically effective. Dreamer of dreams, pregnant with the future, but incoherent and irresolute, he only had the power to give a vast new stimulus of which others have reaped the fruit. All the stirring thoughts which give the Reformation age its stamp were born on German soil, all worked themselves out in other lands.

So far from being a unitary movement, the German Reforma-
tion was the resultant of at least four components. The first —
often enough regarded as the only one — was religious, but this
was linked from the outset with a second of equal vigour, which
was national. Rome was no longer to control, and the Church was
to be, not "*welsch*," but German. A foreign sovereign — for in his
political significance the ruler of the Papal States was such — was
no longer to receive a great part of German tax-revenues. And so
appears the third component, the economic, which had a very
wide extension, for it was the common stream of all the tendencies
which sought to bring about trenchant changes in the social struc-
ture on the model of the primitive Church. Finally, there was the
fourth influence, the ferment in scientific circles, Humanism and

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* D. T. Andrews ²³¹ got over it; never forgive
the other nations.

He wins who bribes — so much the worse
For the poor fool with empty purse.

And the whole thing is summed up in the famous doggerel:

So blind lead other blind today
And both from God must surely stray.

Furthermore, we have already heard how "Enlightenment," the habit of satirizing the Catholic Church, propagated and raised to the height of fashion by the Humanists, set the general tone of all cultured circles in Italy and even of the Pope's own immediate entourage. In the year before the Theses of Wittenberg Pietro Pomponazzi, a famous philosopher, produced a small work on the immortality of the soul wherein it was taught that the founders of religions had invented immortality for the benefit of the masses, who would only practise virtue if there were rewards or punishments of some sort — as a nurse invents a tale to induce good behaviour in a child, or a doctor deceives his patients for their own benefit. In another work Pomponazzi declares the efficiency of relics to be imaginary and says the same results would follow if the bones were a dog's; and the argument that belief in immortality is necessary because otherwise religion would be a deception he answers with the remark that such is actually the case: for, there being three codes (Mosaic, Christian, and Mohammedan), either all three are false, in which case the whole world is deceived; or two are false, and then the majority are. These and suchlike views were tolerated by the Curia, for anything might be spoken or written if only it was "*salva fide*" — that is, without affecting external subjection to the Church.

Wyclif too, as we have already remarked, anticipated the whole of the Reformation, and in some material points even went beyond it: for among his doctrines are the following: images should not be adored nor relics held holy; the pope is not the successor of Peter, and not he, but God alone, is the forgiver of sins; the blessing of bishops is worthless; priests should be allowed to marry; the bread and wine at the Holy Communion do not change into the real body of Christ, for true Christians receive the body of Christ daily by their faith; prayer should not be offered to the Virgin; prayer may be offered elsewhere besides churches. Johann

Wessel (1419-89) depended on the heavenly supreme ruler; on earth and even Councils of session, absolution works, and pictures of the spiritual kind, upon the pope could decide the vicar of Christ, of Christ would depend pregnant words, he The Erfurt theologian even further, object unction, and maintain more than that in a perfluous, and a de better sale for his fape." Erasmus of Rotterdam the adoration of saints entire dogmatics obtained, would be unsacraments, in his Bible in many places intelligible; nor could be proved from it. "But the popes, for by the

But the case of enormous difference merely taught the uniqueness and origin of all these doctrines. esque, the broader universal, and even a thinker. It never a single one of his ideas and reforming temple appeared in person as fully denied it on

secondly, that this pooled Saxon was a dry, heavy-footed, and jejune office-language, and that Luther moulded it into an instrument for the expression of the highest, deepest, most powerful and delicate feelings and forced it into use for every conceivable experience. Out of the material at his disposal he created the very reverse of a protocol-language. He tells us in his *Table-talk* how he questioned the mother in her home, the children in the street, and the common man in the market-place, and noted how they answered him; and by such means, thanks to his sensibility and an imitative power nearly related to the actor's, he brought off the *tour de force* of expressing both the most subtle and learned ideas and also the simplest and most ordinary things in a language that is thoroughly natural, vivid, intelligible, and effective. We meet here yet another indication of that peculiar dramatic gift that dwelt in Luther. It finds utterance also in his polemic and doctrinal works, which, assuming a fictitious opponent, have an underlying character of dialogue that reminds us of Lessing. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that but for Luther Germany would today be a bilingual nation, half Low and half High German.

Luther and
the arts

His musical ability, too, which was considerable, echoes in his style, and he excels especially in working up to the *furioso* climax. He composed the tunes for several of his own hymns, played the lute and the flute, understood and appreciated polyphony, and intensely admired the Dutch contrapuntalists. He made the German hymn into a basic element of the Protestant service, and his wish was that the schools should assiduously practise it. On every occasion he praised "*Musica*," "the glorious, beautiful gift of God, sister of theology," with an enthusiastic gratitude.

But immediately we turn to the other arts, we are struck by the great limitations of this great man. Even to poetry his attitude was unsure. Of all the kinds of poetry he gave first place to the didactic fable because it was the most useful for the understanding of ordinary life — a banausic attitude, which, however, was of the time. His views on the drama were no less utilitarian: Terences' comedies, he said, are an instructive mirror of the real world, Latin school plays a good training in language, religious plays an efficient means for the propagation of evangelical truth. The arts of form simply had no existence for him: in 1511 he travelled through northern Italy to Rome, at the height of the

Renaissance, but he Italy's works of art. cleanliness of the ho so much German mo ings. Even in the ca he was only intereste divine service. For tl little understanding; friend Melanchthon, the historical sense. but praised Cicero a ~~he used his powers in~~ contrast was a "lazy these — concerning t Rome, and the most the mind that gather sical knowledge and merely labelling them only be the result of.

This crucial defect the crudest form in l has left an ugly blemi the supreme attempt has ever experienced, the peasants and the prevented its reaching lay in the ideas of prin against the wealthy temporal princes, an it was even hoped that ment. Luther also, w Gospels, was assumed ous feature of the risi limited to the open c there had long been : letariate and with the whole Fourth Estate dinary extension and. The demands of

Renaissance, but he has not one single word for the beauty of Italy's works of art. In Florence he was most impressed by the cleanliness of the hospitals, and in Rome he only complains that so much German money flowed thither to pay for the great buildings. Even in the cathedral of Cologne and the Minster of Ulm he was only interested in the bad acoustics, which interfered with divine service. For the historical significance of Rome he had as little understanding as for the artistic; in fact, in contrast to his friend Melancthon, he seems to have been completely lacking in the historical sense. Thus he called Julius Cæsar "a mere ape," but praised Cicero as a philosopher far above Aristotle, because he used his powers in the service of the State, while Aristotle in contrast was a "lazy ass." To explain away such judgments as these — concerning the greatest strategic and political genius of Rome, and the most universal and active mind of ancient Greece, the mind that gathered, ordered, and set down the sum of Classical knowledge and founded half a dozen new sciences — by merely labelling them as "subjective" is insufficient. They could only be the result of a complete blindness to historical relations.

This crucial defect of historical understanding shows itself in the crudest form in his attitude to the revolted peasants, which has left an ugly blemish on his whole life. The Peasants' War was the supreme attempt towards a social revolution that Germany has ever experienced, and it was only rawness of discipline among the peasants and the dark jealousy among their leaders which prevented its reaching its goal. Its source, as we have said before, lay in the ideas of primitive Christianity. Primarily it was directed against the wealthy clerical hierarchy, much less against the temporal princes, and not at all against the aristocracy; and it was even hoped that the Emperor himself might head the movement. Luther also, who had always preached the return to the Gospels, was assumed to be the obvious leader. The most dangerous feature of the rising was the fact that from the first it was not limited to the open country-side, but spread to the towns, where there had long been a violent ferment going on among the proletariat and with them the poorest of the clergy; in a word, the whole Fourth Estate was concerned in a movement of extraordinary extension and depth.

The demands of the famous Twelve Articles of 1525 were

*Luther and
the Peasants' War*

and Schiller, Kant had more or less of the statesman cannot — nay, that his very or less well-directed, opportunism. But we is one man who may his fundamental mis- ot to compromise or force into practice the t concession, without

ginning, and it is the and his influence on more on the healthy strongest potentiality, y houses of all sorts, e believed himself to ad of the Protestant h God sent him into ays to speak, without to right nor to left, ay was due to some fell a victim remark- m writing to Ludwig musician of the time: e world hates me and rks me, I scorn it." atures like Herder's, selves up in colossal

gift of understanding unscientific mind. He connect them and de- e more surprising be- eenth century has a and comprehensive y and logically is re- and chatter of Protes-

tant theology, of which an example can be seen already in his views on the nature of Communion.

The conception of Transubstantiation presented no difficulty to the mediæval world-view, since for it, as we have explained at length, only universals had real existence. Therefore, not the individual Host, but the highest universal of the omnipresent God that appears in it possessed, and alone possessed, reality. There were, of course, free-thinkers even in early days who opposed the doctrine of real change of substance, but they had no success. Most famous was the Berengarian struggle in the middle of the eleventh century led by Berenger of Tours, who taught that the words of institution were to be understood as ennobling the elements through the spiritual presence of Christ. His doctrine was condemned and he himself forced to a recantation in which he declared that the body of Christ was bitten in pieces in Communion by the teeth of the faithful. On the other hand the Swiss Zwingli, Calvin, and their followers declared that the Communion was only a symbolical act, a memorial ceremony, so that the Host merely *represented* the body of Christ. Both views are clear in themselves, and a clear decision between the two is possible. Even today anyone can make really his own the idea of an actual transubstantiation, and, equally, anyone can conceive Communion as a purely spiritual act. Luther, with the mediæval bent of his mind, was undoubtedly inclined to the former view, which indeed he stubbornly maintained at the Marburg conference. But he would not allow that the Catholics might be right in a single point; yet the Calvinistic view, again, was for him too modern. Thus he chose a middle interpretation, and this was such that no man can imagine anything whatever by it. The body of Christ was in the consecrated material in the sense that fire is in a heated iron, and as heat and iron subsist together, so too do the Host and the body of Christ. Thus — as Voltaire put it jestingly, but expressively — the Papists enjoy God, the Calvinists bread, the Lutherans bread and God. A more hopeless confusion than Luther's it is impossible to conceive. He eliminated the mystery — through pure anti-papalism — and rejected the philosophical explanation; he taught a transubstantiation in which the elements undergo and do not undergo change.

But the central problem of the whole reform movement and the key to all its later development was the question of the essence of justification. Catholic doctrine bases repentance on three stages, the "*contritio cordis*," the "*confessio oris*," and the "*satisfactio operis*." Luther admitted only the first of these, repentance of the heart, and fanatically — and what was worse, unintelligibly — opposed the other two, confession and works. But this involved a still deeper complication. The point on which, obviously, every solution depends is the decision between free-will and the rule of predestination. This is the primary problem, for before we can approach the question of the form and manner of justification, we must make the preliminary decision whether the human will is free at all. Here Luther, as he often and gladly admitted, was influenced deeply and enduringly by two of the greatest teachers of the Church, Paul and Augustine.

Paul

Paul is the first figure in the world of the New Testament whom we can concretely grasp. The Gospels display to us figures in a flickering, uncertain, one is almost tempted to say impressionistic light, at one time in misty veiling, at another in dazzling over-brightness; but the letters of Paul are like a voice that we can hear close by, his is a dramatic figure that we see striving, stumbling, victorious; a mortal who personifies that most fundamental quality of all life, paradox; a man, like all earthly creatures, now harsh, now gentle, here boundless, there narrow, fool and yet saint. And it is just because he is the most human of all figures whom we know in the history of early Christianity that he became at all later turning-points the leader and the type. All the great renewers of Christianity have linked themselves on to Paul, and among them, inevitably, Luther.

There are two diametrically opposite views of the rôle that Paul played in the development of Christianity. One, which maintains that without Paul the teachings of the Gospels would never have conquered the world, and that Paul is, therefore, the real founder of Christianity, is so absurd and so contemptible that it is not worth our while to refute it. The other view derives from Nietzsche, the most intellectually powerful of all the opponents of ecclesiastical Christianity, who, with an unfailing instinct, made this greatest of all the Fathers the target of his main offensive. In his posthumous fragment *The Antichrist* he paints the de-

velopment of early Christianity as the brush of a Dante not to 'redeem' man . . . He does not require a single step to war with it. . . . And he prays to him evil. . . . Not to condemn . . . but to love them. . . . At J and he died on the cross and what since that time of what he lived, an 'it was just the essence how to die after this above all resentment giving his death — the sense.' (We might remark who can write words of the Saviour than their Christianity by that they have lost all such atheists as Nietzsche a passion for the truthfulness and patience, would do by confession)

May we, then, say more than a single group — a barbarization of art? Such a view would story of Jesus gave rise to this lay the supremely wonderful fact, that the world had not been a teacher, and their kindful death of a slave — question then arose answer, the only answer the grand reversal of us who are unjust to

and atonement and blessing which Paul could make the ground up to the present day, nation.

significance in a single first Christian theologian. It spread about in early form into a sort of system, could be easily impressed, making this achievement of belittling it. Every genius in which is naturally inclined. He therefore needs an effort to try to speak forth the truth to put into earthly, common. A good formula is not a spirit which preserves for itself. This is the sort of thought. The formula washed away the sin of the hope for the purer doctrine only fancy, but something true and in theory.

one which will not readily notion of sin. The God of only wide, reigning beyond recompense, but simply acquits, but the Father are somehow engaged in he could not endure the *one justice*; and indeed to no liberation, but a torture too great, too difficult, because for thousands of things — and in Paul himself so willingly to the doctors, for their part, were it to be possible for them and the Greeks, with their

concrete corporeal form of thinking and their all-defining rationalism, would have found a God of boundless grace incomprehensible.

Therefore it is with some justification that Lagarde made his apparently paradoxical statement that Paul is the most Jewish of all the Apostles. The assumption that God could not wipe out original sin except by the sacrifice of His Son goes back to the Old Testament God of Jewry, who is above all a just God, who still works on the plan of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; it makes the Atonement something of a business deal. Yet it is only this fundamental premiss that God's grace could not be bought save by the death of the innocent — that it had to be bought at all — which was repellent; *within* the actual doctrine of salvation Paul completely abandoned the juristic and Talmudic standpoint and emphasized again and again that man is not justified by works but only by grace and by faith. Thus in the Epistle to the Romans: "For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"; and in Ephesians: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast"; here there is already a negation of the freedom of the will. But already in the Epistle of James we have the doctrine of what is called *synergism*, the working together of faith and grace: a combination which found little favour with Luther. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? . . . Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. . . . Seest thou how faith wrought with (*συνήργει*) his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Thus the New Testament itself contains a conflict of opinion on the doctrine of satisfaction.

Augustine, the second great teacher of Luther, asserted with absolute definiteness the unfreedom of the will and predestination. For him man is a "*massa peccati*," and, therefore, a "*massa perditionis*," of which, through the "*gratia gratis data*," a "*certus numerus electorum*" is saved. Adam alone possessed the freedom not to sin ("*posse non peccare*"), and because of original sin mankind is in the condition of unfreedom ("*non posse non*

Augustine

all significance. If we ob-
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The opposing doctrine of
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alled Semi-Pelagians. They
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sanctification by works has
only in Catholicism. In any
traordinarily wide applica-
ng practice in the matter of
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ite undeserved.
ardly harmonizes with the
on alone a good work; the
to, the spirit in which it is
to Catholic doctrine, the
the possibility fails, is as
The Council of Trent says:
the groundwork and root of
possible to please God and
In similar fashion Luther:
a good and pious man, but
ood works. As trees must be
e the trees neither good nor
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Luther's tree corresponds
but if we think the com-
of the natural necessity of
e tree — of the good tree cer-

tainly — that it should bring forth fruit. The reproach that Catho-
lic doctrine demands sanctification by works and thus encourages
self-righteousness has been handsomely answered by Adam
Möhler in his "*Symbolik*" with the thesis that the destination of
the doctrine is precisely to call forth *holy* works, and to bring it
about that we *ourselves* become just.

If, now, we attempt to review the meaning and content of all
this in an unprejudiced spirit, a strange conclusion emerges.
Protestantism denies justification by works and puts repentance
in the heart, in mere faith, and yet at the same time it demands a
practical, active Christianity and thus again comes back to a sort
of sanctity of works; more, as we shall soon see, it sanctifies even
profane works, thus achieving the last degree of sanctimonious-
ness. Catholicism accepts justification by works, but means by
the latter only performances of a minor sort, and thus it arrives
at apotheosizing the unworldly and other-worldly life, which is
concentrated on inner penitence and meditation, and which
knows nothing of profane works in the ordinary sense. Thus,
starting from opposite standpoints, each ends in the contrary view
from that with which it began: Protestantism, opposed to works,
ends in a glorification of the most worldly tasks, the State, the
magistrates, the family, manual work, science, even war; the
more worldly Catholicism rises to complete contempt for all these
things: emperor, wife, learning, property, and the active life are
things from which it flees to its heights. In addition we have the
further paradox that reactionary Catholicism was often more
tolerant, conciliatory, and accommodating than freedom-loving
Protestantism. Even so unprejudiced a judge as Zinzendorf em-
phasized that "Catholics carry upon their lips and their banner
an anathema against their opponents, but in practice are often
very complaisant towards them; we Protestants have liberty upon
our lips and as our watchword, and yet in practice, though I say
it with regret, there are amongst us many conscience-hangmen."

Actually in this question of justification the issue is really only
theological; no Catholic who was a true Christian ever believed
that works only suffice, and no Protestant if he was a true Chris-
tian believed that faith alone was enough; for faith in Christ and
imitation of Christ are completely identical. If we believe in Him,
we must live His life, or at least try to live it, and whoever does

ly the side-line. All the ship in the best sense, that straightforward decorative temporary work in the plastic possesses something which. To create a cup, a coat, is a certain moral quality: self-discipline, devotion to it is a fine thing whether he can be no doubt that even them have come down to universally treasured as his

ify those of craftsmanship, original composition as the at the beginning of the century and the invention of the each of the three strings to the ultimate significance

and even gross lack of flair — that is to say, banalistic (only a few instances) the and mis-shapen innovative and effective, but only succumbed in the aforementioned past the department of excreta, by the lack of sureness in material (for example, in architectural ornamentation plate-work cut in stone); paintings, of which Lucas is the most notorious instance, and John the Baptist, of the crucified Saviour. and superstition had rather information. Till then only counted as disciples of the diabolized: the pope was

Antichrist, every Papist a son of Satan, while Catholics for their part saw in Luther and his adherents the servants of hell. In addition Protestantism had increased the consciousness of sin; no one could know if he was justified. Works were of no value; yet faith was rather an unending task imposed on the human soul than a pillar of certainty. In Calvinism, with its rigid dogma of predestination, no one could say whether he was among the fore-chosen or among those eternally fore-doomed. Luther used to declare about Doctor Eck, and many more of his opponents, that they had signed a pact with the Devil, and the Breslau Doctor John Cochläus asserted in his biography of Luther — appearing only three years after his death — that he was the son of the adulterous union of the Devil with Margaret Luther. It is the fashion now to doubt whether Luther ever hurled his ink-bottle at the Devil on the Wartburg, but it is quite obvious from innumerable remarks of his that he pictured the world as full of devils, and in the same way he believed in the Devil's harlots, the witches, whom he cursed and threatened from his pulpit. But in that as in everything else he was only the true son of his times. For just then, when faith in Christian doctrine was riven asunder and began to crumble, there was a recrudescence in the depth of men's souls of an obscure and terrifying undercurrent of paganism.

Belief in witches is to be found among the Persians, in the Old Testament, in Greek and Roman mythology, and in some form perhaps in every religion. In the Middle Ages, however, the burning of witches had been rare: it was then still regarded as human sacrifice, and Charlemagne forbade it. In Italy during the Renaissance there was a special witches' tract at Norcia, which proved attractive to foreigners, and the witch, the *strega*, with her art of *stregheria*, received almost official recognition and was persecuted only in exceptional cases. It was only towards the end of the fifteenth century that this witch-mania, beginning in the Northern lands, became a scourge of humanity. The decisive date is 1487, the year of publication by the two papal inquisitors Henry Institor and Jacob Sprenger of the notorious *Malleus maleficarum*; a work in which witchery, if one may say so, is handled in a spirit of technology and scientific system. In the first part of the work various questions are put, answered, and elaborately

discussed, as, for instance: Is there a black art? Does the Devil cooperate with witches? Can men be procreated by incubi (that is, devils who "lie upon" women in the form of men) and succubi (that is, devils who lie under men in the form of women)? Can black magic drive men to love or hate? Can the black art obstruct the marriage act? Can witches treat the *membrum virile* by magic so as to separate it from the body? Can witches turn men into animals? The second part treats more of details; for instance, how witches raise thunder-storms and hail-storms, how they rob cows of their milk, how they make fowls egg-bound, how they produce abortion, how they cause illness in cattle, how they produce frenzy, how they maim limbs by "witches' darts," why they especially love to kill unbaptized children (the answer to this last being that such cannot enter into heaven, and as the kingdom of God and the overthrow of the Devil can only be fulfilled when a definite number of the blessed is in heaven, the murder of newly born children postpones that time).

Witch-
mania and
psycho-
analysis

Witches were assumed to meet on special dates, above all on the eve of May 1, Walpurgis Night, when they flew on broomsticks or he-goats to certain infamous hills, to worship their master by dances and kisses on his genitals or hind quarters (the Devil repaying this court by breaking wind upon them) and then to take their pleasure with devil-lovers in extravagant feasting and wild orgies. The ordeal of witches consisted usually in laying the accused, tightly bound, on the surface of some water and condemning any who remained afloat. Any outstanding quality — good and bad eminence, physical defects and rare beauty, alike — might lead to suspicion of witchcraft. Gradually men became habituated to torturing for a confession, and the vicious circle enclosed them, for, of course, these methods produced numerous proofs of witchcraft, and then increasing fear led to further accusations and trials. Even if avarice and revenge occasionally played some part, there can be no doubt that most of the judges acted in entire honesty, just as a lawyer of today feels himself to be a guardian of law and morality in obtaining the conviction of prisoners for crimes, the punishing of which will seem quite unintelligible to future ages. Protestantism became quite as fanatical as Catholicism (though German historians of a liberal and nationalist tendency like to gloss over the fact), the most blatant

instance being probably Hoensbroech, *Das Papst-samkeit* (*The Papacy and its misdeeds*) of the Roman and in the sternest spirit about the Protestant persecution was a universal disease of the lower classes, to papists persecutors and inquisitors, many of the victims belie the quality of Kepler, who of scientific thought, magic, witchcraft, and it was a of his relatives was burnt times in danger of the witchcraft is probably the rest sexuality, manifesting in psychoanalysis, which scientific trivialities, might do well foundations, for it would *Hammer*. The question among women than men other than the ruin of a necessary disaster, a false domestic peril, a desirable ours?" What emerges he mysterious companion, the sinfulness and unseen co-intercourse, the dark fear gathers into itself all the passions, of erring human formation period it is a lot Strindberg. It is clear from which we have given that sexual one under religious subterranean fantasy, with its religious veneer of sensuality or perversity. This full and grotesque forms

black art? Does the Devil co-
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(in form of women)? Can
the black art obstruct
membrum virile by magic
and witches turn men into
a mass of details; for instance,
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egg-bound, how they pro-
cattle, how they produce
witches' darts," why they
in (the answer to this last
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instance being probably the learned propaganda work of Graf
Hoensbroech, *Das Papsttum in seiner sozial-kulturellen Wirk-
samkeit* (*The Papacy in its Sociological Aspect*), in which the
misdeeds of the Roman Inquisition are treated at great length
and in the sternest spirit of description; while there is not a word
about the Protestant persecution of witches. The fact is that it
was a universal disease of the time, common to the learned and the
lower classes, to papists and reformers, princes and subjects, ac-
cusers and inquisitors, not to mention the witches themselves, for
many of the victims believed themselves guilty. Even a genius of
the quality of Kepler, who can hardly be said to have lacked the gift
of scientific thought, maintained that it was impossible to deny
witchcraft, and it was a serious enough matter for him, for one
of his relatives was burnt as a witch, and his mother was many
times in danger of the same fate. The whole question of witch-
craft is probably the result of a mass-psychosis due to repressed
sexuality, manifesting itself in the form of gynophobia; and
psychoanalysis, which so often occupies itself with unprofitable
trivialities, might do well to investigate the whole problem to its
foundations, for it would find valuable hints in the *Witches'
Hammer*. The question why the black art is more widespread
among women than men is answered as follows: "What is woman
other than the ruin of friendship, an inescapable punishment, a
necessary disaster, a fascinating evil, a natural temptation, a
domestic peril, a desirable danger, a universal evil in fine col-
ours?" What emerges here is that deep fear of man in face of his
mysterious companion, the appalling sensation of the unavoidable
sinfulness and unseen corruption that lies at the back of sexual
intercourse, the dark fearful maelstrom which blindly and eagerly
gathers into itself all the many deeds and miseries, dreams and
passions, of erring humanity. From the witch-madness of the Ref-
ormation period it is a long line, but a straight line, that leads to
Strindberg. It is clear from the few quotations from the *Malleus*
which we have given that the problem was not a religious, but a
sexual one under religious disguise; in most of them we see a
subterranean fantasy, completely unrestrained and emphasized by
its religious veneer of sexual unsatisfaction or impotence, saty-
riasis or perversity. This effusion of sex-hatred in such dread-
ful and grotesque forms was one of the consequences of the

AGE

INSON

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MODERN AGE

THE CRISIS OF THE
EUROPEAN SOUL
FROM THE BLACK DEATH
TO THE WORLD WAR

BY
EGON FRIEDEL

Translated from the German by
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Gustavus Adolphus

death of

P4

~~Gustavus Adolphus~~
died 13-20

17th
Century

29 32-44

~~47~~ 47-53

56-62

67-77

236!

240!

246!

247

249! *swallow*

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280 *cf. graph*

282!

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284-287

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316-17

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330, 333-37,

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347-8!

347-9

were crushed under Croat horse-hoofs — for Gustavus Adolphus, cool and steel-hard *Realpolitiker* though he was, had still so much of the romantic, the northern sea-king, in him that, although short-sighted and fat, he invariably fought out the battle in the midst of his troops; so that there came a day when he met his death in the thick of a *mêlée*, just as though he had been a mail-clad duke of the grey Middle Ages. He died not too early to have impressed the world with his superior power, and early enough to be put into Protestant text-books and festival plays as the selfless champion of liberty and faith.

The "Great War," as it was called, has always tempted later generations to indulge in criticisms which, whether favourable or unfavourable, have the common characteristics of complacency and exaggeration. It came to be habitually looked at through a magnifying-glass, and until quite recently its effects have been vastly over-estimated. This was the consequence of relying exclusively on contemporary narratives without taking into account the fact that they were frankly polemical in character and no more represented the real proportions of things than, say, today's descriptions of White or Red rule in individual countries. Moreover, a rage for distorting and puffing out everything to the point of abstruseness or monstrosity was one of the deep-rooted traits of the age. Even that most famous of contemporary documents, Grimmelshausen's *Simplizissimus*, has only the value of a coarse and powerful oleograph, of a fantastic although very impressive caricature, employing the poetic licence naïvely and without restraint to present things in a more compressed form than that which they bear in reality. Further, it was forgotten that this abortion of a war represented no connected action, but an amorphous crowd of isolated war incidents, and, therefore, that only a few districts suffered permanently, most of them only temporarily or at long intervals, and others not at all. It had also no similarity with the wars of today. These have as their most characteristic feature the straining of all available forces to the utmost. But in the Thirty Years' War there was no question at all of bringing in every section of the country, every class of the population, every physical and material means of fighting. The obligation to bear arms did not exist even for the citizens of a beleaguered city. One was a soldier only if one pleased and for as

Exaggerated
judgments

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was now outstripped in this field also by the French manufactur-
ers, with whom she could not compete in either fashionableness
or quality of goods. The Mediterranean traffic too, for which
Germany had provided the natural route to the North, had long
been ousted from its dominant position, partly through the im-
provement in navigation, and the great discoveries, but partly
also by Germany's own fault: for the innumerable customs bar-
riers, with their trickery and extortion, and the many varieties of
coinage made landwise trading a positive torture. The lack of a
uniform currency especially gave rise to a national scourge which
proved more devastating to Germany than the war: this was the
scandalous race, denounced in many a contemporary pamphlet,
of coiners and clippers — "*Kipper und Wipper*," as the papers
called them, appellations as flattering as that of "profiteer" to-
day. It was these elements in the population that were blamed,
and not without some justification, for the general misery. But
the chief culprits were really the various sovereigns. They had
soon discovered that the currency nuisance held a great advantage
for them in that they could enforce the acceptance of their own
baser money at face values, such being the primitive method of
the time for enriching oneself through a government loan. At
first the population raised no objection, for the old full-weight
gold, of which nearly everyone had a store, went up in price. But
in course of time a general crash became inevitable. Smuggling,
receiving, fraudulent barter, and other disreputable practices took
charge of finance; men paid out "light" money and bought good
money much in the manner of speculators on the Stock Exchange
today. The sovereign princes, caught in a vicious circle (for they
were now having their taxes and interest paid to them in their
own bad coinage), resorted to more and more desperate measures.
Finally the coins were made merely of silvered copper, or even
inferior material, and became simply counters. It happened very
much as in our own day, with the difference that they used sheet
metal and not paper. And the appropriate social phenomena fol-
lowed as a matter of course: sudden wealth and extravagant
luxury on the part of the lucky speculators, distress of the salaried
class and brain-workers, poverty of those with small savings,
rapid depreciation of all capital assets, endless strikes, wild
tumults.

