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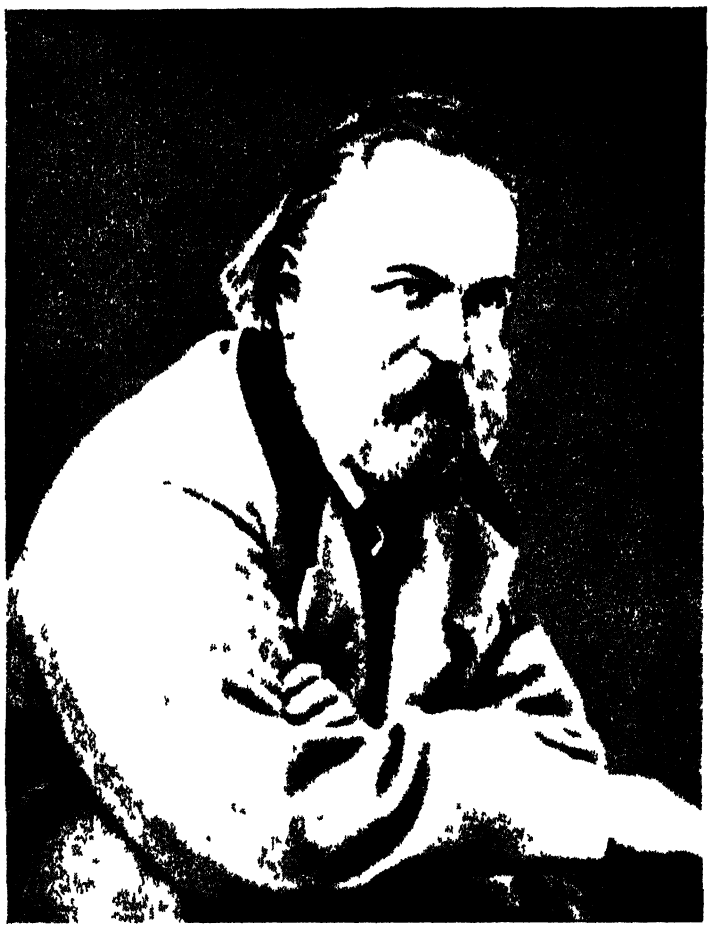

ALEXANDER HERZEN

SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

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Translated from the Russian
by *L. Navrozov*

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V. I. LENIN

IN MEMORY OF HERZEN

One hundred years have elapsed since Herzen's birth. The whole of liberal Russia is paying homage to him, carefully evading the serious questions of socialism, and assiduously concealing that which distinguished Herzen the *revolutionary* from a liberal. The conservative press, too, is commemorating the Herzen anniversary, mendaciously asserting that in his last years Herzen renounced revolution. And, abroad, phrasemongering reigns supreme in the liberal and Narodnik orations on Herzen.

The working-class party should commemorate the Herzen anniversary not for the sake of philistine glorification, but for the purpose of making clear its own tasks and ascertaining the real place held in history by this writer who played a great part in paving the way for the Russian revolution.

Herzen belonged to the generation of revolutionaries among the nobility and landlords of the first half of the past century. The nobility gave Russia the Birens and Arakcheyevs,[1] innumerable "drunkard officers, bullies, gamblers, heroes of fairs, whips, roisterers, floggers, pimps," as well as amiable Manilovs.[2] "But," wrote Herzen, "among them developed the men of December 14, a phalanx of heroes reared, like Romulus and Remus, on the milk of a wild beast.... They were titans, hammered out of pure steel from head to foot, comrades-in-arms who knowingly went to certain death in order to awaken the young generation to a new life and to purify the children born in an environment of tyranny and servility."

Herzen was one of those children. The uprising of the Decembrists[3] awakened and "purified" him. In feudal Russia of the forties of the nineteenth century he rose to a height which placed him on a level with the greatest thinkers of his time. He

assimilated Hegel's dialectics. He realized that it was "the algebra of revolution." He went further than Hegel, following Feuerbach to materialism. The first of his *Letters on the Study of Nature*, "Empiricism and Idealism," written in 1844, reveals to us a thinker who even now stands head and shoulders above the multitude of modern empiricist natural scientists and the swarms of present-day idealist and semi-idealist philosophers. Herzen stood on the threshold of dialectical materialism, and halted before historical materialism.

It was this "halt" that caused Herzen's spiritual shipwreck after the defeat of the revolution of 1848. Herzen had already left Russia and watched the revolution at close range. He was a democrat at the time, a revolutionary, a Socialist But his "socialism" was one of the numerous forms and varieties of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialism characteristic of the epoch of 1848, which were dealt their death-blow in the June days. In point of fact, this was not socialism at all, but merely sentimental phrases, benign visions, in which was embodied the *then* revolutionariness of the bourgeois democracy, as well as of the proletariat which had not freed itself from its influence.

Herzen's spiritual shipwreck, the profound scepticism and pessimism to which he fell prey after 1848, was the shipwreck of the *bourgeois illusions* of socialism. Herzen's spiritual drama was a product and reflection of that epoch in world history when the revolutionariness of the bourgeois democracy was *already* passing away (in Europe), and the revolutionariness of the socialist proletariat had *not yet* ripened. This is something the Russian liberal knights of verbal incontinence, who are now trying to cover up their own counter-revolutionariness by florid phrases about Herzen's scepticism, have not understood and cannot understand. With these knights, who betrayed the Russian Revolution of 1905, and have even forgotten to think of the great calling of a *revolutionary*, scepticism is a form of transition from democracy to liberalism—to that servile, vile, infamous and brutal liberalism which shot down the workers in 1848, restored shattered thrones, applauded Napoleon III and which Herzen *cursed*, unable to understand its class nature.

With Herzen scepticism was a form of transition from the illusions of "above-class" bourgeois democratism to the stern,

undermined and the more rapidly, fully and widely would capitalism have developed in Russia. The idea of "the right to the land" and of "equal distribution of the land" represents but the formulated revolutionary aspirations to achieve equality cherished by the peasants fighting for the complete overthrow of the power of the landlords, for the complete abolition of landlordism.

This was fully proved by the Revolution of 1905. On the one hand, the proletariat came out quite independently at the head of the revolutionary struggle, having created the Social-Democratic Labour Party; on the other hand, the revolutionary peasants (the "Trudoviks"[1] and the "Peasant League") who fought for every form of the abolition of landlordism, going as far as demanding "the abolition of private property in land," fought precisely as proprietors, as small entrepreneurs.

In our day, the controversy over the "socialist nature" of the right to land, etc., serves only to *obscure* and gloss over the really important and vital historical question: the difference of *interests* of the liberal bourgeoisie and the revolutionary peasantry in the Russian *bourgeois* revolution; in other words, the question of the liberal and the democratic, the "compromising" (monarchist) and the republican trends in this revolution. This is exactly the question which Herzen's *Kolokol*[5] posed, if we look beyond the words and get down to the essentials, if we investigate the class struggle as the basis of "theories" and doctrines and not vice versa.

Herzen created a free Russian press abroad—that was the great service which he rendered. *Polyarnaya Zvezda*[6] took up the tradition of the Decembrists. *Kolokol* (1857-67) stalwartly championed the emancipation of the peasants. The slavish silence was broken.

But Herzen had a landlord, aristocratic background. He had left Russia in 1847; he had not seen the revolutionary people and could have no faith in it. Hence, his liberal appeal to the "upper ranks." Hence, his numerous sugary letters in *Kolokol* addressed to Alexander II the Hangman, which today one cannot read without a feeling of disgust. Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and Serno-Solovyevich, who represented the new generation of revolutionary commoners, were a thousand times

right when they reproached Herzen for these lapses from democratism *to* liberalism. However, it must be said in fairness to Herzen that, much as he vacillated between democratism and liberalism, the democrat in him nevertheless gained the upper hand.

When Kavelin, one of the most repulsive types representative of liberal obsequiousness—who at one time was enthusiastic about *Kolokol* for the very reason that it manifested *liberal* tendencies—came out against a constitution, attacked revolutionary agitation, condemned "violence" and appeals to it, and began to preach tolerance, Herzen *broke* with this liberal sage. Herzen turned upon his "meagre, absurd, harmful pamphlet" written "for the private guidance of the government in its liberal pretence," denounced Kavelin's "sentimental political maxims" which represented "the Russian people as cattle and the government as the embodiment of wisdom." *Kolokol* printed an article entitled "Epitaph," which lashed out against "professors weaving the rotten cobweb of their supercilious and paltry ideas, ex-professors, once unsophisticated and subsequently embittered because the healthy youth cannot sympathize with their scrofulous thought." Kavelin at once recognized himself in this portrait.

When Chernyshevsky was arrested, Kavelin, that vile liberal, wrote: "I see nothing reprehensible in the arrests ... the revolutionary party considers all means proper for the purpose of overthrowing the government, and the government is defending itself by its own means." As if in retort to this Cadet, Herzen wrote in his article dealing with Chernyshevsky's trial: "And here are wretches, people comparable to grass under our feet, slimy creatures, who say that we must not denounce the gang of robbers and scoundrels that is governing us."

When the liberal Turgenev wrote a private letter to Alexander II assuring him that he was a loyal and obedient subject, and donated two gold pieces for the soldiers wounded during the suppression of the Polish insurrection, *Kolokol* wrote of "the grey-haired Magdalen (of the masculine gender) who wrote to the tsar to tell him that she knew no sleep because she was tormented by the thought that the tsar was not aware of the

repentance that had befallen her." And Turgenev at once recognized himself.

When the whole pack of Russian liberals scurried away from Herzen for his defence of Poland, when the whole of "educated society" turned its back on *Kolokol*, Herzen was not dismayed. He went on championing the freedom of Poland and castigating the suppressors, the butchers, the hangmen in the service of Alexander II. Herzen saved the honour of Russian democracy. "We have saved the honour of the Russian name," he wrote to Turgenev, "and for doing so we have suffered at the hands of the slavish majority."

In commenting on a report concerning a serf peasant who killed a landlord for an attempt to rape his betrothed, Herzen exclaimed in *Kolokol*: "Well done!" When it was reported that army officers would be appointed to superintend the "peaceable" progress of "emancipation," Herzen wrote: "The first wise colonel who, with his troops, instead of crushing the peasants, will take their side, is sure to ascend the throne of the Romanovs." When Colonel Reitern shot himself in Warsaw (1860) because he did not want to be an accomplice of the hangmen, Herzen wrote: "If any shooting is to be done, it is the generals who give orders to fire upon unarmed people that should be shot." When fifty peasants were killed in Bezdna, and their leader Anton Petrov was executed (April 12, 1861), Herzen wrote in *Kolokol*:

"Oh, if only my words could reach you, toiler and sufferer of the Russian land!... I would teach you to despise your spiritual shepherds, placed over you by the St. Petersburg Synod and a German tsar.... You hate the landlord, you hate the official, you fear them—and rightly so; but you still believe in the tsar and the bishop ... do not believe them. The tsar is with them and they are with the tsar. It is him you now see—you, the father of the youth murdered in Bezdna, and you, the son of a father murdered in Penza.... Your shepherds are as ignorant as you are and as poor as you.... Such was the monk Anthony (not Bishop Anthony, but Anton of Bezdna) who suffered for you in Kazan.... The corpses of your saints will not perform forty-eight miracles, and praying to them will not cure

a toothache; but their living memory may produce one miracle—your emancipation."

This shows how infamously and vilely Herzen is being slandered by our liberals entrenched in the slavish "legal" press, who extol the weak points in Herzen and are silent about his strong points. It is not Herzen's fault, but his misfortune, that he could not see the revolutionary people in Russia itself in the 1840's. When he did behold the revolutionary people *in the sixties* he fearlessly took the side of the revolutionary democracy against liberalism. He fought for a victory of the people over tsarism, not for a deal between the liberal bourgeoisie and the landlords' tsar. He raised aloft the banner of revolution.

* * *

In commemorating Herzen we clearly see the three generations, the three classes that were active in the Russian revolution. At first—nobles and landlords, the Decembrists and Herzen. The circle of these revolutionaries was a narrow one. They were very far removed from the people. But their work was not in vain. The Decembrists awakened Herzen. Herzen launched revolutionary agitation.

This agitation was taken up, extended, strengthened, and tempered by the revolutionary commoners, beginning with Chernyshevsky and ending with the heroes of the "Narodnaya Volya." The circle of fighters widened, their contacts with the people became closer. "The young helmsmen of the impending storm," Herzen said of them. But as yet it was not the storm itself.

The storm is the movement of the masses themselves. The proletariat, the only class that is revolutionary to the end, rose at the head of the masses and for the first time aroused millions of peasants to open revolutionary struggle. The first onslaught in this storm took place in 1905. The next is beginning to develop before our very eyes.

In commemorating Herzen, the proletariat is learning from his example to appreciate the great importance of revolutionary theory. It is learning that selfless devotion to the revolution and the work of revolutionary propaganda among the people are

not wasted even if long decades divide the sowing from the harvest. It is learning to define the role of the various classes in the Russian and in the international revolution. Enriched by these lessons, the proletariat will fight its way through to a free union with the socialist workers of all lands. It will crush that vile thing, the tsarist monarchy, against which Herzen was the first to raise the great banner of struggle by addressing his *free Russian words* to the masses.*

* V. I. Lenin. *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Vol. I, pp. 633-38, 1946.

ALEXANDER HERZEN

SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

DILETTANTISM IN SCIENCE[7]

I

WE LIVE on the borderland of two worlds: hence the constraint and uneasiness which weighs upon thinking people. The old convictions and former conceptions are shaken, but still dear to our hearts. The new ideas, great and all-embracing as they may be, have not yet borne fruit. The early buds and leaves, indeed, hold promise of magnificent flowers, but they have not yet even blossomed and they are alien to us. Many are left without convictions, old or new. Others have mechanically mixed a little of both and found themselves in a dreary twilight. Superficial people in such a condition abandon themselves entirely to the bustle of everyday life. But people given to meditation suffer and seek to reconcile the differences at all cost. Man cannot live in internal discord, with the cornerstone of his moral basis missing. Meanwhile, universal reconciliation in the world of thought was being proclaimed by science which divided those who craved reconciliation into two camps: the *one side* refused to believe science, refused to take it up, to weigh its findings, to travel its hard way. "Our aching hearts," they say, "must be soothed; we cry for bread and science gives us stones. Our broken hearts plead for compassion, we lament and groan, and science replies with cold reason and generalizations. Its inaccessible logic can gratify neither the mystics nor the practical people. Deliberately it speaks a language difficult to understand in order to hide the dry sterility of its fundamental ideas behind the thicket of scholasticism—*elle n'a pas d'entrailles.*" The *other side*, on the contrary, has found superficial reconciliation and the solution to everything by an illegitimate method. They have memorized the letter of science, without touching upon its vital spirit. So superficial are these people

that everything seems marvellously easy to them. They have a ready-made solution for every problem. To hear them talk one might think that science has nothing left to do. They have their own Koran in which they believe and from which they cite excerpts as ultimate proof. These Mohammedans of science[8] are extremely injurious to its progress. It was Henry IV who used to say: "Let Providence protect me from my friends and I shall see to my enemies." Precisely such friends of science, mistakenly identified with science, vindicate the hatred of its enemies, while true science remains in the small family of the elect.

But even if it were limited to a single individual, science would nonetheless be a fact, a great event no longer potential but come true; and one cannot deny an accomplished fact. Such events never occur before their time; but the time has come and science has acquired its true meaning. The human spirit, having gone through all the stages of self-cognition, has begun to unravel the truth, a symmetrical scientific organism, and a living organism at that. The future of science is secure. We are sorry, however, for the generation which, though it may perceive the dawn if not the day, suffers in darkness and is preoccupied with trifles only because it is turned away from the rising sun. Why should these pilgrims be deprived of the blessings of both worlds: of the past, dead world sometimes invoked by them, but which appears in a shroud, and of the present world as yet uncreated for them?

Philosophy cannot at present be received by the masses. *As a science* philosophy presupposes a certain degree of intellectual development, without which one cannot reach and enter its sphere. Abstract speculation is altogether beyond the masses; they accept only what is tangible. Philosophy, however, is too young to drop its artificial language and pass into the universal consciousness, to be received by the family and the people at large, to serve as a real guide to action and source of ideas for every man. It has not reached that degree of development: it still has much to do in its own house, in the sphere of abstract thought. None but the Mohammedans of philosophy imagine that all is finished in science notwithstanding its elaborate forms, the abundance of its growing content and its dialectical method so clear and evident to the initiated. And yet, if science

is inaccessible to the masses, the latter at least have been spared the sense of frustration produced by mental poverty, and the artificiality and hysteria of pietism. The truth is not beyond the masses: they find it through divine revelation. Deplorable is the state of those who find themselves on the cross-roads between the *natural* simplicity of the masses and the *rational* simplicity of science.

For the moment we beg leave to spare for a time the tranquillity and quietism of the formalists and will turn our attention entirely upon the enemies of modern science. We refer to what we call the dilettantes and the romanticists. Formalists at least do not suffer, but these people are unwell. They are sick of living.

Properly speaking, science has no enemies in Europe, except, perhaps, for some castes who are eking out their last days in futility, and these are so absurd that no one ever argues with them. The dilettantes in general are friends of science, *nos amis les ennemis,* as Béranger says, but they are inimical to it in its present state. They are all inclined to philosophize, but to philosophize easily, pleasantly, and only within certain limits. They are, firstly, the tender souls, the dreamers who are hurt by the utilitarianism of the age, who aspire to the universal realization of their sweet utopias, but cannot find them in science, upon which they have turned their backs for that reason, and confine themselves to their own narrow hopes and illusions and are fruitlessly wasting away in misty mirages. Secondly, there are the real admirers of positivism, the people who have lost the spirit of science in a maze of details and obstinately cling to rationalistic abstractions and analytical dissections. Finally, the gallery includes those who have just come of age and imagine that science is easy (from their point of view), and that the desire to know is the same as knowing. Science, however, does not come easy to them and for this they bear it a grudge. They have neither strong aptitude nor the habit of persistent work, nor the desire to make sacrifices for the truth. They have tasted the fruit of knowledge and sadly declare that it is sour and rotten. They are something like the good man who speaks with tears in his eyes about the shortcomings of his friend, while

other good people believe him because of his friendship for the unfortunate fellow.

The romanticists are eking out their last days at the side of the dilettantes. As belated representatives of the past, they are lamenting the deceased world which once seemed eternal to them. They refuse to deal with the new world otherwise than with lance in hand. In the best medieval traditions they imitate Don Quixote and, donning the robes of grief and affliction, they bewail the downfall of man. They are ready, however, to recognize science, but in exchange demand that science admit the one absolute truth, that Dulcinea del Toboso is the queen of beauty. The time has come to regard people without passion or prejudice. The age of maturity has arrived and one may speak not only of the sweet truths, but of the bitter ones as well. It is time to voice a protest against the dilettantes of science, because they are slanderers of science, because they are pitiful, and, finally, because they deserve more attention *in our country* than elsewhere.

One of the essential qualities of the Russian character is its extraordinary dexterity in accepting and adopting the fruits of other people's labour, this being done not only with facility but with deftness. This is one of the most human traits of our character. There is a serious drawback to this quality however. We are rarely capable of thorough and sustained effort. We have acquired a taste for making others draw the chestnuts out of the fire and we have come to take for granted that Europe should produce every truth and discovery by the sweat of her brow. Let her have all the trouble of the pregnancy, of the difficult childbirth and weary nursing, and we will take the child. But there is one thing we have overlooked: the child is not of our flesh and blood and there are no organic ties between it and us.... And this is not yet all. As we approached modern science we must have been surprised by its resistance. Science can grow anywhere, but it will never produce a harvest where it has not been sown. Science must germinate and mature not only in every nation, but in every individual as well. We should like to seize the result, we should like to catch it like a fly, but as we open our palm we either delude ourselves with the thought that we have been clutching the absolute or are disappointed to find the

hand empty. The fact is that science as such is in existence and to that extent yields great results. Apart from it the result does not exist at all. Similarly, the head of a man may be seething with ideas, but only if the neck attaches it to the body, without which it is but an empty shell. This must surprise and offend our native dilettantes far more than the dilettantes of other countries, for our notions of science and its ways are much less developed than elsewhere. With tears in their eyes, our dilettantes complain that they have been deceived in their expectations by the perfidious science of the West, that its findings are obscure and incoherent, though they must admit that that so-and-so has some sound ideas. Such talk is harmful to us, because, our elementary notions of science being still unformed, there is no absurdity or obsolescence which our dilettantes cannot put over with amazing assurance, and which their listeners will not believe implicitly. There are preliminary truths in Germany which are taken for granted. Not so with us. Nobody ever speaks about them any longer there, while here no one has spoken of them yet. In the West the war against modern science is being waged by certain deeply national elements which have been developing for centuries and have hardened in their individuality. Their memories of the past do not allow them to give ground; such, for instance, are the pietists in Germany, engendered by the one-sided character of Protestantism. Lamentable as their position is—their exclusion from modern life—the peculiar tenacity and consistency of their desperate battle cannot be denied. But even when they do contract these foreign maladies, our dilettantes have no antecedent truths to support them, and their superficiality and inconsistency is therefore astonishing. They are not ashamed to retreat, for they have never advanced a step. They have always been dawdling idlers in the vestibules of science; they have never had a home of their own. If they could overcome their oriental indolence and concentrate on science in all earnest, they would join hands with it. But that is just the trouble. As grown-ups, we are annoyed with science just as we were annoyed with our grammar books at the age of eight. Difficulty and obscurity are our chief complaints; to these we add other objections: poetical, moral, patriotic, sentimental. Long ago Goethe said: "When it is argued that a book is obscure,

it is necessary to ask whether the obscurity is in the book, or in the head." And indeed, there is something sloth and indecent in constantly pleading difficulty, something unworthy of argument.* Science comes to no one without effort—that is true; there is no other way of getting on in science but by the sweat of one's brow. Neither fits of passion, nor flights of imagination, nor one's whole heart's desire can be substituted for work. Our dilettantes, however, do not want to work, and console themselves with the thought that modern science is as yet putting its materials in order, that for the present, inhuman efforts are required to comprehend it, but that soon there will be another sort of science, an *easy one,* which will fall from the heavens or spring from the earth.

"Difficult, incomprehensible!" How can they tell? Is it possible to know the degree of difficulty in science by keeping away from it? Are there no formal principles in science which are simple precisely because they are principles, undeveloped generalities? On the other hand, they are right when they plead incomprehension, more so than they think. If we try to discover why many people cannot acquire a knowledge of science in spite of their desire, in spite of their longing for the truth, we shall find that the one fundamental and universal reason is that they do *not understand* what science is and do not know what they want from it. But, one may ask, for whom is science meant, if those who are fond of it and aspire to it do not understand it? Does this imply that science, like alchemy, exists only for the adepts who possess the clue to its hieroglyphic language? Nothing of the sort. Modern science is within the ken of anyone with a living spirit, of anyone capable of self-denial and a *simple* approach. The trouble is that these gentry approach science in an *intricate way,* with "mental reservations." They put it to the test, make demands upon it, giving nothing in return. And, be they as wise as serpents, science remains a senseless formalism to them, a logical *casse-tête,* a thing with no substance.

To recognize the truth one must renounce personal convictions: rivalling the truth, the personality confines it, bends and

* I dare say we bring another absurd accusation against science, viz., why should it use unfamiliar words? Unfamiliar to whom?—*A.H.*

twists it, and arbitrarily subjugates it. They who would preserve their personal convictions seek not *the truth*, but that which they *call* the truth. It is not science that appeals to them, but that vague hankering for it in which they are at ease to dream and flatter themselves. These searchers for wisdom, each pursuing his own path, highly appreciate their own exploits, and love their own clever personalities too dearly to set them aside. There was a time when much was forgiven for the love of science. But that time has passed. Platonic love alone is no longer sufficient: we are realists and desire love translated into action. Now what is it that makes one cling to personal convictions?—egotism. Egotism hates the universal, severs the man from humanity, puts him into an exclusive position; all is alien to him but his own personality. He carries with him his malignant atmosphere which no ray of light can penetrate without being deformed. Hand in hand with egotism goes haughty arrogance which opens the book of science with insolent levity; whereas respect for the truth is the beginning of wisdom.

Philosophy's position in regard to her lovers is no better than that of Penelope in the absence of Ulysses. Nothing protects her—neither the figures and formulae of mathematics, nor the fences put up around their kitchen gardens by the specialized sciences. The extraordinary universality of philosophy makes it appear accessible to the outsider. The more universal the thought and the more it rests on universality, the better it lends itself to superficial comprehension, for the particulars are not brought to the surface and their existence is not even suspected. When looking at the placid sea from the shore one may wonder at the timidity of the swimmers: the immobile waters make one forget their depth and voracity—they seem to be made of crystal or of ice—but the swimmer knows better. In philosophy, as in the sea, there is neither ice nor crystal: everything is moving, flowing, palpitating, and is equally deep at all points. In philosophy, as in a blazing hearth, all that is hard and solid is swept into the fiery vortex without beginning or end and is melted down. The molten surface, like that of the sea, is smooth, placid, serene, boundless and mirrors the sky. Owing to this optical illusion, the dilettantes boldly approach, without fear of the truth or respect for the hereditary efforts of humanity which has

been labouring to reach the present state of development for three thousand years. They do not ask the way, but confidently skim through the beginning, supposing that they know it all. They never ask what science is and what it is for, but demand that it yield them anything they choose to ask. Some vague presentiment tells them that philosophy is duty bound to solve all problems, to soothe and conciliate, and they therefore demand the proofs for their convictions, for all sorts of hypotheses. They demand consolation in misfortune and God knows what not. The austere matter-of-fact and impersonal character of science astonishes them. They are disappointed, deceived in their expectations: where they were seeking repose they are compelled to work, and to work hard. Finding, therefore, that science no longer appeals to them, they seize its separate conclusions, senseless in the form and order chosen, put them in the pillory and flagellate science by proxy. Notice that every one of them regards himself a competent judge, for each is sure of his own intelligence and of his superiority over science—even if he has read only its introduction. "In all spheres of science, art, skill, and handicraft," remarks one great thinker, "it is never doubted that, in order to master them, a considerable amount of trouble must be spent in learning and in being trained. As regards philosophy, on the contrary, there seems still an assumption prevalent that, though everyone with eyes and fingers is not on that account in a position to make shoes if he only has leather and a last, yet everybody understands how to philosophize straightaway, and pass judgement on philosophy. . . ." To the dilettantes their personal convictions constitute conclusive judgement allowing of no appeal. Now whence these convictions? From their parents, their nurses, from school, from people good or bad, and from their feeble wits. "Everyone has his own mind—what care I what others think!" they seem to say. But it takes a genius or a madman to say such a thing not of everyday trivialities but of science; and geniuses are rare, while the maxim is repeated frequently. Though I admit the possibility of a genius who could outdistance the ideas of his contemporaries (Copernicus, for example) in such a way that the truth would stand on his side contrary to general opinion, I have never heard of one who claimed that all people had their own manner

of thinking, whereas he, for his part, had his own. The task of philosophy and civics is precisely to disclose the common workings of all minds. The entire edifice of humanity rests on the unity of minds; it is only in their primitive, petty and purely animal desires that people differ from one another. It should be remarked, however, that maxims such as the above are plausible only in philosophy and aesthetics: the objective importance of other fields of endeavour, be it even shoemaking, has been recognized long ago. Everyone has his own philosophy and his own taste, they say. But it does not occur to these worthy people that this most definitely implies the denial of philosophy and aesthetics. For how can they exist if they depend on everyone and may be changed by all and sundry? The difficulty is that science and art are neither visible to the eye nor perceptible to the tongue. The spirit is a Proteus. It is precisely what a man takes it for. It exists in so far as he comprehends it, and unless he does so it vanishes. Yet even if it should fail to exist for a *man*, it does exist for *mankind*, it does exist for the non-ego. With the naïveté *sui generis* of his time, Hume, while reading a hypothesis of Buffon, remarked:

"Surprisingly enough I am almost convinced of the authenticity of his words though he speaks about objects which the *human* eye cannot perceive." And so the spirit existed for Hume only in its embodiment. The nose, the mouth and the ears were his criteria of the truth. Is it surprising, therefore, that he denied causality?

Other sciences are much more fortunate than philosophy: they have an object, impervious in space and real in time. In natural science there can be no dallying as in philosophy. Nature is the realm of the visible law; it allows no violence upon itself; it presents such evidence and objections as cannot be denied: they are visible to the eye and audible to the ear. Those who study nature surrender their personality which is suppressed and appears only in hypothesis, usually having nothing to do with objective research.

In this respect the materialists are superior and may serve as an example to our dreaming dilettantes: the materialists have conceived the spirit as in nature and as nature alone. And yet they have bowed before its objectivity, in spite of the fact that

there is no real reconciliation; that is why there were such great men as Buffon, Cuvier, Laplace and others.

What theory will a chemist not abandon, what personal conviction will he not sacrifice if experiments show that he is mistaken? It will never occur to him that the action of zinc could be erroneous, or that nitric acid could be an absurdity. And yet, experience is the poorest means of acquiring knowledge. He submits to the physical fact, whereas no one feels obliged to submit to facts derived from spirit and reason, no one, indeed, takes the trouble to understand them; nor does anyone regard them as facts. The dilettante approaches philosophy with his own little philosophy; all the dreams and whims of the egotistic imagination are gratified by this puny, tame, homespun philosophy. No wonder he is annoyed to see all his dreams fade before the rational realism of scientific philosophy! Personality vanishes in the realm of ideas, whereas revelling in self-love forces the individual to seek his own self everywhere as something unique, as the particular ego. But in science the dilettantes find only the universal: reason, ideas—mostly universal. Science has transcended individualities, casual and temporary personalities; it has left them so far behind that they have dwindled almost to nought in its sight.

Science has entered the age of maturity and liberty. The weak tremble at the approach of this liberty; they are afraid to move a step without a mentor, without a dictum. No word of appreciation can be expected from science, no one will praise or reward them. To them the void seems fearful; they grow giddy and go away. Breaking with science, they plead presentiments which, though never clear to them, cannot possibly be wrong. But feeling is an individual property. I may feel something and another may not and yet both may be right; no proofs are needed and they are indeed impossible. If there were only a spark of love of truth in them they would never dare to make it run the Caudine Forks of feelings, fancies and whims. It is not the heart, but reason which is the judge of truth. And what judge shall judge reason? Only reason itself. This is an unsurpassable difficulty for the dilettantes; approaching science they seek a yardstick outside of it to measure it with. A well-known but absurd

rule suits the case: before thinking it is necessary to examine the instruments of thinking by some external analysis.

At the very outset science is interrogated by the dilettantes. They want to know beforehand the answers to its most difficult problems. They want a guarantee that they do know what the spirit and the absolute are, and they want the definition to be concise and clear, i.e., they must have the content of science in several maxims—that would be an easy sort of science indeed! Imagine a man about to study mathematics and demanding in advance a clear exposition of differentiation and integration, and in his own lingo too. Such questions rarely come up in the specialized sciences: the fear of appearing ignorant keeps them in check. Not in philosophy: nobody stands on ceremony there! The subjects are all familiar—the mind, reason, the idea, etc. Everyone has a colossal mind, enormous intellect and *not just one* idea, but *many*. I have here presupposed the dilettantes to have some vague notions about the results of philosophy, though one cannot guess what they mean exactly by the spirit, the absolute, etc. The bolder dilettantes go further however. They put questions which can have absolutely no answer, for the simple reason that the questions themselves are absurd. To put a relevant question one must know something about the subject, must possess a bit of intuition and perspicacity. And when science replies with indulgent silence, or tries to show that the question is impossible, they accuse her of unsoundness and subterfuges.

As an example, I shall cite a question often put by the dilettantes in different ways: "How did the invisible internal become the visible external and what had it been before the existence of the external?" Science is not obliged to answer this, for it has never claimed that the two, the internal and the external, could be disunited so that the one could have real existence without the other. It stands to reason that in the abstract we can separate cause from effect, force from manifestation, the intrinsic from the extrinsic. But that is not what they want: they want to *disengage* the substance, the intrinsic, so that they should be able to contemplate it at leisure. They want it to have some sort of material existence, forgetting that the mate-

rial existence of the intrinsic is precisely the extrinsic; the intrinsic without the extrinsic simply being indifferent nothing.

Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draussen;
Denn was innen, das ist aussen.
Goethe*

In a word, the external is the manifestation of the internal, the internal being the internal precisely because it has its external. The internal without the external is but a defective possibility, because it cannot manifest itself, the external without the internal being a meaningless form without content. The dilettantes are dissatisfied with such an explanation: they harbour the idea that there is a mystery hidden in the internal, inaccessible to reason. Actually, the essence of the internal lies precisely in *its manifestation*; otherwise, for what and for whom would this *mysterious mystery* exist? The infinite, the timeless relation between two elements bearing one upon the other, changing into each other, so to speak, constitutes the life of the truth. The truth lives in this eternal interplay, in this eternal motion in which all that exists is involved: these are its inhalation and exhalation, its systole and diastole. And like all living organisms, the truth can live only as a whole entity. If one dissects it, its soul escapes, leaving nothing but dead, putrefying abstractions. But it is this live movement, this universal dialectical pulsation which meets with bitter opposition on the part of the dilettantes. They cannot admit that any *sound* truth could pass into its antithesis without becoming an absurdity.