The ruin was made complete by the Peace of Westphalia, which reduced Germany almost to an inland country, by leaving her with practically no important river-mouth, that of the Rhine becoming Dutch, that of the Vistula Polish, those of the Oder, the Elbe, and the Weser Swedish. The Baltic was disputed by Danes, Swedes, and Poles; the North Sea by French, Dutch, and English — nowhere was there room for Germany. And at the same time this treaty perpetuated Germany's particularism by granting to all the states of the Empire the *superitas territorialis*, which gave them the right to form alliances among themselves and with foreign powers "except against the Emperor and the Empire" — this reservation being a mere form of words. The Swedish chancellor Oxenstierna, who is responsible for the wise saying: "*An nescis, mi fili, quantilla prudentia regatur orbis?*" ("Do you not know, my son, with how little understanding the world is governed?"), failed, it would seem, to find even that little in the German constitution, for he describes it as a confusion only maintained by Providence. Two hundred years later Hegel, still more candidly, called it a "constituted anarchy."

End of the
Middle
Ages

The Thirty Years' War, kindled originally as a war of beliefs, lost its religious character in the first decade and became ever more and more political as it went on. We have seen that Gustavus Adolphus's chief motive in intervention was in no wise the championing of a confusion. He was pursuing a great-power policy for Sweden, and a further (perhaps a chief) motive for setting himself in opposition to the Emperor's party was the fact that it supported his hereditary enemies the Poles in their claim to the throne of the Vasas. He was made uneasy also by the plans of Wallenstein, who had been nominated General of the Baltic by the Emperor and was using every effort to make this much more than an empty title. Wallenstein, for his part, never once in his whole career gave the Catholic cause a thought. So, too, after the second battle of Breitenfeld the Protestant King of Denmark by his threatening attitude prevented the Swedes from reaping the fruits of their victory. At the Peace of Prague, which occurred about the middle of the war, the Elector of Saxony, the bulwark of the Lutheran cause, went over to the Imperialists. The final phase upon which the struggle now entered was entirely under the influence of France, which continued the war against the

Catholic party by means of the head and brain of the Church, the great Richelieu, the great Richelieu's death his life? Mazarin — likewise a soldier of his "Generalism" of Bavaria, the friend of Faith's sake. And life had forgotten the origin Swedish, Protestants in proved stronger than both activities and relations, the Reformation, now to

And whereas in the sixteenth passions still occupied the out all national, social, and the exact opposite now politicalized, secularized an end.

The first section of the be said to begin simultaneously reaches to about the year pre-Baroque period. In the field of vision, now It is an era of preparatory plan, the first sketch, the The beginning of the sixteenth After the death of Cromwell in 1660; after the death of a self-sufficing personal Pascal. These four dates others of the second ran in history and open another

The central political was to ripen, is the "Moscherosch, the German origin a glorious, magnificent there the Devil cannot

of Westphalia, try, by leaving at of the Rhine se of the Oder, as disputed by ich, Dutch, and y. And at the articularism by *tas territorialis*, long themselves mperor and the of words. The ble for the wise *regatur orbis?* " understanding the d even that little a confusion only later Hegel, still "

a war of beliefs, became ever more n that Gustavus to wise the cham-reat-power policy aotive for setting as the fact that it heir claim to the o by the plans of l of the Baltic by e this much more never once in his . So, too, after the ig of Denmark by from reaping the e, which occurred xony, the bulwark erialists. The final was entirely under e war against the

Catholic party by means of Protestant princes and generals. And the head and brain of this policy was a Cardinal of the Roman Church, the great Richelieu, who therein was carrying out the testament of Henry IV, Most Christian King of France. After Richelieu's death his life's work was continued and completed by Mazarin — likewise a Roman Cardinal. Only Ferdinand II, the soldier of his "Generalissima" the Mother of God, and Maximilian of Bavaria, the friend of his youth, fought for the Catholic Faith's sake. And life passed them by, and in the end everyone had forgotten the origins of the war: Catholics fought in the Swedish, Protestants in the Imperial, armies. The law of the age proved stronger than both parties: the will to secularize all human activities and relations, which we have seen to be the essence of the Reformation, now took possession of the Catholic world also. And whereas in the sixteenth century doctrinal convictions and passions still occupied the minds of men so exclusively as to drive out all national, social, and patriotic considerations and feelings, the exact opposite now took place: all Europe was completely politicalized, secularized, rationalized. The Middle Ages are at an end.

The first section of the genuine Modern Age, which may thus be said to begin simultaneously with the Thirty Years' War, reaches to about the year 1660 and may be described as a sort of pre-Baroque period. In it the new world-picture comes slowly into the field of vision, now too coarse and now too pale in features. It is an era of preparation, in which as it were the provisional plan, the first sketch, the rough draft of Baroque man is conceived. The beginning of the sixties makes a fairly distinct *cæsura* here. After the death of Cromwell comes the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660; after the death of Mazarin, Louis XIV in 1661 becomes a self-sufficing personal ruler; in 1660 Velasquez dies, in 1662 Pascal. These four dates, around which are grouped numerous others of the second rank, but equally significant, close one stage in history and open another.

The central political idea of this era, in which absolutism was to ripen, is the "reason of state," *ratio status*, of which Moscherosch, the German satirist, said: "*Ratio status* is from its origin a glorious, magnificent, and divine thing. But what is there the Devil cannot do? He has joined himself with the *ratio*

The Pre-Baroque

Ratio status

status and turned it upside down, so that it is now nothing better than the biggest swindle in the world, and a ruler who pays his respects to it may do whatever he pleases in its name." And according to another contemporary writer: "It is an eye-powder or dust which the rulers sprinkle in the eyes of their subjects; it is a most superior artifice to keep the common folk quiet." The leading political personage is now the all-powerful minister of state, familiar with every intrigue and feint and finesse of secret diplomacy; in the place of the court theologian we now have the court lawyer, while the other, in so far as he is allowed to exercise any real influence, excels in a peculiarly ugly form of intolerance — most of all, in the Lutheran camp, where he is equally bitter against the Calvinist and the Roman doctrines. The Elector of Saxony's court divine, von Hohenegg, for instance, declared that to take up arms for the Calvinists was nothing but doing knight-service for the original founder of Calvinism — namely, the Devil; that whoever should depart in the smallest detail from the Augsburg Confession was a Syncretist (this being in the eyes of strict Lutherans the most terrific of all reproaches). Even a man of such genuine human piety as Paulus Gerhardt could say: "I cannot consider the Calvinists *qua tales* as Christians." In short the prevailing state of mind was that described by Karl von Hase in his brilliant *Kirchengeschichte*: "In spite of all their subtlety, they really thought of God as a great Lutheran pastor who hit out in defence of his honour." The only exception was Angelus Silesius, originally a Protestant, but later a Catholic. In his *Cherubinische Wandersmann* German mysticism once more unfolded all its profundity and creative power. Yet even this pure, strong-minded thinker, who was able to write: "He who sayeth that God turneth away from the sinner doth clearly show that he doth not yet know God," flooded the world in his last years with bigoted writings, in which he attacked Protestantism with the same narrow and ruthless fanaticism that had so dishonoured Protestantism itself.

It was in those days that the word "political" came to have the subsidiary meaning of wary, cunning, diplomatic, knowing, that it still retains in the popular tongue. A "head for politics" was one that knew how to manage and make use of fellow-creatures skilfully, how to turn everything smartly to one's own advantage, how to insinuate oneself non-committally into

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there was a controversy on the question of whether the coaches of the great ambassadors were to have precedence, even when empty, over those of minor envoys when the latter occupied them in person. And in the Diet there were full houses for endless debates when the envoys of the princes challenged the claim of the representatives of the Electors to the exclusive right of placing their chairs on the carpet in the conference hall; finally it was decided that the former should be allowed at least to place the front legs of their chairs on the fringe of it. Even in the extraordinary twirly writing, too, which looks like nothing but a web of initials, and in the addresses and headings of letters, the character of the age discloses itself. The simple "Sir" no longer sufficed, it had to be "*dem hochwohlgeborenen Herrn Herrn*," and the official manner of addressing the Supreme Court of the Empire at Wetzlar was as follows: "To the high- and well-born, noble, stout, and most learned; likewise the high-born, and high- and well- and nobly born, active privy councillors of His Imperial and Royal Catholic Majesty: the official judges, presidents, and members of the venerable Imperial and Royal Supreme Court of Wetzlar in order appointed; our very dear Sirs, each and every one; also our most honoured and likewise well-beloved and highly esteemed Sirs and Cousins; also our highly and greatly esteemed, likewise especially gracious and most highly esteemed Sirs!" The delight in foreign-sounding, rolled-out forms of speech is seen too in the Latinizing of names — once a mannerism of the Humanists, but now a general custom. "One cannot call a man Roskopf (Horse's head) now; he has to be Hippocephalus, and Schütz is Sagittarius," says Moscherosch. And from this time date all the Textors, Molitors, Fabers, and Sartoriuses who were originally plain Webers (Weavers), Müllers (Millers), Schmidts (Smiths), and Schneiders (Tailors).

On costume the war naturally had a direct influence. Spanish dress, the tightness and stiffness of which has been described in our first volume, was useless for soldiers; and as in those days the military set the tone, dress in general became more comfortable, stouter, and more warlike. Wide sack-like trousers; high spur-clinking jack-boots; immense gauntlet gloves; big challenging felt hats with a flapping plume and a broad brim turned up at one side; flat white turned-down collars, and swords in rattling metal-

mounted baldrics — this is even today by the officials is familiar to everyone from type of novel and opera of the 18th century, and of which Ness be called the most famous way in which the transfiguration succeeded in disguising one of cultural epochs in the gl.

The hair, which had Spanish "millstone" ruff, the moustache was twisted though these disappeared; the object was to appear provocative in pursuit of this end, moustaches were used to enhance the gloom; the ideal was Bramarbas, who Gryphius describes him, in *Horribilicribrifax*; he is "Capitaine Rodomont" (1 — land of boasters and braggarts) in the *commedia dell'arte*. who is in fact the perfectly cowardly, of the type of that with a gigantic rapier; with a terrifying plumed hat; and women, and lopped-off limbs, and kitchen odours, and at least suspicion of a disturbance.

Ladies wore steel-ribbed corset line, which was superseded by the crinoline several petticoats on top of each other. Their hair was divided into bunches of curls. But the details of hairdressing changed on the brow and temples. So also with the corset, at first thick and projecting, and finally the upper lip and finally the

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in ever new colours, forms, and patterns. Immense tulip farms covered the ground in Holland, and amateurs or speculators would pay the price of an estate for a single rare fancy breed. The get-rich-quick people threw themselves into the "option" game: that is, they sold costly specimens, which often existed only in imagination, against future delivery, paying only the difference between the agreed price and the price quoted on settling day. It is indeed the Dutch who may claim the dubious honour of having invented the modern stock-exchange system with all the manipulative practices that we know today. The great tulip crash of 1637, which was the result of all this bubble trading, is the first stock-exchange collapse in the history of the world. The shares of the Dutch trading companies, in particular the East Indian (floated in 1602) and the West Indian (1621), were the first stocks to be handled in the stock-broking manner (their par value speedily tripled itself, and the dividends rose to twenty per cent and higher); and the Amsterdam Exchange, which ruled the world, became the finishing school for the game of "bull" and "bear." Then, too, during the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch were Europe's sole middlemen: their mercantile marine was three times as big as that of all other countries. And although — or indeed because — the whole world depended on it, there arose a bitter hatred against it (contrasting strangely with the extravagant admiration accorded to their manners and comforts) which was intensified by the brutal and reckless extremes to which they went in maintaining their advantage. "Trade must be free everywhere, up to the gates of hell," was their supreme article of faith. But by free trade they meant freedom for themselves — in other words, a ruthlessly exploited monopoly. This was also the kind of freedom that Grotius meant when in his famous treatise on international law, *Mare liberum*, he stated that the discovery of foreign countries does not in itself give right of possession, and that the sea by its very nature is outside all possession and is the property of everyone. But as the sea was in fact in the possession of the Dutch, this liberal philosophy was no more than the hypocritical mask for an economic terrorism.

In this wise the "United States" became the richest and most prosperous country of Europe. There was so much money that the rate of interest was only two to three per cent. But although

table equipment, winebottles, fish, ham, game, and all the other things that served to make existence appetizing for this nation of gormandizers. Apart from such objects, which are all in prolongation of his own personality, the only thing that interests the bourgeois is the anecdote. And so we have juicy family scenes, brawls, records of sport; touching or comic or ghastly character paintings, all with special emphasis on the particular point which has to be made as broad and evident as possible. This is why in Holland the painters who had the greatest success with the public were those clever and banal enough to concentrate on producing a single article. Paul Potter specialized in cows, Philip Wouvermann in grey horses, Melchior Hondecoeter on poultry, William van de Velde on ships, Jan van Huysum on flowers, Abraham van Beijeren on oysters, lobsters, and fruit, Pieter Claesz on fine silverware. In short, the whole art of the brush in the Netherlands, except for the work of a few great ones whom no one understood, was one vast domestic picture-book and family album.

*The
mythology
of the
everyday*

On the other hand, Dutch genre painting has a prodigal variety and richness, a lapidary factualness and impartiality, an impressive brutality and naked self-evidence, an exuberant strength and swelling fertility such as nothing else but Nature herself shows. What this painting described, exclusively, but with the sincerity of ravenous hunger, with a furious seething greed, was life unqualified and unadorned, without moral or fastidiousness, or teleological intrusions, life as an end in itself, one brief self-indulgent moment of effervescing unrestrained vitality.

Art has always an irresistible tendency to try to raise reality to a higher power, to ideology of one sort or another. But these Dutchmen were in a very unfortunate situation. The conventional idealism of the past — the Italian tradition, that is — was repellent to their deepest instincts, and in a cultural world which had the cleric and the pedlar as protagonists it was utterly impossible for them to produce a new idealism out of their own age and for their own people. The only outlet left to them was a naturalism worked up to a dæmonic intensity, and this course led them to the discovery of traits of eternity in the humblest things, symbolism in the most trivial, and divinity in the coarsest. They proved that man can be heroic even while he gormandizes, gets drunk, vomits, or thrusts his hand under a petticoat, provided that it is shown at

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the same time that creative nature is enthroned behind it all in mysterious majesty. By rendering Being in its full and overwhelming *life-size*, they achieved the miracle of creating a sort of mythology of the everyday.

Amidst this diligent noisy crowd there towers one giant, lonely in his supremacy and unrevealed to their earth-bound vision — Rembrandt. As Shakspeare and Michelangelo in their own times, so he also stood, exile and stranger, avoided by all and truly known to none. With Michelangelo he has in common the quality of timelessness: he belongs everywhere and nowhere; for he might just as well have lived a hundred years sooner as an uncomprehended master-creator of the Renaissance, or two hundred years later as a leader of Impressionism. With Shakspeare he has in common the character of anonymity; for he vanishes completely behind his life's work — the variety and profusion of figures that he creates leave the creator's own face indistinct and undefinable. And to both he has the profound kin-likeness that in the art of his last period he loses himself completely in the transcendental and brings forth inscrutable creations to which such crude and banal terms as "realism" and "idealism" are no longer applicable. That art which first he toiled to achieve and then, at the height of his creative power, handled with such consummate ease became at the end of his earthly career transparent to him: looking through it he realized its emptiness, its impotence, its superficiality, and saw that it was not the supreme thing he had all his life imagined it to be; and it fell from him, making room for something more profound, which, however, being no longer quite of this world, eludes men's comprehension.

He was, therefore, as little an expression of his age as Michelangelo and Shakspeare were of theirs; and just as we were forced to assign the rôle of "representative man" to an inferior in each of those ages — in the first to Raphael, in the second to Bacon — so do we select a far shallower master as the hero of this: namely, Peter Paul Rubens. In Rubens the drunken joy of life, the triumphant affirmation of the exuberant present, turned itself into colour. His work is one mighty hymn to the healthy power of enjoyment, the sturdy materialism of the Low-German type of humanity. As a Catholic and a Fleming he coloured and celebrated the double triumph of the Counter-Reformation and of

Rembrandt

Rubens

Dutch commerce in flaming tints, heaped-up measure of composition, and Olympian figures of force. Man, as he sees him, is a sort of demigod, who has descended to earth to give play to his invincible powers and is never ill, never tired, never melancholy, serene in the bloodiest battles, athletic even when a Lazarus — in fact a magnificent beast of prey which hunts, fights, devours, begets, and one day dies ignobly with a roar at the height of its strength. His women are never virgins, never even mothers, but fat rosy pieces of flesh with exemplary pelvises, bosoms, and posteriors, existing solely for the purpose of being flung on to a bed after a savage, lustful struggle which only enhances the enjoyment. A massive revelling in every aspect of dissolute living forms the basic emotion of all his paintings; it is as if they were surrounded by the fragrant brood-warmth of a humming hive or the huge, white spawn-cloud of a shoal of herrings. In form, too, his figures are designed merely to enhance the pomp and the joy of life; they are parts of the *décor*, glowing with colour like rich fantastic tapestries. For the rest, his relation to the world of Classical legend, from which he takes the most elaborate of his allegories, is perfectly cool and academic; it equips him with a vocabulary, and that is all.

In times of economic boom Rubens has always been vastly admired. His buoyant pleasure-loving animality tells of the good conscience that comes with good business, the shallowness of the man favoured by fortune — for Rubens was a child of fortune all his days — and, above all, that profound atheism which was gradually taking possession of Europe and, as Holland was the most advanced country, first reared its head there. Rubens is certainly one of the most irreligious artists who ever held a brush, and for that reason he will always be the idol of those who regard God as tiresome or superfluous. But everyone of finer feeling will, if honest with himself, be forced to confess that in spite of his admiration for Rubens's proportion, his power as a colourist, and his magnificent gift of grasping the outer shell of a man, he was nothing but a royal animal-painter and the glorifier of a steaming super-healthiness which is as irresistible as it is barbaric.

Holland's blossoming was as luxuriant as it was brief, for it could only be a matter of time for the real great powers to drive this insolent parvenu from its factitious supremacy. It was inevi-

table that England in all the North Sea ship hands. It will be remembered with an astonishing survival half of the sixteenth century been stemmed even upon of the narrowest, most positive caricature of kingship by the grace fellow-monarchs. In fact he said that, as God had life and death, and is the power to create and death over them, are responsible to no chess-men and raise Charles I was in magnificent manners, a friend of the arts and sciences James's: the self-conscious Queen, the gentle stiff Prince — and aristocratic colouring.

But Charles I had good ones: he was inclined to straight things. The state after him — very blundering and conceited. It was absolutely implied to everyone, new words to mean their the best fighting method dominate them all. It tonguedness and wicked hereditary perfidy of king stood so high as self anything in his and deeper into the lost the confidence.

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table that England in particular should find it intolerable to have all the North Sea shipping, and even its own trade, in foreign hands. It will be remembered that this country had leapt forward with an astonishing swiftness in all directions during the second half of the sixteenth century, and that the tide of progress had not been stemmed even under the rule of James I — who, though one of the narrowest, most ordinary and incompetent of men and a positive caricature of a king, had so extreme a conception of his kingship by the grace of God as has seldom been seen among his fellow-monarchs. In his speech from the throne on his accession he said that, as God has power to create and to destroy, to give life and death, and is the lord of soul and body, so also kings have the power to create and destroy their subjects, the command of life and death over them, and to direct them in all things; that kings are responsible to no one but God, can deal with their subjects as chess-men and raise or debase them like a coinage. His son Charles I was in many respects his opposite: clever, amiable, of gracious manners, a finished cavalier, and a discriminating patron of the arts and sciences. Van Dyck painted the whole Court of St. James's: the self-consciously elegant King, the decorative dreamy Queen, the gentle stiff princesses, and the anæmic feminine Crown Prince — and aristocratic decadent society in discreetly autumnal colouring.

But Charles I had one bad quality which outweighed all the good ones: he was incapable of speaking a straight word or doing a straight thing. The still popular King Charles spaniels are named after him — very blue-blooded, sensitive creatures, but distinctly treacherous and conceited. And this was the King's own character. It was absolutely impossible to treat with him; he cheated and lied to everyone, never kept his promises, and twisted his own words to mean their opposite. He was so foolish as to believe that the best fighting method was to deceive all parties so that he might dominate them all. It seems that in him this fundamental double-tonguedness and word-breaking had its basis not only in the hereditary perfidy of the Stuarts, but in the conviction that the king stood so high above his subjects that he could allow himself anything in his relations with them. And so, falling deeper and deeper into the net of feints and contradictions, he gradually lost the confidence of the whole country. All the same it is a

For A. H.

tendencious untruth on the part of democratic historians to maintain that his execution was the will of the people. It evoked universal horror and was actually no execution, but a political murder, for the jury that decreed it was legally incompetent to do so and, even apart from that, acted only under pressure.

His position was at first anything but unfavourable. On coming to the throne he was received with acclamations by the greater part of the population, and even when the situation began to be critical he would have been able, by following a fairly reasonable and straightforward policy, to hold his own. The majority in Parliament was invariably on the side of the monarchy, though opposed to absolutism, and even with the lower classes the Royalists always commanded more sympathy than the Independents. But Charles began at once to try to govern in opposition to, and even without, Parliament. He took for his adviser the Earl of Strafford, who—true to his device: “Thorough”—tried by every method of law-twisting and compulsion to create an effectively absolute despotism. And his principal ecclesiastical adviser was Archbishop Laud, whose ambition it was to bring the English Church as near to identity with the Roman as possible—a prospect regarded with horror by most of the population. The revolt broke out, however, not in England, but amongst the Scots. The bitter hostility aroused by the ill-considered attempt to introduce Laud’s liturgy into that country led them to sign a Covenant for the protection of their religious and political liberties. Charles thereupon sent an army against them, and since a mistrustful Parliament would grant him no money for troops, the funds were raised by voluntary contributions among the Royalist sympathizers. The latter, who became known as the Cavaliers, were opposed everywhere and at once by the democratic Roundheads, who, though they did not at first go beyond the idea of a monarchy limited and controlled by Parliament, presently inclined more and more to a republic. And the Civil War became inevitable.

Cromwell

And now there arose out of the darkness the brazen figure of Cromwell, who swept the country like a steam plough at the head of his “Ironsides,” overthrowing everything: King and people, High Church and Covenant, Upper and Lower Houses, Irishmen and Scotsmen. It cannot be said that any one party served him unconditionally during his ten years’ government. The Royalists

hated him as a regicide, the Episcopals as a lukewarm compromiser, the Levellers as a dictator and tyrant. He was a brilliant politician from the standpoint, but always of the given business. Unsurrounded by him, he did not turn himself to them. In a way a organizer, or strategist, known just what people so intend

As a matter of fact, he was to trouble much about what of this gift, as simple as the case with an unbiased man. Cromwellian party, strict he ruled all three kingdoms. A Plantagenet of the Middle Ages only once obeyed an absolute Protector Oliver Cromwell. An external reason: he was an army. But his true inwardness to power: the right neither by solemn Parliament nor people, and yet the best kingship. He was, in plain words—if we look at things from the morals of philistine democracy. He said himself as a king, but as a constant and indeed more than a father for his country than the wisest Tudors, or the pure whole internal administrative tyranny of the Calais, conquered one of the West Indies, and laid a future as the world’s leader.

to doing justice to Cromwell's importance if we read the word "constable" in its modern sense, and see in Cromwell no more and no less than the faithful, tireless, energetic, and common-sense "*Schutzmann*" of his country.

It is an old historical tradition to regard Cromwell as one of the greatest hypocrites and intriguers who ever lived; in fact, as the "prince of liars." To set against this, Carlyle, his chief apologist, declares that he never lied in his life. At bottom both conceptions are right. Cromwell had in his make-up a tendency truly British, a habit of confused thinking, double reasoning, reserve, of ambiguous, much-qualified, and deliberately obscure utterance, and to that extent he was tortuous, curved, and complicated. But a confirmed liar he certainly was not. The Englishman's attitude to truth is, as was pointed out in our first volume when discussing *cant*, not at all plain or uncomplicated, and the solutions of problems to which it leads are never net. And indeed, in general, the relation of the individual nations to "reality" varies very considerably. The Frenchman behaves towards it like an impassioned lover, though one who in his blindness is easily deceived; the German treats it in the manner of a thoroughly honest but somewhat boring and pedantic fiancée, and the Englishman adopts towards it the rôle of the brutal husband, the house-tyrant. The pleasure-loving Frenchman wants pleasantness, whether true or false; the worthy German wants the truth at all costs whether it is agreeable or not; and the practical Englishman decrees that the acceptable is true and the unacceptable false.

*The
Puritans*

In the Puritans, who at that time ruled England, English *cant* reached its peak. They constituted the army, the government, and even the newly-created Upper House. Everyone hurriedly made himself scarce when these ludicrous but dangerous new saints went about snuffling and rolling their eyes, with cropped hair and black clothes, walking slowly and moving deliberately, nosing out dissoluteness, godlessness, and scandals wherever they went. It was, of course, a sin to drink, play, or be noisy; but it was also a sin to dance or go to the theatre, to write love-letters, wear starched collars, or enjoy food; and on Sundays anything and everything was sinful. For on this holy day it was forbidden to water a flower-bed, be shaved, pay a call, or even laugh; and even on Saturdays and Mondays, its near neighbours, it was, to say the least of it,

unwise to do these things. Sabbath betrays the spirit to regard the Puritans as selves in almost every respect themselves after the Israelites. Their conversation bristled with parables; and they thought of their servants, called by him born Canaanites with fire, forced his people into the wilderness, and spread the sliders? They were God-minded Puritans, and even when he was permitted to them heathen and established in Moses, a god of revenge, casting-down of sinners the Gospels with the book already, take its revenge.

Only one branch of the Christians, the Society of Friends, the "Quakers," who settled in America. These people took not of the Old Testament doctrines seriously. They had taken the Commandments, refused to do military service or even the sale of arms, and in a peaceful way without arms. They scorned the regulations of the mother country and were self-satisfied dishonoured. They rejected liturgy and the sacraments of everyday life, address hats to none. And although they retained a certain amount of the most lovable and pleasing confessions.

The poet of Puritanism

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unwise to do these things. This exaggerated sanctification of the Sabbath betrays the spirit of Jewry, and, to be candid, it is difficult to regard the Puritans as a Christian sect at all. They based themselves in almost every respect on the Old Testament. They called themselves after the Israelite heroes, prophets, and patriarchs; their conversation bristled with Hebrew idioms, proverbs, and parables; and they thought of themselves as Jehovah's militant servants, called by him to wipe out idolaters, heretics, and stubborn Canaanites with fire and sword. For had not Jehovah himself forced his people into the true faith by means of plagues and punishments, and spread terror and destruction among the backsliders? They were God's fighters, the chosen people, the right-minded Puritans, and every method of cunning, force, and cruelty was permitted to them in their good cause of overthrowing the heathen and establishing theocracy. Their God was the God of Moses, a god of revenge, of wrath, of merciless justice and tireless casting-down of sinners. So yet again did the unhappy union of the Gospels with the book of the Jews, of which we have spoken already, take its revenge on a section of Christianity.

Only one branch of Puritanism can really be included among the Christians, the Society of Friends of the Light, nicknamed "Quakers," who settled in Pennsylvania along the Delaware. These people took not only the theory but the practice of the New Testament doctrines seriously — as seriously as the Independents had taken the Commandments of the Old Testament. They refused to do military service, to take an oath, to countenance slavery or even the sale of war material, and extended their colonies in a peaceful way without fighting or even exploiting the Indians. They scorned the regulation sermon, which they had learnt to know in the mother country as an offspring of unspiritual routine and self-satisfied dishonesty. In place of it they permitted everyone to speak, but only when moved to do so by the inward light. They rejected liturgy and sacraments and also all the ceremonial of everyday life, addressed everyone as "thou," and took off their hats to none. And although, as a result of their exaggerations and fads, they retain a certain quaintness of type, they are one of the most lovable and pleasing phenomena in the history of Christian confessions.

The poet of Puritanism is the great John Milton, who was at

*The
Quakers*

Milton

reprobate, as the fanatical seventeenth saw him. He neither put up a fight against the persecutions to which he was exposed, nor endured them like a martyr: he simply evaded them in a cool and collected fashion. His father was a Portuguese Jew who, while quite young, had fled during the Inquisition to Amsterdam, where numerous fellow-believers had found asylum. But hardly had the Jewish communities found their liberty in the "New Jerusalem," as they called it, before they began to develop with renewed energy that detestable intolerance which has always been characteristic of their religion, and which unhappily the Christian Church inherited in some degree. The spirit of Caiaphas, which determined the whole history of the people of Israel as long as they had national independence, frequently lost its potency in later times owing to external conditions, but it always came to life again when the Jews attained to power. And so it was on this occasion. The case of Uriel da Costa, who, for his free religious views, was sent to his death by the venomous persecution of the Amsterdam Synagogue, is a tragic instance. Spinoza was then eight years old. Half a generation later he was engaged in a similar conflict himself. His philosophical interests and activities became known, and attempts were made, first to convert him, then to bring him back to orthodoxy by threats. When both methods failed, bribery was tried: he was offered a salary of a thousand gulden if he would remain true to Judaism. Since he was not to be moved even by this, a member of the community felt that murder was indicated. But the attack failed. And now there was no course left to the Synagogue but to excommunicate him. Before the assembled congregation the solemn ban was pronounced, the concluding words being: "Curse him by day and curse him by night! Curse him sleeping and curse him waking! Curse his comings-in and curse his goings-out! May the Lord never forgive him! He will burn with hardness and wrath against this man who is laden with all the curses that are written in the Book of the Law. He will blot out his name from under the heavens." Thus did Jewry treat a man whose whole offence was that he led a more serious, peace-loving, and unworldly life than his fellow-Jews. But, as it had always been a good old Jewish tradition to stone the prophets, there is nothing extraordinary in this, particularly as Spinoza does not seem to us one of the greatest among those sons of Israel who suffered this fate;

for we can only regard him and unique one.