It is evident that the necessity of the eternal, subtle transition of the internal into the external, so that the former becomes the latter or vice versa, cannot be clearly and accurately explained outside of science; and the reasons why these conclusions cause indignation are quite obvious. Rationalistic theories have habituated people to the anatomic method to such a degree, that they regard only that which is motionless, dead, i.e., not real, as the truth. They cause thought to freeze, to stiffen in a one-sided definition, believing that it is easier to examine the

* There is nothing inside, there is nothing outside; for what is internal is external.—*Ed.*

truth in this necrosis. In former days physiology was studied in the dissecting room and that is why the science of life lags so far behind the science of corpses. No sooner does one examine one element than an invisible force brings up the opposite element: this is the first vital throb of thinking. The substance involves manifestation, the infinite the finite: they are as necessary to one another as the poles of a magnet. But the incredulous and cautious explorers wish to separate the poles. There can be no magnet, however, without opposite poles. As soon as they apply the scalpel, demanding *either the one or the other*, the indivisible is halved and two dead abstractions remain with curdled blood and motionless. They would do well to realize that the one or the other taken separately is a mere abstraction, just as the mathematician does when he separates the line from the surface and the surface from the solid but remembers that only the solid is real and that the line and surface are merely abstractions.* But they do nothing of the sort; they who do not realize and deny the objectivity of reason, demand unwarranted objectivity, reality for their abstractions.

It is time to recall the previously mentioned third condition for the understanding of science, *the living spirit.*

It is only the living spirit which is open to live truths. It possesses neither the empty shell of formalism wherein to stretch the truth as on a Procrustean bed, nor rigid, petrified dogmas from which it cannot deviate. These rigid dogmas constitute a mass of axioms and theorems preconceived by the dilettante when he approaches philosophy. With their help he concocts utterly disconnected notions and definitions on God knows what grounds. To begin acquiring knowledge, one must forget

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* In general, mathematics has renounced the dry *either or*, despite the fact that its subject is usually inanimate and formal. What is the differential? An infinitesimal quantity, so it is either a specific quantity and therefore a finite quantity, or has no quantity and therefore aquals zero. But Leibnitz and Newton had broader points of view and accepted the co-existence of being and non-being, the initial movement of the appearance, the transition from nothing to something. The results of the theory of infinitesimals are well known. Furthermore, the mathematicians are afraid neither of negative values, nor of incommensurability, nor of the infinitely great, nor of imaginary roots. And it is evident that all this collapses before the narrow-minded, rationalistic "either or."—*A.H.*

all these inconsistent and false conceptions; they are misleading; the unknown is posited as the known. Leave death and destruction to the dead; all fixed spectres should be abandoned. The living spirit sympathizes with the living, its way is illuminated by a sort of clairvoyance, it thrills upon entering its own element and soon grows familiar with it.

Science, of course, possesses no such majestic propylaea as religion. The way to science, evidently, lies across the arid steppes and some people are discouraged: of losses there will be many, of gains none; we reach rarefied heights, a world of incorporeal abstractions, its grave solemnity seeming austerely cold; every step carries us farther into the ethereal ocean; it becomes *frightfully vast*, it is difficult to breathe and the prospects are dismal. The shores grow dim and vanish with the dreamy images dear to the heart; the soul is seized with terror: *Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate!* Where to find a haven? All becomes rarefied, ethereal, volatilized. But soon a voice proclaims in the words of Julius Caesar: "Fear not, it is me whom you are carrying!" It is the voice of the eternal spirit in the bosom of man. Roused in the instant of despair, it will serve as a guide in this ethereal world, its native land, the realms it has been longing for in music, marble and song. This is the *Jenseits* that it has been pining for in its narrow confines. A little farther and the real world will come in sight again, but it will no longer seem alien: the deed of ownership has been granted to us by science. The dreams conjured by overwrought imagination, by means of which the spirit leapt to knowledge, have faded away. Reality on the other hand has grown clear. Our eyes can penetrate deeper and see that there is no mystery guarded by sphinxes and griffons, that the inner essence is ready to unfold to the daring. But it is precisely dreams to which the dilettantes cling most of all. They are not strong enough selflessly to endure the initial stage and reach the turning-point, where the pain of scepticism and privations is required with presentiments of assuaged thirst for knowledge. Aware that their cherished dreams and all their ideals are somehow unreal, they are ill at ease, incoherent, but continue to stay that way, *are able* to stay that way. But the man abreast of the times, the man endowed with a live spirit, cannot find gratifica-

tion beyond science. Having suffered deeply from the futility of subjective convictions, having vainly knocked on all doors to quench his burning thirst for knowledge, worn out by scepticism and defrauded by life, reduced to nakedness, poverty and loneliness, he plunges into science.

"How could he meekly bend under the yoke of someone else's authority?" asks the dilettante.

But science demands no pledges and prescribes no principles to be taken for granted. And, indeed, what principles are there in science which could be prescribed? Its principles are its end in view, its final word, the sum of its endeavours, the things it is striving for and whose very development is its irrefutable proof. Now if one looks to the first page for the basic principles, one will find no scientific truth there precisely because this page comes first and the whole development follows after. Science begins with some general statement and not with its *profession of faith.* It does not say: "Admit this and that and I shall grant you the hidden truth. You shall have it if you be my slave." As regards the individual, science only directs the inner process of development, it implants in the individual what had been accomplished by the whole of mankind and brings him abreast of the times. Knowledge itself is a process of nature's self-concentration and the development of the complete self-cognition of the cosmos. Through knowledge the universe *comes to consciousness* leaving behind the struggles of material being steeped in the immediate. Knowledge changes its fantastic revel in *imagery* into *sober knowledge*, to use Aristotle's expression. But to reach this sobriety the labour of thirty centuries was needed. What grief, what suffering the human spirit has endured, what tears and blood it has shed before it could separate thinking from all that was transient and one-sided and at last realize that it itself is the conscious essence of the world! Humanity had to live through a great epic of history before the *great poet,* who outdistanced his age and anticipated ours, was able to demand:

Ist nicht der Kern der Natur
Menschen im Herzen?
Goethe

Of what alien authority are the dilettantes talking about? How can it be possible in science? The fact is that they conceive science not as a successive development of reason and self-knowledge, but as various experiments invented by various persons at various times, unrelated and without connection. They fail to realize that the truth is independent of the researchers who are but agents in its development. They cannot at all comprehend its highly objective quality. It seems to them that it is all subjective and capricious. Science has its own autonomy and its own genesis. Being free, it does not rely on any authority; nor does it subject anyone to authority of any kind. It is a liberating force. But, after all, it has the right to demand in advance that it should be treated with sufficient trust and respect and should not be approached with ready-made, sceptical and mystical objections on the score that they too have been voluntarily taken at their face value. Why and wherefore and on what grounds do the dilettantes fabricate stock-in-trade objections to science outside the sphere of science? Where does this inert mass which obstructs the light come from? In the mind free from prejudices science can only find support from the spirit which attests its merit and ability to evolve the truth. This gives rise to the audacity to know, that sacred daring to tear the veil from Isis and look upon the naked truth, be it at the cost of life and one's fondest hopes.

But what truth is this, behind the veil? What indeed? Those who had so ardently desired it, had grieved and shed tears for it, now stole a glance behind the veil and were filled either with fear or indignation. Poor truth! Fortunately, the ancients had hewn the veil from marble and it could not be lifted: the eyes of men were not strong enough to bear the light of its features. Or, perhaps it was not *that* truth they wanted? How many truths are there then? Good and reasonable people know *many* a truth, very many, but there is *one* which seems to elude them. An optical illusion seems to distort the truth for them, and in a different way for every man. If one could tabulate all the accusations constantly levelled against science, i.e., against the truth which reveals itself in a well-balanced organism, one could draw a just conclusion by applying the well-known method used in astronomy for determining the real position of a

luminary observed from different points, i.e., by calculating the opposite angles (the theory of parallaxes). Some people talk of atheism, others of pantheism; some plead that it is difficult, very difficult; others allege that there is void, simply nothing. The materialists smile at the dreamy idealism of science; the idealists find ingeniously hidden materialism in the analytic methods of science. The pietists are convinced that modern science is more irreligious than Erasmus, Voltaire, Holbach and their ilk and more pernicious than Voltairianism. Those who are not religious reproach science of orthodoxy. And above all, everyone is discontented and insists that the veil be lowered again. Some are blinded by the light, some abashed by the simplicity, others are shocked by the nakedness of the truth and still others do not like its features because they are too earthly. And all are disappointed because it is not the truth they wanted.

What is done cannot be undone, events will not turn back. Once disrobed to reveal a torso of unparalleled beauty, the truth will not put on the veil of prudery again, aware as it is of the power, glory and loveliness of its nakedness.

April 25, 1842

II

DILETTANTES—ROMANTICISTS

Let the dead bury their dead.

THERE ARE problems with which no one is concerned any longer, not because they have been solved, but because everyone is tired of them; by tacit agreement they are considered to be obscure, out of date, devoid of interest, and nothing more is said about them. But from time to time it is useful to look through the files of these spuriously settled matters. In consecutive retrospection we on every occasion see the past in a new light, every time discover some new aspect, and fully employ the experiences acquired in the interim to gain fresh comprehension. By understanding the past more fully we get a clearer view of the present; delving more deeply into the past, we discover the meaning of the future; looking back, we go forward. Finally,

it is also useful to air the old apparel in order to see how much of it has been worn out and what is still fit for wear.

One such matter recently filed away until further notice, to use a legal term, was that of romanticism versus classicism, which made such a stir in the first quarter of our century and even in more recent times. The litigation of those who had risen from the grave sank with them into the grave for a second time, and now scarcely anything is said about the rights of romanticism and its fight against the classics, though many of its inveterate worshippers and implacable foes are still alive.

And to think that this battle so noisily begun was blazing in all its glory not very long ago. Many were the talents in the field. Public opinion was aroused. The now stereotype terms "classic, romanticist" were then full of meaning. And suddenly there was complete silence. The fervour of the spectators was gone: they realized that both parties were fighting for the dead. The latter had well deserved elaborate funerals and ornate tombs, for they had left us a great legacy amassed by sweat, blood and hard work. But why fight over them? There is no task more thankless than battling for the dead. It is like fighting for a throne with no sovereign to occupy it, because the king is dead. When the combatants realized that they were no longer supported, their ardour promptly cooled. Only the stubborn and narrow-minded stayed on the battle-field, armed to the teeth and resembling the Bonapartists of today, who defend the rights of a shadow which is gigantic, but a shadow nevertheless.

This struggle seemed like an apparition come from the other world to witness the debut of the new world, to hand on its powers on behalf of its two predecessors, its father and grandfather, and to learn that there is no place for the dead in the world of the living. Actual romanticism and classicism as two exclusive schools were the consequence of a strange state of mind which prevailed more than thirty years ago. When the nations had returned to normal conditions after the fifteen years' turmoil at the beginning of our century and life had once more taken its ordinary course, it was realized at last how much had been lost and destroyed in the old order of things and had not been replaced. There had been no time to be aware of this in the

sidedly liberated the German minds, the Reformation led them in a poetic-scholastic and mystico-rationalistic direction, an important deviation from the true path. Leibnitz remarked in his time that Germany would have difficulty in ridding herself of this trend which, let us add, has left its mark on the works of Leibnitz himself. The epoch of forced classicism and Gallomania which swept over the national elements for a time could exert no lasting influence: this literature found no response among the people. God knows for whose benefit it spoke and whose ideas it expressed! More real and incomparably deeper was the influence exerted by the literary age ushered in by Lessing. Mature and cosmopolitan, it strove to render the national elements into universally human. This was the great task of Herder, Kant, Schiller and Goethe.

This problem, however, was solved in the sphere of art and science, the intellectual world being separated from public and family life by a Chinese wall. There was a Germany within Germany, the world of the savants and the artists; and there was no real contact between the two worlds. The people could not understand their teachers. The greater part of the people had stayed where they had come to rest after the Thirty Years' War. The history of Germany from the Peace of Westphalia to the time of Napoleon can be read on one page, and, namely, on the one on which the exploits of Frederick II are recorded. In the end Napoleon's mighty blows brought forth the practical side of the Teutonic spirit neglected by Germany's reformers. Only then did the dormant passions, which had been at work within, raise their heads. There was a hoarse outcry, full of fanatical and morose passion for the fatherland. Medieval views, somewhat readjusted to suit our ways of life and masqueraded in knightly apparel, took possession of the minds. Once more mysticism was in vogue. The fires of persecution flashed again in the eyes of the peaceful burghers and the world which had actually passed through the Reformation now returned to Catholic conceptions. The supreme romanticist Schlegel espoused Catholicism precisely because he was a Lutheran—logical under the circumstances.

For the time being it was Waterloo which decided who had won the field: Napoleon, the classicist, or Wellington and Blü-

cher, the romanticists. In the person of Napoleon, the Corsican and Emperor of the French, who represented the classical civilization and Latin Europe, the Teutons once again vanquished Rome; and once again they proclaimed the triumph of Gothic ideas. Romanticism was triumphant and classicism was hounded. Classicism was now associated with memories which everyone desired to forget, while romanticism, on the other hand, had unearthed the forgotten which everybody desired to recollect. Romanticism spoke incessantly, while classicism was silent; romanticism hurled itself upon everything like Don Quixote, classicism sat still, impassive and impressive as a Roman senator. But it was not dead like those Roman senators whom the Gauls had mistaken for corpses. In its ranks there were people of uncommon clay—all those Benthams, Livingstones, Thenards, de Candolles, Berzeliuses, Laplaces, Says who did not at all look vanquished, and the gay songs of Béranger rang in the camp of the classicists. Showered with the curses of the romanticists they silently but emphatically replied now with steamships, now with railways, now with entire branches of science freshly evolved, such as geology, political economy and comparative anatomy, now with an entire series of machines which saved the labour of man. The romanticists scorned these labours, humiliated every practical occupation as much as they could, found the imprint of damnation on the material tendency of the age, and, ensconced upon their high belfries, failed to observe the romance of industrialization which was unfolding on so grand a scale in North America, for instance.

While classicism and romanticism were fighting, the one converting the world to antiquity and the other to knighthood, something powerful was arising and gaining strength, something which passed between the two of them and unnoticed by either for all its magnificence. Resting one elbow upon the classicists and the other upon the romanticists it stood head and shoulders above both—as "he who hath power." Taking stock of the one and the other, it renounced both of them, for this new figure represented the inner life, the living Psyche of our contemporary world. Born amid the lightning and thunder of the struggle raging between Catholicism and the Reformation and come of age amid the thunder of yet another struggle, she had no need

for cast-off apparel; she had acquired her own. For a long time neither classicism nor romanticism suspected the existence of this third power. At the outset the one side and the other mistook her for an ally. (Thus, romanticism suffered under the delusion that Goethe, Schiller and Byron, let alone Walter Scott, were in its ranks.) At last, both classicism and romanticism had to admit that something stood between them, something not at all inclined to bolster either the one or the other. Without making peace between them, the two fell upon the newcomer. And this sealed their fate.

Meditative romanticism came to *hate* the new trend for its *realism*!

The classicists, on the other hand, extended cautious feelers and came to *despise* the new trend for its *idealism*.

True to the traditions of the ancient world, the classicists regarded the warring ideologists with tolerance, with a sardonic smile and, preoccupied with diverse experiments and specialized subjects, rarely appeared in the controversy. In all fairness they should not be regarded as enemies of our epoch. They are mostly utilitarians, practical people, and rejected the new trend as useless because the latter had but recently emerged from the school and its subjects seemed inapplicable, unfeasible in practice and unnecessary. But the romanticists, loyal as ever to the feudal traditions and savagely intolerant, would not leave the arena. It was a fight to the death, desperate and vicious; they were ready to bring back the Inquisition and the stake to settle the dispute. The bitter realization that they were ignored, that their game was up, fanned the embers of persecuting zeal to a white heat. Nor have they resigned themselves to the situation even now. And for all that, every day and every hour shows ever clearer that mankind desires neither the classicists nor the romanticists but modern people and regards all the others as guests in masquerade, every one of whom shall have to raise his mask at table and thereby reveal the familiar face under the grotesque and borrowed features. There are some, however, who will not sup in order to avoid lifting their mask; but masks such as theirs cannot even frighten children nowadays. The new conflict proved fatal to both sides: the unsoundness of classicism and the impossibility of romanticism stood fully exposed.

Their unnatural and anachronistic characters were fully revealed and the best minds of the age kept aloof of this war of werewolves for all the ado that was raised by them. But there was a time when classicism and romanticism were alive, true and beautiful, were necessary and profoundly human. Those were the days.... "Was papacy beneficial or harmful?" the naive Las Cases asked Napoleon. "I really do not know," replied the ex-emperor, "it was beneficial and necessary in its day and harmful in another." Such is the destiny of everything manifest in time. Classicism and romanticism belong to two great pasts. No matter what is done to resurrect them, they will remain the ghosts of the departed for whom there can be no place in the contemporary world. Just as classicism belongs to the ancient world, so romanticism belongs to the Middle Ages. Neither can claim to govern the present, because the present in no way resembles the ancient world or the Middle Ages. That is evident at a glance.

The Greco-Roman world was essentially realistic. It revered nature and lived with it as one. It regarded existence as the supreme felicity. To the Greco-Roman world the truth was the cosmos beyond which there was nothing. And the cosmos was everything to this world precisely because its demands were limited. The ancient world attained to the spirit from nature and through nature and precisely for that reason did not attain to the absolute spirit. Nature is the existence of the idea in diversity. Its unity, as the ancients conceived it, was necessity, fatum, the mysterious universal power irresistible to both Earth and Olympus. Nature was subordinated to the laws of necessity, the key to which existed *in it but not for it.* The cosmogony of the Greeks began with chaos and developed into the Olympic federation of gods under the dictatorship of Zeus; republicans as they were, they did not attain to unity and willingly halted at republican rule in the universe. Anthropomorphism brought the gods very close to the people. Gifted with sublime, aesthetic perception, the Greek fully comprehended the *expressiveness of the external,* the mystery of form. The divine existed for him only as incorporated in human beauty. Through it nature was idolized by him and beyond that beauty he did not go.

Such an existence at one with nature was enchanting and carefree. People were satisfied with life. In no other age were the elements of the soul so artistically balanced. The further development of the spirit was inevitable, but it could not occur otherwise than at the expense of flesh, body, and form: it was a higher stage, but it had to sacrifice ancient harmony and grace. The life of the people in that flourishing age was free of care, happy and clear as nature itself. Vague ennui, morbid self-searching, and futile egotism were unknown to them. They suffered from real causes, shed tears over real bereavements. The ego of the individual was dissolved in his citizenship, a citizen being an organ, an atom of another sacrosanct personality, that of the city. It was not the ego of the individual that was revered, but the ego of Athens, of Sparta or Rome. Such was the essence of the free, broad views of the Greco-Roman world, humanely beautiful *within their limits.* But these views had to give way to other views just because they were limited. The ancient world placed the external on a par with the internal, which is the case in nature, but not in the truth where the spirit dominates the form. The Greeks thought that they had sculptured everything contained in the human soul, but their chisels had failed to describe a residue of urges dormant and as yet immature. The Greeks dissolved the personality in the universal, the citizen in the city, the man in the citizen, but the personality had inalienable rights of its own and by the law of compensation the individual, accidental personalities of the emperors finally absorbed the City of Cities. The apotheosis of the Neros, the Claudiuses and their despotism was an ironic denial of one of the main principles of Hellenism and the Hellenic world. It was then that the time had come for its demise, and the birth of a new world. But the seeds sown by Greco-Roman life could not and should not perish for mankind. They germinated for fifteen centuries and the Teutonic world had ample time to strengthen its thinking and to acquire the ability to apply them in practice. In that span romanticism flowered and withered with its great truth and its great one-sidedness.

The romantic views should be regarded neither as universally Christian nor as purely Christian: they were nearly the exclusive properties of Catholicism. In them, as in everything

Catholic, two principles were welded: the one was derived from the Gospel and the other from popular, temporal and essentially Germanic elements. Hazy and inclined to meditation and mysticism, Germanic fantasy found full play for its vast character in the adoption and assimilation of Christianity, at the same time imparting to religion a national hue. Christianity, moreover, offered more than the romanticists could take and what they did take was taken one-sidedly and developed at the expense of other sides. The spirit which leapt heavenwards from the Gothic spires was quite contrary to that of the ancient world. The basis of romanticism was spiritualism, transcendentality. For it spirit and matter were not in a state of harmonious development, but conflicting and in dissonance. Nature was false, and everything natural was to be condemned. The spiritual substance of man "blushed for the shadow cast by the body of man."* Having conceived itself a duality, life suffered from inner discord and sought conciliation in the rejection of one of the two conflicting principles. Having realized his infinity, his superiority to nature, man sought to ignore nature. And individuality, erased in the ancient world, now attained infinite rights; spiritual values were brought to light, unsuspected by the ancient world. The object of art was no longer beauty but spiritualization. The hearty laughter at the feast of Olympus was no more. The end of the world, the eternity of which had been the dogma of the classical world, was awaited by the hour. All this served to tinge the activities of man and his thinking with solemnity and melancholy. Yet, this melancholy had the irresistible charm of obscure, undefinable musical impulses and desires which plucked at the innermost chords of the soul. Romanticism was an exquisite rose which had grown at the foot of the cross it entwined, but its roots, like those of every plant, were fixed in the earth. And this romanticism did not choose to know. Fearing that they bore evidence of its baseness and unworthiness it sought to renounce its roots. Romanticism ever lamented the narrow confines of the human breast and yet could never divorce itself from its heart and feelings. Constantly proffering itself for sacrifice—romanticism

* Dante, *Ascension to Paradise.—A.H.*

demanded infinite remuneration. Idolizing subjectivity, romanticism yet anathematized it. And this very struggle of seemingly reconciled contradictions imparted to it an impulsive, powerful and ecstatic air. But if we forget the bright picture of the Middle Ages imprinted on our minds by the romantic school, we shall find in it horrible contradictions, reconciled formally, but rending one another ferociously. Believing as they did in divine redemption, they nevertheless regarded the contemporary world and man as constantly at the mercy of the wrath of God. Arrogating unto themselves uncurtailed liberties, they yet deprived entire estates of human conditions of existence. Their self-denial was egotism, their prayer was a selfish supplication, their soldiers were monks, their military chieftains, bishops; the women they idolized were kept like captives. Abstinence from innocent pleasures was combined with riotous licentiousness, blind obedience with unrestricted tyranny. Everyone spoke of the spirit, of scorn for the flesh and the things of this earth; and yet, in no age was passion more rampant, and life more contradictory to prevailing convictions and catechisms, compromising with the conscience as it did through formalism, subterfuges and self-deception, such as the purchasing of indulgences. That was an age of shameless and brazen lies. While recognizing the Pope as their spiritual shepherd appointed by the Almighty, the temporal authorities humbled themselves before him but formally. They constantly avowed their devotion and at the same time sought to do him as much injury as they could. The Pope, the servant of God's servants, the humble shepherd, the spiritual father amassed riches and earthly power. There was something frenzied and feverish in such a life and mankind could not long remain in this unnatural and tense condition. Real life, though spurned and ignored, began to claim its own. No matter how they tried to turn from it, to fix their gaze on eternity, the voice of life spoke commandingly and intimately. Both heart and mind responded. Soon it was joined by another strong voice: the classical world had risen from the dead; and the Latin people in whom the Roman spirit had never really perished, delightedly seized upon the ancient legacy. A trend entirely contrary to the spirit of the Middle Ages announced its existence in all spheres of human

endeavour. There arose a tendency to renounce the past at all cost, there was a desire to breathe freely, to live well. Leading the reform, Germany proudly inscribed on its banners "the right to research," though actually she was far from recognizing this right. Germany bent all efforts to the struggle against Catholicism. There was, however, no consciously positive aim in this struggle. She prematurely outdistanced the classicism of the Latin people and precisely for that reason was left behind afterwards. By renouncing Catholicism Germany severed her last tie with this world. The Catholic rites, at least, brought heaven to earth, while the bare Protestant church pointed only skywards. To gauge the influence exerted upon the Germans by the Reformation, suffice it to bring to mind their nature so inclined to mystery. After the Reformation the Germans lapsed into scholastic mysticism depriving man of all realism, a mysticism which was based on the literal misinterpretation of the sacred texts in a dozen ways and took the form of cold madness, evolved with terrible consistency by some, and erupting through fanatical, unrestrained and oppressive ravings in others.

In the midst of this the new world was being born and its breathing was perceptible everywhere. The St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome was a solemn landmark of mankind's renunciation of Gothic architecture. Bramante and Buonarotti preferred the eclectic style *de la renaissance* to the austere lancets of Gothism. That was but natural. From an aesthetic point of view, apart from history, Gothism is unquestionably a style superior to those of the renaissance, rococo and others which served as transitions from Gothism to what would be the true restoration of ancient architecture. But Gothism closely linked with the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, of Gregory VII, of knighthood and feudal institutions, could not satisfy the nascent requirements of life. The new world clamoured for a fresh incarnation, a brighter embodiment, one capable not only of aspiration, but of enjoyment, not only of overwhelming with its grandeur, but also of soothing with its harmony. There was a return to the ancient world. Its art aroused sympathy. Its coveted architecture was clear and fair as the face of youth, harmonious as "music in stone." But much had occurred since the great days

of Rome and Greece; the experience gained in the interim was firmly lodged in the minds and showed that neither the peripteros of the Greeks nor the rotunda of the Romans could fully express the idea of the new age. It was then that the "Pantheon on Parthenon" was built and inexperienced hands, fearful of straight lines, marred the ancient simplicity with pilasters, protuberances and projections. This upheaval in architecture was a step backward for art, but a step forward for mankind. Its timeliness was illustrated in the whole of Europe. All rich cities built their own St. Peter's Cathedrals. Gothic churches were left unfinished in order that new churches might be erected in the style of the renaissance. Essentially Gothic, Germany remained true to her architectural style longer than the others, but put up few structures in that period: she was too sorely wounded and exhausted for this. There is no point in arguing against these common facts. One should try to understand them. Mankind cannot be crassly mistaken through entire epochs. The new architectural style in cathedrals marks the end of the Middle Ages and their outlook. Gothic architecture became impossible after St. Peter's: it became a thing of the past, an anachronism.

The plastic arts, in turn, were being liberated. The Gothic church had made different demands upon the artists than St. Peter's. Byzantium had expressed one of the essential elements in Gothic painting. Its unnatural postures and colours, its austere grandeur divorced from the world and everything earthly, its deliberate neglect of beauty and grace amounted to an ascetic denial of earthly beauty. The holy image was no picture: it was a vague delineation, a subtle suggestion. But the artistic nature of the Italians could not long keep within the confines of symbolic art. Developing it more and more, they passed from religious to pure art by the time of Leo X. The immortal types *dei divini maestri* clothed the divine in supreme earthly beauty, their ideal being a man transfigured, but a human being nonetheless. Raphael's Madonnas, the apotheosis of pure feminine beauty, were yet not abstract, supernatural beings, but real maidenhood transfigured. Risen to the highest ideal, the art of painting once more gained a firm footing on earth, from which

it would no longer depart. The Byzantine artist had renounced the ancient ideal of earthly, human beauty. But Italian painting, while developing that of Byzantium, at its highest stage renounced Byzantium and apparently returned to the ancient ideal. There had been a great stride, however: the orbs of the new ideal shone with a new light, the reflection of new and profound thought, and were unlike the open but unseeing eyes of the Greek statues. Reanimating art, the Italian's brush imparted to it a new depth of spirit sprung from the word of God.

Poetry was undergoing a revolution of its own. Within it, knighthood relinquished its solemn reverie and feudal hauteur. Playful and smiling, Ariosto told the story of his Roland. Maliciously ironic, Cervantes exposed the untimeliness and impotence of knight errantry. Boccaccio portrayed the life of a Catholic priest; Rabelais with characteristic French audacity went further still. The Protestant world produced Shakespeare, a man of two worlds, who closed the door upon the romantic epoch of art and opened another. The genius with which he so fully revealed the inner life of man in all its depth, restlessness and infinity, the boldness with which he pursued life to its innermost recesses and exposed what he had found there, was not of romanticism but *transcended it.* The main feature of romanticism was its yearning for something "far away," and inevitably it was saddened because "that which was yonder would never come hither." It always strove to escape the heart, within which it could find no peace. To Shakespeare, on the other hand, the heart of man was a universe, the cosmology of which was vividly drawn by his mighty pen. In France and Italy at that time pseudo-classicism was growing and gaining in strength. In his work on architecture Palladio spoke of Gothism with scorn. Mediocre and lifeless imitations of the ancient writers were more highly valued than the songs and legends of the Middle Ages, so poetic and profound. The antique had an irresistible appeal for its humaneness and reconciliation in life and beauty; and it was from the antique that a new spirit arose, a spirit which affected science* and even politics.

* We shall leave the upheaval in science to another chapter. Suffice it to mention Bacon, Descartes and Spinoza.—*A.H.*

Meanwhile, the struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism continued. The former was rejuvenated in the contest, while the latter matured. But the new world belonged wholly to neither. At the very outset of this confused struggle there was a scientist who refused directly to join the one side or the other. He pleaded that he was occupied with the humanities and did not wish therefore to involve himself in the war between the Pope and Martin Luther. This learned humanist was Erasmus of Rotherdam, the same who smilingly wrote something *de libero et servo arbitrio*, which made Luther tremble with rage and reply: "If anyone has wounded me to the heart, it was Erasmus and not the defenders of the Pope." Thanks to the initiative of Erasmus, the new, humane ideas flowed both through classicism and romanticism. From the Reformation thought derived enormous strength, but at the first opportunity it passed to the side of the classicists. From this, one might have deduced, though no one did, that such alternatives as classicism and romanticism are not inherent in, or essential to, new thought, that the latter is neither the one nor the other but rather both the one and the other, this combination being not a mechanical mixture, but a chemical compound which within itself has eliminated the properties of its composite parts, just as the causes are eliminated in the effect, or the premises are eliminated in the syllogism. Who has not seen children wonderfully resembling both parents who did not in the least resemble each other. The new age was just such a child: it combined the elements of musing romanticism and plastic classicism, not separately evident, but indivisibly fused in their offspring.

Romanticism and classicism were destined to find their graves in the new world—not graves alone, however, but also immortality. Only that which is one-sided, false and transient can perish, but both were possessed of the truth, eternal, universal, and all-human. Such things cannot die, but are handed on to the senior heirs of mankind. The eternal elements of classicism and romanticism continue alive without compulsion. They belong to the two true and indispensable moments in the development of the human spirit in time. They constitute two phases, two outlooks of different epochs, each relatively true. Consciously or subconsciously everyone is a classicist or roman-

ticist or, at least, was once the one or the other. Youth, the time of first love and inexperience is inclined to romanticism. The latter is beneficial at that time: it cleanses and ennobles the soul. Bestiality and grossness are consumed in its purifying flame. The soul is purged and takes wing in this bright and innocent world of dreams, soars to the heights, far above the trivial, the transient and the accidental. Those of bright intelligence rather than of sensitive heart are classicists owing to their inner make-up; just as those who are contemplative, dreamy and delicate rather than hard-thinking are sooner romanticists than classicists. All this, however, is very far from the existence of mutually exclusive schools of thought.

Schiller and Goethe are shining examples of how the romantic and classical elements should be received in our age. Schiller, of course, was drawn to the romantic more than Goethe, but his greater sympathies lay with his age and his last, most mature works were purely *humanistic* (if one may give them such a title) and not romantic. Could there indeed have been anything in the classical world that was alien to Schiller, the man who translated Racine, Sophocles and Virgil? And could there indeed have been anything inaccessible to Goethe in the deepest recesses of romanticism? In these giants, the conflicting and contrary trends were welded by the fire of genius into conceptions of amazing completeness. The partisans of the warring camps, however, stayed where they were. Mankind has reached an age of such maturity that it is simply ridiculous to attempt to convert it to the one side or the other. And yet, after Napoleon, we have witnessed the advent of a vigorous neo-romantic school. For this there was sufficient cause. The tendencies of German science and art were growing increasingly universal and cosmopolitan. But this universality was purchased at the expense of vitality. The national spirit of the Germans had been phlegmatic and latent until the onslaughts of Napoleon. It was then, however, that the Germans arose, fired with patriotic fervour. Goethe's songs with their all-human appeal then ill accorded with the fever in the blood of his countrymen. What patriotism did for Germany, apathy did for France, and each of the two opened a fold of the gate to romanticism. Both the aroused feeling of popular pride and the suffocating atmosphere of in-

difference, inclined the soul to that art which was full of faith and national sympathies. But since the sentiments which had called neo-romanticism into existence were purely transient, its ultimate fate could be easily foreseen. A closer examination of the nineteenth century will suffice to show that the lasting charm of romanticism was impossible.

The peculiar character of the nineteenth century was indeed evident from its very beginning. It was marked by the climax of the Napoleonic era; it was greeted by the songs of Goethe and Schiller and the powerful ideas of Kant and Fichte. Replete as it was with memories of the last ten years, with forebodings and burning issues, it could not be gay-hearted as its predecessors had been. Singing its lullaby, Schiller foretold its tragic fate.

Das Jahrhundert ist im Sturm geschieden,
Und das neue öffnet sich mit Mord.

The fossilized structures of centuries came crumbling down. The battle-fields of Jena and Wagram[9] gave rise to doubts as to the stability of the past and the reality and permanence of the present. Goethe once read in the French newspaper *Moniteur* that the Confederation of the German States had ceased to exist. What scepticisms and criticisms were suggested by the ruins of temples hitherto believed to be eternal! Could the object of this *remue-ménage* have been a return to romanticism? Nothing of the sort. Thinking people were spectators at the great drama of the transition from one era to another and it is significant that they rejected the fruit of deep and solemn thought which had hitherto grown from the tree of mankind's entire knowledge.