Spinoza himself, through lost his calm. Thenceforward buried in his studies, entirely and avoiding all contact versions and disturbance him at Heidelberg, flatter fame (which, however, on death) rests on his *Theologico-politicus*, the first of the Bible, and on his *E* set forth. Incidentally, 1 this.

Spinoza's system was whimsical style. Because can only be obtained by cided to demonstrate his paragraph starts with th nitions), leading on to the theorems (Propositions) and consequent propositions (Scholia). Thus text-book, and in its content and dry, but forced and

Since God, conclude an absolutely infinite being, he can possess no son and will presuppose must be denied to him. (nothing can exist. Consider God, and we have the the God-Nature all things flows from the nature of angles equals two right freedom: a man who thinks which imagines itself to And as God has no real mark — ends, too, are

for we can only regard him as a curiosity — though a monumental and unique one.

Spinoza himself, through all the screaming of the Rabbis, never lost his calm. Thenceforward he lived in complete retirement, buried in his studies, entirely disinterested and without pretence, and avoiding all contact with worldly pleasures and honours, diversions and disturbances. He declined the professorship offered him at Heidelberg, flattering as were the terms. His philosophical fame (which, however, only became world-wide a century after his death) rests on his *Theologico-Political Treatise* (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*), the first great attempt at a historical criticism of the Bible, and on his *Ethics*, in which his system is exhaustively set forth. Incidentally, no book ever merited its title less than this.

Spinoza's system was built up in a very unusual and somewhat whimsical style. Because he was convinced that certain knowledge can only be obtained by using the mathematical method, he decided to demonstrate his whole system *geometrico modo*. Every paragraph starts with the necessary specification of ideas (Definitions), leading on to the principles (Axioms) which produce the theorems (Propositions). Then follow proofs (Demonstrations) and consequent propositions (Corollaries), and finally the elucidations (Scholia). Thus the whole work reads like a mathematical text-book, and in its content there is something not only archaistic and dry, but forced and artificial.

Since God, concludes Spinoza, can only be comprehended as an absolutely infinite and, therefore, absolutely indeterminate being, he can possess no self and no personality. And as both reason and will presuppose a self-consciousness, both these attributes must be denied to him. Outside this absolutely infinite substance, nothing can exist. Consequently the whole world is identical with God, and we have the famous formula *deus sive natura*. Out of the God-Nature all things are produced as inevitably as it follows from the nature of a triangle that the sum of its internal angles equals two right angles. Therefore there is no human freedom: a man who believes himself to be free is like a stone which imagines itself to be flying when in the act of being thrown. And as God has no reason, he lacks the power to set himself a mark — ends, too, are therefore a human illusion. Values are

equally non-existent, for they define, not the properties of things in themselves, but their effect on us.

In his *Psychology* Spinoza makes *appetitus*, the striving for self-preservation, the basic force in human nature. That which assists in this striving we call good; that which handicaps it, evil. We do not desire things because they are good, but we call them good because we desire them (thus ignoring the fact that all the higher religions, and particularly Christianity, have invariably seen the principle of Evil in desire and the sense-world that is the object of desire). All emotions may be divided into two basic forms, active and passive; the first of these are accompanied by pleasure or joy, the second by pain or grief. Under this classification sympathy belongs to the harmful emotions, because it causes pain; therefore, although we should help those who suffer, it should be done without personal concern and as the result of reasonable judgment. It is the same with repentance; for to the bad deeds, which are in themselves a misfortune, it adds the pain of contrition. Similar non-moral principles are laid down by Spinoza in respect of politics. He says, for instance: "A treaty between nations exists as long as the cause for it exists: fear of shame or hope of gain." But the soul reaches its highest peak in the *amor Dei intellectualis*, the intellectual love of God, which is nothing else but knowledge of the infinite substance — something remote indeed from the love of God as commonly conceived. And since every man is but a portion of the God-nature, God in this love loves himself.

The
equation
of two
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We make bold to declare that the system, of which the foregoing is only an aphoristic sketch, is the work of a diseased mind of marvellous acuteness. Cartesian rationalism was tolerable by reason of its inconsequence; but Spinoza thinks out each idea with such inexorable logic as to annul it: the idea of God ending in naked atheism; the idea of causality in dead automatism; the difference between mind and body in the assertion that there is no relation whatever between them; the desirability of controlling the emotions in the postulate of insensibility; pantheism — the identity of God with Nature — in a hopeless naturalism which completely despiritualizes the world and makes it a ghastly spectral waste. In short, his abnormally consequent thinking abolishes the objects of this thinking, destroys them, disintegrates them,

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not mean to say that Spinoza was actually mad, but only that in him the understanding was developed to an unnatural degree of exclusiveness, one-sidedness, and autocracy. Chesterton writes:¹

"And if great reasoners are often maniacal, it is equally true that maniacs are commonly great reasoners. . . . If you argue with a madman, it is extremely probable that you will get the worst of it; for in many ways his mind moves all the quicker for not being delayed by the things that go with good judgment. He is not hampered by a sense of humour or by charity, or by the dumb certainties of experience. He is the more logical for losing certain sane affections. Indeed, the common phrase for insanity is in this respect a misleading one. The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason. The madman's explanation of a thing is always complete, and often in a purely rational sense satisfactory. . . . His mind moves in a perfect but narrow circle. . . . In the same way the insane explanation is quite as complete as the sane one, but it is not so large. . . . Now, speaking quite externally and empirically, we may say that the strongest and most unmistakable mark of madness is this combination between a logical completeness and a spiritual contraction. . . . He [the madman of experience] is in the clean and well-lit prison of one idea: he is sharpened to one painful point. . . . Materialism has a sort of insane simplicity. It has just the quality of the madman's argument; we have at once the sense of it covering everything and the sense of it leaving everything out. . . . He [the materialist] understands everything, and everything does not seem worth understanding." This characterization fits Spinoza and his system like a glove.

It is this pure rationality in Spinoza, too, that produces that intolerable chill which emanates from his work: not, as some of his admirers would have us believe, the cold of aerie heights, but the cold of the vacuum. We have the austere and comfortless feeling of being somewhere in the vast interstellar spaces — in a medium which permits of no life, no heat, no breathing, no sound, and lets nothing through but the severe light of a distant unknown sun. We freeze when we read in his *Ethics* that nothing could be or should be different from what it is; that all things are equally

¹ In *Orthodoxy* (London: John Lane; New York: The John Lane Company; 1909).

to the sensualism of a humanity that was longing for an outlet for its forces. For the new humanity, once it had come into being, could not in the long run be held down. And yet no entirely clean solution offered itself here. The Church's hereditary enemy was rationalism, and, being unable entirely to eradicate this enemy, it sought to drive it out by that other great power of the age, sensualism, a power dangerous indeed, but less so. Sensualism, accordingly, was to take the place of rationalism, to release it, to redeem it, and in this wise there came upon the scene that strange psychosis that we call the Baroque. The Baroque is no natural and normal reversion to irrationalism, but a shrewdly imagined therapy, a vicarious satisfaction, a provocative exorcism. Incapable of finding the way back to genuine naïveté, men produced within themselves a spurious variety by means of various drugs, opiates, elixirs, intoxicating and stupefying poisons. They did not denounce their reason — that was not in their power — but merely tried to mystify and confuse it, to drown it or eliminate it by a process of refined narcosis. And it is precisely this artificiality which explains the overwhelming and perhaps unique triumph of artistry achieved by the Baroque.

The world-
theatre

The attitude towards colour adopted by the *tenebrosi*, who kept everything down to dusky tones, and the "cellar-peephole-style," which represented everything as though in a dark cellar lighted from above, were typical, not only of the painting, but of the world-feeling and form of life of the entire generation which came after the Council of Trent. Then, all at once, music and decoration, pomp and incense forced their way into the Catholic Church and thence into art. Architecture took on a spectacular, expansive, eloquent, almost chatty character. Arcades and colonnades, loggias and galleries crowded upon each other; twisted and bent columns, daring ornaments and roof-profiles asserted themselves. The form-language could not be ostentatious and insistent enough. The façades, which even in the Renaissance had the appearance of being stuck on, have now the character of magnificent and self-sufficing coulisses: frequently they rise whole storeys higher than the real building. Interior decoration revelled in mirrors, damask flowers, garlands, gilt mouldings, and stucco. It was obviously an entirely theatrical style, but on that very account it was a real style such as had never been known since the

age of Gothic. As in the to one great central purp and vital activities into erish and passionate del stronger than reality; a l whelms, a magic atmo sp and glitter of a more col the theatre, the tendenc separated the arts. Dome like real architecture, an designed to hold sculptu of the plastic monument produce results that ha painting — modelled levi beards, swelling robes, c the sheen of silk and the lost their original functi and trebled, and set in pl and the wall-arches were be an organic part of the were there solely for the three pillars shout loude: split arches are more orig logical or practical scrup whole thing was a theatr dramatic "set" by the air gorges, and wells. And si marble and rigid bronze, appeal and mysterious st lessness rather than una flung themselves with sp works, which — built of r and form — freakishly el producer of this theatre v tor, poet, master-mechan became, through his inex and dauntless imaginati zarrerie) upon a relentless contemporary Europe.

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age of Gothic. As in the theatre, so here, everything is subordinate to one great central purpose, which like a tyrant draws all the arts and vital activities into its dominion. Every pore exudes the feverish and passionate determination to create a fantastic illusion stronger than reality; a hypnotic fascination which grips and overwhelms, a magic atmosphere which bathes everything in the scent and glitter of a more colourful, more aromatic world. And, as in the theatre, the tendency was to erase the boundary lines which separated the arts. Domed ceilings were painted to look incredibly like real architecture, and the light and shade effects of the niches designed to hold sculpture in a building became an integral part of the plastic monument itself; fragile stone was called upon to produce results that had hitherto hardly been expected from painting — modelled levin-bolts, light-rays and flames, fluttering beards, swelling robes, clouds of the sky and waves of the sea, the sheen of silk and the warmth of flesh. Pillars and architraves lost their original function of carrying: the pillars were doubled and trebled, and set in places where they had nothing to support, and the wall-arches were broken in the middle. They were not to be an organic part of the building, or even to pretend to be so, but were there solely for rhetorical effect and noisy decoration; and three pillars shout louder and more vigorously than one, just as split arches are more original and striking than closed ones. As to logical or practical scruples, no question could arise, since the whole thing was a theatre. Even nature was staged, made into a dramatic “set” by the aid of artificial rocks, waterfalls, fountains, gorges, and wells. And since in every case (even in that of cold marble and rigid bronze) artists strained to enhance emotional appeal and mysterious stage effect, by suggesting melting formlessness rather than unambiguous and powerful contours, they flung themselves with special passion on waterworks and fire-works, which — built of materials perpetually changing in colour and form — freakishly eluded all attempts at fixation. The gifted producer of this theatre was Cavaliere Bernini. Architect, sculptor, poet, master-mechanic, and scenery-designer all in one, he became, through his inexhaustible wealth of ideas, his grandiose and dauntless imagination, and his insistence (for all his *bizarrerie*) upon a relentlessly uniform style-will, the art dictator of contemporary Europe.

Exaltation,
extrava-
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Visibly, it was all an extreme reaction against the Renaissance. There the ideal had been *gravità riposata*, here it was unrestrained (in many cases artificially decontrolled) passion, movement, and exaltation. In architecture and sculpture, in painting and ornamentation, in creative and in imitative minds, we constantly are met by gusts of this rushing, rustling, snorting, and yet languishing, swimming, and soaring quality. This art had neither the dignified aloofness of the High Renaissance, nor the gentle persuasiveness of the Early Renaissance, nor the reverent self-absorption of the Gothic: it carried on an undisguised propaganda, declaiming, shouting, gesticulating with such passion and even shamelessness that protests could not even be heard. It was always relentlessly bent on giving to the utmost extreme of its power. Whether it represents the adoring, affectedly humble upward gaze of yearning, contrite figures, or renders the visionary spasms of an ecstasy amounting to hysteria, or ruthlessly pictures reality in its most monstrous and terrifying forms, always it is the exaggerated and the exorbitant, shrillness and glare, at which its productions aim. It seizes with ardour on the very material which the cool æstheticism of the Renaissance had disdained: the sick, the defeated, the outcast; the old, the decrepit, the worn-out; the ragged, the weather-beaten, the deformed; death, skeletons, and corruption. It shows humanity howling, grinning, trembling, writhing in contortions and convulsions; it likes extravagant, ugly things because they are stronger and truer. And whereas it was the profound determination and highest aim of the Renaissance to define and make clear, to harmonize and order, the new art takes the most elaborate pains to spread around its creations the perfume of perpetual yearning and unfulfilment, the charm of enigma and confusion and dissonance. The triumph of its artistic achievement is that it pressed into its service even light — that dividing and clarifying power which, from time immemorial, has been the interpreting medium of all the arts — for by the indefiniteness with which it carried out its transitions from shade to light, by the emphasis it laid on the indefinable aura which envelops all objects and thus all contours, it is able to generate opaqueness and vagueness and to raise the mixing of colours to the level of a mystical art — one of the most forceful and revolutionary acts that the history of Sight has to show.

At the same time it sphere of sultriness and figures were clothed, but more suggestive than they had been merely anatomical became endowed with a there breathed much was arranged as to appear to sensuality was concentrated intermingled. Art revelled in wounds. The sweet eroticism, algolagnia, combined in that bizarre expression in Bernini's something else, will always be comparable only to that of the most subtle illusions. profoundly religious; yet footlights is inseparable from the arrangement of theatre and religion by those who serve it seriously and religion, on its ritually in presentation of God's grace.

There will always be more than the Baroque. These consider that a work of art can be as many assume that a picture is incomprehensible. matters of taste, on which is sensible. One thing does, however, contrary is maintained: more than that of the Renaissance movement would have soundest century had been accustomed of unnaturalness, pervading matter, in the eighteenth century, was almost synonymous with coarse, inartistical notation of art terms, the

at the Renaissance. It was unrestrained in movement, and painting and ornamentation were constantly at hand and yet languished and neither the dignified the gentle persuasive self-absorption of propaganda, declaimed and even shameless was always relentless power. Whether the hard gaze of yearning ecstasies of an ecstasy of reality in its most exaggerated and productions aimed at the cool æsthetic, the defeated, the ragged, the sordid, and corruption. It writhing in conglomerate things because of the profound defiance to define and art takes the most he perfumes of perfume enigma and constructive achievement is dividing and clarifying as been the interdefiniteness with light, by the envelops all objects of opaqueness and to the level of a revolutionary acts

At the same time it imparted to everything a general atmosphere of sultriness and tension — in fact, of latent eroticism. The figures were clothed, but the clothing, by its concealment, was far more suggestive than the nakedness that preceded it. Man, who had been merely anatomically beautiful in the Renaissance, now became endowed with a sexual beauty. Under the decent draperies there breathed much warmer flesh. At times the covering was so arranged as to appear to be ready to fall off; at times again, all the sensuality was concentrated in the face. Cruelty and lust were intermingled. Art revelled in scenes of bloodshed, in martyrdom and wounds. The sweetness of pain was glorified. Finally eroticism, algolagnia, and yearning for the supernatural were combined in that bizarre mixture which found its most powerful expression in Bernini's St. Theresa, a work which, apart from anything else, will always be memorable for the sublime art — comparable only to that of the stage — by which it is made to express the most subtle illusions. There is no doubt that the conception is profoundly religious; yet the impression of secret make-up and footlights is inseparable both from the composition as a whole and from the arrangement of every detail. But why, after all, should the theatre and religion be irreconcilable? Is not the theatre, for all who serve it seriously and devotedly, a sort of religion, and is not religion, on its ritually impressive side, a sort of *theatrum Dei*, a presentation of God's greatness?

There will always be some who place the Renaissance higher than the Baroque. These are predominantly the people who consider that a work of art can only be called noble if it is dull, just as many assume that a philosophical work can only be profound if it is incomprehensible. They forget that here we are dealing with matters of taste, on which an impartial judgment is almost impossible. One thing does, however, seem to us irrefutable, often as the contrary is maintained: namely, that Baroque art is more natural than that of the Renaissance. Only a few decades ago this statement would have sounded like a bad joke, for the nineteenth century had been accustomed to think of the Baroque as the extreme of unnaturalness, perversity, and distortion — just as, for that matter, in the eighteenth century, Gothic was practically synonymous with coarse, inartistic, barbarous. In this change in the connotation of art terms, there lies a whole history of æsthetics, and

Natural
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The name given to this spoken singing — which was a decided improvement on earlier vocal styles in point of naturalness and clearness, since it followed the normal accent of the words — was *stile rappresentativo* or *stile parlante*. By 1607 opera had advanced a stage in Monteverde's *Orfeo*. Here the recitative is more animated and the rôle of the music becomes much more independent, both the interludes and the tone-colour effects being handed over to it as its particular function. The opera of that day also owes to this its finest master the introduction of the duet, the invention of the tremolo for the violin family, and the *leitmotiv*, which appears in the very first of his operas.

In outward splendour the operatic performances of the Baroque outshine those of all their successors. One beheld the goddess of Dissension with her dragon-steed and Pallas Athene in her owl-drawn coach floating through the air, Jupiter and Apollo enthroned in the clouds, and the ship of Paris steering through waves and storms; the underworld belched forth spirits and monsters from its red jaws; horses and buffaloes, elephants and camels passed across the stage; bodies of troops (often several hundred strong) filed past, delivered battles, battered fortresses; and the heavens, with sun and moon, stars and coloured comets, played their parts almost without intermission. Bernini, master of all these arts, once staged the Castle of S. Angelo with the rushing Tiber, full of boats and people, in the foreground. Suddenly the dam which divided the river from the stalls burst, and the waves swept towards the audience with such violence as to start a panic. But Bernini had calculated to a nicety that the water would stop short of the front row. Another time he put a brilliant carnival procession on the stage with masked dancers and torches at its head. A part of the wings caught fire and everyone began to rush away. But at a given signal the flames were extinguished, and the stage was transformed into a blooming garden in which a fat donkey placidly grazed. It is by such grotesque and glittering devices as these that we may gauge the jaded taste and excessive demands of theatre audiences in those days.

The opera soon became the queen of the age. In 1637 the first public opera-house was built in Vienna, and by the year 1650 there were already four in that city. In 1627 the first German opera — likewise called *Daphne* — appeared; it was the work of Heinrich

Schütz, the most important of the composers of the time. The text was personally — by that pontiff of the aria detached itself from most completely, its sing- to utter occasional cries and so on. Innovations, h with unmixed approval; w Maria Artusi, a contrap- *della moderna musica*) muses, who merely make mitted to write and what r

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Schütz, the most important forerunner of Bach and Handel, and the text was personally — very personally — adapted from Rinuccini, by that pontiff of German literature, Opitz. Gradually the aria detached itself from the recitative, the chorus withdrew almost completely, its singers becoming mere supers who had only to utter occasional cries such as: "*Viva!*" "*Mori!*" "*All' armi!*" and so on. Innovations, however, as in our own day, did not meet with unmixed approval; we read in the work of the canon Giovanni Maria Artusi, a contrapuntist to the bone (*Delle imperfezioni della moderna musica*) that "the new composers are ignoramuses, who merely make a noise and do not know what it is permitted to write and what not."

The summit of the Early Baroque is seen in Spain. Here again is a proof that a wave of political and economic prosperity is by no means always the essential preliminary to high artistic development. For, to the Spaniard, the seventeenth century signified the loss of his country's position as a world-power and its complete economic ruin. And yet he called it — and rightly — *el siglo de oro*, the golden century. Philip II, whom we have already studied at close quarters, was succeeded, at the turn of the sixteenth century, by the phlegmatic, flabby Philip III, of whom his father is reputed to have said: "God, who has given me so many kingdoms, has denied to me a son capable of ruling them; I fear it will be they who rule him." The aimless and corrupt domination of favourites under which his government suffered became even worse with his successor, Philip IV, whose interests were the pleasures of love and the chase, though drama and painting were included in them also. This incapable and indolent form of *étatisme* (which took care to suppress every independent movement on the part of both town communes and country population) and the universal corruptibility, lack of enterprise, and protectionism led to a complete decline of the nation's economy. In the end the State was reduced to the desperate measure of promising hereditary nobility to every field-labourer; but even this proved fruitless, for work was a disgrace to the free-born Spaniard. The impolitic and inhuman oppression of the Moriscos has already been mentioned; in the year 1609 it culminated in their complete expulsion, with a literally disastrous effect on the home industries. Similar results followed the enforced emigration of the Jews to Holland, where they played

*El Siglo
de oro*

D. 7

new power. In the towns — which was than in Spain — classes fell into a ly difficult to col- also were involved ht to see the royal o the poor at the little sheep's-milk diet; he could but odrida soup, con- jacon. There were of any sort. Only rgeoisie were able books as a strict of the Inquisition cused man should e door was opened iniation. A wide- mia, which was in ry-side. In spite of ong high and low, ie manufacture of Drunkenness alone rd of abuse "bo- only be avenged by ion of honour was of the Spanish na- assionateness, and is familiar to all nost movingly de- ope de Vega says: ers; no one is hon- r that he receives penhauer's defini- ers as to our value It is very typical rds that — despite itself preferable to

an unavenged insult — no offence could come from the king. This is illustrated in a number of famous dramas, as, for instance, in Zorilla's *Del Rey abajo ninguno*; here the idea actually gives the work its title, which substantially means that no man below the king may insult another. The king's word had also the power to restore anyone's injured honour.

Not only the villages, but also the towns consisted of mud houses — palaces and public buildings excepted. There were no pavements, and for sole illumination there were the little oil-lamps under the Madonna shrines. Cleanliness was hardly better than in Russia, the dirt of Madrid being indeed proverbial. Post-coaches were unknown, and inns were in such a miserable condition as simply to be undeserving of the name. There was no question of anything like an organized system of information or public safety or suchlike things. And yet life was not without colour, poetry, and gaiety. The numerous religious feast-days brought with them their magnificent processions, in which Church and court displayed the splendour of their power; there were rollicking national festivals, too, imposing bull-fights, and, above all, dramatic performances such as could be seen nowhere else in the world. And even the poverty of everyday life was seasoned by perpetual love-intrigues, jests of both grace and gallows-humour, and the intoxicating perfume of gardens and moonlit nights, which cost nothing.

The crown and summit of this strange world is represented by a race of glossy, melancholy drones — the Grandees — who often lived in great poverty, but even then wore their threadbare *capas* and ever-ready *espadas* with an air and dignity that have remained proverbial to this day. Their pride did not abate even before the king, in whose presence they remained covered. Velasquez has preserved for us the tired, well-bred hauteur of their anæmically pure blood, the devitalizing exclusiveness of their class-consciousness, their mentality become all mask and form, with the same incomparable skill as that shown by Titian in delineating that very different type of self-consciousness which characterized Renaissance man. And woman, at once queen and slave of this Christian-oriental world, petrifies completely into a doll. Every facial emotion is hidden under a thick layer of white of egg and sugar, and the lower part of her body is covered by an

End of
17th
Ch. 11

Queens
without
legs

s a *guardia de vertu*. When
 a Spanish city, and the
 tion of costly silk stock-
 ing them down indignantly,
 the queens of Spain have

society raised a character-
 l *Oraculo manual y arte de*
 her Balthasar Gracian in
 man by Schopenhauer. In
 leave others in uncertainty
 nor agreeable to show your
 appear that there is some-
 "keep people hoping, but
 untenance extravagant ex-
 ceak like the many"; "in-
 negligence is at times the
 of triumphing over your
 yourself, the unpopular
 come a sinking sun, drop
 neither wholly to yourself
 tyranny." And at the close
 ig résumé: "in a word: be
 everything. There are three
 ppiness: *santidad, sanidad,*
 1)."

re that Calderon's marvel-
 ning colour-orgies of deco-
 :ulejos, remind us of that
 y. The wooden sculptures,
 a their glaring paint, natu-
 s, crystal eyes, crowns of
 ents, tears made of glass
 ooth the coarsest waxwork
 ysterious, suggestive effect
 lting, again, Ribera's mas-
 n, and Zurbarán's simple
 accomplished creations of
 ention Murillo—who yet

throughout the nineteenth century counted as the greatest Span-
 ish painter—is almost blasphemous. His art, with its artificial
 perfume and its billowy clouds, has the silky optimism and the
 cheap *élan* of the popular virtuoso whose success with the larger
 public is unfailing; and his famous scenes of Spanish peasant life
 are just pleasing bits of opera and glazed idylls, which flatter the
 philistine with highly coloured misrepresentations of reality that
 show only too clearly why this artist became the idol of the mid-
 dle classes. Murillo is the Spanish Raphael; true, but it is charac-
 teristic of seventeenth-century Spain that it regarded as most rep-
 resentative, not the shallowest of its leading artists—as (we have
 had to admit) Italy did in the case of Raphael, and the Nether-
 lands in that of Rubens—but the most profound: namely, El
 Greco.

El Greco lived in Toledo—a city which, though its death-
 agony was setting in precisely at that very time, was still the
 proud home of the Inquisition and the Councils—and it was the
 soul of Toledo that he painted: the triumph of the world-church
 of Rome and the dying pomp of the world-dominion of Spain.
 But it is not this alone which gives his pictures their incomparable
 power; it is above all the complete detachment, unreality, and
 transcendence which breathe from every one of his figures—
 their blanched air, their strangely contorted and elongated bodies,
 their eyes of visionaries initiated into the higher mysteries, and
 the quite unnatural (indeed definitely magical) foreshortening
 and light-distribution. Gravitation, likeness, perspective—these
 things and their like seem to us, as we stand before his paintings,
 immensely secondary and insipid—even false. This "Greek"
 did not paint the truth—the "suspicious truth," as Calderon's
 forerunner Alarcón calls it in the title of one of his plays—and
 for centuries he was regarded as a fool because he realized that
 reason was foolishness, as the "court jester of humanity" that
 Calderon represents him to be. But on that very account he stands
 along with Loyola and Don Quixote as the most powerful expres-
 sion of the Spanish Baroque.

It is not yet the time to write anything really comprehensive
 about the Baroque; but certain features stand out clearly even
 now. The Baroque is, like every self-contained world-outlook, an
 attempt to get even with reality and to reconcile its conflicting

*The three
 therapies
 for
 Rationalism*

years, he was condemned to great physical suffering, which he bore with the noblest patience and composure, almost with serenity. A chronic victim to colic, neuralgia in the head, inflamed gums, and insomnia, he yet denied himself every form of comfort, waited on himself entirely, and even took in an invalid pauper and nursed him. He praised God for his illnesses — for, as he said, to be ill was the only condition worthy of a Christian — and had a positive dread of becoming healthy again. And his sufferings did in fact raise him to heights which are barred to ordinary mortals; endowed, so to say, with weightlessness, he was able to lead a magical, mystical existence in the midst of the profane and greedy world of Mazarinian France and the hard daylight of his rationalistic century. His last years are bathed in an ethereal, astral glow.

Pascal's philosophic method is embodied in the sentence: "One must be three sorts of a man: mathematician, sceptic, and devout Christian." He arrives at belief — and this is the noteworthy and typically contemporary thing about him — not by way of dogma, but of scepticism. He shows too — in direct opposition to Spinoza — that mathematics does not destroy faith, but founds it. It might be said that for him religious truths hold the same position as higher mathematical truths: inferior understanding may consider them nonsensical as long as it fails to grasp them, but from the moment that it does grasp them it is bound to recognize them as essential, proved, and irrefutable.

It is this that the *Pensées* — which may fairly be taken as the profoundest book in French literature — set out to expound. They deal with the "study of man." For Pascal the scientist the human soul is one large field of experiment and he approaches it with the most subtle precision-instruments of analysis; exposes its most secret and delicate, its darkest and most contradictory impulses; measures its heights and its depths; illumines and fixes its most fluid nuances. In short, he applied to psychology the theory of probability of which he was the founder, and, just as he was the first to measure air-pressure, so now he was the first to weigh the apparently imponderable and to make it an object of exact examination. The final result is, all the same, a vast "*amas d'incertitude*." "For what, after all, is man in the midst of nature? A nothing, set against the infinite; a world, set against nothing; a middle thing between nothing and everything. He is infinitely remote from

Pascal's soul-anatomy

much noise and glitter have now sunk into nothingness, under the ban of oblivion, if not of contempt and ridicule. In short, we shall have to take to heart the lesson that all great things are unprofitable, and no profitable things great, and that true world-history consists in the action of a few unworldly dreams, visions, and delusions.

The miracle to which we allude, a sort of second order of creation, was brought about all unconsciously by a poet-weaver in concepts, a shy aristocrat: the *Chevalier René Descartes, seigneur de Perron*.

The golden age of man, at once grandiose in mind, who united the detestable qualities of the ages of iron and of gold, the real founder of Bourbons, the greater part of the fortune of Henry IV was due to the fact that he was a fortunate man than gifted, on the other hand the great craft and violence to which he was indebted who at first acted as a puppet, Louis XIII himself — of value in him except for his superior mind — as a conclusion that the imperial policy was not really centralized which strive for economy, art — around a profound knowledge of the age, lay the secret of the age, the dying, bourgeois liberalism, only effective vehicle of the feeling of the age; the first of modern political ideas of the greatest and on the other hand, far from being history as conceived in the ordinary profane his-

CHAPTER II
LE GRAND SIÈCLE

"Aimez donc la raison!"

Boileau

Richelieu

The golden age of France begins with Richelieu. This statesman, at once grandiose and unworthy, fertile in ideas and narrow in mind, who united in himself not only all the admirable and detestable qualities of an eminent politician, but also all the shining virtues and ugly vices of his race, is generally regarded as the real founder of Bourbon absolutism; and in fact he did contribute the greater part of the imposing edifice that the gifted and unfortunate Henry IV had begun and which Louis XIV, more fortunate than gifted, had only to complete. When we remember on the other hand that he not only employed every method of craft and violence to oust Marie de Medicis, the Queen-mother, who at first acted as regent for her young son, but also treated Louis XIII himself — a pathological ne'er-do-well with nothing of value in him except his blind submissiveness to the Cardinal's superior mind — as a dummy in king's clothing, we arrive at the conclusion that the impulse which stimulated Richelieu's powerful policy was not royalism, but that typical French will-to-centralize which strives to organize everything — State, Church, economy, art — around one single shining centre. Therein, in this profound knowledge of the national character and the tendency of the age, lay the secret of his success. Aristocratic feudalism lay dying, bourgeois liberalism was not yet in its birth-pangs, and the only effective vehicle of power therefore was the Crown. This was the feeling of the age; and this was what made Richelieu one of the first of modern politicians — in a double sense, alike one of the greatest and one of the earliest. To call him modern is, of course, far from being a compliment according to the spirit of history as conceived in this work, but it is certainly one in terms of ordinary profane history. He understood what mankind in his

As a matter of fact, in the beginning the tendency was towards the very opposite: towards simplicity, artistic frugality, tasteful reserve; *ordre, économie, choix*, were the fundamental qualities demanded by good form. In sum, in the age of Richelieu we already sense all about us the cool and bright, thin and pure air of the *grand siècle*.

Mazarin

When Richelieu and the King died, at almost the same time, it was once more a foreigner — Anne of Austria — who acted as regent for her son, a minor, and once more a Cardinal who had the real governance, though this time not as an enemy of the Queen, but as her lover. Apart from that, Mazarin was more or less a weaker double and understudy of Richelieu. But his outward success at any rate was almost greater than his predecessor's. He completely crushed the insurrection of the Fronde, in which the feudal elements made their last stand against the exclusive power of the throne. He secured for France, by the Peace of Westphalia, the long-coveted Rhine frontier; by the Peace of the Pyrenees he on the one hand made good the Pyrenean frontier, and on the other acquired, in the possession of certain very valuable south Belgian fortresses, a strong sallyport into the two Netherlands. He created the Rhenish league, which, completely under French influence, turned west Germany almost into a Bourbon protectorate; and he formed advantageous alliances with Sweden, Poland, Holland, and England. In short, France at that time reached a height of diplomatic power which was never, even under Louis XIV, regained. And yet with it all he seems but a genre figure beside the great Richelieu. His insatiable avarice, for instance, was grotesque enough for Molière; no means of satisfying it was too vile or too adventurous. At the time of the Fronde, when bitter pamphlets against the unpopular minister poured in great numbers from the press and were eagerly bought, he had them all confiscated and then proceeded to sell them in secret himself at high prices. Even on his death-bed he occupied himself with weighing gold pieces with the intention of using the lighter ones at cards.

The
Cartesian
Age

This was in the year 1661. After Mazarin's death it was thought by many that a third prince of the Church, the talented, intriguing Cardinal de Retz, would be promoted to the position of ruler of France, but to the general surprise the twenty-three-

year-old monarch ruled. On that day tall the height of Cartesian age.

The life of the *grand siècle* owes i to the tremendous ran on very unass went through the he attended the Je tary service in Ge grimage to Loret in complete seclusi centre of the world his comprehensive desire whatever f "Savages," he w monkeys could sp they should be for up writing, therel might have had if as possible to do w turbing element, a with the ruling p based on the helio Galileian) theory, become involved by Superficial minds truth and persona man never ceased to Roman Church, a existing order of t blood. And as rega to be able to devel them to the world a that he did not eve:

Yet even in his and disciples from in the mathematica

the tendency was towards artistic frugality, tasteful the fundamental qualities of the age of Richelieu we already thin and pure air of the

at almost the same time, of Austria — who acted as a Cardinal who had the as an enemy of the Queen, Mazarin was more or less a Richelieu. But his outward than his predecessor's. He of the Fronde, in which the against the exclusive power by the Peace of Westphalia; the Peace of the Pyrenees he mean frontier, and on the certain very valuable south into the two Netherlands. completely under French into a Bourbon protector- nces with Sweden, Poland, ce at that time reached a never, even under Louis seems but a genre figure able avarice, for instance, means of satisfying it was of the Fronde, when bitter ster poured in great num- bought, he had them all them in secret himself at- cupied himself with weigh- using the lighter ones at

Mazarin's death it was the Church, the talented, promoted to the position surprise the twenty-three-

an-old monarch announced that now he himself was going to On that day begins the age of Louis XIV, which we may all the height of the Baroque or, most accurately perhaps, the Cartesian age.

The life of the remarkable man to whom really the spirit of the *grand siècle* owes its form stands apparently in utter contradiction to the tremendous effect that it produced, for outwardly its course ran on very unassuming and almost conventional lines. Descartes went through the normal upbringing of a nobleman of the time: he attended the Jesuit school, became a licentiate of laws, did military service in Germany, Bohemia, and Holland, and made a pilgrimage to Loretto. The last twenty years of his life were spent in complete seclusion in the Netherlands, his only contact with the centre of the world — the Paris of Richelieu and Mazarin — being his comprehensive correspondence. He felt, as he said himself, no desire whatever for fame, rather indeed a positive dread of it. "Savages," he wrote to one of his admirers, "maintain that monkeys could speak if they wished, but deliberately refrain lest they should be forced to work." I have not had the wisdom to give up writing, therefore I have no longer the peace and leisure I might have had if I had kept silence." He wished to have as little as possible to do with the world, which was to him merely a disturbing element, and he therefore avoided every kind of conflict with the ruling powers. His work on the *Cosmos*, which was based on the heliocentric (though as a matter of fact not on the Galileian) theory, he suppressed when he learnt how Galileo had become involved by his new theory in differences with the Church. Superficial minds have tried to ascribe this to a lack of will-to-truth and personal courage, but they forget that Descartes the man never ceased to be an aristocrat of France and son of the Holy Roman Church, and that in refraining from tilting against the existing order of things he was but following the voices of his blood. And as regards the rest, it was of more importance to him to be able to develop his great thoughts unmolested than to show them to the world amid molestation and controversy; so much so, that he did not even desire a following.

Yet even in his lifetime he could not prevent both opponents and disciples from swarming about him. For his achievements in the mathematical and physical sciences alone were sufficient to

*The magic
cross of
co-ordinates*

create for him a world-wide reputation. He discovered the law of refraction of light and the function of the crystalline lens in the human eye; he solved the riddle of the rainbow, and his theory of vortices, by which he sought to explain the movements of astronomical bodies, carried great weight in his day, although now discarded in the light of later research. His greatest work was, however, the founding of analytical geometry, by which it became possible to express the properties of every plane curve in an equation whose main constituents were formed out of two variable quantities, the co-ordinates. This was not only a perfectly new, and in the sequel extraordinarily fruitful discovery; it was also something of far greater importance: namely, nothing more or less than a giant's effort to apply algebra — that is, pure thought — to geometry; which means the use of real existence to discover the attributes and laws of existence of actual things *before these things themselves exist*; the capture of reality in a permanently fixed network of lines with reference to which it must orient itself, and from which it can at any time be defined and foretold — a supreme victory of rationalism over matter, even though it be only a fictitious one. Cartesian man holds up the *magic cross of co-ordinates* before irrational reality, and so turns it into his spellbound servant. The symbolical significance of this is incalculable: it contains the key to the whole of French Baroque.

Deductive
man

After mathematics it was the turn of metaphysics to develop its propositions deductively from principles known immediately and self-evidently. Everything is true that I “clearly and distinctly” represent: we can, therefore, draw conclusions only from that which we either are able intuitively to know of ourselves, or can with certainty deduce from such knowledge. It is in a strictly tested and ordered series of such progressive and discovering conclusions that the Cartesian method consists.

The principle at the top of Descartes's structure reads as follows: everything is doubtful, *de omnibus dubitandum*. Those sense impressions from which we construct our world-picture do certainly deceive us sometimes, and perhaps always. All the same, even in case we were justified in doubting everything, one thing would remain quite indubitable: that is, this very doubt of ours. Even though all our conceptions may be false, there is a positive

remainder in the fact that everything be an error; even though I deny it. In this manner, the point *de omnibus dubitandum*, or — since all doubt is immediately produced by *cogitans*, by setting up whose existence is doubted — the existence of his spirit. Descartes, is divided into two parts: the mental quality is extended in thought. The body without thought: *me* and *tu* are two curious conclusions of his age: first, that man is not the necessary cautioner of his own error; clearly and distinctly error is his own fault; the proper use of the divine thinking substances cannot think, the human body is in communion with the soul, and no soul of any sort automata.

Let us try to gain a clearer insight into the Cartesian method expressed in a particularly emotional language. The Cartesian method is a strict method of passionate belief in it as a logical master-key: this method, the “truth” is the cardinal conviction that the dominating life-process, of the Leibniz and Napoleon, to the Cartesian method. It dissects the truth under examination, deductively, following the

discovered the law of
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w, and his theory of
movements of astro-
nomy, although now dis-
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So, there is a positive

remainder in the fact that they are conceptions; even though
everything be an error, the existence of our error itself is no
error; even though I deny everything, I am still the I who
denies. In this manner Descartes arrives direct from his start-
ing-point *de omnibus dubito* at the conclusion *dubito ergo
sum*, or—since all doubt is thought—*cogito ergo sum*. But
he immediately proceeds to identify this with a third, *sum
cogitans*, by setting up the hypothesis not only that man is a being
whose existence is distinguished by its thought, but that the whole
existence of his spiritual half consists in thought. The world, for
Descartes, is divided into two substances: bodies, whose funda-
mental quality is extension, and spirits, whose essential attribute
is thought. The body is never without extension, the spirit never
without thought: *mens semper cogitat*. This leads Descartes to
two curious conclusions, strikingly characteristic of himself and
his age: first, that man, if he applies the Cartesian method with
the necessary caution and only agrees with that which he has
"clearly and distinctly" recognized, can never be in error, that
error is his own fault into which he falls only when failing to make
proper use of the divine gift of knowing; and, secondly, that as
thinking substances can never be extended, extended ones never
think, the human body is a machine which has nothing in com-
mon with the soul, and animals, since they do not think, have
no soul of any sort and differ in no wise from complicated
automata.

Let us try to gain a closer view of this philosophy, which Des-
cartes expressed in a crystal-clear and at times almost dramati-
cally emotional language. The first fundamental trait that we per-
ceive is a strict methodic of all-round application and, with it, a
passionate belief in its power to win victories. There is a method,
a logical master-key: he who owns it owns the world; if I have
this method, the "true method," I have the whole thing—such
is the cardinal conviction of Cartesianism, and it develops into
the dominating life-passion, determines the whole future evolu-
tion-process, of the Latin soul from Descartes, by way of Voltaire
and Napoleon, to Taine and Zola. This method is the analytical
method. It dissects the given reality, or such of its sections as are
under examination, first of all into its "elements," and then de-
ductively, following the "right" way, gets back to it. It corrects

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strikes six or seven. He goes, in his logical course, even further still and declines to place even human sensations among the spiritual processes; for him they are likewise mere phenomena of movement. The passions are only false judgments, confused, incorrect, obscure notions; and there is therefore no justification for their existence, and they can and must be conquered by reason, reason being the faculty of "clear and distinct" conceptions. We recognize here the habit of mind — akin to that of the Greek Stoa, but adjusted to the point of view of the man of the world — which hovered over the seventeenth century as an ethical ideal: that of the man who has tamed and rationalized all his instincts by the clear methodology which has become his *life-form*; who looks down upon everything that is the outcome of elementary instincts and the unregulated sphere of the will as uncivilized and plebeian, tasteless and barbaric, unphilosophical and unæsthetic; who feels everything not subject to reason to be subaltern and in bad form. But already the eighteenth century is heralded in the conviction that everything that conflicts with reason represents an unripe moral formation and an aberration of nature, destined to be overcome in the course of progress.

The soul
without
brothers

In each individual province the Cartesian system did no more than draw logical conclusions from its supreme principle of *cogito ergo sum*. From thought Descartes extracted the fact of the human ego and of the whole world. It is true that when Gassendi argued that man could draw conclusions as to his existence from any of his other activities, and say, for instance: "*Ambulo ergo sum* (I walk, therefore I am)" Descartes quite rightly replied that man could only be assured of the fact that he was walking by his conception of that fact; that is, by thinking he was walking. But he brought thought and existence not merely into such a relation of major and minor premiss, but also into that of identity, by establishing that the being of the mind consisted solely in thought, and that things thought were therefore the only reality. If, for instance, Gassendi had challenged him with the maxim: "*Volo ergo sum* (I will, therefore I am)," on which Schopenhauer's philosophy takes its stand, Descartes would not have been able to produce the same rejoinder; for even if I become conscious of my will only through my imagining it, the question still remains, may not this will nevertheless be the origin of my existence? Through

the fact of my thought reality Descartes turn He was nevertheless fu the great philosophers i the voice of their time epoch to a system. And vined that only the activity: "*Quod nesci* Cartesian Geulinx. Onl a soul must think: "I Malebranche.

This mind, which Cartesianism presents, tion into which any being. It is out of the pure thought that Descartes sum. Man, as he conc with his *cogito*, his nol fying, which builds up and nature; world- astronomies, physics; virtues. Yet at bottom perhaps unaware of it thinks and thinks, is; but only the thought of what is real (or at an curve, but the general; conceptions have less what guarantee have not a dream? "When a single characteristic the waking conditions I am completely at a loss at this moment." Here true Baroque philosophy to a reality of the second in hypothesis — as a direct distrust of the world too, in combining wit

complaining
to himself.

The life of the court was one long repertory piece, always the same, which began at eight in the morning and ended at ten at night, only to begin all over again next day. But, what is more, the life of all France was a similar comedy. It took an amazing amount of self-control and self-denial to carry out the ticklish, exhausting title-rôle of the hero in this comedy, but Louis XIV solved this difficult problem with such consummate mastery that we do not

Louis XIV was detestable. For his portraits he posed as a magnificent equestrian statue. He wished to be presented as a horse which is in the attitude of a sculptor Girardon carved for Louis XIV a statue for his fatherland — a statue which ruins the work from that manner, however, the king was always tactful, always smiling and angry only in the presence of the *Tonans*. With women, he was a courteous and a lowliest kitchen-maid. He was humiliated and of refusal of delicacy is seen in his attempt to find asylum with his mother. He treated him as a sovereign and he made himself King of the shield, according to the king. On one occasion he threatened to flee from the temptation of state and had insulted him. When he was in battle, once said to him: "I should no longer need to be a king." "I should be sorry for that," he said and made him a handsome

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de l'esprit rests in "thinking nobly and delicately," that cunning and treachery arise solely from ineptitude, and that the surest way of being deceived is to believe oneself more artful than other people. A large number of his *bons mots* are distinguished by extreme delicacy, as, for instance: "It is a greater disgrace to mistrust our friends than to be deceived by them"; "To be in too great a hurry to clear off a debt is a sort of ingratitude"; "We are easily consoled for a friend's misfortunes when they give us an opportunity to show our love for him." This blending of frivolity and nobleness, harsh materialism and sensitive tactfulness, makes La Rochefoucauld the finest bloom of all the intellectual flora which sprang to life around Louis XIV. His saying: "Ridicule is more shaming than shame," mirrors the whole world of Versailles with all its light and shade, and he once summed up the whole of this culture in the words: "Every member of every class of society adopts a particular look and posture which shall make him appear what he wishes to be regarded as; we may say, therefore, that the world is made up of nothing but attitudes." And in fact we scan this race in vain for faces and spontaneous movements; wherever we look there is nothing but pose and gesture.

The Allonge

The costume of the period illustrates this very clearly. It is exclusively for salon wear, designed for parade occasions, for persons perpetually "on show." The doublet disappears under the *justaucorps*, a richly embroidered gala coat, reaching to the knees, with wide sleeves, long cuffs, and enormous buttons. Ladies wore the full robe with tight bodice, a train — whose length might be six to forty feet according to the wearer's rank — and the *cul de Paris*, a padded bustle suggesting abnormal development behind. Boots gave way to buckled shoes, and gloves of fine white leather were indispensable for both sexes. The chief article of external apparel was, however, the *allonge* or large state wig, which was introduced in 1625 and universally worn by 1655. As the chancellor von Ludwig said, "it made men like lions," and that is why light brown or blond was the favourite colour. At about the same time there vanished the last indication of a beard, the "fly"; and all the world went clean-shaven. The feminine counterpart to the *allonge* was the *fontange*, a towering head-dress made of lace, ribbons, ruchings,

and false hair, which five feet.

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It was commonly held that the wig owed its origin to Louis XIII's baldness, and that the ladies, not to be left behind, seized upon the *fontange*, and that after that all Europe followed suit out of servility. Now, nothing could well be more feeble and incorrect than this. First of all, as we have just seen, it was not France that led the fashion in Europe at that time, but Holland; and, above all, a nonentity like Louis XIII was the last man likely to impose a costume on his generation. The cultural beginning of France set in only with Louis XIV, and he personally fought against the wig for many years — having fine long hair of his own — and first mounted one in 1673. Indeed, no monarch can ever create a fashion; he can but experiment with it and make himself ludicrous by so doing. The beard of the cut known as "*es ist erreicht*," and the Austrian "imperial," only labelled their wearers as travelling wine-merchants and members of veterans' societies. The "Emperor Frederick" beard, on the other hand, which was no whit more ornamental, did not degrade, because it really happened to be the fashion that the spirit of the age demanded. It should also be remembered that the wig was at no time designed for the concealment of a lack of natural hair, like the present-day toupet, but was from the first an *article of dress*, adorning and completing the outward appearance in the manner of a plumed hat or scarf. Finally and emphatically, it would be idiotic to try to trace the cause of such a universal phenomenon as the wig to the bald head of an individual contemporary.

For the wig is the deepest symbol of seventeenth-century humanity. It enhances and it isolates (we shall see presently that these were the two underlying tendencies of the age); moreover, it imparts style, and that by its very unnaturalness. It was, for that matter, no novelty in history. The peoples of Hither Asia were familiar with it, and so above all were the Egyptians — they also a people whose culture was based on a supreme style-instinct, and who even used artificial beards. The same spirit of abstraction which created their pyramids and sphinxes insisted upon erections of elaborately plaited hair and square-cut beards made to hang on. The shallow nineteenth century regarded Egyptian art as primitive; nowadays we begin slowly to realize that in comparison

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had as many as three hundred coffee-houses, and already special rooms were reserved for play, billiards and ombre being the favourite games. On the other hand smoking was allowed only in the less polite establishments. It may even be said that coffee then played an even bigger part as a universal tonic than it does today. It is indeed very typical of that naturalist age, for it represents a stimulant that produces what may be called a *sober intoxication*. Voltaire, for instance, was a confirmed coffee-drinker. He may or may not have put away fifty cups a day, or rather a night, as he is said to have done, but he was certainly incapable of living and working without the beverage, and the effect of it is clearly seen in his nervous, transparent, overwrought, and, as it were, over-exposed manner of writing. Besides coffee there were other new foods and drinks. Fruit ices; sparkling wine (not yet, for a century, called "champagne"), the production of which only became possible with the introduction of corking; and chocolate, the favourite Mexican drink, to which Europe only began to accustom itself after someone had conceived the idea of sweetening it — poverty-stricken Spain in particular found in this a popular form of nourishment, and often enough the people's meal would consist of it alone. Yet this tea, coffee, and chocolate did not drive out alcohol. The Germans were still famous or infamous for their reckless drinking, and French and English did not lag far behind, whereas the southerners remained (as ever) relatively moderate. Finally, the fork, whose appearance, or non-appearance, has been noted from time to time, became recognized as a useful implement. From being mocked at as "affected" by the satirists of the first half of the century, it established itself at the French Court about 1650, and thenceforward it was generally accepted. Up till then meat had been conveyed to the mouth either by hand or — as was thought more elegant — by the knife. Another new custom was the taking off of hats. Previously the head-covering had been either not touched at all in greeting or had been merely pushed back on to the neck. On the score of cleanliness much was lacking even in the highest circles, and in this respect one perceives a definite set-back. The public baths, which existed everywhere in the declining Middle Ages and even at the Reformation, now disappear completely, and there was an almost entire lack even of private bathing-facilities. The toilet consisted normally of dipping

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— the perturbations of the elliptical paths of the planets, the inequality of the moon's motion, the ebb and flow of the tides. But Newton was too profound a thinker to draw materialistic conclusions from the results of his researches. It was precisely this admirable ordering of the universe that confirmed him in his belief in a divine founder and controller. He even tried his hand at theology and wrote a treatise on the prophet Daniel and the Apocalypse. In his last years he gave himself up almost exclusively to religious problems. Neither the almost superhuman achievements of his speculative powers, nor the extraordinary number of honours bestowed upon him in recognition of these during a long life, could rob him of his modesty. "*Evangelij simplicitatem moribus expressit*," runs the inscription on his tomb in Westminster Abbey.

England at this time held the leading place in scientific development. Cromwell's system had crumbled at his death. The son of Charles I returned from banishment and ascended the throne as Charles II, amidst general rejoicing. He displayed a great interest in science, was a member of the Royal Society (to which the most prominent national scientists of the age belonged), busied himself with astronomy, and founded the famous observatory at Greenwich. He was tactful, good-natured, sociable, and extremely intelligent; his urbanity went so far as to lead him, after the night of his last battle with death, to make his excuses to those around him for being such an unconscionable time in dying. He danced, played ball, or told anecdotes, brilliantly; was a great patron of the arts, particularly the drama; but with all his amiable (and in some respects dazzling) qualities he remained internally a cold and soulless being, idle, frivolous, and entirely unprincipled, intent on nothing but the satisfaction of his ever-present unslakable thirst for pleasure. He even visited Parliament solely for amusement, and was wont to say that a political debate was as entertaining as a comedy. The licentiousness of his court was a byword in London, and it was not without an undertone of contempt that his people nicknamed him the Merry Monarch. One day, when the Earl of Shaftesbury waited on him, he remarked, smiling, that here was the most dissolute of all his subjects. "True, Your Majesty; of your subjects," replied Shaftesbury.

Though anything but a revengeful fanatic, Charles was equally

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far from possessing noble and passionate convictions. He had nothing of the senseless despotism-mania of the Stuarts, but neither had he any of their lively ambition. He regarded himself neither as absolute monarch by divine right, nor even as the responsible director of the nation's destiny. At bottom he was nothing. He was a man of peace, but purely from indolence; tolerant, but from superficiality. He had but one passion, and that the most harmless — and the lowest — namely, love of money. For money anything could be obtained of him: alliances, changes of faith, concessions to party despotism, concessions to the people's liberty, edicts of toleration, deeds of terror, declarations of war, or peace-treaties. He sold Dunkirk, his neutrality, his allies, his royal privileges, whatever was demanded of him. His extravagance only applied to his loose and vulgar amusements; when it was a question of reasonable sums for the upkeep of the State he was stingy. His officials followed his example and were of a corruptness hitherto unknown in England: the ministers in particular made vast fortunes in their official capacities. In other respects, too, his reign was unfortunate: there occurred, for instance, the unheard-of thing that an enemy fleet — the Dutch under Admiral de Ruyter — swept up the Thames and threatened England with invasion. Then a new and terrible outbreak of plague devoured the country, and a monstrous fire laid the whole city of London in ashes. It was precisely at that time that the doctrine of "passive obedience," advocated earlier by Filmer, won general acceptance — that the king has the power of a father over his children, he was responsible only to God and not to his subjects, who would not be justified in offering resistance to any manner of treatment the monarch chose to adopt. Yet never has such absolute subservience been rendered to a prince who desired it less, wanted it less, and knew less what to do with it.

The
"Glorious
Revolution"

Charles II was succeeded by his brother James II, a zealous partisan of the Romanism to which Charles only confessed his adherence on his death-bed, and of the autocracy which he had shown no inclination to assume. The new King possessed all the bad, but none of the good, qualities of his predecessor, for he was malicious, stupid, and obstinate. Men of other faiths and political opponents he treated with cruel severity. He was supported by Judge Jeffreys, a grotesque monstrosity of a brutal, bloodthirsty

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drunkard, who is still execrated in England today, after over two hundred years, for his misdeeds; it was his boast that he had had more traitors executed than all his predecessors since the reign of William the Conqueror. James II was apparently a sadist like Henry VIII and also sexually perverse in other respects: he took only mistresses of exceptional ugliness. One of them, Catharine Sedley — who was witty into the bargain — once remarked that she did not know what he found in her to attract him: it could not be that he saw any beauty in her — since she had none — or any intelligence — since *he* had none. His method of argument was to meet all objections by repeating his own statement in the same words, believing that he had thereby won the debate. His daughter (later Queen Anne) did precisely the same, and Marlborough said she inherited it from her father. Here, however, as she was a woman, it is perhaps hardly necessary to bring in heredity as an explanation.

After he had for three years done everything possible to embitter even the most devoted and patient of his subjects, there came the "Glorious Revolution": his son-in-law William of Orange was unanimously summoned by Whig and Tory alike to take the throne. To reconcile the right to revolt with the duty of passive obedience was a simple matter for English "cant." The theologians explained that, although religion forbade any opposition to the king, the Commandments were not valid for every occasion: in certain cases it was permissible to put them aside. It was forbidden to kill, yet this general law allowed of exceptions in war; similarly, it was forbidden to swear, yet witnesses were bound to take the oath in court in the interests of truth. In the same way it was lawful in certain instances to resist godless princes: examples of this were to be found in the Old Testament itself. Others pointed out that it was not the people who had risen against James, but James who had risen against God, whose laws he had broken; that it was he who had failed to render unto Cæsar that which was Cæsar's. In spite of all this, however, William of Orange would not have reached his goal had he not had a most effective ally in James's own incredible narrow-mindedness and tactlessness. The new King's foreignness and sober reserve were not calculated to make him much more popular with the English than his forerunner; all the same, the complete devotion of his wife who as

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James's daughter was in the nation's eyes the really legitimate ruler of England, made his precarious position easier, and in addition he was one of the greatest diplomats and generals of his time. As a Dutchman — and such he remained all his life — he recognized in Louis XIV the hereditary enemy. He therefore effected a complete change in English policy — which, on account of Charles's perpetual need of money and James's absolutist and Catholic tendencies, had till then stood under French influence — and brought into being that great coalition against France of which we have already spoken.

In the externals of civilization England was at that time little more advanced than the other countries of Europe. We have seen something already of the deplorable condition of the communications. Travelling by coach was slow and dangerous on account of the swamps, and costly on account of the strong teams required. The only way to make speed was to ride. In the towns streets were almost too narrow for carriages to pass, and goods were accordingly carried chiefly on go-carts, drawn by dogs. On the other hand, the inns were famed all over the world for their excellence, and letters were safely conveyed with a degree of punctuality and speed that was very striking in those times. The nobility still lived for the most part as country gentry in quite peasant-like conditions. Some idea of the lighting arrangements outside the capital may be gleaned from the fact that, as late as 1685, a private contractor named Edward Heming undertook for an annual sum to keep a light before every tenth house in London up till midnight. Most houses in the country were still built of wood, and the rooms had neither wall- nor floor-coverings and were painted with a mixture of lamp-black and beer. Strong beer formed the usual drink of the country gentleman. How customary it was to take on board quantities of liquor is vividly illustrated by the fact that an order of the time forbade courts martial to pronounce a death sentence except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 1 p.m. Obviously, the theory was that after dinner the gentlemen would be in no condition to assume the responsibility of so grave a decision. The men had few intellectual pursuits, their principal occupation being hunting, gambling, and politics. Women's education was on a still lower plane and showed a great falling-off in comparison with that of the ladies of Elizabethan times; for, whereas many of the latter

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London was, however, containing half a million, all England — while Norwich, had not quite the Great Fire the city was original and softened more imposing and far no less than politically a vassal state of France. (Theatrical manager, reformer, and abolitionist theatre in the (considerable use of music plays as "dramatic operations.") John Dryden, Boileau, Corneille, and cleverly calculated to Dr. Johnson said of his bricks and left a city of spere's coarse bricks have the empty and unsolid Rymer, William's history monkey knew more about taste than Shakspeare, a growling of a dog there Shakspeare's tragic pathos

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London was, however, by this time already a real capital, containing half a million people — the tenth part of the population of all England — while the two next biggest cities, Bristol and Norwich, had not quite thirty thousand inhabitants apiece. After the Great Fire the city was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren in an original and softened Renaissance style, which made it both far more imposing and far more comfortable than of old. Artistically, no less than politically, England was at this period more or less a vassal state of France. William Davenant, dramatist and theatrical manager, reformed the stage by creating a pompous illusionist theatre in the Classical taste of Louis XIV, with a considerable use of musical aids. (He even arranged Shakspeare's plays as "dramatic operas" with numerous musical interpolations.) John Dryden, the poet laureate of the day, emulated Boileau, Corneille, and Racine in a cold but brilliant art of verse, cleverly calculated to please the public taste of the moment. Dr. Johnson said of him that, like Augustus, he found a city of bricks and left a city of marble. But in the course of time Shakspeare's coarse bricks have proved more beautiful and lasting than the empty and unsolid marble splendour of Dryden. Nevertheless Rymer, William's historiographer, asserted at the time that a monkey knew more about nature and a baboon possessed more taste than Shakspeare, and that in the neighing of a horse or the growling of a dog there was more living expression than in all Shakspeare's tragic pathos.