The first to be heard all over Europe with that of Napoleon was the name of a great thinker. In the age of fierce controversy, of gory conflict, of bitter schism, this inspired thinker proclaimed the reconciliation of the opposites as the basis of philosophy. He did not separate himself from the warring parties; he saw the process of life and development in struggle itself. It was in struggle that he saw the supreme identity which cancelled struggle. No sooner conceived and uttered by the poet-thinker, this idea, fraught with the deeper meaning of our

epoch, was caught up and developed by the speculative dialectician in a consistent, harmonious and scientific manner. In May, 1812, while the reception-rooms of Napoleon in Dresden were thronged with royalty, Hegel's *Logic* was being printed in an obscure print-shop of Nuremberg. This event passed unnoticed in the light of the "declaration of the second war on Poland," an event which happened just at that time. But the seed was sown: these several signatures, in elaborate language and apparently intended for scholars, contained the fruit of the whole of mankind's antecedent thought. the seed that was to grow to the proportions of a mighty oak The conditions for its growth were at hand, for it could not be otherwise. It was only necessary to evolve the formula, as the mathematicians would say, and the tree of knowledge would rise tall, green and with rustling leaves, a cool shade, its fruits ripe and nutritious. That which had palpitated in the graceful images of Schiller's dramas, which had struggled for expression in Goethe's songs, now became clear and visible to all. The truth, as though bashful, had adorned itself in the mantle of scholasticism and never ventured from the abstract sphere of learning, but this mantle, which had been worn threadbare even in the Middle Ages, could no longer serve as a cover: so shining is the truth that a single rent in its garment will suffice to shed strong light upon an entire field.

The best minds sympathized with the new trend of thought, but a greater part failed to understand it and as pseudo-romanticism grew, it lured the young people and the dilettantes into its fold. The aged Goethe grieved over the aberrations of the new generation. He was saddened to see that not what is really valuable in his works but something else was appreciated, that his meaning was misunderstood. Goethe had been essentially a realist, like Napoleon and the whole of our century; but the romanticist had no faculty for the understanding of realism. Byron too heaped scorn upon his fictitious friends. But the majority favoured romanticism: and the tastes of the Middle Ages so contrary to the positive character of our age and its demands, were resurrected in dress and ornament. Everything, from the sleeves of evening gowns to men's hairdress, was affected by this influence. Just as a tragedy was no tragedy for the classi-

cists unless it had Greek or Roman heroes, just as the classicists incessantly lauded the inferior Falernian wine, while drinking good Bourgundy, so too romantic poetry must needs have the knights of old, no poem without copious bloodshed, naive pages and dreamy countesses, cross-bones and corpses, exaltation and ravings. The place of Falernian wine is taken by platonic love; themselves given to real loving, the romantic poets eulogize the platonic passions alone. Germany and France vied with each other in presenting mankind with romantic writings: Hugo and Werner—the poet who affected madness and the madman who affected poetry—stood perched on the peak of the Brocken as the two strongest representatives of their trend. Between the two there sprang up genuine talents, such as Novalis, Tieck, Uhland and others, who were, in turn, overrun by the cohorts of their followers. These writers so distorted romantic poetry, so eulogized their loves and their spiritual urges that even the good romanticists grew boring and difficult to read. It is noteworthy that one of the principal disseminators of romanticism was no romanticist at all. I mean Walter Scott. His is the vital and practical outlook of his country. To recreate the life of an epoch does not yet mean to accept its one-sidedness.

Be it as it may, romanticism exulted, imagining that it would last for ages. Proudly, it made overtures to new science and the latter often imitated its language. Romanticism condescendingly launched a philosophy of its own, but never attained to its clear exposition. Using the same words for different meanings, the romanticists and the philosophers palavered without end. The situation was most comical when both parties, after laborious and prolonged effort, came to realize that they had been talking at cross purposes. Some years were frittered away in these innocent occupations, in composing songs in the fashion of the troubadours, in digging up traditions and chronicles about the knights of old for the ballades, or just in hankering languorously, or in torments of love for maidens unknown. In the meantime, Goethe died, Byron died, Hegel died and Schelling grew old. On the face of it, romanticism had now to reign supreme. But with unerring intuition the masses decreed otherwise, since they ceased to sympathize

with romanticism fifteen years ago. And the romanticists found themselves circumvented like Leonidas and his Spartans and like the latter resolved to fall in an heroic but hopeless fray. What it was that had alienated the public from them is quite another matter into which we do not intend to delve just now. We shall confine ourselves to a fact. Who cares about the romanticists now, who troubles with them, who knows them? And chilled by universal indifference, pallid and melancholy, the romanticists anathematize the age in which they live. They see the castles of their beloved dreams tumbling down, and the new generation trodding roughshod over the ruins, heedless of the romanticists and their tears. They are anguished to hear the joyous song of modern life, a song which is not theirs. Gnashing their teeth they watch the vain world preoccupied with material improvements, social questions and science. At times one is startled by the ferocious and reproachful stare from these corpses which still haunt the seething and fragrant realms of life, never dreaming that they are dead. May they rest in peace: it is not seeming that the dead should mingle with the living.

Werden sie nicht schaden,
So werden sie schrecken.

May 9, 1842

III

THE DILETTANTES AND THE GUILD OF SCIENTISTS

> Such as . . . welche alle Töne einer Musik mit durchgehört haben, an deren Sinn aber das Eine, die *Harmonie dieser Töne*, nicht gekommen ist. . .—as Hegel remarked.
>
> (*Gesch. der Phil.*)

THROUGHOUT the long history of mankind two opposing trends can be traced. The development of one of them conditions the origin of the other and, at the same time, engenders a struggle which must lead to the destruction of the former. No matter what corner of history we choose to examine we will find

this process repeated in a series of transformations. Owing to the operation of one cause, people with some common ground between them, set themselves apart to gain a privileged position and establish a monopoly. Owing to the operation of another cause, the masses seek to absorb the isolated group, to take over the fruit of their labours, to assimilate this group and destroy its monopoly. Though in every country, in every age, in every sphere of life the struggle between the privileged and the masses is expressed differently, the guilds and castes are constantly formed anew, the masses are constantly undermining them and, strangest of all, the self-same masses who but yesterday pilloried the guild, turn out to be the guildists of today, to be pilloried and assimilated, in turn, by the yet broader masses of tomorrow. This polarity is one of the features of the living development of mankind, somewhat resembling the phenomenon of pulsation from which it differs in that every beat means for mankind a step forward.

It is in the guild that abstract thinking crystallizes this group of people gathered together by it and in its name is a necessary organ for its development. But no sooner has it reached maturity than the guild becomes pernicious to it: it strives for air and light like an embryo in its ninth month; it needs a broader environment. But the members of the caste, so useful to thought in its incipiency, lose their importance, fossilize, come to a standstill, jealously spurn what is new, afraid of relinquishing their golden fleece and determined to keep thought strictly to themselves. This is impossible, however. Thought is universal and radiant: it craves generalization, bursts through all crevices and slips between the fingers. The true consummation of thought is to be found not in the caste, but in mankind at large. It cannot limit itself to the narrow confines of the guild, knows nothing of conjugal fidelity: it proffers its embraces to everyone, it refuses to exist only for those who yearn for exclusive possession. As the masses learn to embrace thought and to sympathize with it the guild must dwindle. Pity is out of place. It has done its work and can go. The object of isolation should be communion and reunion. People generally leave their homes to return with fresh acquisitions. Only vagrants leave their homes for ever.

Such is the fate of all castes. It might be supposed that *pour la bonne bouche* the guild of mankind will embrace all the lesser guilds, but this will not occur very soon. As yet man is prepared to accept any title, but not the simple name of man.

Modern science is just entering that stage of maturity when it must make itself known to all, must yield itself to all. It feels cramped and bored in the auditoriums and conference halls. It struggles for freedom, desirous of contributing a decisive voice in the practical spheres of life. This desire, however, remains unfulfilled and science cannot participate as a living element in the precipitous current of practical life as long as it rests in the hands of the caste of the scientists: only those who belong to life can introduce it into life.

A beginning has been made, something great has been set in motion and progresses, though slowly; science in the meantime is rounding out some abstract theories no less essential to it than its escape from them to real life. Science is to be born for the masses not as an infant, but fully accoutred like Pallas Athene sprung from the head of Jupiter. Before bearing fruit it must accomplish everything it has been called upon to accomplish and be absolutely certain that it has done so: from this science is not far. People still regard it distrustfully, however, and this mistrust is a virtue in itself: an unerring though vague instinct tells them that science must contain the key to the gravest problems, but they see that the scientists are preoccupied mainly with empty disputes and lifeless problems and are strangers to human interests. They sense that science belongs to all, but see that it is not easily accessible, that it speaks a language difficult to comprehend. And so the people turn away from science as the scientists turn away from the people. The fault, of course, should be sought not in science, nor in the people, but somewhere between the two. To reach the ordinary people a ray of science must penetrate such marshy mists and vapours that it is stained with their grey colours and altogether unlike itself; yet by its light alone do men judge. The first step towards the liberation of science is the comprehension of the obstacles which stand in its way, the exposure of false friends who imagine that science can still be swaddled in the infant raiments of scholasticism or that it can lie immobile in the ban-

dages of an Egyptian mummy. Those murky vapours enveloping science are crowded with friends of science who are in reality its worst enemies. Under the eaves of the temple of Athene they live like owls, hooting that they are the masters, whereas they are only menials, dawdlers. It is they who are responsible for all the reproaches, all the vituperations levelled against science. Superficial dilettantism and the narrow specialization of the scientists *ex officio* are the two banks of science which prevent the fertilizing waters of this Nile from overflowing. We have referred to dilettantism quite recently, but we do not believe it superfluous to mention it again as the perfect antithesis of specialization. The contrast sometimes is more explicit than the mere similarity.

Dilettantism is love of science coupled with complete absence of understanding. Its love is such that it spreads itself thinly over the sea of knowledge and cannot achieve intensity at any point. Its love is such that it feeds upon its own affection, attaining nothing, never caring for anything, not even for reciprocation. It is a purely platonic, romantic affection which begets no offspring. Rapturously holding forth on the heights and weaknesses of science, the dilettantes scornfully leave all other talk to the vulgar. For all that, they are horribly afraid of questions and surreptitiously betray science when pressed to the wall by logic. The dilettantes are the people of the frontispiece, the people who wander all about the ingredients of knowledge of which not they, but others partake. If I remember aright, Gernovic taught the King of England to play the violin. The king was a dilettante, i.e., he was a lover of music, but could not play. One day he asked Gernovic to which class of violinists he, the king, belonged. "To the second," the artist replied. "And whom do you place in this class?" "Many, Your Majesty. As regards violin playing I divide mankind into three classes: the first, the most numerous one, consists of people who cannot play at all; the second, also rather numerous, consists of those who cannot really play, but are fond of playing incessantly; the third are the few, the handful who really know music and sometimes play beautifully. Your Majesty has certainly passed from the first to the second class." Whether or not the king was pleased with this answer, I do not know, but nothing more fit-

ting could be said about dilettantism. As Gernovic so aptly remarked, it is precisely the second class which plays *interminably*; it is a sort of disease preying upon the dilettantes, a madness from excess of amorous passion.

Dilettantism is nothing new. Nero was a dilettante in music, Henry VIII, a dilettante in theology. The dilettantes assume the colouring of their age. In the eighteenth century, they were gay, boisterous, and called themselves *esprit fort*; in the nineteenth century the dilettante is sunk in melancholy and mysterious brooding, he is now enamoured of science, but *aware* of its perfidy, he has become a bit of a mystic, reads Swedenborg; but he is also a bit of a sceptic and peeps into Byron; with Hamlet he often repeats: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," yet smugly he is certain that he knows it all. Finally, a dilettante is the most harmless and useless of mortals. He leads a meek and gentle existence, haranguing the wise men of all ages and neglecting the grosser business of living. God knows what the subject of his discourses is! This is not clear to the dilettantes themselves, but they are so snug in this cosy indistinctness.

The caste of scientists (*die Fachgelehrten*), the scientists by virtue of rank, diploma and sense of dignity, is the antithesis of the dilettante. The principal shortcoming of this caste is that it is a caste, the second shortcoming is the "specialism" in which the scientists are usually lost. To define in brief the relation between the caste of scientists and science, we should recall that such a caste developed more fully in China than elsewhere. China is regarded by many as a prosperous, patriarchal empire. That well may be. There are hosts of scientists there who have enjoyed privileges in the civil service since time immemorial. But of science there is not a trace.... "But they have a science of their own," it may be objected. We shall not contest this, but we have referred to the science which belongs to humanity at large, and not exclusively to China, Japan and other learned states. In Russia too, when a boy is apprenticed to a smith or joiner he is said to be bound over to *science:* and so one ought to suppose that they also have their *own* science. It must be admitted, however, that *true science* too was once of an age, long since gone, when the scientific caste was a neces-

sity—in the age of its immaturity, when science was denied its rights and was itself subjugated to authority. It was thus the caste of the scientists, the people of knowledge, who, surrounded by crude and primitive notions, cherished and preserved the legacy of the ancient world, the memorials of the past, and the ideas of their own epoch all through the Middle Ages right up to the seventeenth century. They worked in seclusion, fearful of being harassed and persecuted, waiting patiently for the time when fame would shine upon their hidden achievements. The scientists then practised science as a mystery and found expression in occult language purposely disguising their thoughts, for fear of gross misinterpretation. In those days it was indeed valiant to belong to the Levites of science. The calling of science then more often led to the stake than to the academy. And yet they persevered, inspired by the truth. Giordano Bruno was a scientist and Galileo was a scientist too. At that time, the scientists as a class were very much in place; the greatest issues of the epoch were discussed in the auditoriums; the scope of their interests was immense. And it was the scientists who stood first haloed in the early glory of dawning reason, like the tallest and proudest of the oak tops ablaze on the mountain ridges.

But everything has changed nowadays; no one persecutes the scientist today and public consciousness has risen to the appreciation of science, to an urge for science and therefore rightly protests against the monopoly exercised by the scientists. This jealous caste, however, is determined to keep the light to itself. It has surrounded science with a forest of scholasticism, of barbarous terminology, ponderous and discouraging language. Similarly, the farmer surrounds his crops with hostile thickets ever ready to prick the thieving hand and tear the clothing of the intruder to shreds. But in vain. The time of the aristocracy of knowledge has passed. Apart from all other agencies, the invention of the printing press alone dealt a decisive blow to the seclusion of knowledge, rendering it accessible to all who are eager to learn. Finally, the last possibility of keeping science within the guild lay in the development of its purely theoretical aspects not always within reach of the layman. But modern science has other pretensions, apart from theoretical ab-

stractions: as though forgetful of its dignity it is striving to descend from its throne into the thick of life; and that this cannot be prevented by the scientists is beyond all doubt.

The scientific caste of our times was formed after the Reformation and more so within the period of the Reformation itself. We have already mentioned the scientific corporations of the Middle Ages and the Catholic world. These should not be confused with the new scientific caste reared in Germany in the last centuries. It is true that the old learned caste enslaved the minds of its day, but one should not forget, first of all, the state of men's minds of that day, and, secondly, that those who imposed the yoke were themselves chafed by a heavy yoke. There was something unfinished about everything which grew out of the Reformation. There was insufficient courage to follow up the ultimate consequences, insufficient heroism in logic: they often vehemently proclaimed a principle and timidly renounced the natural consequences. An edifice was frequently rent asunder and its debris reverently preserved. It often happened that what existed could neither be piously revered nor boldly renounced. The thinking of the Reformation originated somewhat prematurely and that is why it fell behind and was circumvented. The caste of scientists, formed in the world of the Reformation, never had the strength to establish a corporation, compactly self-sufficient and firmly in control of its boundaries, nor to dissolve into the masses. It has never had the energy either to cling to the existing order or to rebel against it. For that reason it has come to be regarded suspiciously, as a stranger. For the same reason it has come to shun the living issues and to concern itself narrowly with those which are dead. The ties linking the caste with society were bound to grow weaker and the direct consequence were mutual misunderstanding and indifference.

A poetic providence pointed to the word *humaniora*, a beautiful, prophetic word. But there was nothing human in the humaniora of the scientists. The word was relegated exclusively to philology, as though in irony, as though they themselves realized that the ancient world was more human than they. The stunted tree of the scientific guild grew out of pedantry, seclusion from life, petty distractions, and futile pursuits leading no-

where—some phantom endeavour, busy idleness—as well as out of artificial conceptions, inapplicable theories, practical inexperience and arrogant conceit. It would, however, be ungrateful to deny that the learned men have contributed very much to science; but not at all because they strove to form a caste. On the contrary, it was only the individual efforts which proved truly useful.

Born in struggle and controversy, to replace the science of Catholicism, the new science required a fresh foundation, more positive, more factual; but it had no material, no supply of experimental data and observations; the army of facts was not strong enough as yet. The scientists apportioned the field of science and scattered over it. Theirs was the painful task *défricher le terrain* and in these labours, their chief contribution, they lost the broad view and became handicraftsmen who still imagined that they were prophets. It was by the sweat of their brow, by the arduous toil of whole generations that genuine science arose, but, as always happens, the toilers are the last to benefit from the results of their efforts.