The Puritans had always looked askance at the theatre, and eventually they had put a ban on it. On the return of the Stuarts a reaction naturally set in. Not only did the people throng to all the public amusements that had so recently been scorned; they also insisted on their being as riotous and licentious as possible. Not only were the old prudery and bigotry shaken off; but honourable conduct and piety were looked on as a sheer disgrace and the surest sign of hypocrisy. In consequence of this, English comedy took on some extraordinary forms. Women, who even in the gay Elizabethan age had not been allowed to appear as actresses, now took over the female parts, and it became a great

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pole-axe in his moral lectures.

In this period also occurred the first rise of the state of Bran-
denburg-Prussia, which the Great Elector elevated to a Euro-
pean power. By pursuing a policy both shrewd and perfidious he
freed the duchy of Prussia from the overlordship of Poland, and
by overthrowing the Estates — a process attended by great brutal-
ities and illegalities — he established unlimited monarchy in
his lands. For the external security of his government, and for
protection against the ever-present threat of Sweden — then a
great power — he created the standing army, the miles perpetuus.
He constructed the Friedrich Wilhelm Canal, which connected
the Elbe with the Oder; organized his own posting system, which
was far quicker than that of the Taxis business; improved the
fiscal and educational system; established the university of Duis-
burg; promoted agriculture, cattle-breeding, and the reclamation
of marshland; enlarged and beautified his capital (amongst other
things by the Schlossbibliothek and the avenues of trees in front
of the Schlossbrücke, which received the name: "Unter den Lin-
den"); ran a small navy (which, however, went to pieces under
his successor); and even founded a trading colony with a fort on
the Gold Coast of Guinea. In his religious policy he was guided by
the greatest tolerance. Himself a member of the Reformed Church,
he extended complete freedom, not only to Lutherans and Catho-
lics, but also to Socinians and Mennonites, and his Edict of Pots-
dam invited all who were persecuted to come under his protection.
As a consequence of this the Huguenots in particular came into
the country in great numbers, and rendered highly valuable serv-
ices as engineers and architects, merchants and financiers.

Frederick William was doubtless one of the strongest political
personalities of his age. But the whole age was very fruitful in
outstanding personalities. One of these — and the chief — was
Prince Eugene, who, though originally destined for the Church on
account of his insignificant figure and shy manner, became one of
the most brilliant generals of his century. His victories at Zenta
and Peterwardein, Blenheim and Turin, Oudenarde and Malpla-
quet roused the astonishment of all Europe and had the result of
securing to the Habsburg monarchy Italy and the Netherlands,

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swamp motives, these, that now obtain the mastery, while the fine earlier forms begin to dissolve in an aristocratic decay. Over all there is the soft cool breeze of evening, the fading blue and tender rose which herald the close of the day. A grey autumnal mood is settling upon humanity and is reflected in the faded tints of its external covering, which, for choice, was of honey-yellow and tea-green, dark grey and pale red, violet and brown. This decadence-style *par excellence* is weary, toned down, anæmic, and, above all, feminine: affectedly infantine and naïvely obscene, as a woman is; veiled and boudoirish; perfumed and painted; satiny and sweet-toothed; without masculine depth and worthiness, but equally without virile heaviness and pedantry; lightly poised as if dancing, and so achieving the miracle of an architecture that almost defies the laws of gravitation; for ever ambiguously smiling, but seldom with a whole-hearted laugh; amusing, piquant, capricious, epicurean, witty, coquettish; full of anecdote, short story, and point; chattering and open-minded, sceptical and popular, with the atmosphere of comedy, theatrical and yet domestic: even the caryatids of the age, such as Frederick the Great, Bach, and Voltaire, were in a sense genre figures of more than life-size.

This late Baroque has indeed an intimate character which the High Baroque never possessed. It is in the best sense a tapestry style, which sets out purely to please, to decorate and refine, and regards violence of expression as not only vulgar, but inconvenient. The characteristic building to which invention and care were devoted was no longer the pompous palace, but the *petite maison*, the small pleasure-house, furnished with all the charms of a luxury of intimacy rather than display, and, as compared with the preceding architecture, having something discreet, reserved, and personal about it. Under Louis XIV men lived only in public: that is, for and by reason of the court; they counted only when they appeared before the King and as long as they continued so to appear. For that reason every vital manifestation, from a profound thought to a graceful bow, was designed for parade and calculated for the effect it would make at Versailles. Now, however, fifty years of gala performances had left them weary, and they began to appreciate the joys of retirement, of letting themselves go, of belonging to themselves, of the *petit comité*. The very

names of these villas — *Érémite, Monrepos, Solitude, Sans-souci* — are an index to the change in taste. Gone are Jove-like aloofness and heaviness of line; their aspect is now gracious, unconstrained, hospitable. In the rooms within there are no longer the stiff ceremonial chairs with high, hard backs, or the imposing decorative pieces of heavy material, but comfortable upholstered chairs, sofas with silken cushions, and small white lacquered tables with fine gold lining. Even such quiet effects as these were further toned down by replacing the gold with silver, or shading it to mat; here as in all else the positive was avoided and preference given to broken, fading, mixed colours and delicate materials such as rosewood, violet-wood, tulip-wood. The items of the inventory begin to wear the subjective stamp of their owners and to serve their personal aims. A host of new articles of furniture, expressive of the new mood, came into fashion about this time. There was the *boîte à surprises*, a secretaire with cunningly contrived secret drawers and surprise mechanisms, and the lady's writing-table prettily called "*bonheur du jour*." All the objects in daily use were impregnated with scent, and enamelled perfume-pans filled the apartments with exquisite odours. The leading artists took an interest in every one of these details and were able, by bringing them all into harmony, to create a finely graded atmosphere of artistic satisfaction and comfort. Watteau painted fashion-plates and shop signs, and Boucher designed headings for note-paper, menus, and business papers.

Pastel and
porcelain

A special note of these Rococo interiors was the predominance of pastel and porcelain. Indeed, no kind of painting could have expressed so well the intellectual attitude of this whole period — its delicate, fleeting, pale, expiring character, so well attuned to a soft velvet background — as the pastel, even apart from the fact that it is a medium particularly suited to the intimate portrait. European porcelain was first manufactured in 1709 by the Saxon Johann Friedrich Böttcher, whom Augustus the Strong kept in captivity for himself as his alchemist; and, as it turned out, this discovery of his did in fact develop into a sort of gold-making, for the new material made a conquest of the whole continent. The Meissen factory, which was founded shortly after, supplied everyone with cheap, handsome, and practical eating-utensils and drove not only earthenware and pewter, but even silver from the table.

The classic maker of Kändler, whose enameled size birds, monkeys, and As for Augustus the that he sacrificed half with porcelain. In Vienna in 1718, but the Gern in the Sèvres factory, England Josiah Wedgwood him, using it chiefly for Finally all Europe was only candlesticks and inlays for furniture and more than life-size this sort of thing was proper paths of a variety the nature of its material the soul of the times; that it did in the Rococo dinary and exclusive fragile, and demure art

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The classic maker of German porcelain was, however, Joachim Kändler, whose enamoured shepherds and shepherdesses and life-size birds, monkeys, and dogs were the delight of the elegant world. As for Augustus the Strong, he was so obsessed by his new craze that he sacrificed half his fortune to it and filled a whole castle with porcelain. In Vienna, too, a fine porcelain-factory was opened in 1718, but the German manufactures had a powerful rival later in the Sèvres factory, built on the initiative of the Pompadour. In England Josiah Wedgwood invented the material named after him, using it chiefly for masterly reproductions of Classical vases. Finally all Europe was seized by a veritable mania for china. Not only candlesticks and lustres, clocks and stones, flower-pieces and inlays for furniture were made of it, but whole rooms and coaches and more than life-size monuments were formed out of it. All this sort of thing was of course merely the diversion into inappropriate paths of a very subtle art that, so long as it respected the nature of its material, was a vital and pregnant expression of the soul of the times; the reason why it found the eager response that it did in the Rococo soul was precisely that it was so extraordinarily and exclusively suited to the polished, coquettish, select, fragile, and demure art of miniature.

Before Böttcher's discovery porcelain had been imported from China, and even after it Meissen goods were for a long time exhibited for sale as Chinese. And this was not merely a business trick, but a prompting of the instinct of the age. China was, to the Rococo mind, the pattern country of wisdom and art. In the beginning of the century "*Chinoiserie*" — Eastern pictures, vases, sculptures, wall-papers, lacquers, and silks — came into vogue. Novels transported the reader into that fairy realm in which a happy, serene people enjoyed a blissful existence under learned governors; historians, with Voltaire at their head, extolled China as an *El Dorado*, pre-eminent in morals, religion, and administration; pagodas and tea-houses, bell-pavilions and hanging bamboo bridges appeared in the gardens; and even the pigtail is traced back to Chinese influence. The peacock, too, which just then enjoyed great popularity, has something Chinese about him, as well as being a thorough Rococo bird — decorative, bizarre, self-satisfied, and theatrical, Sunday-afternoonish, and domestic as well.

Chinoiserie

in by the barbed wire fence of Latin learning in the Renaissance, were thrown open for general use in the eighteenth century and publicly set out for the entertainment, refreshment, and instruction of all: of nobility and bourgeoisie, of man and wife, of clergy and laity. The People are still not admitted; not because they are despised, but from a still more curious reason — namely, that the fact of their existence has not yet been noticed. But there will come a day when this stratum of society also makes use of these gardens, and a strange use it will be: it will neither cultivate them to the greater glory of God like the Church, nor extend, enrich, or carefully divide them into lots like strict science, nor transform them into a general place of amusement as the philosophers did for society, but will plunder and demolish them. It will use the material collected there, first as a wooden sword with which to threaten its opponents, and finally as a mass of combustible material with which to set the world in flames.

Love as
amateur
theatricals

Seeing that this age knew how to turn even science and philosophy into highly select stimulants, to be swallowed like a gum-tickling *apéritif*, it goes without saying that it was equally well able to deal with all the other aspects of life. There was but one desire, to make life an uninterrupted round of pleasure. "For safety," as Madame de la Verrue said, "we get in our paradise on earth." Moreover, one insisted on having one's fun without paying for it: the fruits of riches without the trouble of working, the glitter of an influential social position without its duties, the joys of love without its pains. Therefore the grand passion was avoided, and even branded as not *chic*, and only the sweet frothy cream of love was tasted: one was always amorous, never seriously in love. "We take each other," wrote Crébillon *fils*, "without loving; we leave each other without hating." Love and hate were passions, and passions were uncomfortable things, besides indicating a lack of *esprit*. Love was to be enjoyed without much fuss, like a tasty bonbon which soon melts on the tongue and is only there to be followed by a second of a different flavour.

Eroticism became a graceful society game, which imitated love in an amusing way and was subject to definite rules. Love was turned into an *amateur stage*, a mapped-out comedy with everything foreseen and prearranged — the casting, in which the lady always receives the part of the capricious mistress, the man that of the

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wart, thus making of every woman a *belle-vilaine* and endowing
her with a new and perverse charm — it was, in fact, one more
trait of morbidity. Later on, the stage of sheer bad taste was
reached, in giving the *mouche* the form of various stars, crosses,
and animals, and edging it with diamonds. The majestic *fontange*
had dropped out as early as 1714; by about 1730 the *crapaud* or
hair-bag had supplanted the wig, which had been growing steadily
smaller since the beginning of the century: men's locks were now
tucked away in a little bag which was tied up with a coquettish
silk bow. By the middle of the century (earlier in the case of the
army) the pigtail (*la queue*) had become universal. Powdering,
which was indispensable for well-groomed people, whether they
wore real or false hair, was an extremely laborious performance.
Usually the powder was flung up towards the ceiling and allowed to
float down on to the head, the face being protected by a cloth.
Prince Kaunitz used to walk through a double row of lackeys
whose duty it was to powder him as evenly as possible. Count
Brühl owned five hundred wigs, which were all kept permanently
powdered — "a lot for a man without a head," was Frederick the
Great's comment. Faces, too, had to be kept under a heavy layer
of powder.

The Rococo powder, like the Baroque *allonge*, was no freak of
fashion, but the most eloquent symbol of the age. In the Rococo a
man past forty had done with life, and a woman far sooner. Mar-
riages were earlier than at the present day. Girls often married at
fourteen or fifteen, youths at twenty. In his letters Voltaire calls
himself an old man from his forty-fifth year on. His friend the
Marquise du Châtelet felt that she cut an impossible figure when
at forty she found herself expecting a child. Standards such as of
this kind may and do undergo great transformations, but all the
time the spirit of the age, whatever it may be, is their foundation.
As late as the end of the nineteenth century a woman of thirty
acted as chaperon at a ball; now she takes dancing-lessons at fifty.
In the French dramas of morals of the eighties the philosopher who
looked on at life and love with the eyes of a resigned observer was
seldom over forty; the modern films like to make the unprincipled
seducer a man of fifty. The Rococo felt itself to be old, while at
the same time it was filled with the desperate longing of life
for the youth that is vanishing, and that is why it eliminated

Rococo's
tragic
mask

artificial flowers, and occasionally with hand-paintings. On the dress of the Queen of Portugal, for instance, could be seen the whole story of the Fall, complete with Adam, Eve, apple-tree, and serpent. Gradually the crinoline, which by 1720 had taken possession of Europe and was worn by peasant women and servants as well as by society ladies, grew to so colossal a size that its wearers could only enter a door sideways. Equally uncomfortable was the preposterously high-heeled shoe, which made walking almost impossible. At home and in intimate circles the crinoline was replaced by the "Adrienne," a loose, voluminous garment, but this also was worn with a tightly laced bodice. At the beginning of the century it became the custom for ladies to carry gracefully beribboned walking-sticks. Another indispensable item in the coquette's battery was the fan, which only now came into its own with the introduction of the folding variety. Another new discovery was the umbrella that could be folded up (this was the *parapluie*; the fixed sunshade or *parasol* was somewhat older). The whole costume was copied exactly for the children, who not only wore hair-bags and panniers, patches and fancy swords, fans and three-cornered hats, but painted and powdered, curtsied and kissed hands, like the little ladies and gentlemen that they were.

We find it delightfully comic that the figure on a monument is made to hold some object suggestive of the late lamented's sphere of activity, such as the scroll of the poet, the wheel of the inventor, or the telescope of the nautical hero. By analogy we might regard some particular utensil as peculiarly representative of each culture-period: the man of the dawning Modern Age might be represented with a compass, Baroque man with a microscope, nineteenth-century man with a newspaper, the man of today with a telephone. For Rococo man this symbol would be a mirror. This article accompanied him through his whole life. The reception-rooms of the period were filled with full-length Venetian panels which confronted the visitor with his own complete image. Small pocket-mirrors were introduced into all kinds of articles of daily use, and the glittering light of chandeliers and lustres was reflected in the looking-glasses of every shape and size which hung on the walls. There were even rooms — the extremely popular "mirror cabinets" — that were completely lined with glass, in which the likeness of the beholder was multiplied to infinity. This

*The passion
for
mirrors*

mirror craze is expressive of many things — not only of the most obvious, such as vanity, self-love, narcissism; but also of pleasure in regarding oneself, of self-analysis and absorption in the ego-problem, which, indeed, frequently amounted to a veritable mania for introspection. Rococo saw the dawn, amongst other things, of the classic letter and memoir literature, of self-descriptions and great confessions, of psychology. This new science was an achievement of the eighteenth century, and we shall see how the craving for self-dissection and soul-fathoming rose with each succeeding generation until, towards the end of the century, it had almost attained to its modern levels. And there is a second thing which the mirror of Rococo man reflects; the love of appearances, of illusions, of the variegated outer shell of things. And what this signifies is not so much superficiality as an extreme, sophisticated artistry. We have life in its reflection as we have a torrent in its rainbow, said Faust, and a similar *leitmotiv* Nietzsche would have us believe of the Greek culture: "Oh, these Greeks! They understood the art of *living*: it consists essentially in keeping valiantly to the surface, the fold, the skin; in worshipping the semblance . . . these Greeks were superficial from a sense of *depth*!"

Theatrocracy

There was one profession to which the mirror was as indispensable as the retort to the chemist, or the blackboard to the school-master; namely, that of the actor. And here we get to the very core of Rococo: it was a world of the theatre. Never, before or since, has there been such a passion for witty masquerading, beautiful illusions, scintillating comedies, as in the Rococo. Not only was existence itself an everlasting carnival of masking, intrigue, and a thousand fleeting jests and secrecies, but the stage was the dominating factor in daily life, comparable to the orator's tribune in Classical antiquity or the sports-ground of today. Amateur theatricals were everywhere: at court and in the villages, in castles and in middle-class houses, in universities and in nurseries. And almost everyone played the game well. In this mania for the theatre we have the strongest, clearest indication of the most profound will of the age: a yearning for the final uncovering of one's own soul. The art of the stage has often been called a sort of "prostitution," and rightly. Men have a deep-rooted instinct to prostitute themselves, uncover themselves, show themselves naked. This was at the root of the immemorially old Dionysus-cult, in

which men and women showed their bodies. The Greeks, however, but a "sacred rhapsody," we stumble upon which is inherent in all State and society that always wear covering down, except in the Olympic games; therefore, in the very province of the supreme domain of the human being appears painted, than anywhere else, "prostitution" which falls, the inner substance whether the bearer will more than most people are mere playing, but some literally magical in our

Gynæocracy and the Rococo throughout. As, however, no clear definition. For the Regency, which speak of the *style Régence* century and later, of the *Louis XVI*, which is *style*. The first section of unrestraint and laxity, something of the triumph of festivities become steady until, on reaching the Cl. numb, stiff-jointed old a notions of pigtail and R no justification whatever pigtail belongs to is the I

We have already remarked the death of Louis XIV nobility as well as come freely when the double pr moved from the land. "G

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opening words of Massillon's funeral oration on the great Louis, "and great particularly in these final moments when he inflicts the penalty of death on the kings of earth." As after the fall of Puritanism in England, so now in France men sought to indemnify themselves for the long repressions and tutelage of the old régime by elevating pleasure to be supreme lord of life and declaring all virtue to be hypocrisy and all morality prudery. In his family affairs as in other things Louis XIV. had been very unhappy during his later years. All the direct heirs to the throne died one after another down to a great-grandson who was a minor, and the regency fell to his nephew, Duke Philip of Orleans, the son of the "Liselotte" who had played the part of the ingénue in the theatre of Versailles and still enjoys posthumous celebrity on account of her letters. Popular wit was justified in recommending for her gravestone the epitaph: "Here lies the mother of all the vices," for the Duke was the very type of the "waster" as it figures to this day in the serial shockers; brilliantly clever, seductively amiable, but sceptical and frivolous to the last degree. His sole standard in all his actions was his own enjoyment. Louis XIV used very aptly to call him "*fanfaron de vice*"; and in fact he made his sins into a sort of bizarre cult. This was not only in the true Rococo style, but truly French, for the Frenchman delights in underlining his good points and his bad ones alike, going all out, so to say, for success in two rôles at once. And because of this the nation forgave the Regent everything and did not even revile his memory. It was he who originated the term "*roué*" to describe the companions of his orgies, "gallows-birds, broken on the wheel of all the vices." The ingenuity with which this company thought out ever new excesses provided admiring town-talk for Paris, and it was the ambition of all the women to be admitted to the "*fêtes d'Adam*" organized at Saint-Cloud. Even the Regent's relation with his daughter, the beautiful and temperamental Duchesse de Berri, roused no particular repulsion, for incest was anything but rare just then in the highest circles. The Duc de Choiseul, for instance, who played a great part as premier in the Seven Years' War, was known by all the world to have an affair with his sister the Duchesse de Gramont. In other respects, too, the normal limits of sexual intercourse were but little observed and it is in keeping with the "elderly" character of the age that the violation

of children was per-
period.

On the occasion of the Regent's death, he sought to do so, and he therefore said to the Regent with the words: "Sire, I do not see how it can be fitting for me, as the bishop of Cambrai, to then turn to Law, which would he do it." He finally, "run by a wheel," it looks as if there was his government was in either his predecessor from his court and family two thousand million affected a rapprochement of his tutor, the lascivious to carry out a pacific arbitrary imprisonment him, particularly as the most genuinely witty. When Voltaire, in his audacity to make an ascription of the incestuous Duke sat unmoved in it all, clapped applause to his annual allowance.

One of the greatest Revolution was undoubted whom allusion has justified handsome, clever, fashionable — had conceived the financial capital of the state and expressed merely by the inclusion of the natural transactions. He claimed to call for credit from could not be fully covered

great Louis, he inflicts the fall of Puri- to indemnify the old régime declaring all in his family happy during the reign of one after another, and the reign of the son of the king in the theatre on account of his good conduct for her sake, "the vices," for the first time to this day amiable, but standard in all very aptly to his sins into a Rococo style, but turning his good fortune, for success he forgave the story. It was he and his companions of his life the vices." The new excesses the ambition of "organized crime" daughter, he caused no parallel: just then in France, who during the War, was his sister the normal limits it is in keeping the violation

of children was perhaps never so widespread as in the Rococo period.

On the occasion of one of these orgies a document was brought to the Regent to sign. He was already so drunk that he could not do so, and he therefore handed the paper to Madame de Parabère with the words: "Sign, whore." The lady replied that it would not be fitting for her to do so, whereupon he said to the Archbishop of Cambrai: "Sign, bully." As he also refused, the Regent then turned to Law with the command: "Sign, crook," but neither would he do it. "Here's a well-governed realm," said the Regent finally, "run by a whore, a bully, a crook, and a drunkard." But it looks as if there was a little of fanfaronade in this case too, for his government was in more than one respect better than that of either his predecessor or his successor. He expelled the Jesuits from his court and favoured the Jansenists, paid off a fifth of the two thousand million livres of state debts left by Louis XIV, effected a rapprochement with the sea-powers, and, with the help of his tutor, the lascivious and adroit Cardinal Dubois, was able to carry out a pacific policy. Oppressions of the censorship and arbitrary imprisonments came almost entirely to an end under him, particularly as he, like all genuinely dignified persons and most genuinely witty ones, was impervious to personal attack. When Voltaire, in his first drama, *Œdipe*, had the incredible audacity to make an allusion to the Duke and his daughter in describing the incestuous relation between the King and Jocasta, the Duke sat unmoved in his box, although he naturally understood it all, clapped applause, and granted the young author a considerable annual allowance.

One of the greatest public catastrophes of France prior to the Revolution was undoubtedly that associated with John Law, to whom allusion has just been made. This wealthy Scotsman — handsome, clever, fashionable, and undeniably a financial genius — had conceived the fruitful (and in itself correct) idea that the capital of the state and the great private banks was not something expressed merely by their stock of gold and silver, but should include the natural values and man-power available for their transactions. He claimed, in consequence, that it was justifiable to call for credit from the public and to issue bank-notes which could not be fully covered by the cash in hand. His private bank,

*The Law
crash*

eventually became entirely independent of the court. This "*no-
blesse de la robe*" formed a powerful clique, hostile to the court
and the Jesuits, which (by reason of the numerous marriages of
its members to rich merchants' daughters) formed at the same
time a plutocracy of bourgeois colour. After Fleury's death
the court no longer commanded respect in either home or
foreign politics. Frederick the Great characterized the French
system of government in an apt and witty remark one day at
the opera, when the curtain did not come right down and the
feet of the dancers were left visible. "Absolutely the Paris minis-
try," he exclaimed, "legs without heads." It says much for the
long-suffering royalism of the French that this King, the most
unlovable and useless that they had ever had, nevertheless was
named *le Bien-Aimé* from the popular joy at his recovery from
a dangerous illness in 1744 and ruled happily for thirty years
thereafter.

During this epoch France's rôle in European history was no
more than that of a lustful and impotent intriguer. After the War
of the Spanish Succession the notions of a "European balance of
power" and a "Concert of the Powers" began to come into
fashion, the idea being that the existing system of states formed,
as it were, a well-appointed orchestra in which no one leading part
was allowed to domineer. But as these catchwords were obviously
dictated, not by any genuine love of peace and justice, but by pure
envy and a jealous fear of allowing others to rise too high, they
did not prevent wars; they merely extended the theatre of war, in
that the coalition type of war became even more typical than it
had been before. It was rarely that individual states went to war;
we see nothing but alliances, which are promptly dissolved when
one of the members scores a decisive victory. The great France-
Habsburg opposition remained a fixture; Spain and Sweden
dropped out of the array of great powers, their places being taken
by Russia and Poland, while England was even thus early the
arbiter of Europe in virtue of her long diplomatic training and
riper political experience.

The territorial changes during the first two-thirds of the cen-
tury are — apart from the change of ownership in Silesia — casual
and uninteresting, consisting in an unintelligent and arbitrary
exchange of provinces and scraps of provinces. At the Peace of

*The
Concert
of the
Powers*

burger, the husband of Maria Theresa, who received the Imperial crown.

In all these political happenings the feelings and wishes of the people played not the smallest part. It was all a matter, so to say, of private understandings among the individual potentates turning upon marriage connexions, territorial desires, contracts and breakings of contracts, personal ambitions and leanings. We have drawn attention to the imitation of French absolutism by rulers and subjects all over the continent. Germany in particular developed a limitless servility, which was the more grotesque, being practised chiefly by the smaller states. A Würtemberger parson informed his Duke that his grace's "most high swine" had eaten his own "most humble potatoes." Every duodecimo princeling cherished the ludicrous ambition of copying Versailles and had to have his Italian opera, his French pleasure-seat, his pheasant preserve, and his parade troops. It was equally indispensable that he should keep expensive favourites: so definitely was this demanded of him by custom that in some cases—for instance, that of Frederick I of Prussia—the prince felt obliged to maintain a merely titular concubine. Said a citizen of a minor capital with emotion, as he watched his ruler drive past with his newly-wed young bride: "Now there is nothing wanting to our prince but a handsome mistress." Augustus the Strong—whose nickname was no mere flattery—had over three hundred illegitimate children, one of whom, the Countess Orszelska, became his mistress. Duke Leopold Eberhard of Würtemberg was even less scrupulous, for he allowed the thirteen children whom he had by his five mistresses to intermarry. No one dared to criticize such behaviour; everything which took place at the courts of these little god-kings was justified, and the subjects celebrated the name-day of the illegitimate sovereign lady of the moment as if it had been a national festival, feeling themselves highly honoured when the prince stooped to a townsman's daughter. Other encroachments on their liberty were suffered in the same unresisting way. The innumerable hunts did indescribable damage to the fields and often ruined a whole harvest. Preparations for court diversions would sometimes absorb the services of half the population, and the cost of all the disturbance as often as not be met by recruiting and selling the people. Withal, nothing whatever was done to raise

*Duodecimo
absolutism*

P. 7.

P. 7

the working power of the country. In eighteenth-century Germany there was an accepted standard of one cleric and five beggars to every twenty of the population.

The most intellectual capital in the Germany of that day was Leipzig, which, as the seat of the great fairs and the most distinguished German university, as the metropolis of the artistically minded Polish-Saxon kings and the book trade, and as a centre of fashion and frivolity, had achieved the proud position of an Athens-on-the-Pleisse. For all that, everything that Saxony produced in the way of literature was of the purest repetitive kind: well-informed and methodical, thrashed-out and finicking, pedantic, furiously revised, and equally tireless and tiresome with its wearisome repetition of the same elementary commonplaces. A pleasing figure is Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, clergyman's son and professor, who, though weak alike in physique and creative power, was spotlessly pure in style and in character. He was a really effective influence, not only through his novels and comedies, lyrics and works of edification, but also through his well-attended "moral lectures" and through an extensive correspondence in which he played the part of wise and sympathetic father-confessor to all and sundry. Frederick the Great said of him: "He is a very different fellow from Gottsched" and "There's something so *couplant* in his verses." This was an excellent characterization: he owed his extraordinary popularity to the soft, ingratiating form in which he expressed his harmless wisdom. The tenderness with which he approached his readers made him an ideal women's writer. His humour leaves us somewhat cold, suggesting, as it does, grandpapa in the nursery; his fables — which are all that survives of his work — give the impression of having been written definitely for a class-book, as pieces for the lower school. The fundamental trait in his nature was a touching, albeit rather tiresome, old-maidishness, just as Gleim, for all his love-songs, was typical of old bachelordom. The "Anacreontics" who sat at the feet of "Father Gleim" were anything rather than amorous, being far too gauche and well-behaved for that. They were not even straightforwardly in love, but merely in love with a perfectly nebulous and schoolboy notion of the state of being in love which had taken possession of their childlike souls. Neither were they ever really intoxicated, but again only drunk with the

bare notion and garlanded wineb Kant was possible poems commonly

From about 1750 the actor was filled with his main theoretic *vor die Deutschen* of the imitation of *et prodesse*, expression and narrowness. I by the two Swiss, object of poetry is these "must ever ideal they found in of Æsop. At bottom so different as they were more like quotations and details, other as regards the better, and their undoubtedly did a complacent, narrow 1765 the young Goethe him."

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field the violin-makers Amati, Guarneri, and Stradivari achieved such a mastery in their art as has never since been equalled. In 1711 the Florentine Bartolomeo Cristofori invented the ~~piano e forte~~ or hammer-piano, which gradually pushed all other stringed instruments into the background. Along with the *opera seria* the *opera buffa* appeared, Pergolesi's *Serva padrona* being the most famous example; and it was under the influence of the "buffoonists" that Rousseau wrote the first comic opera: *Le Devin du village*, which brought him a brilliant success. He and the Neapolitan Duni, who also lived in Paris, were the founders of this new type, in which the frozen passion of the *dramma per musica* dissolves in playful grace, and the stiff pompous aria is replaced by the coquettish chanson. In serious opera, too, Jean Philippe Rameau with his orchestral colouring went a certain way to meet the Rococo taste for brightness and glitter, though the Lully tradition was too unbreakable in France, and there was no real departure from program music, but only its expansion and enrichment with imagination and charm.

Even Handel, as we know, only broke away from Italian influences in his old age. He carried the art-form of the fugue to its greatest height in vocal as Bach had done in instrumental music. In his full choruses, particularly in *Israel in Egypt* (which is almost entirely made up of them), we have for the first time, as the object of an art-creation, something — namely, the mass, the people — of which the dramatists were still unaware, for it was not until *Tell*, or even, more accurately, not until *The Weavers* that a playwright attempted to bring the collective soul on the stage as his hero. Bach, on the other hand, put the awakening power of the German bourgeoisie, the Pietists' inner fervour and sturdy love of God, into music and gave it immortality. In his monumental chamber-music the rhythm and weight of Baroque were wedded to the intimacy and introspection of Rococo. Of the two, Handel is the less problematical, but the more *cantabile*; he is the psychologist, Bach the metaphysicist. In fact, one might perhaps place them in parallel with Leibniz and Kant, and not only for this reason, but also in the sense that Handel, as a sought-after and revered master, set up the macrocosm of his creation in sight of all, while Bach, living in the constricted atmosphere of lower social conditions, built his still mightier and more universal realm within himself;

Bach and
Handel;
Frederick
the Great

Leibniz and Handel forced their own world upon the world at large, Kant and Bach encircled the whole world in their own. Bach and Handel, however, were alike in the intense Germanic ethos which fills all their works. This gigantic double sun forms one of the two undying titles to fame won by the Germany of that time in the realm of the spirit. The other is Frederick the Great.

The King

*D.T.
show H.*

"Find in any country the Ablest Man that exists there," says Carlyle; "raise *him* to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country." A recipe as admirable as it is simple, but, like almost all good and simple recipes, very seldom followed. Obviously it would be the most natural thing if the best were always at the head of things, the cleverest and wisest, the strongest and best-armed, the eye that sees furthest with past and present, the gleaming focus in which all the world's rays unite: if, in a word, the brain were in command as is the case with the simplest human individual! Yet this self-evidently normal case has happened at most a dozen times in the better-known sections of the history of humanity: a dozen times in three thousand years. One of these few cases was Frederick the Great.

The Father

The year 1740 was a year of change of government, not only in Prussia and Austria, but also in Russia, where the Tsaritsa Anna was succeeded by her grand-nephew Ivan VI, a minor; and in Rome, where Clemens XII was followed by Benedict XIV. "il papa Lambertini" — the most popular pope of the eighteenth century, a deeply honest man and a scholar, even-tempered, modest, passionately interested in contemporary literature, and so unprejudiced that Voltaire could risk dedicating his *Mahomet* to him. Frederick, it has sometimes been argued, owed his success in great part to his extraordinary predecessor, and the relation has been likened to that of Philip and Alexander. This grotesque opinion is represented by two parties who are in other respects entirely opposed to one another: the official Prussian historians who would make out every Hohenzollern to be a genius, and the equally biased Socialist history-writers who will have no king a genius at any price. Actually Frederick William I handed down to his son only the instrument of policy — that is, the army — and not a single political or even philosophical idea. Philip, on the contrary, who was probably a greater man than his successor, planned out the

whole scheme of what the author of *Alexander* the splendid actor of the

But even among the place in Prussian history concerns. The same critic considerate and brutal, self-sacrificing. It is a paradoxical genre figure should have introduced before its general adoption the idea of patriarchal concerned himself not only the economic situation their clothes and lodgings, wives and of callings, chance. He was in fact the some, father of his country right to misunderstand that the said children do

He possessed neither what he did possess he: his minor faults — his collection of all intellectual which humanity finds in his unpretentious virtue, modest personal needs — thank him for raising that also was one of his freak in itself. He regarded it: of gigantic toy, and he collected china, or Pope-ing methods became a but otherwise worthy prince means was employed to women, cards, alcohol, served, brute force. The cision, the Prussian cadet, the iron ram

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whole scheme of what the latter accomplished. He was in a sense the author of Alexander's conquests, and the "King of Asia" but the splendid actor of the heroic part.

But even among those who give Frederick William his proper place in Prussian history, we find the most contradictory judgments. The same critics will, without rhyme or reason, call him considerate and brutal, clear-sighted and narrow, malicious and self-sacrificing. It is fairest perhaps to regard him as a cranky, paradoxical genre figure. Certainly it is characteristic that he should have introduced the pigtail into his army a generation before its general adoption in Europe, and he undoubtedly carried the idea of patriarchal absolutism to the point of caricature. He concerned himself not only with the taxation and military service, the economic situation and the hygiene of his subjects, but with their clothes and lodging, reading and conversation, choice of wives and of callings, culinary arrangements and church attendance. He was in fact the well-meaning and severe, faithful and tiresome, father of his country, and he made liberal use of the paternal right to misunderstand and ill-treat the children. Small wonder that the said children developed a formidable "father-hatred."

He possessed neither many bad nor many good qualities, and what he did possess he possessed in only a moderate degree. But his minor faults — his coarseness, his stinginess, and his detestation of all intellectual and artistic aspirations — were of the sort which humanity finds it harder to forgive than the major sins; and his unpretentious virtues — his love of order, his diligence, his modest personal needs — did no one any good. Nor did his people thank him for raising the army to an imposing strength; for this also was one of his freaks. The army was not a means, but an end in itself. He regarded it as an entirely personal property, as a sort of gigantic toy, and he collected tall fellows as Augustus the Strong collected china, or Pope Lambertini fine prints. Prussian recruiting methods became a byword for baseness. In this respect this otherwise worthy prince knew no restraint. Every conceivable means was employed to entice more Grenadiers into his ranks: women, cards, alcohol, false promises — and, if none of these served, brute force. The troop movements were models of precision, the Prussian cadenced step went like clock-work. The introduction of the iron ramrod, combined with this iron discipline,

It is often said that he inherited his delight in work and sense of duty from his father; but the diligence of genius is something of quite a different order from that of the average man: the latter arises out of a mechanical sense of orderliness and the instinct to be active (which is a primitive bee-like vital instinct), but the former from an almost maniacal devotion to an exalted mission, a sublime sense of responsibility towards one's own magic destiny.

The fact that Frederick the Great was dominated all his life by a great leading idea not only made him the invincible hero of his time, but endowed all his individual actions — unlike those of his crowned rivals — with imagination and genius and meaning. This basic idea of his was no more and no less than the Platonic demand that kings should be philosophers, and philosophers kings. In his book on Plato, Walter Pater says of Marcus Aurelius that it was precisely because the philosophic outlook was so essential a part of him, because he was the passionate devotee of philosophy and in particular of Platonism, that he was so excellent a servant of the Roman people in peace and war. Just such a ruler was Frederick the Great. In this alone lay the true meaning of "enlightened absolutism," the slogan of the day, of which only he could grasp the deeper meaning and which only he could transform into a living reality. Absolutism means unlimited control, and enlightenment spreading of light; this formula, therefore, asserts nothing more or less than that light shall reign, the strongest soul rule, the clearest head organize. There is no need to discuss the outward forms by which such an ideal may be realized; this is a matter of complete indifference, a mere question of costume. Whether such a ruler be styled Cæsar or High Priest, President of the Reich or People's Commissar, he will always be the legitimate king because he is the philosophical king.

His tolerance alone suffices to show Frederick as a true philosopher. We mean tolerance, and neither free-thinking nor liberalism. It is possible to be "liberally" minded and yet have a very illiberal mind, in which (as is the case with most free-thinkers) an understanding for differently constituted points of view has no place. This type of the "enlightened" is as much the prisoner of his narrow one-sided doctrine as the reactionary whom he scorns. The same is true of liberalism as usually practised. It is liberal towards liberals only; the rest of the world are obstinate heretics and blind

The
Philosopher

A. H.

The Genius

fools on whom the better world-outlook must be imposed in spite of themselves. And this, after all, was the typical behaviour of the Enlightened in Frederick the Great's time. In the eighteenth century we see everywhere in the high places these dictators of progress, who held it to be their mission to force happiness upon a lagging humanity. Peter the Great and Charles XII, Catherine II and Joseph II, Cardinal Fleury and Robespierre and many others were guided by this fixed idea, which penetrated even as far as Portugal, where the Marquis of Pombal built up a positive reign of terror of Enlightenment. Thus in reality these rulers were nothing but converted children of darkness, and they furnish yet one more proof of the psychological fact that tolerance is essentially obnoxious to average humanity. But Frederick the Great was tolerant, not in his capacity of free-thinker, but as a genius. Genius tolerates everything because it contains latent within itself every imaginable specimen of mankind, every impulse of the soul, and knows how to conform to everything because it possesses creative imagination. Frederick practised that genuine tolerance which consists simply in recognizing every alien individuality and its laws. For this reason he could even tolerate reaction. He, as the head of the chief Protestant power of Germany, was far more lenient to the Jesuits than was the Roman Emperor. The latter abolished monasteries while the former restored burnt-down Catholic churches. Not that Frederick was by any means without personal prejudices, but, sharply marked as were these very subjective and one-sided convictions of his, clear-cut, strong, and luminous as was the profile of his personality, he had yet a sufficiency of understanding for all other opinions, and, what is more, he actually took them into account in practice. Certainly he was in a way a spiritualist and ideologue, for he always argued from certain abstract principles, direct soul-experiences. But this was counterbalanced by his highly developed mental elasticity, his capacity for accommodating himself at any time to the special "conditions of the problem" which reality imposed upon him in his experiments. He was unusually tenacious and conservative in matters of theory, and correspondingly supple and progressive in his application of theory to life; and it is this double quality which in fact forms the basis of all productive thought and action.

Another eminent mark of genius was his boundless sincerity, a

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quality which, rarity on the throne, dictatoriness, and as a politician he had an impression, and his sleight-of-hand and that age of hollow mendacious men of technical language in the transaction thought really serious, probity and of being raised so high talents and deeds, individual free from all minor traits also he stance, something in great monarch and having was that of in the midst of his career of note he felt himself Everything he did attachment. How did testation of hunting wit which, like a firm affairs of government affects us as a "private" *ing bons mots* worth confirmed the acquisition defence "that the Ble was admitted as not that he forbade him accept any presents when reviewing the case natural connexion with "The swine is to be too is his lively feeling him until well into mind of him, not, of course

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quality which, rare enough in any case, seems almost an impossi-
bility on the throne. Even his attitude to truth shows the contra-
dictoriness, and yet in a higher sense the unity, of his nature. As a
politician he had no qualms about giving the whole world a false
impression, and he prided himself on beating all his enemies at
sleight-of-hand and double-dealing. Yet, living though he did in
that age of hollow lying and empty masks, he was one of the least
mendacious men that ever lived. Untruthfulness was to him a sort
of technical language of which he made use in masterly fashion
in the transaction of his business; but in all things which he
thought really serious and important he was actuated by incor-
ruptible probity and merciless self-criticism. This is why, in spite
of being raised so high above his fellow-men by birth and position,
talents and deeds, he figures to posterity largely as a private indi-
vidual free from any historical nimbus. A number of endearing
minor traits also help to bring him nearer to us. There is, for in-
stance, something impish yet touching in the remark made by this
great monarch and controller of battles that the only fame worth
having was that of an author. He would polish away at his verses
in the midst of his campaigns, and in the presence of literary men
of note he felt himself a pupil desirous of profiting by their art.
Everything he did or left undone secures for him our personal
attachment. How charmingly unkinglike, for example, is his de-
testation of hunting! The marked and even consciously ambitious
wit which, like a fine essence, pervades all his doings, from big
affairs of government to the most everyday conversations, also
affects us as a "private" attribute. Even his decrees were glitter-
ing *bons mots* worthy of a Swift or Voltaire. One day, when he
confirmed the acquittal of a thief convicted of sacrilege, whose
defence "that the Blessed Virgin had herself given him the silver"
was admitted as not incredible by Catholic authorities, he added
that he forbade him in future, on pain of heavy punishment, to
accept any presents whatever from the Holy Virgin. Another time,
in reviewing the case of a soldier convicted of having had un-
natural connexion with his horse, he settled it with the words:
"The swine is to be transferred to the infantry." Very attractive
too is his lively feeling for escapades of every sort, which clung to
him until well into middle age. Macaulay thus describes this side
of him, not, of course, without implying a black mark for bad

5 for the people.
20 their ego.

conduct: "If a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriachal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy. If he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither." With such things did Frederick the Unique occupy himself while engaged in making his army the most powerful striking force, his administration the most capable, and his State the most feared in all Europe. The respectable Macaulay deduces from all this the wickedness of his nature. We are inclined to think that it is only through such traits that human greatness becomes human and bearable. They are rarely absent from the nature of true genius and, far from indicating an evil disposition, they express an indestructible childlikeness and a supreme artistic playfulness which takes everything and nothing seriously. In this, as in so many other respects, Frederick the Great resembled Voltaire. The old friendship between these two men, as registered in their correspondence, forms one of the wittiest chapters in the history of the eighteenth century. There we have French pepper and Prussian salt thrown together and so intimately blended that the mixture became too sharp and biting for any philistine to sample without tears of vexation.

*The Hero
from
curiosity*

So complicated and paradoxical, yet so clear and transparent is the character of this king that it leaves the democratic historian nothing to "debunk." He went so far in self-criticism as to make himself out at times worse than he was. He admits frankly that the mainspring of his policy was ambition. He tells us how, when as Crown Prince he heard of the Turkish War, his heart thumped as if he had been an actor waiting for his cue. Yet when it came, he advanced from the wings without hesitation, and it was clear from the earliest scenes that he was determined not to play the little episodic rôle assigned to him by the European management, but to improvise an entire new text as protagonist and filler of the title-rôle of the age. In 1740 he wrote to his friend Jordan: "My youth, the fire of my passions, the craving for fame, even—to conceal nothing from you—my curiosity, in a word, a secret instinct tore me from the sweetness of repose I had been tasting; it was the satisfaction of reading my name in the papers and eventually in history that tempted me." And long afterwards in his

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the heir to the throne; even at Naples and in Spain his portraits were on sale.

The Danish minister Bernsdorff called pre-Frederician Prussia a young lean body with all the appetite that belongs to this stage of physical development, and Voltaire mocked at it as a "border state." A glance at the historical map will show that such a state, consisting in the main of two disconnected coastal areas with a few oddments of territory in the west, was incapable of existence in such a form. One cannot reproach Frederick the Great for his aspirations towards Silesia, unless one is prepared in principle to deny to a political organism the right of forcible expansion. Through this addition, which enlarged the extent of the state by a third and the population by a half, Prussia first obtained that stability and solidity of territorial basis without which a great power is unthinkable. It is only too comprehensible that Frederick succumbed to this temptation. But from the moment when he incorporated Silesia with hungry Prussia, he looked upon the latter as sufficiently provided for. In 1745 he declared, at Dresden, that from that time on he would not attack a single cat, unless indeed he were forced; that he regarded his military career as closed. And beyond a doubt he honestly meant it. No one but an imbecile would maintain that he embarked on the Seven Years' War otherwise than against his will; only, as he himself was anything but an imbecile, he naturally began it at the moment which appeared to him relatively the most favourable.

Endless rubbish has been written and printed about the "brutal surprise attack" and "perfidious breach of treaty" in 1740. It is an Austrian lie that Frederick was bound by the Pragmatic Sanction. The fact is that the Emperor had guaranteed the succession of the Rhenish dukedom of Berg to Frederick William in return for his assent to the treaty and yet ten years later took diplomatic action against him in collusion with France, England, and Holland with the object of forcing him to relinquish these claims. That Frederick did not wait until Austria was fully equipped, but occupied Silesia in mid winter—an unheard-of proceeding according to the strategic practice of the day—is merely a proof of his courage and originality in not thinking on traditional lines, and of Austria's heaviness and mental apathy. His simple and therefore crushing logic was: first to obtain posses-

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again — must be artificially created. Stags and deer in enclosures are designed to give the *illusion* of living nature, and ruins were specially built, and even mountains painted on canvas, to suggest a romantic wildness. The Baroque principle of staging nature still ruled, though with the opposite sign. These ideas were to some extent realized by William Kent in his *fermes ornées*. Montesquieu, the first great Anglomaniac in France, on his return from England transformed the park of his ancestral château into an English garden. Typical of the awakening nature-sense, too, are the popular *bals champêtres* of the day and the “inns,” so called, where fine ladies and gentlemen dressed up as barmen, peasants, huntsmen, and fishermen and played at the simple life. Sleighing was a favourite amusement, and Klopstock sang the praises of skating. In summer fashionable ladies formed the habit of wearing wide straw shepherdess hats. At first it was merely a coquetting with Nature, and this Nature was not yet that of Romanticism — notwithstanding its mountain backgrounds and its cult of ruins — but the idyllic, inviting, touching, lamb-brook-and-meadow Nature lying caressingly at their feet. The highest praise for any scenery at that period was to call it “pleasant.” Moreover, Wolffian rationalism and utilitarianism strongly pervaded everything still. The country was lovable above all as the donor of tasty vegetables, nourishing milk, and fresh eggs. The high mountains were held in abhorrence. As late as 1755, in the *Dictionary* which the English contemplated with astonishment as a world-wonder, Dr. Johnson described mountains as diseased growths and unnatural swellings on the earth’s surface, and complained, after his journey in the Scottish Highlands, that an eye accustomed to flowery pictures and waving corn was appalled by this wide domain of hopeless barrenness. The only comfortable landscapes to look at were evidently the bread-and-butter-producing regions. The high tracts were barren and therefore could not be beautiful. Haller’s poem *The Alps*, again, which made an immense sensation, contemplates only the human accessories of the Swiss landscape and has a moralizing, political tendency even at that.

By this period the modern Englishman was already complete and ready-made: a mixture of spleen, cant, and business, with his shrewdness and sobriety occasionally seasoned with fixed ideas, with thoroughness in place of depth, and plainness instead of sig-

nificance; didactic rather than business, more pious than business, more eternal than business, on wheels with equal fervor, and on wheels.

After the death of George I, the Elector of Hanover, a personal union with Great Britain, George I, intellectual sakes who succeeded the country, and it was useless for the minister was Robert Walpole, the Hanoverian supporter in the bribes. The corrupt *Opera* (which was, in opera of the day). On these bribes was wit to call for a secret in his own favour. In the whole of foreign and he still kept his

During this reign perhaps more fraud than history: Robert Clive in India. An inexhaustible oil poured out tells us, the English race for money set in, people became at once merchant traders, and were called, returned their newly-acquired despised but envied “the whole of public life of samples set in, and business, in which fine articles, secured at a

D. 1.
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Franklin
and
Robinson
Crusoe

in fact the two typical forms of modern economy.) Simultaneously the abundant influx of ready money introduced "comfort," a thing until then unknown to modern times. This English word had a curious origin. It meant at first "consolation" or "encouragement," and only now acquired the sense of "ease," "well-being," or "convenience," under which meaning it has been adopted in German. To an Englishman it is actually the supreme consolation and encouragement, and the final legitimization of his existence in his sense of well-being in it. The Calvinistic divine Richard Baxter, living in England in the times of the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution, tells his followers in his *Reasons for the Christian Religion* that they may work for God in order to become rich. Success in business counted as a proof of election; such was his — and in general the English — idea of Predestination. In place of Christian justification there appears the bourgeois, practical prosperity-justification: the well-to-do on earth are the righteous; the unblessed and the damned are the poor — an inversion of the gospel teaching unparalleled in its impudence and shallowness.

Writing in his incomparable plastic way on the England of that time, Taine says: "A preacher here is nothing but an economist in priest's clothing who treats conscience like flour, and fights vices as if they were prohibitions on imports." In real life this type is most closely embodied in the story-book hero Benjamin Franklin, author of the phrase: "Time is money"; in literature we have the most complete representation of it in Defoe's *Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*. Robinson Crusoe is the very able man who is equal to any emergency: a practical economist, politician, and technician; a deist who believes in God because he has discovered that this also is a practical sort of thing to do. It is significant that, besides writing his books (more than two hundred of them), Defoe established the first hail- and fire-insurance societies and savings-banks. The extract of his philosophy is found in the words with which the father Crusoe sends forth his son on the journey. He tells him that "the middle station of life was calculated for all kind of virtues and all kinds of enjoyments; that peace and plenty were the handmaids of a middle fortune; that temperance, moderation, quietness, health, society, all agreeable diversions, and

all desirable pleasure of life; that the World, and the labours of the hand, were the circumstances which rest. . . ."

After Frankl English domestic most successful "*Clarissa*, or the most important ing the distress parents and chil famous novel is s ing to add: "*Pan Letters from a B published. In ore ligious in the mind has its Foundatio that it agreeably INCIDENTS, is int many Pieces calc minds they shoul geois drama — a sickly sweet an This was a type the comédie larn admirers and "bl was the first aut by the actress scenes went dow taire, too, ever o produce plays of lert's *Zärtliche S lière*," as he ha ceeded in giving theatre, and, abc could see and obs kindly caricature*

all desirable pleasures, were the blessings attending the middle station of life; that this way men went silently and smoothly thro' the World, and comfortably out of it, not embarrassed with the labours of the hands or of the head . . . or harass'd with perplex'd circumstances which rob the soul of peace, and the body of rest. . . .

After Franklin and Defoe came Richardson, creator of the English domestic novel, and likewise primarily a shopkeeper. His most successful work (of over four thousand pages) is called: "*Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*; comprehending the most important concerns of private life, and particularly showing the distresses that may attend the misconduct both of parents and children in relation to marriage." Another equally famous novel is so well characterized in its title that there is nothing to add: "*Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded*. In a series of Familiar Letters from a Beautiful Young Damsel to her Parents. Now first published. In order to cultivate the Principles of *Virtue* and *Religion* in the minds of the YOUTH of BOTH SEXES. A Narrative which has its Foundations in TRUTH and NATURE; and at the same time that it agreeably entertains, by a variety of *curious* and *affecting* INCIDENTS, is intirely divested of all those Images, which, in too many Pieces calculated for Amusement only, tend to *inflamm* the minds they should *instruct*." The father of the middle-class bourgeois drama—a pendant to the family novel that is even more sickly sweet and more false—was George Lillo, a jeweller. This was a type which quickly became popular in France as the *comédie larmoyante* and was considered "touching" by its admirers and "blubbering" by its enemies. Nivelle de la Chaussée was the first author to take it up, having been advised to do so by the actress Quinault, who pointed out that sentimental scenes went down better with the public than tragic ones. Voltaire, too, ever on the alert for others' successes, soon began to produce plays of this *genre*. The first German attempt was Gelert's *Zärtliche Schwestern*. Only Holberg—the "Danish Molière," as he has been (a little extravagantly) called—succeeded in giving his countrymen a national comedy, a national theatre, and, above all, a national looking-glass in which they could see and observe themselves, not unduly flattered, but quite kindly caricatured. He was a rapid versifier (like all true comedy-

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who regards every unmoral action purely as an error in judgment: in a murder, for instance, there is a mistaken idea that one can restore the dead to life; in torturing animals, the erroneous notion that they do not feel pain; in disobedience towards God, the false belief that one is stronger than he. Similarly, Mandeville in his *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices made Public Benefits*, as the very title indicates, puts forward the cynical view of the modern statesman that selfish and unscrupulous competition among individuals supplies the motive power for the well-being of the community.

But the most characteristic figure in English philosophy at that time is David Hume. His sensational achievement was his explanation of the notion of causality, which he accounts for by habit, the frequent repetition of the same experience. Our empiric entitles us only to the opinion: first A, then B, the *post hoc*. But our mind is not satisfied with that, and, on the basis of having observed this constantly recurring sequence, says: first A, therefore B, thus making a *propter hoc* out of the *post hoc*. The idea of substance, too, arises solely from our habit of always combining the same ideas with certain groups of characteristic features. In the same way is to be explained the consciousness of one's ego: for by regularly relating our impressions to the same subject we get the idea of an unchanging carrier of these impressions, whereas it is really nothing but a "bundle of ideas." Arguing on the same lines, Hume declared himself opposed to the theory of the Social Contract: long before men were able to sign any state contract, compulsion had already united them, and the obedience which had become a habit through that compulsion brought about the existence of governments and subjects without any such contract. All this is truly English: the prudent and short-sighted insistence of the sole authority of empiricism, the distrust of all metaphysics and ideas, the deep-rooted conservatism which puts down everything to habit, and the relentless superficiality which in its wonderful keenness and vigour becomes almost profundity.

In Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* we find the subtle remark: "The difference between Hume and Kant can also be drawn characterologically, much as I can distinguish between two men of whom the one finds the highest art in Makart and Gounod and the other in Rembrandt and Beethoven." Elsewhere he says

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any bookseller proclaim me as the author, I can assure him he will gain nothing by so doing. Far from selling a single copy more, he would on the contrary damage the credit of the book. To maintain that I, who have been away from France over twenty years, could have so lived myself into French law would be perfectly absurd." About the dictionary he wrote to d'Alembert: "As far as there is any danger of it, I beg you will inform me, so that I may disavow the work in all the public papers with my accustomed honesty and innocence." And in a letter to the Jesuit Father de la Tour he went so far as to assert that if anyone had ever printed over his name anything that could offend even a village sexton, he was prepared to tear it up; he wished to live and die in peace without attacking anyone, without harming anyone, without taking up a standpoint that could offend anyone. The statement may be hazarded that this intention of causing no offence anywhere was only very imperfectly realized.

We must, of course, take into account that it was extremely dangerous to acknowledge the authorship of works which might incur the displeasure of Church or government, and that almost all Voltaire's colleagues practised the same tactics of denial and anonymity. "I am," he said to d'Alembert, "an ardent friend of truth, but in no sense a friend of martyrdom." Anyhow, in Voltaire we have to recognize a new form of heroism. In the place of the death-martyrs there appeared life-martyrs; purification through asceticism is now not sought within the walls of monasteries, but in the turmoil of the world; death no longer appears as the glorification of life, and the hero is no longer the one who renounces life, but the one who fights on in it with resignation.

To Voltaire's over-stimulated and hyperactive militancy we may also ascribe his many small meannesses, of which his attitude to Frederick the Great is particularly characteristic. The unavoidable friction between these two geniuses produced incessant sparks of hatred, love, and wit. The very manner of their coming together was strange enough. In order to compromise Voltaire in France and thus to get him to his own court, Frederick had a very insulting letter of the poet's circulated among a number of influential persons who were attacked in it. Voltaire, on his side, tried to raise as much money as possible out of the King's weakness for him. Frederick the Great, finding out one day that

D. T.

Voltaire's
character

he had overpaid Voltaire, limited him in the use of light and sugar; Voltaire proceeded to pocket the candles in the salons. Lamettrie informed Voltaire that the King had said of him: "One squeezes an orange and throws it away"; while Maupertuis informed the King that Voltaire had said of him: "I am obliged to look through his verses, he sends me his dirty linen to wash." Voltaire made an anonymous and offensive attack on Maupertuis; Frederick composed a reply, also anonymous and equally offensive. Frederick had Voltaire imprisoned in Frankfurt on his return from France and searched for compromising documents; Voltaire in turn, on his release, wrote compromising revelations in France.

We have deliberately emphasized the most dubious points in Voltaire's life-story, because for a long time, and occasionally even today, these and similar small traits have been combined to form the picture of an ambiguous, treacherous, even squalid character. Of the bad qualities of which Voltaire is accused, vanity is the only one which he possessed in a really full measure, and herein he contrasts most unfavourably with Frederick the Great. But it is a quality that he shared with the great majority of artists, and indeed with the great majority of mankind, besides which it had in him a kindly, childlike, and at times childish note which disarms us. To call him malicious and mendacious, for instance, is only half true; he was malicious only when in a state of defence, mendacious in small things when under the influence of his vanity or timidity (both of which were rooted in an almost pathological sensitiveness); in all major matters he was of the most complete uprightness. And to call him supremely egotistical is completely and unreservedly wrong. He was avaricious only during the time when he was amassing riches; from the moment that he possessed them he used them in the most unselfish and liberal way for others; and as for the incorrect methods by which he obtained them, let us not forget that we are in the age of Rococo, which displayed its decadence by, amongst other things, the loss of moral standards. To the question, then, which so often arises: why did this great mind lack integrity? the reply is: because the Rococo mind lacked integrity. For Voltaire neither belongs to nor wished to be one of those supernatural heroes of morality who, as opposite numbers to the great criminals, stand outside the moral

laws of the time and constructed from the ti

For the ambitious money to spare (in the recipient), actual piety towards his own at his own expense, for the publication himself, and, on the sand livres. "It is, himself useful to his tised charity on a great marshes, laid vast set on foot flourishing on his estate and we His advocacy of the Paul Sirven — each his children who witnessed them; here we justice, writing pamphlet witnesses' statement whom he had access flaming desire for justice hatred of every kind partisanship. And if two-fifths villains and taire to thank for it.