The opposing natures of the Latin and the Teutonic characters could not but affect the newly formed class of scientists. The French are more observers and materialists and the Germans more scholastics and formalists. The former are more engaged with natural science, with the applied branches of science and are fine mathematicians too. The latter occupy themselves with philology, with inapplicable branches of science and are subtle theologians to boot. In science the former seek practical use and the latter, poetic uselessness. The French are more the specialists, but less of a caste, while the Germans are the other way round. The scientists in Germany resemble a caste of Egyptian priests: they constitute a special race which controls public education, social thought, medicine, learning and so on. To all the other good Germans at large it is left only to eat well, drink and *subir* medical treatment, education and thinking from those entitled to those prerogatives by virtue of their diplomas. In France, on the other hand, the scientists are not so prominent and consequently wield less influence than their German colleagues. In France they aim more or less at practical improvements and this in itself is a broad path to life.

If, in all fairness, they can be reproached for their narrow specialization more than the Germans, they certainly cannot be reproached for uselessness. It is France who leads in the popularization of science. How ingeniously she was able, a century ago, to clothe her outlook (such as it was) in a popular, topical form accessible to everybody and permeated with life! The Frenchman cannot be content with the abstract alone: he requires the friendliness of the drawing-room and the square, the songs of Béranger and the pages of his newspaper. No need to worry about him: he will not remain within his caste very long.

Not so the German guild scientists. Their principal feature is the rampart that separates them from life. Like the anchorites of the Middle Ages, they live in a world of their own, a world with its own customs and interests: theology, the ancient writers, the Hebrew language, interpretations of obscure places in manuscripts, disconnected experiments, and observations without a general object in view; such are their concerns. Whenever they do happen to deal with realities they must needs pigeonhole them with other categories; and the wildest monstrosities result.

The academic world in Germany is a state apart, one which has nothing to do with Germany. And indeed, it could borrow but little from life after the Thirty Years' War. The antagonism has been mutual. Vegetating in their endless preoccupation with scholastic subjects they have grown into a stratum sharply distinct and alone. Beyond the academy walls life has been dull and sluggish, not at all attractive. In its philistine drabness life has been as depressing and intolerable as the scholastic world itself. But divorced though they are from life, the scientists recall the stentorian voices of their predecessors who once weighed problems of the gravest importance at the universities of the Middle Ages; and similarly, they take upon themselves to judge high-handedly all scientific and artistic controversies. They who once undermined the castes of the Catholic spiritual shepherds in the name of the universal right to research, now show a tendency to establish their own guild of secular shepherds. But lacking the fervour of the Catholic propagandists on the one hand, and the ignorance of the masses on the other, they have failed. The new caste of manherds was not destined

to appear. It has become more difficult to herd people who not only regard the masters of science as their equals, as ordinary mortals, but even as people who have failed to attain the fulness of life and are only eking out an existence in one of its nooks.

Science is a table abundantly laid for every man whose hunger is great enough, whose craving for spiritual nourishment has grown sufficiently insistent. The striving for truth, for knowledge does not exclude activity in particular spheres of life: it does not prevent a man from becoming a chemist, a physician, an actor or a merchant; and it should by no means be supposed that a specialized scientist has more right to the truth. He only claims he does. Why should a person who spends his life in a monotonous and one-sided study of some special subject have clearer views and more profound ideas than another who has tasted of realities and rubbed shoulders with thousands of diverse people? On the contrary; no matter what the guild scientist does outside his special subject, he does it awkwardly. He is superfluous in the solution of any living issue. He is the last to suspect the great importance of science; he does not see the wood for the trees, the trees of his particular field within which he supposes science to be confined. In extreme cases, the guild scientists are to society as the second stomach is to a ruminant; no fresh food ever reaches them, only that which has been chewed over and over and which is masticated for the pleasure of it alone. It is the masses who are active, who sacrifice their blood and labour; and only then comes the scientist to discuss the matter. The poets and the artists create and the masses are enraptured by their creations. But then comes the scientist to write the commentaries and the analyses, grammatical and otherwise. All that is very useful, but the injustice lies in their overweening conceit that they stand head and shoulders above us, that they are the high priests of Palas Athene, her lovers, or worse yet, her husbands. On the other hand it would be queerer still if they were told that the learned cannot know the truth, that they are excluded. The spirit impelling man towards the truth makes no exceptions. Not all scientists belong to the guild. Overcoming the habits of didacticism, many a *genuine savant* acquires an *educa-*

*tion** and emerges from the guild to serve humanity at large. The hopeless guild scientists are those grimly determined specialists and scholastics at whom Jean Paul[10] hinted when he remarked: "The culinary art will one day develop to the point when he who fries trout will be utterly unable to fry carp." It is these fryers of trout and carp who form the bulk of the scientific caste which begets countless lexicons, tables, observations, and everything requiring infinite patience and a soul that is dead. It is difficult to convert them into people. They are the extremes of a lop-sided scientific development. Not only are they destined to go to the grave one-sided as they are, but serve as cumbersome impediments in the path of every great improvement, not because they are against science or progress, but because they can recognize improvement only when it has run the gauntlet of conventional forms and procedure or of such procedures as they have worked out personally. They know only the one method, the anatomic method: to study an organism they must perform an autopsy. Who killed the doctrine of Leibnitz? Who imparted to it the cadaverous aspect of scholasticism, if not the learned prosecutors? Who was it that tried to turn Hegel's living, all-embracing teaching into a scholastic lifeless skeleton? None other than the professors of Berlin![11]

The Greeks who were well able to develop the personality to great heights of artistic and human perfection in the best of their time knew little about scientists in our sense of the word. Their thinkers, poets, historians were citizens above all, were people who belonged to life, to the civic council, to the square, to the bivouac. Hence the versatile development, perfectly balanced and harmonious of such great personalities in science and art as Socrates, Plato, Aeschylus, Xenophon and others. But our scientists? How many German professors in the great days of the Napoleonic drama continued coolly to deliver their scholastic frothings and altogether unperturbed searched the map for Auerstedt and Wagram with the same pedantic curiosity

* The word of course is used in its true sense and not in the sense in which it is employed by the mayor's wife in the play *Inspector-General* by N. Gogol.—*A.H.*

with which they would have traced the travels of Odysseus when reading Homer. It was Fichte alone, inspired and profound as ever, who proclaimed his native land in danger and for a time discarded his books.[12] As for Goethe.... Better read his correspondence of that time. He, of course, stood incomparably higher than the lop-sided school. To this day we regard his majestic and formidable shadow with deep astonishment, as though it were the Luxor obelisk, a mighty monument of another epoch, tremendous, but not our own.* The scientist** of our day has so far departed from his epoch, has so sadly withered and shrunken in all ways that almost superhuman efforts are required to fit him into a living chain as a living link. To a truly educated man nothing that is human can be alien: he is in sympathy with all that surrounds him. Not so the scientist: to him everything that is human is alien except the subject that he has chosen, however limited. When the educated man thinks, he does so on free impulse, by virtue of the nobleness of human nature, and his thoughts are free and open. When the scientist thinks, he does so out of duty, owing to his pledge and for that reason there is something fabricated about it and sanctioned by convention. The scientist is duty bound to be wise in his subject while the educated man is obliged to be intelligent in everything. He may or may not know Latin, while the scientist must needs know Latin very well. Now please do not smile at this: here too I see the traces of the fossilized caste. There are great poems, great works of world importance—immortal songs handed on from age to age, songs which every more or less educated man has read, known, and made part of himself. But the guild scientist has probably never read them unless they have a direct bearing on his subject. What is *Hamlet* to a chemist? What is *Don Juan* to a physicist? Another, still stranger phenomenon is to be found among the German

* It was said in some pamphlet or other published in Germany: "In 1832, in that memorable year when the last of the Mohicans of our great literature died."—*A.H.*

** We deem it necessary to emphasize again that this pertains to the *guild scientists* alone and that all that has been said is justified only in the antithetic sense; a *true* scientist will always be simply a human being and mankind will always respect him.—*A.H.*

scientists: some of them read everything, but understand only that which pertains to their specific subjects. Otherwise they are amazing for their prodigious store of knowledge associated with perfect obtuseness, sometimes reminiscent of childish simplicity: "They have listened to all the sounds but perceived no harmony," as the epigraph says. The degree of guild learnedness is determined by memory and zeal. The man who has memorized the greatest stock of superfluous data on any given subject, who is cold of heart and whose passions are gratified by books alone, who for twenty years has had the patience to con the particulars and the trivialities pertaining to any given subject, is considered to be the most learned. No doubt the gentleman who was brought to Prince Potyomkin because he had memorized the almanac was a scientist and more so than an ordinary scientist. He had in fact invented *his own* branch of science.

The scientists write only for the benefit of scientists. It is the educated who write for society. The greater part of those who wrote books, who exerted immense influence, who stirred and impelled the masses were not scientists at all: Byron, Walter Scott, Rousseau. Whenever a gigantic mind from the world of science did fight his way into life, he was at once denounced as a prodigal, as an apostate. Copernicus could not be forgiven for his genius; Columbus was ridiculed, Hegel was accused of ignorance.

The writing of the scientist is fearfully arduous. There is only one thing still more arduous, more laborious—to read their *doctes écrits.** But then no one cares to undertake this labour. Their folios are purchased by the scientific societies, the academies and libraries. The curious from time to time refer to them, but no one reads them from cover to cover. A conference of the scientists of an academy would much resemble a gathering of our old-Russian reed-players of whom each knows and plays but one tune all his life. All that they would lack would be the band leader and *ensemble* (while science is an *ensemble*). Such a conference would resemble the reed-players arguing

* Speaking of the gigantic task of reading some German book of learning, Hegel added that it had probably been easier to write it.—*A.H.*

among themselves about the superiority of their respective tunes and tones and striving to prove their points by piping full blast. It would never occur to them that music will ensue only when the separate sounds are absorbed by the swelling harmony of the whole.

There is a noteworthy difference between the scientists and the dilettantes. The latter are fond of science, but decline to occupy themselves with it. They float about in the blue haze hovering over science, a haze which turns out to be as empty as the azure depths of earthly atmosphere. To the scientists science is a corvée by which they are duty bound to till a prescribed furrow; and, preoccupied as they are with the irregularities in the terrain, they have no time to view the entire field. The dilettantes are accustomed to look at things through a telescope, and so they only see objects as far removed as the moon, but they can see nothing that is near or earthly. The scientists, on the other hand, scrutinize things through a microscope and for the same reason cannot see anything sizable. To be noticed by them, a thing must be invisible to the naked eye. They are incapable of discerning a clear stream, but only a minute drop filled with tiny monstrosities. The dilettantes admire science as we admire Saturn—at a respectable distance and satisfied with the knowledge that it shines and has a ring. The scientists, on the other hand, have approached the walls of science so closely that they can see neither the walls nor anything but the bricks against which their noses are pressed. The dilettantes are tourists in the realms of science and like all tourists they know the country through which they travel only from casual remarks, all sorts of nonsense, newspaper slander, fashionable gossip, court intrigues. The scientists are like factory workmen and, like most workmen, have no mental latitude. This does not prevent them from being past masters of their crafts, outside of which they are fit for nothing. Every dilettante is occupied with all that is *scibile* and, over and above it, with that which is unknowable, i.e., mysticism, magnetism, physiognomy, homeopathy, hydropathy, etc. The scientist, on the contrary, consecrates himself to one chapter, to one separate branch of some special science beyond which he knows nothing and refuses to know anything. Such preoccupation is sometimes valuable in

that it furnishes facts for genuine science. Needless to say the dilettantes bring benefit to no one.

There are many who believe that the self-sacrifice displayed by the scientist in withdrawing from the world, in secluding himself in his study, in devotion to dull and monotonous work for the sake of science deserves the gratitude of society. But it seems to me that labour is its own reward. Without going into this any further, however, I should like to tell an old anecdote:

There was once a good Frenchman who made a wax model of a block of houses in Paris in the finest detail. Finished with this work of many years he presented it to the Convention of the Republic, the One and Indivisible. As is known, the Convention was of a severe and eccentric temper. At first it said nothing; it had enough troubles apart from such trifles as wax models: for example, it had to form several armies, to feed the starving people of Paris, to defend itself against the coalition, etc. But finally the turn of the wax model arrived and the Convention reached a decision: "Citizen so-and-so, whose work we cannot but admit to be finished and perfect, is to be imprisoned for six months for having occupied himself with a useless thing when his country was in danger." The Convention was right in a sense, but the trouble was that it regarded everything from one point of view, an unpleasant point of view at that. It never occurred to them that a man *capable* of devoting years, and such years, to a wax model *could not* be put to any other use. It seems to me that such a man should neither be rewarded nor punished. This applies perfectly to the scientific specialists: they deserve neither scolding nor praise, their pursuits are no worse and certainly no better than the pursuits of the ordinary run of man. It is a curious injustice that the scientist is ranked higher than the ordinary citizen and is relieved of all public burdens just because he is a scientist. For this alone he is more than glad for the comfort of his study and dressing-gown and happy to leave all worries to others. There is no valid reason to place a man in a privileged position just because he has a mania for stones, or medals, or sea shells, or the Greek language. In point of fact, the scientists pampered by society have sunk into an antediluvian state. Nowadays everyone knows that there is no useful occupation with which a

scientist may be trusted. He is an eternal adolescent among grown-ups. It is only in his laboratory or museum that he is not ridiculous. He has lost even the most elementary marks which distinguish man from the animal—sociability. He is shy and embarrassed in the presence of people. He has lost the habit of natural language. He trembles in the face of danger. He does not know how to dress. There is something wild and pathetic about him. The scientist is a perverse Hottentot just as Khlestakov* was a perverse general. Such is the stigma with which Nemesis marks the man who attempts to stand above society undeservedly. The scientists demand that we admit their superiority, that mankind be grateful to them; they imagine themselves to stand in its vanguard. That will never be. Scientists are bureaucrats in the service of an idea. They are the bureaucracy of science, its junior clerks, senior clerks and superintendents. Just as officials do not belong to the aristocracy, so the scientists cannot regard themselves as belonging to the foremost phalanx of mankind, to the first to be illuminated by the dawning light and the first to be struck down by the tempest. A scientist, of course, may be found in this phalanx just as readily as a soldier, an artist, a woman, or a merchant, but such a man is selected not by virtue of his degree, but because he carries the divine spark. Such a man is not a member of the scientific class, but simply belongs to that set of educated people who have grown equal to a living comprehension of mankind and the contemporary age. This set, varying in its numbers in accordance with the degree of their respective country's enlightenment, is a mighty, living medium which absorbs the life-giving fluids through different fibres and transforms them into the beautiful corolla. Through it, the present passing into the future is unfolded in all its beauty and fragrance in order that the present might be enjoyed. To avoid misunderstanding—this aristocracy is not exclusive. Like Thebes it has a hundred broad gates ever open, ever welcome.

Anyone may enter here, but a scientist with more difficulty than anyone. The thing that obstructs him is his diploma, an

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* A character from N. Gogol's play, *Inspector-General.* He was mistaken for a high official in a small town.—*Tr.*

extraordinary obstacle to development. The diploma is an attestation to the effect that a thing is finished, *consommatum est.* Its possessor is confident that he has mastered science and knows it well. In his *Levana* Jean Paul says: "When a child tells a lie, tell him that he has done wrong, that he *has told a lie,* but do not tell him that he is a *liar,* for he may at last come to believe that he is." This observation is pertinent. Having received a diploma, its possessor imagines that he really knows his subject, whereas a diploma is only a civic document. Its owner, however, feels himself set aside from mankind and regards the diplomaless as laymen. Like Jewish circumcision the diploma divides mankind into two species. A young man may regard a diploma as a document freeing him from school, as a ticket to life; and in that event it is neither harmful nor harmless. Or, on the other hand, he may set himself aside from people in proud consciousness and regards his diploma as a licence to citizenship in the republic *litterarum* and hastens to make his appearance on its scholastic forum. The republic of the savants is the worst republic there has ever been, including the republic of Paraguay under the *learned* Dr. Francia. The young proselyte encounters ways and customs which have become fossilized and covered with the barnacles of centuries. He is hustled into arguments endlessly protracted and utterly useless. The poor fellow exhausts his strength, is sucked into the artificial life of the caste, gradually comes to forget all living interests and departs from the contemporary world and the people. He comes to regard scholasticism as the acme of achievement and learns to speak and write in the florid and ponderous language of the caste. He comes to regard only those events worthy of notice which happened no sooner than eight hundred years ago, things that were denied in Latin, but were admitted in Greek. Yet this is not all. This is only the honeymoon. Very soon a one-sided exclusivism takes possession of his mind (something like the *idée fixe* in a madman). He abandons himself to his speciality and to the narrow limits of handicraft. For him science loses its grandeur: no master is a hero to his servant. And thus the guild scientist is fully hatched!