He says somewhere of man to work as it is, as such a fiery the heads of the astor nating with his unequal light. He often wrote and dictated so fast to him. At sixty-four he as lively as a lizard, and to be all this for another to him: "I doubt whether of a system by the

various rocks arranged in superimposed layers like the storeys of a house, the second is a block in which all kinds of rocks are mingled together. In our period the three main ideas were *not* arranged one on top of the other like sedimentary rocks, with the stratum of the Enlightenment coming first, then that of Revolution, and last that of Classicism, in the same way as sandstone, slate, and lime succeed one another on a mountain. Rather we have what the petrographer would call "sills" and "dikes," for the whole age was permeated with all *three* tendencies. At most we might say that the strongest and widest-spreading phase of the Enlightenment was from the middle of the century till about 1770; that in the next quarter-century, from 1770 to 1795, it gave place to the Revolutionary current; and that in the last two decades, down to 1815, Classicism finally prevailed. Or, to keep to the metaphor: one type of rock predominates in each part of the mountain range, but all three are found in all parts of it. Right at the beginning of the period each one of the three movements appears with decisive and definitive activity. The *Encyclopédie*, the pioneer of the French Enlightenment, began to appear soon after the middle of the century; Rousseau's *Contrat social*, the code of the French Revolution, was published one year before the end of the Seven Years' War, Winckelmann's art-history, the Bible of Classicism, a year after the Peace; and all three movements only reached their climax towards the end of the period, Enlightenment in Kant, Revolution in Napoleon, Classicism in Goethe.

In political history the epochal event of the French Revolution marks a clear gulf which more or less cuts the period into two discrete sections. For the moment we shall not pass beyond this boundary, except in our account of scientific studies, in which, to avoid later repetition, we shall extend our account to the end of the century.

The Seven Years' War had a double significance for Europe: first, by giving Frederick the Great the opportunity to display his genius in its most brilliant form, it gave the world a spectacle such as it had not seen for centuries; secondly, it was the first world-war in the modern sense, being fought simultaneously in the four quarters of the world and having colonies as its true war-aim. The quarrel appeared to hinge on a few strips of Prussian territory; actually the stakes were immeasurably rich and extensive

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tory has called the Roman Empire Cæsarian and the Greek world-
culture Alexandrian.

Like almost all great historical personages, Frederick stands
on the bridge between two ages, marking the conclusion of the
one, the rise of the other; he joins the absolutism and the artistic
impulse of the Rococo with the liberalism and naturalism of the
Enlightenment. His direct influence in this way, however, was only
on the French Enlightenment; the German, of which Berlin be-
came the centre, benefited only indirectly through the all-
pervading intellectual awakening which had streamed from his
personality. The qualities of French culture which particularly
attracted him were just those that were least German, its playful
humour, void of profundity, but also of heaviness; its cool and
bright scepticism, with faith in nothing but itself, its penetrating
wit, for which it had to pay the penalty in the loss of real creative
ability. We can well believe that the choice was not hard between
Voltaire and Nicolai, between Diderot and Ramler, and that he
had no understanding in his old age for such wholly new phe-
nomena as *Götz* or *Die Räuber*, or even the *Critique of Pure Reason*;
but it is curious that he never felt any contact with Lessing,
with whom he had so much in common. At bottom Lessing's
achievement, in his own field, was similar to Frederick's. He
fought on different fronts with vigour and originality, won for
himself a victorious position, and in the end raised the realm in
which he ruled to be one of the great powers of Europe.

It would be a great mistake to think that during the French
Enlightenment there was any conscious struggle against the aris-
tocracy and the monarchy; on the contrary, the almost universal
object of attack was the Church. Possibly a well-trained and
politically experienced mind could have caught a glimpse of a gen-
eral revolution even in this form of the opposition, but the French
nobility of the time had no conception of national life and the
motive forces of history. Above all they had no notion of money:
the strongest power of modern civilization was unknown to them.
In an age when religious and political disputes were soon to be re-
placed by economic, they were not only incompetent on all such
questions, but literally uneducated. All they knew was that money
was necessary; otherwise how could one spend it? Money was nec-
essary, but to them the necessary was the obvious; money was like

Philanthropy
of words

air, just as essential for life, but just as easy to acquire and hence just as valueless.

Until the last decades before the Revolution there was, superficially, the most beautiful harmony between government and people. On the accession of Louis XVI the cheers for the King lasted uninterruptedly from six in the morning until sunset; at the birth of the Dauphin strangers embraced each other in the streets. When aristocratic virtues were treated on the stage, the people applauded; when those of the people, the nobility applauded. It was a comedy of sentimental brotherhood, with warm words and muzzy emotion, but no one thought to draw from this fine feeling even the most trivial practical result. In a word it was *philanthropy*.

*The bureaux
d'esprit*

The whole movement of the Enlightenment was regarded by the French aristocracy merely as a sort of amateur theatricals which were to give to society a new and piquant interest; but none marked the danger of the play. The French have always been fascinated by the bizarre, and what could be more paradoxical, more original, than a cleric who doubted God or a noble who masqueraded as a democrat? The germs of the great Revolutionary literature, which is usually called Encyclopædist, are to be sought in the intellectual circles, which — at first ironically, but later in all earnestness — were called "*bureaux d'esprit*." The first of these salons was that of Madame de Tencin, a lady with a hectic past which had made her the mother of a number of illegitimate children, among whom was d'Alembert; she had farmed him out immediately after birth and only tried to approach him again when he had become famous; he rejected her proposal contemptuously and continued to live with his foster-mother, a simple woman of the people who had most touchingly protected his childhood. One of her lovers was Law, who helped her to win a great fortune by selling her Mississippi shares before the crash came. At the time of her first salon she was already forty-five years of age and inclined to fatness; she was not yet one of the free-thinkers, but was on excellent terms with the Jesuits and the Pope Lambertini, of whom we have already spoken. Her successors were Madame Geoffrin, a lady of charming and delightful social genius, and Madame du Deffand, who united an exceptional intelligence with a vast egoism. The latter had as her companion a poor girl, Mlle

de l'Espinasse, with intellectual fascinations, becoming jealous, "Home" of her own d'Alembert, who re-won over to her salons patronized salons with Rousseau, Madame famous actress Quir

The monument

Dictionnaire raisonné appear in 1752; in 17 in the most fascinating and with magnificent literature and æsthetic theoretical and technical ability to handle a deadest of all intellectual and clarity, but the main object of the nothing less than a vision seen the light during the editors was skillfully suspected of containing "Freedom of the Will" expounded orthodox views such discussions would opposite views, supported references (which the elucidated the connexion

The soul of the whole a scientist united elegant an amazing and iridescent excellence in philosophy, story-teller, art-critic, above all he was a fine devoted to his task. His considerable changes in a sort of monism, according

Epigenesis
and
Neptunism

Essai sur le despotisme, in which he declared that the king was nothing but the first minister, "*le premier salarié*," the head but not the master of the people, who is appointed and paid for definite tasks and can at any time be removed if he fails to fulfil them or even misuses his position.

Closely related to the extension of the materialistic ideas was the development of natural science — indeed, it is difficult to say which of the two was cause and which effect. The flourishing of exact research does not lead necessarily to a rejection of spirituality, as is shown by the seventeenth century, which was dominated by Descartes and Leibniz. But in the next century there was a decisive change, for whereas previously the front place had been occupied by mathematics and theoretical physics — which are at bottom idealist sciences — now it was purely empirical disciplines that began to claim man's chief attention.

First, as to the theories themselves, the earlier ones still held their ground for a very long time, and it was only gradually that they gave place to the more modern conceptions. Albrecht von Haller used the whole weight of his authority to support Harvey's "preformation" theory, according to which the whole organism with all future generations was already present in "involution" in the egg. Against it Kaspar Friedrich Wolff set up his doctrine of "epigenesis," propounded in his *Theoria generationis* in 1759: the origin of the organism is a process of growth whose course is decided partly by heredity, partly by latent dispositions, partly by external and mechanical causes. The experiments he made to crystallize this hypothesis make him the founder of scientific embryology. Although his assumption was more plausible and easier by far to grasp, it met at first with little credence, but eventually it proved victorious, and inevitably so, because it contained one of the guiding ideas of the time: namely, the idea of evolution; it gave expression to the same feeling which twenty years later caused Lessing to regard the history of religion as a gradual evolution to an ever purer and more adequate idea of God, and gave to Kant his wonderful conception of the whole world as developing out of the conditions of our reason.

Geology too became the object of increased attention. Here ruled the "Neptunistic" doctrine taught by Abraham Gottlob Werner, who, from 1775 on, worked as a revered teacher in the

School of Mines changes of the Werner was also minerals wholly ing their external about him: "The vast many-coloured simultaneously knew where and an opposition to Hutton, a contrast acceptance much change in fire, in the earth against Buffon, too, who nervous style to positive sciences; and greatest influence

But it was in decisive changes occur imponderabilia regarded as a substance and magnetism. All these processes "imponderability" multaneously with Scheele, discovered the one is the "causation of acids, he succeeded in explaining. Again, contemporaries hydrogen, he arrived water, and thus the economy was revealed achievement was the sum of the material though he had clearly had established it irre in practice to the id

* D. T. Str
Contempt
contemplation

chaotic; and thus also light is caused by vibration in the ether — a liquid substance somewhat similar to air, but incomparably finer and more elastic. "In actual fact, then, nothing comes to us from the sun, any more than from a bell whose ringing hits our ear." Euler's successor in Berlin was Lagrange; his *Mécanique analytique* and his classical work on the problem of three bodies and on the differential calculus were epoch-making.

Finally there are three scientific successes which we will not leave unnoticed, though they received little attention from the period, because they were in advance of it. In 1787 Saussure ascended Mont Blanc for the purpose of studying earth structure. In 1793 Christian Sprengel published his *Secret of Nature revealed in the structure and fertilization of flowers*. This, as the book describes in detail, is brought about as follows: insects, in searching for the juice of flowers and for that purpose settling on the flowers or crawling into them, of necessity rub off the pollen on the stamens, owing to the hairiness of their bodies, and bear it to the pistil. This is appropriately covered either with fine hair or with a sticky substance. Nature, moreover, "who never does things by halves," has seen to it "that the insects perceive the flowers from a distance, either through their appearance or their smell, or both. All succulent flowers are, therefore, provided with a corolla and many of them diffuse a scent, which for mankind is mostly pleasant, often unpleasant, sometimes intolerable, but for the appropriate insect is always pleasant. . . . Then when some insect, enticed by the beauty of the corolla or the fascinating scent of the flower, has settled upon it, it either notices the honey immediately, or fails to do so because it lies in some hidden part. In the latter case nature helps by a mark which consists of one or more spots, lines, dots, or figures which are of a different colour from the corolla and so offers more or less of a contrast with it. This mark always lies at the point at which the insects have to crawl in if they are to reach the honey. . . . All flowers, that have neither corolla nor, in its place, any noticeable or coloured calix, and are not scented, possess no honey and are not fertilized by insects, but mechanically by the wind." His work was little heeded, and even less attention was at first given to the Englishman Edward Jenner and his inoculation against smallpox, which even to Kant seemed nothing but the "inoculation of bestiality." The

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credo we abstract the *absurdum*, as the rational faith of the time did, nothing remains but a Mosaic religion which has one prophet added to its Old Testament quota. Even philosophy, in Mendelssohn's eyes, has only the task of "making clear and certain, by means of the reason, what ordinary common sense has recognized as right." With such primitive weapons he tries to prove immortality in his *Phædo* and the existence of God in his *Morgenstunden*. His aim in the first book is made clear in the preface: "My task was to elucidate, not the grounds which the Greek world of the time had for believing in the immortality of the soul, but those which today a man like Socrates, who would have his beliefs based on reason and has the efforts of so many great minds to build upon, would find for thinking his soul immortal." That means, Plato revised by Mendelssohn and enlarged by "great minds" like Garve, Engel, and Nicolai. If we approve the purpose, we must admit its success, for Socrates does talk about last things just like the worthy tradesman and popular writer Mendelssohn, who sees in him nothing but the founder of a popular ethic and apprehends nothing in him but a rationalistic equation "Virtue = Knowledge"; who perceives nothing at all of the splendid irony which culminated in his voluntary death.

In the *Morgenstunden* he taught the prevailing deism, which, whether openly or tacitly, was the creed of the cultured, and left little of the idea of God except that of a wise being, who fulfils the natural laws decreed by the philosophers. In the matter of revelation they saved their faces for the time being by all sorts of compromises, which were either illogical or (more often) the result of dishonest thinking. Thus the eminent theologian Johann Salomo Semler, who applied to the Bible a very competent *apparatus criticus*, introduced the idea of "accommodation," according to which the Son of God, the apostles, and the saints suited their words to the needs of men of their time; therefore in our time, when needs had changed, they could be otherwise understood. On the other side Rationalism, seeing everywhere, *à la* Wolff, a pervading wisdom in nature, led to a ridiculous vulgarization of theology. It was no longer enough to talk of a "physicotheology," which from the universality of law and the adaptation of the world to definite ends had argued a wise creator; there were new inventions such as litho-, phyto-, melitto-, acrido-,

Utilitarian
interpretation of the
Bible

ichthyo-, testaceo-, insecto-theology which were supposed to give evidence of God in all the detailed phenomena of stones, plants, bees, locusts, fish, snails, insects; there were even a bronto- and a seismo-theology, which led to the knowledge of God through the proper understanding of thunder and earthquakes. The utilitarian interpretation of the Bible was especially favoured in Evangelical services; the Manger was used in sermons to indicate the value of stable feeding, the Easter visit of the women to the tomb to prove the value of early rising, and the entry into Jerusalem to point the undesirability of damaging trees by the cutting of young branches.

*The
Resurrection
fraud*

The whole attitude of the time towards religious history may be summed up in the much-discussed work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus, which only circulated in a manuscript in his lifetime and was published later in fragments by Lessing, who pretended he had found it in the Wolfenbüttel Library. The real author was not known until 1814. Starting with the thesis that "a single untruth which contradicts evident experience, history, common sense, incontrovertible axioms, or the rules of good morals, is sufficient to cause a book to be rejected as evidence of divine inspiration," he takes a jump of which the audacity becomes almost imbecility, and argues that the apostles invented the story of the Resurrection for their own benefit: after the incessant wandering about with the Messiah they had forgotten how to work, but had realized that preaching the Kingdom of God supplied nurture for the preacher, since the womenfolk had been only too glad to maintain the Messiah and his future ministers in comfort. They therefore stole the body of Jesus, hid it, and proclaimed to the world that the Saviour had risen and would soon return. Jesus, in agreement with the popular Jewish conception, had pictured the Kingdom of God as a powerful kingdom of this earth and himself as its future king, but he and his disciples had been bitterly disappointed; and the latter had therefore invented a new scheme, according to which Christ had to suffer and die for the salvation of mankind, but had thereafter risen to heaven, whence he would soon come to restore his kingdom.

That a hypothesis which made of the apostles a greedy band of swindlers could meet with such a welcome finds its explanation in that complete lack of historical and psychological under-

standing which the whole people simply intended for by the Jewish surdity has seemed marvellous; but the New Testament, which gives opportunity for the study of the Bible, merely transforms it, filling it with — which is the case today — but the words, that he once called him commonly thou show that he was details here; but scholar with still logical, yet a man this question to the most remarkable authority than was the Messiah, as the Messiah and did two simple considerations why did he do so secondly, if Jesus nize him as such present day? Th the sword, but had occurred pre Messiah was to certainly the right or less than the

Lessing himself "Fragmentist"; and this "genuine opinion" But the defender

*D.T.'s
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might at any time make the impossible possible. Everyone be-
lieved in the magnetic cures which apparently endowed people
with the powers of the prophets, the so-called mesmerism, on
which Mesmer did very good business in Paris, Vienna, and else-
where. Great popularity was also enjoyed by the wonder-cures and
devil-exorcisms of Gassner and the invocation of ghosts by the
innkeeper Schrepfer — who ended in suicide. The two most promi-
nent representatives of this business were men of whom everyone
has heard — Casanova and Cagliostro. The first, who was at least
as famous as an international crook as he was as a seducer of
women, wandered about the world as a cabbalist, astrologer, and
necromancer practising rejuvenation cures, gold-making, and
soothsaying. To Cagliostro magical arts and shams of all kinds
were a means of livelihood; when his servant was asked if the
Count was really three hundred years old, he replied that he could
not say, as he had only been in his service for a hundred. The
technique of these masters of sharp practice were dealt with ef-
fectively and in factual detail by Schiller in his *Geisterseher*;
“their only capital,” said Chledowski, “was their faith in human
folly, and it was a capital which paid high interest.”

But this period, in which soberest rationalism and crassest
superstition, audacious charlatanry and true prophecy moved side
by side, produced the polar complement to Cagliostro in the seer
Swedenborg, whose figure, unrecognized and misunderstood by
contemporaries and posterity, strides through history as a superb
riddle. During the greater part of his life his face was turned to-
wards worldly concerns. His original occupations in which he has
considerable achievements to his credit had been mineralogy and
mathematics, engineering and mining technique. Then suddenly
in his fifty-fifth year he received the revelation, and from that
time forth he had dealings only with the higher worlds. There are
many proofs that he possessed abnormal occult powers: he learnt
details from the dead which could not possibly have been known
to him previously; he told the Queen of Sweden things which no
one knew but herself, and in Gothenburg he saw the complete
course of a big fire which broke out at the same moment in Stock-
holm, whence news only came two days later to confirm his story.
Whether he was in continuous and special communication with
angels, we cannot of course test, but he at least believed it. His

Swedenborg

P.T.
G.V.

who pull a building down to get the material." One of these malicious epigrams led to his imprisonment: for when he saw everywhere the general proclamation: "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité ou la mort!*" he added: "*C'est la fraternité de Caïn.*" He was set at liberty, only to be imprisoned a second time, when he attempted suicide. It is not certain whether he died as a result of this attempt or of a long-standing bladder trouble.

As for Rousseau, the history of the origin of his first work is extraordinarily characteristic of the man. The Academy of Dijon had set for a prize essay the subject: Has the revival of science and art contributed to the purification of morality? Diderot asked Rousseau which line he should take, and Rousseau replied: "Naturally, the affirmative." "That is the *pons asinorum*, every mediocrity will go that way. But the opposite view gives new scope to thought and style." Rousseau took the tip, and in his essay (which won the prize) he made the sensation he hoped for. Once he had made up his mind to take the opposing view, he went far beyond the question set, and sought to prove, as he lashed himself into a foam of fury against the whole of human civilization, that it has not merely not improved morality, but has corrupted it, and had been the cause of all human misery. What should we do with artists apart from the fatal luxury which brings them up? Should we be less numerous, less well governed, less flourishing without the men of learning? On the contrary, it is science and art, and they alone, which have made us put talent above virtue." Some years later the Dijon Academy set another prize theme: What is the origin of the inequality of men, and has it any natural basis? Rousseau wrote an essay on this subject also and attracted still more attention than with the earlier, for it was precisely because a blind and wild resentment spoke in him that it was a success. The origin of inequality, which is a scandalous crime against nature and justice, he again finds in civilization, in political and social conventions, which are the arbitrary creation of men. The only condition worthy of man is his natural condition: "If nature has determined us to be healthy, I dare to assert that the condition of reflection is an unnatural condition and that a man who thinks is a degenerate animal." "The first man who enclosed a piece of land and had the audacity to say: 'That is mine,' and found men simple enough to believe him, was

Rousseau's
conception
of Nature

~~not difficult for me.~~

is self
improvement
is the
goal

The German "Genius Period," which began, roughly, in the seventies, also goes back to Rousseau in essential traits. There was, as Goethe said retrospectively, a ferment of ideas. "The epoch in which we were living may be called the challenging age, for we made demands on ourselves and on others which no one had yet lived up to. The loftiest, most sensitive, and intelligent, in fact, had suddenly realized that the immediate view of nature, and action based thereon, was the best that man could wish for himself, and was not hard of achievement. . . . When now men advanced to its realization, it became clear that the easiest way out of the business was to call in the aid of genius, which by its magical gifts would solve the problem and meet the challenge." The watchword "genius" had been first used in this sense by Gerstenberg, who also wrote the first important drama of this school. The meaning of the word has been best expressed by Lavater in his *Physiognomy*: "The character of genius and all its works is *apparition*; as angels do not come, but are here, do not go away, but are away, so also with the work and the effect of genius. That which is unlearned and unborrowed, which can be neither learnt nor borrowed, the inwardly individual, the inimitable, the divine, that is genius; the inspirational is genius and is called so, will be called so, at all times, among all peoples, as long as men think and feel and speak. Genius flashes and creates, it does not construct, just as it cannot itself be constructed, but is. Inimitability is the character of genius, instantaneity, revelation, and apparition, givenness; that which is given, not by man, but by God or by the Devil." The highest praise that could be — and often was — extended to a man at the time was to call him an "original genius" or a "Nature." What was demanded was no longer the handling of definite rules, but the "full heart," and the feelings were placed far above the reason — but yet associated with reason; for the whole of the impetuous youth which had made it part of its program to exude at all costs, was a strange mixture of naïveté and reflection, eld-wisdom and childishness.

The prelude to this extremely interesting movement, which introduced a completely new quality into German intellectual life, is the period of Sensibility, whose beginnings came about twenty years earlier. Gellert's chief demand, repeated time and again in his letters and writings, had been the "good and sensitive soul,"

and this fashion about 1750, "c Sterne's *Sentiment*, expression not only of life-motto. Si "*la belle âme*," ment. Then the tion, with a pow the fashion over shouted it to eac a secret inspirati completely adeq foundation of lo — Feeling. Wha what are life and poet, what gives

The inevitab from out of the i a talent that the to keep up with f One had to be away, one must tension. In Frai Revolution; in ' of a one-sided u

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and this fashionable softness and sentimentality was called, round about 1750, "delicacy" and "sensibility." Lessing translated Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* as *Empfindsame Reise*, and this expression not only made itself at home, but became very soon a sort of life-motto. Side by side with it was Rousseau's conception of "*la belle âme*," which lies open to every gentle and refined sentiment. Then the word "feeling" came, and extended its domination, with a power that is attainable only by a word that becomes the fashion over every sphere of life. Men were intoxicated by it, shouted it to each other like a watchword that is at the same time a secret inspiration. "Feeling" was the indispensable, but also the completely adequate, legitimation of everything. What was the foundation of love, friendship, harmony, all human relationship? — Feeling. What is the core of religion, what is the fatherland, what are life and Nature? — Feeling. What forms the painter, the poet, what gives the impress of true humanity? — always Feeling.

The inevitable consequence was that this feeling of everything from out of the inner wealth of the heart, which is a capacity and a talent that the gods rarely give, was in the thousands who wanted to keep up with fashion just an external parade and artificial show. One had to be always stirred, always moved, agitated, carried away, one must live in a perpetual condition of emotional high tension. In France this play with noble sentiment produced the Revolution; in Germany it had the more harmless consequence of a one-sided unworldly culture.

One of the first and most beneficial results of this cult of sentiment was that it broke down, in part, the partition walls which the stiff tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had erected between men. Even Lessing, in other respects a warm and successful defender of the natural, addressed his best friends in formal terms; and in the elementary schools of Joseph II (which as little as his other reforms meant a real attainment of freedom) the children were strictly forbidden to say "thou" to each other. Goethe and Lavater on the other hand spoke familiarly, thee'd and thou'd each other at their first meeting; and this became the ordinary method of address among men who felt themselves intellectually in relation (a thing which was very easy at the time). Equally readily people took to calling each other "brother" and "sister." An indispensable part of even the smallest park was the Temple

high that ladies had to remove the cushions from their coaches. At the French Court a frigate in full sail was seen as a coiffure. The Marquise de Créqui tells us that in 1785 Marie Antoinette appeared with her hair dressed *à la jardinière*, with an artichoke, a cabbage, a carrot, and a bundle of radishes on her head. One of the court ladies was so taken with this that she cried out: "I shall only wear vegetables in future, they are so simple, and much more natural than flowers." Huge hoods also came into fashion again, the so-called *dormeuses* or *baigneuses*. In the name of philanthropy, a vigorous opposition was set up against powdering, on the ground that the enormous use of wheat flour raised the price of bread for the people, and the hair actually began to be worn unpowdered, though this fashion was not universal. Men's pigtails became shorter every year, and the old full coat, which even during the Rococo had been slightly cut away, was then transformed into the frock-coat proper. This was modelled on the English riding-coat and came into fashion about 1770 as the swallow-tail. In its beginnings, however, it was by no means the serious dignified ceremonial dress that its survival is today, but an affected and provocative article of clothing, favoured especially by the revolutionary youth and worn in vivid colours such as scarlet, azure-blue, and violet, ornamented with gold or copper buttons. From the free America, towards the end of the period, came the top-hat and the big round felt hat. The Werther attire consisted of high boots with tops, yellow leather breeches, yellow waistcoat and blue frock-coat; the neck and hair were left free, which shocked the older generation particularly. Even women of the emancipated sort appeared with the Werther hat, waistcoat, and coat, the notorious "*caraco*."

The gods of the time were those to whom Werther prayed, Homer, Ossian, and Shakspeare, who was erroneously regarded as a book-dramatist. In 1760 the Scottish poet James Macpherson published his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands*, bardic poems, purporting to be translated from the Gaelic of the time of Caracalla. In 1762 these were followed by a second work, *Fingal, an old epic poem, by Ossian, son of Fingal*. Doubts were already cast on their authenticity by Johnson and Hume, but it was not till 1807, eleven years after Macpherson's death, that the forgery was conclusively proved. But this really mattered little,

Ossian

and only paper-souls like Johnson or furious sceptics like Hume regarded it as a problem of importance. The real genius of these play-acting pieces lay in the very fact that they did not reproduce the old folk-poetry faithfully at all; but were just what the wishes of the age imagined and wanted nature-poetry to be, delicately primitive, artificially picturesque, mirroring the sadness of over-civilized minds. No genuine bardic poems have ever achieved the colossal success of these. They were translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Dutch, and about half a dozen times into German; Alwina, Selma, and Fingal became favourite baptismal names; bardic schools sprang up, and even Napoleon rated Ossian above Homer. Pallid melancholy and wild-natural disorder appeared to the time more poetical than clearness and form. The fascination and grandeur of the hitherto disparaged Gothic was rediscovered; Horace Walpole, son of the Robert Walpole already mentioned, rebuilt his home at Strawberry Hill as a mediæval castle and wrote the successful Gothic thriller *The Castle of Otranto*. Herder glorified the simple manners of the German past, and Goethe waxed enthusiastic over Strassburg Minster.

*Sturm und
Drang*

It is to be noted of the poets of the "*Sturm und Drang*" movement that without exception their greatest vigour was shown when they were still young. This is true even of the classics — Herder, Goethe, and Schiller. The movement was preluded by Gerstenberg's *Ugolino* in 1767, a splendid dramatic study which was full of colour and movement, but was found repellent owing to the coarseness with which it discovered a sort of morphology of hunger. Gerstenberg was about ten years older than the other "Original Geniuses" and died as late as 1823, at the age of eighty-six, but he produced nothing of note after this promising beginning. The Göttingen "*Hain*," a group of idealistic young people which was founded in 1772, sought to revive the old scaldic poetry and was enthusiastic for liberty, fatherland, virtue, and Klopstock. The members of the real "*Sturm und Drang*" group, with which the Hain was in reality only externally connected, were all born about the middle of the century; they were often called Goetheans, since Goethe was looked on as the leader of the whole movement, though in fact (as everyone knows) he very soon withdrew from it. Their products were published anonymously, and it is delightful to see how even skilled critics blundered in the attribution of vari-

ous works. Lessing by Goethe, and many poems have found. *Soldaten* was Gerstenberg's. Lenz's collected Gleim and Schiller. Klopstock, Voss: some even hold of fact, Lenz is, the generation; viduality," and admirably: "he minds us of We his works, an precisely he owe uralism, which his figures a peci is a moralism, w the most repulsi harlot, and the. Lenz's plays, the sented a mixed demands which *das Theater of*. This apt remark to copy in every Frau von Stein, successfully imit poems, and want Karl August cal cally opposite to lack of human after his brief he and oblivion.

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Thing-in-itself, which is not included under the space- and time-
forms of intuition nor under the thought-forms of substance and
causality, is a mere limit-notion; it marks the frontier at which
our knowledge ceases.

Kant compared himself with Copernicus, and the *Critique of
Pure Reason* does in fact mean a complete reversal of the hitherto
existing world-picture. Only he really reverses it in an opposite
way to Copernicus. For Copernicus said that man had till then
believed the earth was the centre of the universe, all of whose
movements were regulated according to it, whereas in reality the
earth is only a tiny satellite of the sun and the great universe of
worlds, and its path is regulated accordingly. Kant took the op-
posite path: hitherto man had believed that his knowledge was
regulated by the objects of the external world; in reality the
whole world has to be regulated according to him and his knowl-
edge, through which alone, in fact, it can acquire existence.
Nevertheless both systems have the same point: in our first vol-
ume we indicated that the new astronomy, which stands at the
opening of the New Age, while it did reduce the earth to a tiny
spot of light and extended the universe to terrific dimensions, at
the same time raised man to be the power that pierces and un-
veils the cosmos; so that a finite but impenetrable magic-world
was replaced by an infinite and yet calculable mathematical-
world. In the same way Kant hurls man down to the depths of
powerlessness and darkness and proves to him irrefutably that he
is separated from knowledge of the "true" world, the world-in-
itself, by insuperable barriers; but at the same time he makes him
the creator and absolute lawgiver of the empirical world, whose
enormous expanses can no longer make him fearful. The *Pure
Reason* thus marks at once the lowest subjection and the highest
triumph of human reason: man is a vanishingly small point in the
universe, but this cipher imposes its laws on the universe.