But how can science exist without specialized effort? Is not the encyclopaedic superficiality, snatching at everything, pre-

cisely the shortcoming of the dilettantes? No, science cannot exist without specialized branches. But here is the crux of the matter. Science is a living organism through which the truth is developed. It has but one true method, namely, the process of its organic plastic growth. The form, the system is presupposed in the very essence of the conception of the truth and develops as conditions permit and as there is a possibility for its realization. The complete system is a differentiation and development of the *soul* of science in order that the soul may become a body and the body a soul. Their unity is realized in the method. No amount of information will constitute science unless it has grown, like living flesh, around a vital centre, i.e., until it arrives at an understanding of itself as a living body. No brilliant universality, on the other hand, constitutes complete scientific knowledge if, confined within the icy region of abstractions, it has not the power to incarnate itself, to evolve from the genius into the species, from the universal into the *personal*, unless the need for individualization, for the transition into the world of events and action is contained in its inner urge which it cannot *overcome*. All things in life are true and alive only as a complete entity, as the co-existent external and internal, the universal and the particular. Life binds these opposites together. Life is an eternal process of their transition into each other. One-sided scientific understanding severs the unseparables, i.e., kills what is living. Both dilettantism and formalism keep within abstract universality and, therefore, neither the one nor the other commands real knowledge, but only phantoms which easily dissolve in the void surrounding them. To lighten their burden they separate life from the living and the burden has become light indeed, because such an abstraction is a mere *nothing*. And this precisely is the favourite medium of the dilettantes of all degrees. They regard it as a boundless ocean and are delighted to have such a scope for their dreams and fancies.

But if there is something evidently insane in the idea that life can be separated from the living organism and yet be preserved, the error of specialism is of course no better. It does not want to know the universal; it never rises to this level, it mistakes the fraction and the particularity for the origin of knowl-

edge, attributing to the former self-sufficient existence. Specialism may arrive at the point of compiling a catalogue or at all sorts of subsumptions, but it will never penetrate to their inner essence, to their conception, to the truth, if only because of the fact that to achieve this all the particularities must be dissolved in the truth. Their method is very much like the identification of man's inner properties by his galoshes and buttons. The specialist's whole attention is concentrated on the particulars and with every forward step he grows more and more involved in them, and they in turn become still more fragmentary and trivial. The division becomes infinite. The dark chaos of accidentals, ever on the look-out for him, draws him into the mire of that extreme of being to which no light ever penetrates: and such is the nature of his boundless ocean, the counterpart of the dilettante's high seas. The universal, the thought process, the idea, that first principle which gives origin to all the particulars, that Ariadne's clew of thread is lost to the specialists amid the particulars. They sense a terrible danger: facts, phenomena, modifications and accidents press upon them from all sides: they experience the inborn dread of losing their bearings in a multiplicity of all sorts of things without any cementing principle. They are so conscientious that they cannot console themselves with commonplaces like the dilettantes. And losing sight of the sole great purpose of science they cling desperately to *Orientierung*. Anything for orientation, anything to keep from being buried alive under the sand-storm of facts stinging from all sides! This craving for a beacon prompts them to evolve all sorts of artificial systems and theories, artificial classifications and concepts, of which *it is known beforehand* that they are not true. These theories of theirs are difficult to study because they are quite unnatural and they in themselves constitute the unscaleable rampart behind which the adroit scientists are ensconced. Those theories of theirs are like blinkers which must be removed before science may be descried. But this impediment itself is the pride and glory of the scientist. Of late there has not been a single doctor, physicist or chemist but would be ready to produce his own theory: Broussais and Gay-Lussac, Thenard, Raspail and *tutti quanti*. But the more conscientious the scientist, the less probable is it that he can rest

content with theories such as these. No sooner has he accepted *some* theory for the purpose of cementing a group of facts than a fact turns up which cannot be nailed down anywhere. The truant requires a new pigeon-hole, but the new hypothesis contradicts its predecessor—and so on and so forth. The scientist ought to be aware of all the theories concerning *his special field*, yet never forget that they are nonsense (which is expressly stated in all French textbooks on physics and chemistry). Devoting his time as he does to the study of the errors of the past he cannot find the leisure to treat his subject in non-professional capacity, still less so to rise into the sphere of genuine science enveloping all the particular subjects as its branches. But then the scientists do not believe in this kind of science. They regard the thinkers with an ironic smile, just as Napoleon regarded the ideologists. They are ostensibly people of practical experience and observation and yet this practical bent, this materialism, does not prevent them from being for the most part idealists, for what else are those artificial methods, systems, subjective theories, but the extremes of idealism? No matter how seriously a man regards himself to be a student of facts alone, the inner urge of his mind impells him into the sphere of thought, of the idea, of the universal. Far from leading them to the correct path of elevation, their recalcitrance has caused the specialists to wander about in a quandary of incoherent facts and theoretical, disjointed dreams. Elevating themselves to the universal, they are yet reluctant to part with a single particularity, but that lofty sphere cannot accept what may be devoured by the moths: it can hold and illuminate only the eternal, the generic, and the truly necessary. The world unquestionably is the basis of science, and a science which does not rest on nature and facts is precisely the vague science of the dilettantes. But on the other hand, facts *in crudo*, taken in all accident of existence, are untenable against the light of reason. In science nature is recreated free of the fortuitous and the external influences with which it is hemmed in by existence; it is cleansed in the purity of logical necessity. By overcoming the fortuitous, science reconciles being with the idea, reinstates the natural in all its purity, detects the shortcomings of existence (*des Daseins*) and rectifies it as one who hath power. Nature,

one may say, has been longing for liberation from the fetters of fortuitous being and the mind has achieved this feat in science. Abstract metaphysicians should descend from their clouds into physics (in the broadest sense of the word), while the specialists crawling on the face of the earth should in their turn elevate themselves to it. In such a science there are neither theoretical dreams nor factual accidents, but only the mind which contemplates itself and nature.

What chiefly makes the science of the *scientists* so involved and difficult to understand is the metaphysical ravings and forests of special branches, the study of which requires many lifetimes and whose scholastic aspect discourages many. But the one and the other are absent in genuine science where only a perfectly operating organism remains, intelligently constituted and therefore *simple to understand*. Before our very eyes science is attaining to a true conception of itself. If it were not so it would never occur to us to mention this subject. As now and always, of course, the respective branches of science will have their technical sides which will be duly handled by the specialists. But this is not what matters. Science, in the best sense of the word, shall come to be accessible to the people and when it does, it shall claim a voice in all practical matters of life. There is no thought which could not be expressed simply and clearly, especially in its dialectical development. Boileau is right when he says:

Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement,
Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.

We cannot help smiling when anticipating the plight of the scientists who at last grasp the essence of modern science. Its true conclusions are so simple and clear that they will be scandalized. "How is that?" they will exclaim, "is it possible that we have laboured and suffered all our lives, whereas all that was needed was to 'Open Sesame'?" For the time, they are still capable of respecting science to some extent, because it still requires some mental strain to understand how *simple* it really is and to acquire some skill in the matter of recognizing the plain truth concealed under the folds of the scholastic vestments. They indeed do not divine its simplicity.

But if genuine science is really so simple then why did its greatest representatives, for instance Hegel, use so difficult a language? In spite of the power and grandeur of his genius Hegel was but a human being. He dreaded to express himself straightforwardly in an epoch of twisted language, for he dreaded to follow up the extreme consequences of his fundamental principles. He lacked the heroism of consistency, the self-sacrifice of accepting the full truth regardless of the cost. The greatest men, in fact, shrank from the inferences drawn from their fundamental principles. Some of them were frightened and retracing their steps sought to obscure their meaning instead of seeking clarity. Hegel realized that much of the conventional should have been sacrificed: he was too merciful to deal mortal blows. On the other hand, he could not but give expression to that which he was destined to express. Drawing an inference, Hegel often dreaded to admit its full consequences and sought not the *simple*, natural conclusion following of itself, but strove to adjust it to the circumstances. And thus the logical development of his idea became more involved and the meaning more obscure. To this let us add his bad habit of using the language of the school, a habit he involuntarily acquired in his life-long conversation with the German scientists. But here, too, his genius broke to the surface in all its might. In the midst of his tortuous sentences there is suddenly a dazzling word which sheds its radiance far around, a word whose thunder reverberates in the soul and inspires awe. No, we cannot reproach this great thinker. A great man may rise above his age, but not depart from it entirely. And if the younger generations have learned to speak more simply, have dared to lift the last of the veils from Isis, it is precisely owing to the fact that Hegel's outlook already existed and had been assimilated. The man of today stands on the peak that commands a grand view, but to him who paved the way the panorama unfolded gradually. Hegel, the first to arrive at the heights, was overwhelmed by the grandeur of the scene and could not help searching for his familiar foot-hill no longer visible from the peak. And he was frightened: it had been too closely associated with all his hardships, memories and the events within his experience; he would have wished to preserve it. The younger generation soaring on

the mighty wings of the great thinker feels neither respect nor reverence for that lowly hill, to them it is a *thing of the past.*

When youth matures and is no longer frightened by the dizzy heights, when it has viewed its surroundings and come to feel at home within them, when it is no longer astonished by the infinite vistas of its own freedom, in short, when it learns to identify itself with those heights, then its truth and its science shall come to be expressed plainly and comprehensibly to all. *And this will come to pass.*

November 1842

IV

BUDDHISM IN SCIENCE

> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.
>
> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

As WE HAVE MENTIONED, science has proclaimed the general reconciliation of thought and produced a split among those desirous of this reconciliation: the one party rejected this reconciliation without discussion, while the other accepted it literally and superficially. There were still others who comprehended science correctly, but these constitute the Macedonian phalanx of science which is not the subject of the present article. Then we have attempted to survey the *irreconcilables* and found that for the most part it was their impaired and imperfect vision which prevented them from seeing what was happening and understanding what was being said. Because of their imperfect sight the fault was attributed to the contemplated object. Incidentally, the disease of the eye does not always imply weakness of sight. There are times when unusual keenness of sight is associated with it, a keenness deviating from its normal function.

Now let us turn to the *reconciled.* These include the unreliables who downed their weapons at the first volley and accepted

all the terms of truce with exasperating self-denial and suspicious obedience. Formerly we called them the Mohammedans of science, but shall do so no longer: this is reminiscent of the vivid and colourful pictures of the Caliphate and Alhambra. Instead, we shall more justly call them the Buddhists of science.* We shall try to express our opinion of them in a clear, unpretentious way and in simple language.

Science has not only proclaimed the great reconciliation, but has kept its word as well. It has really achieved the reconciliation *in its sphere*. It has proved to be that eternal mediator, which through consciousness and thought transcends and reconciles the opposites by displaying their unity, which reconciles them in itself and between themselves by coming to be conscious of itself as the truth of the conflicting principles. It would be mad to demand that science should achieve anything outside its own sphere. The sphere of science is the general, thought, reason *as the self-cognizing spirit*. In this sphere it has achieved the main part of its destiny, while the rest will take care of itself. It has understood, cognized and evolved the truth of reason *as underlying reality*: it has liberated the thought of the world from the phenomenon of the world, all things that exist, from the fortuitous. It has dissolved everything solid and immobile, made transparent everything that is obscure, brought light into darkness; it has revealed the eternal in the transient, the infinite in the finite and recognized their necessary existence. Finally, it has destroyed the Chinese wall separating the absolute, the true, from man and has hoisted the banner of the autonomy of reason over the ruins. Proceeding from the simple phenomenon of sensuous authenticity and personal reflections, it develops in him the generic idea, the universal reason disengaged from personality. At the outset it demands the sacrifice of personality, Isaac's offering of the heart; this is its *conditio sine qua non* and however terrible it may seem it is right: it has one sphere of thought, only one sphere of the universal. Reason

* The Buddhists accept existence for veritable evil and all that exists as ephemeral. To them, supreme existence is the void of infinity. Advancing from stage to stage they achieve the ultimate beatitude of non-existence in which they find complete freedom (Klaproth).[13] What a striking similarity!—*A.H.*

does not recognize *this* personality, it recognizes only the necessity of personalities in general. In supreme justice it accepts no persons. Those who are initiated in science must lay aside their personality, must conceive of it as something that is not true, but accidental and enter the temple of science by discarding it together with all personal convictions. This ordeal is too difficult for some and too easy for others. We have had occasion to observe that science is inaccessible to the dilettantes because their personalities stand between them and science. The dilettantes clutch at their personalities and forbear to approach the precipitous stream for fear that the rapid current will carry them away and drown them. And even when they do approach, their instinct of self-preservation prevents them from seeing anything. To such as these science will not reveal itself just because they for their part will not reveal themselves to science. Science demands that man abandon himself unhesitatingly and without reservations and be rewarded by the heavy cross of *sober knowledge*. The man incapable of surrendering his heart to anything whatever is a pitiful creature. Not only does science close the gates of its temple to him, but he can be neither deeply religious, nor a genuine artist, nor a virtuous citizen. He is neither to know the deep sympathy of friendship nor the passionate flash of love reciprocated. Love and friendship indeed are reciprocating echoes and give no more than they take. In contrast to these misers and egotists of the moral world there are the profligates and the spendthrifts who set at nought both themselves and their fortunes. They recklessly hurl themselves upon self-denial in the universal and at the first command discard both their personality and their convictions as so much soiled linen. The bride whom they are wooing, however, is whimsical. She does not desire the hearts of those who are too ready to give them up and indeed are too glad to get rid of them; and she is right. What is a personality worth if it may so easily be discarded? But then what is the solution? Should one discard the personality only to cling to it? The sleight of hand of a new cabbala?

The personality perishes in science. But besides its affinity with the sphere of the universal, has not the personality another aspect, an aspect that is personal? If so, it cannot be absorbed

by science precisely because the latter eliminates the personal by generalizing it. The elimination of the personality in science is the process of transition from the spontaneously natural personality into the conscious, freely cognizing personality; and thus the personality is liquidated only to be reborn. Does not the parabola vanish in its equation, and the individual figure in the formula? Algebra is the logic of mathematics. Its algorithm represents general laws, their results and operations in their eternal, generic, impersonal forms. The parabola, however, did not perish in its formula, but lies *dormant* there, like the figure in a formula. To achieve an actual effect, the symbol must be replaced by a figure and it is thus that the formula comes to life and is borne into the world of realities from which it originally emerged and is now consummated in a practical effect without, however, annihilating itself. This operation has brought about its practical realization and the formula reigns supreme as ever in the sphere of the universal. Examples from formal science always facilitate comprehension, if only we bear in mind that speculative science is *not merely* formal but that its formula at the same time exhausts its very content.

And so the personality which resolves itself in science does not vanish irrevocably. It has to undergo this elimination in order to realize that its destruction is impossible. To become a chalice of the truth the personality must renounce itself; it must forget itself to avoid becoming an impediment, to accept the truth with all its consequences, among which it will discover its inalienable right to autonomous existence. To perish in natural spontaneity means to rise again in the spirit and not perish in the infinite nothingness as the Buddhists do. Such a victory is rendered possible and real only through struggle. The growth of the spirit is as difficult a process as the growth of the body. Only that becomes our very own which has been acquired by labour and suffering; that which comes by the windfall is of little value to us. The gambler flings his gold away by the handful. What would have been the point of testing Abraham if the sacrifice of Isaac had meant nothing to him?