The final chapter of the *Pure Reason* forms the transition to
Kant's second great work, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which
appeared seven years later. The ideas of freedom, immortality,
and divinity are inaccessible by theoretical paths, since they are
beyond our experience, but they are unattainable by the prac-
tical, since by our moral will we can make them (not, of course,
objective, but at least) subjective and personal certainties and

The primacy
of Practical
Reason

315
D.T. Down in the abyss of darkness
all movement is denied the
greater wisdom of our Prince and his
of heaven. Devil of my category, even my
will categorize do not enter there

one-idea'd but amazingly efficient schoolmaster entered a class-room and, by his teaching, forced the minds of his pupils — all of them lively, talented, inquisitive children — once and for all into an oblique and receding path. All classical poetry became *workshop poetry*: the dramas, stories, poems, treatises of the Classicists all have, as it were, tiny windows, the atmosphere of interiors, artificial or, at best, indoor lighting, strong lines, but pale colours. Everything is narrow, badly ventilated, curtained over, half dark, alcoved; and all this was supposed to be imitation of the Greeks, who created and produced their plays, their sculptures, and their paintings in the open air, who pursued their artistic sport, their philosophy, and their rhetoric in the streets, who never held their political meetings or court sittings, their divine worship or theatrical performances under cover and were, in fact, "*plein-air*" creatures *par excellence*.

Schiller, one of the most powerful of German temperaments; Goethe, whose whole life, thought, and creations were an organized seership; whole generations of German sculptors and painters, who were by their innermost gifts cut out for Naturalism; even the leaders of the nominally anti-classical Romantic school — all, all took up the Classicist task-work. Napoleon, wild, hundred-eyed child of reality, had nothing more urgent to do as Emperor than to spread the empty veneer of the Empire style all over Europe.

The
"Classical"
Greek

Were we to believe this conception of Antiquity, the chief occupation of Greeks and Romans must obviously have been to read hard at Winckelmann, just as Rousseau's children of nature must have known the *Contrat social* by heart. This remarkable return to the Classical is only intelligible as a fundamental urge and last effort of the age to find — in a world of pure measure and proportion, clear order and easy oversight, self-limitation and avoidance of complication — relief and rest from its own problems, from the fluctuating formlessness and confusing multiplicity of its own strivings, situations, and outlooks. Classicism was born of the fears of modern man.

But it is on the other hand highly remarkable, a sort of involuntary irony at one's own expense, that the ideal of the Classical was found in Alexandrinism, the sugary, lush, and literary sculpture of the Greek Baroque: men, in fact, instinctively made for that which was most closely akin to themselves. The Greek de-

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understand a word of Greek authors, one would have not only to cut these out of school curricula, but forbid them for private reading as unmoral in the highest degree. But on adults the impression the Greeks make is that of beautiful beasts of prey, whom one appraises from a purely æsthetic point of view, or certain drama-figures of which one admires the fine characterization without approving the characters. In any case, the average Athenian himself regarded the Greek culture, even of the Periclean Age, as a degraded compound of democratic chatter, soap-box strategy, sporting jargon, and onion prices.

Goethe is responsible for the well-known remark that the Romantic is the morbid, the Classical the healthy. Without troubling to discuss the accuracy of this thesis, one can probably say anyhow that the Greeks were Romantic and unhealthy in their life, its manifestations and institutions, Classical and healthy in their poetry and thought. They were indeed absolutely forced to it, for they could never have carried the luxury of a Romantic art and philosophy, which would have involved them in an immediate collapse. The relation of life to its product is always, as we have pointed out, that of positive to negative. It is not a matter of accident that the sickly, highly sensitive, and gentle-hearted Nietzsche set up the ideal of the superman, while on the contrary the healthy, happy, and most egoistic Schopenhauer taught a philosophy of pessimism and negation of the will; that a strong sensualist like Wagner preached spirituality, while Rousseau was a fanatic of the primitive, the idyllic, and the “good.” If we judged the “*Fin de Siècle*” only by its art, we should hardly argue from Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Altenberg, George, Schnopff, and Klimt to an age of technocracy, bourse domination, militarism, and imperialism. It is the same with the Greek ideal of *sophrosyne*: the tempered wisdom, clear sense, and controlled passion. They spoke so much of it because they had it not. Of their taste, on the other hand, of which they had as much as all other peoples old and new put together, they never spoke.

In the centre of Greek history, chronologically as well as intellectually, stands the mysterious figure of Socrates, who had a good deal to say to his fellow-countrymen about these things. Nietzsche, as everyone knows, saw in him a typical decadent, even a criminal, and called his dialectic the victory of mob-resentment;

Socratism

try, by unjustified, and treated that here also of marble.

n barbarism of a very natural that came under ure would have es, too, were as ented by jewels, uncritical imies were immediate of ignoring the "Greek head", without a look ie neo-German

magnificent impink or brown-coloured tint. l material must ie Greeks knew ent would only their own judgment, or made white (in which or was likewise s. Helmets and s were of metal, vere not necessarily painted by rhyselephantine, colossal work, d, the ivory by at it fitted the int already apas slightly dyed nted gold plate, yes of flashing

jewels. On the temples the frieze and metopes were delightfully coloured, like tin soldiers, on a background of gleaming red or blue, the "drops" and other details were gilded, the echinus and the gutter of the roof ornamented in many colours after the fashion of our modern enamel-painting. On the Hecatompodon, the old temple of Athena on the Acropolis, made of porous limestone, which was destroyed in 480 B.C. by the Persians, and only rediscovered in the "Persian rubbish-heap" in our eighties, the men still had their bright-blue beards and hair, grass-green eyes, and red bodies. Painted relief, however, was always regarded, through the whole of Antiquity, only as a side-line of picture-painting.

In the light of a blazing sun, a hitting blue sky, cinnabar-red hills, sulphur-coloured rocks, poison-green trees, and a sea that flashed in a hundred changing shades the Greeks were predisposed already to be one of the most colour-loving — nay, colour-drunken — of peoples. Their poetic and philosophical fantasy always lived in an atmosphere of rich, strong colouring, and in their dress they loved loud and violently contrasting hues: purple and sky-blue, saffron and scarlet; even gleaming white had with them the character of a colour.

Their painting, as to which we have only scanty information — perhaps very fortunately so, for it is hard to say what its example might have led to in modern European art — seems to have had a strictly conventional character till right into the fifth century, and if relief was a sort of painting over moulding, painting must in its turn have been a sort of two-dimensional coloured plastic. As in the drama, the chief reasons for this limitedness lay partly in the primitiveness and conservatism of technique, partly in its orientation towards religious cultus. The frescoes of Polygnotus, who flourished in the second quarter of the fifth century, showed no thrown shadows, no chiaroscuro, no modelling, and were nothing but coloured-in outlines; nor did he know anything of perspective, recession being shown by superposition. It was only in the second half of the century, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, that Agatharchus discovered "*Scenographia*," a scene-setting kind of perspective, which became the height of fashion when Alcibiades had his house decorated with such pictures. About the same time Apollodorus was at work, called the shadow-painter because he was the first correctly to observe and reproduce light-relations.

Greek
painting

that every Greek was a Platonist. In the Platonic philosophy the ideas are the immortal *παράδειγματα*, the originals and exemplars, after which all earthly appearances are formed as *μιμήματα*, imitations and copies. What fascinates us as the "beauty" of an object is the *ἀνάμνησις*, the dark remembrance in our soul, of its eternal archetype, which it saw before birth. Ideas are therefore something quite different from concepts, for we reach a knowledge, or rather an inkling of them, not by abstraction, but by intuition. Aristotle, the second most influential Greek philosopher, has a somewhat different, yet fundamentally similar conception. For him the *morphe*, the form, is in essence the same as the *Eidos*, the idea, and the *Hyle*, or material, is the *dunamis*, the possibility of form, while *energeia* is the realization of the material. *Hyle* means actually raw material, timber, and Aristotle illustrates the meaning of the *Eidos* by the function of a carpenter — which is the idea of the house. The form, therefore, exists first; it generates the house. Aristotle says quite emphatically that the idea, the universal, is *πρότερον φύσει*, the first in reality, and the individual only *πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, the first for us. The conviction of the priority of the Idea is common to Plato and Aristotle. It is the Classical model of each thing, that which nature really aims at, but never achieves; it is, certainly in Plato, something quite concrete. It will be recalled from the previous chapter that Goethe had a similar idea before him when he thought of the *Urpflanze*. The canon of the beautiful human form, as moulded by the Greeks in their sculpture, corresponded to it in a way. The same character informs their feeling of tragedy. Nietzsche said in his *Birth of Tragedy*: "There is an assertion by someone or other that all individuals as individuals are comic, and therefore untragic: from which it might be argued that the Greeks *could not* endure individuals on their tragic stage." A dramatic art that individualized, that in any sense created something more than the idea, the *mask*, would have been to them not a higher, but a ridiculous, unworthy, and blasphemous form. For one must not forget the religious basis on which this tragedy rested. Alfred Bäumler says in his penetrating and suggestive introduction to a selection of Bachofen's works: "Every thought of everyday matters must be put away if we want to understand Agamemnon, Orestes, Œdipus Ajax, Antigone. They are in fact *shades* that

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rise up before us on the tragic stage. These heroes are not fetched from the highways, but conjured up from the grave. . . . Every-thing empirical, every thought of realism, is infinitely remote. The exposition-form of Greek tragedy is not to be explained merely from the idea (which admittedly exists) of a real superhuman greatness in the heroes of the past, but far more in a holy reverence in presence of the dead." Therefore: since the tragic heroes came forth from the grave, they could not be represented realistically like modern heroes, for they were part of a religious ceremony and could only be grasped as universal symbols. In this light we can see that the change from the older type-art to the "psychology" and character-drawing that we get in Euripides was a symbol of irreligion, the dramatic counterpart to the destructive dialectic of Protagoras and to Alcibiades' profanation of the Mysteries.

The Greeks had — connected both with their Platonism and with their musicality — a native eye for the geometry of things, their arrangement, division, proportion — an extraordinary gift of recognizing in everything the secret outline, plan, and style, the inner skeleton and diagrammatic scheme. They were eminently linear artists and, for all their nervous quality, the very opposite of impressionists. *Γράφειν* means both to write and to paint. They had no eye for half-tones, screened lighting, gradual transitions, and subtle shadows; and perspective was not yet known, as we can argue with certainty from the description of paintings that survive and the poets' descriptions of nature. The very character of their land, the crystalline brightness and clearness of the air, the sharp profiling of the hills, the strong, varied articulation of the coast-line, had pushed them to such a definite feeling for contours. In Athens the sun, on the average, is clouded over only twenty-five days a year. In Homer everything takes place in brightest daylight. Night was the most hateful thing known to the Greeks; and for the poetry of mist, of the autumn mood, of twilight, of moonlight, which plays so large a part in modern sensibility they possessed no organ at all. Further, the whole day was lived in the open. Consequently we must tacitly add the Greek landscape to all that the Greeks did and created — to their drama, their temples, their vases and pictures, their speeches and songs, their symposia and games — just as they themselves always

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marked, was the counterpart in the world of imagination to the other in the world of politics. Emerson counts them among his six *Representative Men* — "Goethe or the Writer," "Napoleon or the Man of the World." Carlyle includes them in his six groups of *Heroes*: Goethe is the "Hero as Man of Letters," Napoleon the "Hero as King." They were alike in that neither remained true to the Revolution out of which they had grown: Napoleon because of his Cæsarism, Goethe because of his Classicism, both of which things are inherent tendencies of the cultural complex which in the widest sense of the word we may call Empire. That they should tread this backward path was probably inevitable, for, as Goethe himself said, "Great men are always bound to their century by some weaknesses."

In discussions of the French Revolution it is generally said that its greatest historical importance lay in the fact that it freed France and Europe by emancipating society from the domination of absolutism, of the Church, and of the privileged classes; and that the proclamation of the "Rights of Man" begins the era of intellectual independence, of legislation by the citizen for the citizen, and of unfettered economic competition. Now, it is quite true, of course, that certain emancipatory movements were set in motion by the Paris Revolution, but the view that constitutionalism, liberalism, socialism, and the other similar political movements of the nineteenth century arose from this one source is, stated in this crude form, false and misleading. The Revolution brought about the decisive victory of the bourgeoisie, but only at the outset; later it led to the decisive victory of the mob. The Revolution overthrew absolutism, but not for long, for on June 2, 1793 absolutism returned in the dictatorship of the Convention and the Commune, on April 1, 1794 it developed (not formally, but *de facto*) into the dictatorship of a single man, Robespierre, and by Napoleon's *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire the dictatorship became formal as well as *de facto*. Neither was it the Revolution that definitively broke up the old forms of hereditary monarchy, aristocratic domination, and the rule of the priests; these powers, alleged to be dead, experienced a partial resurrection under the First Empire, and an almost complete one under the restoration in the reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X. The French Revolution did *not* create equality; it only produced

✦
The
Revolution

P.T. 401 and my little bit of confusion
to a student by his weaknesses

another and more objectionable form of inequality in the inequalities of capitalism. The French Revolution did *not* bring liberty; it exercised the same narrow, cruel, and selfish censorship over minds as the *Ancien Régime*, but in the name of liberty and by much more Draconian methods. It asked every man if he was on the side of liberty, and if a perfectly unambiguous answer was not forthcoming it replied, not with *lettres de cachet*, but with the guillotine. Never before, either under Turkish sultans and Arab caliphs, or under Russian Grand Dukes and Spanish inquisitors, has there been such an unfreedom as under the "Constitution of Friends of Freedom," for never before was the death-penalty imposed for a whole series of quite passive qualities, such as culture, purity, tolerance, silence, even mere existence. Of the three slogans, *fraternité*, *liberté*, and *égalité*, the first was a mere operative phrase, of which practical politics took no account whatsoever, and the two others were irreconcilable opposites. For equality is destructive of liberty, and liberty is destructive of equality. If all men are looked upon as identical and therefore subjected to the same rights, duties, and life-forms, they are no longer free; and if all may develop in accordance with their various individualities, they are no longer equal.

Nevertheless there remains to the French Revolution the high merit of having made the relation between the State and the subject, the ruler and the ruled, so to say more labile. The association of the two partners, outwardly still the same, became merely looser, much more easily breakable; from that time onwards a slight shock was often sufficient to produce complete dissociation. The European states became unstable combinations, after the manner of certain carbohydrate compounds which have a "free radical link." This "free radical link" has constituted since that time a latent threat to the structure of the State, ever ready to enter on new affinities and thus to change (or destroy) the character of the existing combination.

"The French nation," said Goethe, "is a nation of the extreme; it knows no moderation. It is the only nation of the world in whose history we find both a Massacre of St. Bartholomew and a Feast of Reason, the absolutism of Louis XIV and the unbridledness of the Sansculottes." The two extremes, between which the soul of France is hurled hither and thither, are pedantry

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the French Revolution the high the State and the sublimable. The association same, became merely at that time onwards a complete dissociation. combinations, after the days which have a "free" constituted since that the State, ever ready to or destroy) the charac-

is a nation of the exclusively nation of the world of St. Bartholomew and Louis XIV and the unworldly extremes, between and thither, are pedantry

and folly, and both have their roots in one and the same fundamental characteristic. The spirit of France may be briefly — indeed, summarily — described as consisting in an extraordinary absence of the sense-of-reality.

Pedantry and folly are not opposites, but merely different grades of the same relation to actuality. The pedant is a kind of tame fool, and the fool a kind of pedant run wild. Both have one-sided, incomplete, and therefore false perspective of life. They take, as it were, opposite positions on the thermometric scale. The pedant is at freezing-point, the fool at boiling-point.

One has only to attempt an unprejudiced examination of the French national character in its essential manifestations to find that pedantry is a persistent feature of the French, though one has to confess that it leads, in the highest products of the national spirit, to a most marvellous mastery of form. They have created a language excellently adapted to speech and written composition; a language in which it is impossible to express oneself badly; the only choice is to write correct and beautiful French or something incomprehensible, ridiculous, and absurd, and therefore not French at all. They have produced a classical tragedy in which vague, unclear, or confused writing cannot be. They possess a philosophical terminology in which illogical or vague thinking is impossible. They are the inventors of a centralized administration without which the Revolution in all its stages would have been unthinkable; for this system alone enabled the man who happened to have his hand on the lever of the machine to become the absolute ruler of all France, so that a country of twenty-five million inhabitants was ruled first by an idle oligarchy completely unfit to rule, then by a handful of empty-headed juristic doctrinaires, then by a gang of hysterical bandits, next by a set of thievish financiers, and eventually by the brain and will of a *conquistador* of genius. Even in the greatest period of their history, under Louis XIV, when they held not only the political, but also the intellectual hegemony of Europe, they produced nothing but pedantic creations of a monumental style, accurately compassed court poems, court paintings, and court philosophy. Method, program, mathematics, system, rule, *clarté*, have always formed the strength of the French, in complete contrast to the Germans, whose essential genius is brewing, soaring, experimenting, and

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æsthetic pull. A plant seems to us more poetic than an animal, a child than a grown person, a dead man than a living man. The same naturally applies to the past. Even our own past has its own particular half-romantic character; we always think of past events, even when they were painful, with a certain envy, and we rather think that life was better then. Experience possesses much less reality than fiction. The events which history hands down are told, presented, thought over, their existence is in fantasy. But those which we live through as contemporaries are merely actual. Historical events come down to us in epic dress and have that aromatic, intoxicating, confusing effect which poesy always possesses and actuality never. When we live through an event, the deep spiritual impression that it might make is blanketed and nullified by the intrusion of a multitude of everyday details. Proximity is too great, the physical too importunate, for us to have a clear conception of the matter. Illusion, the mysterious effect of distance, is destroyed. That which *was* affects us more deeply than that which *is*.

But the second specially remarkable point about the French Revolution is the simple fact that this revolution was French. The Frenchman has the paradoxical and mysterious talent of making everything — God, love, liberty, fame, and everyday life — into a stage thrill, a sensational novel; he knows how to give everything a certain æsthetic presentation and a good and effective *décor*. The mere imposing ferocity of the instincts then let loose alone provided a dazzling spectacle to a Europe already fading out in dust of books and smoke of tobacco; Europe was awakened from its drowsy afternoon musings by a flaming torch reddening the sky with a magnificent display of colour.

In his report of the Convention session of January 16, 1793, which voted the death of the King, Mercier remarked: "*Tout est optique*," a remarkably pregnant phrase. It seems that this whole French Revolution affected many like a ghostly puppet-theatre, like scenes in a magic lantern. No one has rendered this truly magic atmosphere more movingly and suggestively than Carlyle in his *French Revolution*, in which the strange shadowiness, the batlike uncanniness of all its events, and their so-to-say two-dimensional character, nightmarish and unreal into the bargain, are brought out with the most vivid effect.

Then, besides, there was the marvellous Latin perfection of form with which the drama was played. The public utterances of this wild horde of murderers and madmen, their speeches, pamphlets, manifestos, were always works of art. They might, without alteration or at most with a few cuts, be taken over bodily into a play. For example, when Robespierre, conscious of his omnipotence, had the effrontery to say to the Convention: "Who dares accuse me?" and Louvet rose, slowly took four steps forward, and, looking him in the face, replied: "I, I, Robespierre, accuse you." Or Danton, who cried before his execution: "Oh, my beloved wife, must I thus leave thee behind alone?" but forthwith interrupted himself: "Fie, Danton; no weakness, Danton!" Or the famous accusation of Camille Desmoulins in the *Vieux Cordelier* against Jacobin domination, which in its magnificent intensification would have made a show piece for Kainz (he pretends to be speaking of conditions under the Roman emperors, but refers, of course, to the present):

"In that time words became state crimes; from now on, there was but a single step to turn a sigh or a glance into a crime. It became a counter-revolutionary crime for Cremutius Claudius to call Brutus and Cassius the last of the Romans; it was a counter-revolutionary crime for Mamercus Scaurus to have written tragic scenes capable of a double interpretation; it was a counter-revolutionary crime for Torquatus Silanus to live ostentatiously, for the Consul Cassius Geminus to lament the unhappiness of the time, for that implied accusation of the Government; for a descendant of Cassius to have a portrait of his great-grandfather in the house; for the widow of Gellius Furca to have wept at her husband's execution.

"Everything awakened suspicion in the tyrant. Did a citizen enjoy the favour of the people, he was a rival of the Prince; suspect! Did he, on the other hand, avoid the favour of the people and remain sitting at the fire-side, this retired life showed that he was politically indifferent; suspect! Was a man rich, the people might be led astray by his expenditure; suspect! Was a man poor, none is so enterprising as the destitute; suspect! Was a man gloomy, melancholy in temperament, he was vexed that public affairs went well; suspect! Did a man enjoy himself and

get indigestion, it suspect! Was a man desired to humiliate himself, it was a philosopher, an orator, a general, his talent suspect! Suspect!"

Asked for his name, Danton r inscribed in the *Pa* place will soon be no am as old as the good revolutionaries." In fact the figure a little for Hérault-Séchelles de said, pointing to the: "There, my friend, a sheer scene-endings a Sardou and Dumas i

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Asked for his name, age, and address before the Revolutionary
Tribunal, Danton replies: "My age is thirty-five, my name is
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place will soon be nothingness." Camille Desmoulins answers: "I
am as old as the good sansculotte Jesus, a dangerous age for revo-
lutionaries." In fact he was already thirty-four, but he reduced
the figure a little for the sake of effect. When his fellow-victim
Hérault-Séchelles desired to embrace him on the scaffold, Danton
said, pointing to the sack containing the heads of the guillotined:
"There, my friend, our heads will kiss one another." These are
sheer scene-endings and *scènes à faire* such as hardly occurred to
Sardou and Dumas in their best hours.

There was also much that was pitifully melodramatic. The
painter David declared in the Convention: "Under a good régime
women bear children painlessly." The Conventional commissary
Ferry addressed the peasants of the departments under him with
the words: "Noble friends of Nature!" and ends with the de-
mand: "Good citizens are herewith invited to give the rural festi-
val of harvest the sentimental character proper to it." The first
number of the *Mercure de France* which appeared after the Sep-
tember massacres bore at its head an ode: "To the Shade of my
Canary-bird."

Indeed, in observing the endless feasts of liberty and magnifi-
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supers, on pinchbeck symbolical properties, on plaster and paste-
board and tin, it seems almost as if Revolution had been concei-
ved by the French nation as a kind of tragic operetta. It often
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hundred and twenty years of age entered the National Assembly
and aroused much emotion by his expression of republican senti-
ments. On another occasion Anacharsis Cloots appeared with a

The tragic
operetta

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The tragic
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* D. T. laments the loss of Danton
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degree of security in small proprietorship and small businesses, based on stability of the market, absence of competition, uniformity both of productive capacities and of demand. These conditions produced even in the "working" classes an atmosphere of reflectiveness and leisure which is hardly to be found anywhere today. At that period, in contrast to later times, the average middle-class woman was generally more active than her husband, but quite uninterested in intellectual matters; he on the other hand, thanks to his large leisure, could take a much greater share in all cultural things than he can today. There was also a relative absence of distractions and diversions and of the fuss of every sort that so completely fills our own hours of leisure; there were no big newspapers and mass meetings, no film-dramas and radio-dramas, nor telephone calls every few minutes, nor red-hot news by telegraph, telephone, and wireless; in short, none of the interruptions which break up our present-day life into fragments. The circumstances of daily existence encouraged subtle and imaginative thinking, introvert activity, as much as the environment of today discourages them. Out of this intellectual life arose the Classical age of German literature. Others sweated and hurried hither and thither, England toiled for bars of gold and sacks of pepper, America began to turn itself into the gigantic trust that we see today, France became a madhouse and a den of murderers, but Germany slept an honourable, sound, refreshing sleep. And what lovely dreams that sleep brought her!

Did the
Classics
really live?

A little girl once asked me: "Were the Classics ever really alive?" — a most revealing question. They have in fact been so hung about with hollow, false, and frosted phrases by the philistines who came after them that their figures pass before our mind's eye as empty, unreal, legendary personages; they have no more reality and individuality in our consciousness than, for instance, Knecht Ruprecht or King Drosselbart.

Even so soon as the War of Liberation Schiller's sentences were mottoes for gymnastic associations, and thus he became the "national" poet, and the pattern of the unworldly poetic youth living in an attic and devoting his whole activity to communion with his muse. The principal author of the legend of the "ideal Schiller" was his sister-in-law Karoline von Wolzogen, also his first serious

biographer. Karoline was then *à la mode*, and she loved for her brother-in-law one of the very people who painted a picture of him, and for a long time fixed. After that, how his name was associated with a nose; Schiller's move was bow-legged; Schiller was prone to drinking quinine at the margins of the drafts of his expenses."

It was Schiller's fate, scenery, victimized even the more popular of the his *Vorlesungen*: "If he had been a nonade of Valmy or otherwise perhaps have opined, as was to be lamented indeed was necessary for his poet any greater work was to appear Goethe's *Gesamte Werke* by Göschen in eight volumes for 600. The market for separate copies was: *Mont* 377, and *Werther* (1774) seventeen hundred thalers; on the other hand 3,500 copies of *Werther* sold out in two months, and *Werther* was sold out in two German cities. Schiller, either, was adequate. In 1798 he was nominated Professor of the University of Jena. In the light of this, it was statistically an honour to be more considered the expression of his changed to "great pleasure." The Dioscuri was nicely hit by

And what will destroy it? Also vanity"; and later, more shortly and plainly: "Triflers play a great part in France. Good sense plays none at all." He taught his people to think in terms of reality and to act clearly; he taught them to turn their eyes on things instead of illusions and phrases, and to orient their course constantly by facts. Emerson was well advised when he opened his essay on him with the following words: "If Napoleon is France, if Napoleon is Europe, it is because the people whom he sways are little Napoleons." But the reverse could also be said: namely, that he was the leader of his time because he succeeded in *making* little Napoleons out of all the men of his time.

Nevertheless we have to admit that the principal reproach against Napoleon is precisely that he was so completely a type of the new men whose destiny it was to rule the coming century. He was, perhaps, the most complete empiricist that ever lived; and this was the essence of his incomparable genius as of his catastrophic weakness. For he was so complete an empiricist that he was nothing else. He was not a moral and metaphysical phenomenon; ethics and ideology meant nothing to him. This absence of all ideology was his fundamental defect, and it was this that made his domination a transitory one.

And so one is almost tempted to say that this adamant and argus-eyed hero was a *touching* spectacle. He knew everything, could do everything, held everything in his mighty hand — only not himself. He was stronger than the whole world; but not stronger than his own deeds. He forgot that *even* the greatest man — indeed, particularly the greatest man — exists for mankind only. His success went to his head just as if he had been an ordinary banker, minister, or actor. And so his empyrean flight became a miserable descent into hell.

Madame de Staël said of him: "He is a skilled chess-player; and his opponent is the human race, whom he is determined to checkmate." But his dæmonic temperament made him more than a master of chess; rather, a great stage-manager, one such as the world has perhaps never seen. Even his outward appearance was incomparably theatrical: the master of Europe in the crumpled hat and worn cloak of the common soldier in the midst of glittering generals, dignitaries covered with orders, and be-

jewelled women. Man scenes: for example, w addresses his brother smash you like this wa his life has been made "The rascals wanted today's libretto." The is so little in accordanc that is true: Talma hin able lessons from the the Emperor, who ha whom the present wor modern stage-history;¹ times.

Perhaps Napoleon's ascribed to the fact that genius are only partial the less civilized ages th is inherent in the nature stand Plato, Beethoven, a kind of negative print a true photograph capc ording all the rays en intensity can only be m pose. Napoleon is the completely comprehensi ties that he had provide and communication of egoist; brutal, sensual, thing magnificently vul daughter of a Habsburg ennoble himself by marr gave offence in society lighted in malicious indi himself unseemly jokes mercial traveller of his had no genuine success love, the upstart. But th

¹ Max Reinhardt, to whom

genius, in fact was the very thing that clears it up, just as a figure can be seen better in diffused light than in full sunshine. And when all is said and done, there is no manner of reasonable doubt that Napoleon was the completest genius the world had ever seen, greater than Cæsar, greater than Shakspeare, greater than Goethe. For when one looks at both the intensity and the extent of his gifts, he possessed as much as all three put together: He was a Cæsar in practical oversight and foresight, a Shakspeare in creative fancy, a Goethe in knowledge of human nature; and over and above these things he had a power of translating his conceptions into actuality which none of these three possessed in the same measure. One thing only he lacked, that each of the others possessed — idealism. He had no faith in the most real force of the world: namely, human ideals. Altruism, patriotism, piety, were for him available sources of energy to be used and guided, but he did not regard them as of any higher value than cannon, steam-power, or money. It never occurred to him that an *idée fixe* is more and can do more than a hundred thousand bayonets. He did not know that ideas, ideals, ideologies, phantasms, illusions, concepts, are also physical and physiological sources of energy, measurable and effective quantities, ponderable imponderables, so to say; that the consciousness of right, the belief in the Supreme, is just as effective in raising the temperature of an organism as fat, albumen, brandy, and cola-nut. Thus he was not quite so complete an empiricist as he and his supporters thought: He was, paradoxical as it may seem, in this respect, a detached doctrinaire. He had his system of the world and humanity, a philosophical system if you will, but one which, like so many clever and well-constructed systems, was not in tune with, was not *close to*, life. He scorned and despised the "ideologues" and never suspected that he himself was one. He brought the whole world into confusion, drove his masses of men from Sweden to Egypt and from Madrid to Moscow; and he vanished one day as suddenly as he had emerged, went off in smoke like an explosion of gunpowder, leaving nothing behind but startled people and a smell of burning. He mobilized mankind and the forces of nature, wind and water, all the states and towns and peoples of Europe, now on his side, now against him; and when he disappeared, the map of Europe was as it had been twenty years before, with but minor

alterations, and the diplomatic contingents, and principles, and that is his chief reason why his conquest could only be a temporary one. He did not know that in the long run the world.