A robust and sound personality does not surrender itself to science without a struggle. On the contrary, it refuses to yield

an iota. It abhors the very demand to sacrifice itself, but an irresistible power impels it towards the truth. With every blow man realizes that he is pitted against an invincible force: in agony he is compelled to relinquish bit by bit everything that is his very own, his heart and soul. A veritable Odysseus clutching at the sharp rocks to save himself from the seething waves coloured with his blood. But the victor gives no quarter and the vanquished desires none. In reality, however, the victor will claim nothing: it has no need for what is human. It was man who needed to give and not science which needed to take. The formalists whoever dwell in the world of abstractions set no store upon the surrender of their personalities and, therefore, gain nothing from such surrender. They forget both life and action. Their lyricism and passions are readily gratified with abstract comprehension and, therefore, it costs them neither labour nor suffering to sacrifice their personal values. To offer up Isaac is nothing to them. The formalists *study* science as something external. They are to a certain extent able to assimilate its principles and expressions and believe that they have gained possession of its life-giving spirit. One has to live through science in order to digest not the mere form of it, but the essence itself. The man who has broken his leg knows what the pain is like better than any physician who has not. To suffer through the phenomenology of the spirit,[14] to shed the heart's blood and weep scorching tears, to waste away from scepticism, to pity and to love and to yield everything to the truth—such is the poem of progress of science. Science becomes a vampire, a fiend which cannot be exorcised, for it has been evoked from the breast of man itself and can vanish into no other grave. At this juncture one has to set aside all pleasant thoughts of beguiling the time with philosophical interlocution for the edification of the mind and the ornamentation of the memory. The crucial questions are relentless and always confront the victim no matter how he squirms. They are written in flame like the fiery words of Daniel. Their attraction is irresistible, a precipice drawing everything into itself for the mysterious danger of its depths. It is the snake who holds the bank; the game which began sedately enough, with logical commonplaces, quickly gains momentum and grows desperate; the cards fly: cherished

dreams, tender aspirations, Olympus and Hades, hopes for the future, confidence in the present, blessings on the past, all these are casually turned up one after the other by science which unsmilingly, without irony or sympathy, coldly reiterates the one word: "trumped!" What else can one stake? Everything has been lost. Only one thing remains: one's self. It too is now flung into the game and from that moment one's luck is reversed. Woe be to him who has failed to stake his all and left the game a loser. He will either collapse under the burden of agonizing doubt or be consumed by the thirst for faith; or he will mistake his defeat for victory and smugly reconcile himself to his injuries. The former leads to moral suicide, the second to soulless atheism. The personality that was firm enough to stake itself in the game is completely abandoned to science, which, however, cannot possibly absorb such a personality. Nor can the latter of its own accord disintegrate in the universal, for that it is far too great: he that loseth his life *shall find it.*

He who has suffered all this in the quest for science, is rewarded not with the carcass of the truth, but with the living organism of the truth itself; he is at home in it and is no longer to be surprised either by his freedom or its light. This reconciliation, however, is not sufficient for him, nor is the bliss of serene meditation and contemplation. He desires the full richness of ecstasy and suffering; he desires *to act*, for action alone can satisfy man to the full. Action is the personality itself. When Dante entered the ethereal realm untroubled by grief and sighs, when he saw the incorporeal dwellers of Paradise he grew ashamed of the shadow cast by his own body. Those bright and bodiless beings were no companions for him of gross clay and so he returned to the vale of tears leaning on the staff of a homeless exile. But now he will no longer go astray, nor drop midway from fatigue. He has survived his resurrection and suffered its pangs. He has wandered through life and the torments of hell. He was deafened by the cries and groans of agony. With vacant suffering eyes he prayed for even the slightest relief, but instead heard only fresh shrieks, *e nuovi tormenti, e nuovi tormentati.* Penetrating to Lucifer himself, he rose through purgatory into the sphere of ever-blissful and incorporeal life. He has learned that there truly is a world in which

man is happy divorced from earth—and has returned to life to bear its cross.

The Buddhists of science who have risen to the sphere of the universal by one way or another never depart from it. There is nothing that could tempt them into the world of realities. Who, indeed, could draw them away from the spacious temple with its honourable but idle existence to the throes and passions of our life where man must work hard and sometimes die. The specific gravity of certain bodies causes them to sink in water, but such things as straws and shavings will float importantly on the surface. The formalists have found reconciliation in science, but of a false sort. In fact they have found a more complete reconciliation than science could ever afford. But they have failed to understand *how* reconciliation is achieved. They came to science with feeble sight and feeble desire and are blinded by the light and abundance of gratification. They were fond of science as groundlessly as the dilettantes were not. They imagined that *to know* reconciliation was sufficient and that to put it into effect was superfluous. Having withdrawn from the world which they regarded negatively they were loath to return to it. They thought that to be cured it is quite sufficient only to know that quinine may serve as a cure for fever. It never occurred to them that science is but a stage of life, that life surges towards it naturally and spontaneously and flows from it again consciously free. They have failed to understand that science is a heart to which the dark venous blood flows not to stagnate there, but to combine with the fiery element of air and to diffuse through the body in crimson arterial streams. The formalists thought that they had found a snug haven, but as a matter of fact they ought to have cast off at once. They stood with folded arms whereas they should have rolled up their sleeves. According to them knowledge in itself was payment in full for life with which they consequently could dispense: they conceived that science was an object in itself and imagined that it was the only object that man should strive for.

The reconciliation that science offers is actually the resumption of a struggle which arrives at reconciliation in practical spheres. This reconciliation occurs in the mind, but "man is not

merely a thinking, but also an acting being."* This reconciliation is universal and negative and therefore it rejects the personality. The positive reconciliation may be achieved only in free, intelligent and conscious action. In those spheres still necessitating the presence of the personality as an active witness, the latter is preserved; as in religion which not only uplifts the personality, but also condescends to it and preserves it; in religion faith is dead without works and love is placed above all. Abstract thought is a constant reiteration of the death sentences meted out to all things transient. It is the decapitation of all that is unjust and decrepit in the name of the immortal and eternal. And it is for this that science at every moment denies that imaginary invincibility of the existing. Now the action of conscious love is creative. Love is universal forgiveness, the merciful goodness which gathers to its bosom all that is most transient for the sake of the mark of the eternal imprinted upon it. Pure abstractions, on the other hand, cannot exist. The opposite steals into the house of its enemy and grows within it; the denial of science is fraught with something positive. This latent positiveness is set free by love and is diffused on all sides like calorific seeking constantly to find the conditions for its realization, an egress from the sphere of universal negation into that of free action. When science has reached its apex it quite naturally transcends itself. In science thought and being are reconciled, but the conditions of the world are the doing of thought and the full reconciliation lies in the doing. "Doing is a live unity of theory and practice," said the greatest thinker of the ancient world more than two thousand years ago.** In action, the heart and mind are absorbed by realization. In the phenomenal world they have fulfilled that which existed in potentiality. Are history and the rising structure of the world not actions in themselves? The action of a mind alone, on the other hand, is thought annihilating personality. In it man is infinite, but loses his personality. In thought he is immortal, but *he is not he*. Now the action of a discreet heart is a particular deed that

* These are the words of Goethe. In his *Propädeutik* (Vol. XVIII, § 63) Hegel says: "The word is not yet the *deed* which is *superior to speech*." And the Germans apparently understood this.—*A.H.*

** Aristotle—*A.H.*

is not able to evolve into the universal. In his heart man is at home but transient. It is only in the intelligent, morally free and vehemently energetic action that man arrives at the actuality of his personality and immortalizes himself in the phenomenal world. In such action man is eternal in the transient, infinite in the finite, represents both his genus and himself,* and is a live and conscious organ of his epoch.

The truth just uttered is far from being realized. The greatest and mightiest representatives of contemporary mankind have conceived of thought and action in different and one-sided ways. Germany, sedate, deep-feeling and contemplative has defined man as thought; she has recognized science as an aim and conceived of moral freedom only as an inner element. She has never fully developed her sense of practical activity. By generalizing every issue she escaped from life into abstractions and finished with a one-sided solution. True to the instinct of the Latin people, Savonarola became the head of a political party.** But the German reformers who destroyed Catholicism in half of Germany did not abandon theology and scholastic controversy. Germany has repeated the new phases of French history in science and partly in art. The Germanic world contains another, opposite trend, but also abstract and one-sided.

England on the other hand is supremely endowed with a sense for the significance of life and activity, but each of her actions is a particular one. With the British the all-human promptly turns into the national: the universal issue is reduced to a local one. Separated from mankind by the seas and proud of her insularity, England will not disclose her heart to the continent. The Britisher will never relinquish his personality. He is too aware of his merits, of that inviolable grandeur, that halo of respect with which he has surrounded the idea of personality.

* These expressions will be ridiculed by our jesters, but let us not be timid. Let the jesters have their fun. For this they are jesters. To them fun is a compensation for obtuseness and from sheer human kindness we should leave them their cheap revenge.—*A.H.*

** "The character of the Latin race is more keen than that of the Germans. They set themselves definite aims and bring them about with extraordinary firmness, deliberation and skill." *Philosophie der Geschichte,*[18] Vol. IX, p. 422.—*A.H.*

The dormant people of Italy and the freshly awakened Spaniards lay no claims to prerogatives in question.

And so only two nations remain to whom we must involuntarily turn. On the one hand France, most fortunately situated in the European world gathered about her, verges on Latin and touches upon all varieties of Germanism from Britain and Belgium down to the countries of the Rhine. A Latin-Germanic country herself she seems to be called upon to reconcile the abstract and practical bent of the Mediterranean nations with the abstract and speculative turn of those across the Rhine, the poetic indolence of sunlit Italy with the industrial zeal of the fog-bound island. France and Germany hitherto did not understand each other completely. Different things troubled and attracted them and different words were used for the same things. Quite recently, however, they have grown to know each other: it was Napoleon who introduced them to one another. After they had exchanged visits, and the passions had subsided together with the smoke of battle, they learned to bow to each other with respect and recognition, but real unity is lacking as yet. The science of Germany refuses to cross the Rhine. Without waiting for the full evolution of dialectics, the quick-witted French are wont to snatch an idea from somewhere in their middle and hasten to put it to use. The future has yet to show to what degree France can serve as a medium for the reconciliation of life and science.

One should not, however, imagine that the contrast between France and Germany is really so sharp. More often than not, it is quite superficial. In her own way, France has arrived at conclusions very close to those of the Germans, but she is not able to translate them into the language of the universal, just as Germany cannot render logic in the language of life. German science, moreover, has ever drawn upon the French. The influence of the Encyclopaedists, let alone of Descartes, was immense. Germany, in fact, could never have reached maturity without the great mass of facts furnished by France in all branches of science. On the other hand we of the North might be called upon to contribute our mite to the treasure-house of human reason. Perhaps we, who have scarcely lived in the past, will come to be the representatives of actual unity of science and life, of

word and deed. In history the late-comer receives not the leavings, but the dessert. There is something in our character which combines the best sides of the French with the best sides of the Germans. We are by far more fit for scientific thought than the French and we are decidedly averse to the philistine life of the Germans. There is something *gentleman-like* about us which the Germans lack. Upon our brow there is the imprint of grave thought which somehow evades the countenance of the French.

But let us not indulge in conjectures about the future and return to the subject at hand. The German philosophers somehow foresaw that it is action and not science which is the aim of man. More often than not it was a prophetic inconsistency of genius that forced its way into the austere and dispassionate logical structures. Even Hegel's idea of action was more hinted at than evolved. The evolution of this idea was the work not of his epoch, but of the epoch which he launched. Revealing the sphere of the spirit Hegel spoke of science and art and neglected the practical activities attending all historical events. The series of German thinkers of whom Hegel was the last is not to be bracketed with the real formalists. The former had pursued no other aims than the acquisition of knowledge, but that was what the age demanded then. Laboriously they paved the way of science for mankind and their reward was the reconciliation in science alone. Owing to their place in history, therefore, they were justified in resting content with the universal. They were called upon to testify before the world that self-cognition was an accomplished fact and to show the way that leads to it: and precisely herein lay *their action*.

Nowadays the situation is different. To us, life in the abstract, in the universal sphere is altogether untimely, a mere personal whim. Every new trend of thought has claims to predominance and absolute importance. Belief in the new trend is the chief prerequisite of success. But further evolution in time necessarily transcends the would-be absolute sphere, and this necessity of transition may be more justly said to be absolute. Hegel very profoundly observed: "It is the task of philosophy to understand *what is*, for *what is*, *is* the mind. Just as every personality is the *product of its time*, so too philosophy is the *epoch grasped in thought*. It is absurd to suppose that any philosophy could

transcend its contemporary world."* The task of the world sprung from the Reformation was to comprehend, but comprehension is not the will's last word. The philosophers have overlooked positive activity and no harm was done by that. The practical sphere had a voice of its own and raised it when the time came; and that time came quickly enough: mankind is rushing ahead like a steam engine. The centuries are pressed into years. Barely ten years have passed since the death of Goethe and Hegel, these greatest men of art and science, when Schelling, carried away by the new trend, set himself aims altogether different from those with which he set forth in science at the beginning of the century. The apostasy of Schelling, at any rate, is an event fraught with meaning. There is more of poetic contemplation in Schelling than dialectics. And like *Vates,* he was frightened by the ocean of the universal ready to swallow the whole of spiritual activity. Retracing his steps because he was unable to cope with the consequences of his own principles, he departed from contemporary life and thereby indicated its sore spot. New currents of life and science are felt in the German atmosphere. This is obvious in journalism, fiction and works of art. The personality, so neglected by science, demanded new rights, a new life replete with passion and content with nothing less than free, creative work. After the negation in the sphere of thought the personality was anxious for negation in other spheres: its need grew plain. It was a demand warranted by science. And far from obstructing it, science gave its blessing to the intensified life of the personality, to the life of free action in the name of absolute impersonality.

Yes, indeed, science is the kingdom of impersonality, a kingdom freed of passions, becalmed in profoundest self-cognition, illuminated by the all-pervading light of reason. It is the kingdom of the idea, not lifeless and still like death, but placid in its very motion like the ocean spaces. Science is the realm of the Olympic deities and not of people, of the *mothers*[16] to whom Faust ascended. In science the truth is incarnated not in a material body, but in a logical organism and is alive through the architectonics of dialectical development and not through the

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* *Philosophie des Rechts,* Vorrede. Author's italics.—*A.H.*

epic of the transient being. In science the law is the thought wrested and preserved from the tempest of existence, from external and accidental disturbances. In it the harmony of the spheres is heard, every sound of which contains eternity because it contains the necessity, because the accidental sigh of the transient does not reach so high. We concur with the formalists in that science is *superior to* life, but this very superiority testifies to its one-sidedness. What is concretely true cannot be either beneath or above life; it must lie in the nodal centre, like the heart in an organism. And just because science is above life, its sphere is abstract and its *completeness is incomplete.* The living entity consists not of the universal which has cancelled the particular, but of both the universal and the particular which attract and repulse each other. It is not to be found in any one logical stage, for all stages belong to it. However self-sufficient and exhaustive some definitions may seem, they melt away in the fire of life and, having lost their one-sidedness, flow into the broad all-embracing stream.

The reason of the real has elucidated itself in science and so settled accounts with the past and the present. As to the future, it is to be realized not in the sphere of the universal alone. This sphere, indeed, contains no future as such, because the future is a foregone conclusion, a logical inference, and its realization would be too poor and too abstract. Thought must be clothed with flesh to descend into the bustle of life, to reveal itself in all the beauty and exuberance of the transient being without which there can be no living, passionate and absorbing action.

Warum bin ich vergänglich, o Zeus? so fragte die Schönheit,
Macht' ich doch, sagte der Gott, nur das Vergängliche schön.

Goethe

Not only has science realized its autonomy, but also that it is itself the law of the world. Translating the world into terms of thought, it has renounced the world as the real, it has sublimated it by its negation which nothing real can withstand. In the sphere of the positive-real, science destroys; in the sphere of logic, it creates—such is its vocation. Man's vocation, however, is not logic alone, but also the socio-historical world of moral freedom and positive action; man has not only the ability of ab-

stracting comprehension but also the will which may be called positive, creative reason. Man cannot forbear from the human work around him. He must act in his place and in his time and this is his universal vocation, his *conditio sine qua non.* The personality transcending science belongs neither to personal life nor to the sphere of the universal. The particular and the universal are combined in it by the unity of the citizen; having achieved reconciliation in science, it craves for reconciliation in life, but to accomplish this it has to realize its moral will in all practical spheres.

The fault of the Buddhists is that they feel no need for an egress into life, for the real realization of the idea. They mistake the reconciliation in science for *all-round* reconciliation. To them it is not a stimulus to action, but a pretext for complete, self-sufficient contentment. For the world beyond the covers of their books, they care nought. They are prepared to suffer anything for the vacancy of the universal. It is thus that the legitimate Indian Buddhists strive to purchase liberation in Buddha at *the price of existence.* To them Buddha is an abstract infinity, mere nothing. But science has conquered the world for man, it has in fact conquered history for him, and it has not done all this to enable him to rest content. The universality kept within its abstract sphere must always lead to the somnolence destructive to activity—to Indian quietism.

Unable to withstand the flame of negation, the granite world of events is melted down and cascades into the ocean of science. But across this ocean man must swim to begin activity on the other side, in the promised Atlantis; and there he is to begin to act not by means of groping instinct, or desperate probing, or obscure intuition, but with complete moral freedom. Man cannot rest content as long as his environment is not in accord with him. The formalists are resigned to the fact that they have struck out into the seas and now float on the surface without striving to swim anywhere; they will be covered with ice before they realize it. But to them the ice seems like transparent waves, whereas in reality it is but an imitation of motion, now frozen and dead. The formalists themselves turned to ice, have done science irretrievable damage by using its language and delivering their relentless indictments, as chilling as the blasts of the

Arctic. The brilliance of their speech is like the sparkling of ice, lifeless and frigid, unaffected by the sun which can destroy it but not make it warm. Their hearers have been shocked at the lack of human kindness displayed by the greater part of the Berlin and other pillars of formalism, those *Talmudists* of the new science. Guided by the letter of science alone, they have stifled every vestige of feeling, of warm sympathy. Deliberately and with great effort they have hoisted themselves to the level of indifference to all things human and firmly believe that they have attained to the loftiest of heights. Incidentally, it should not be supposed that they have no hearts, for sometimes they merely pretend that they have not (it is a new kind of *captatio benevolentiae*). They have always mistaken the formal solutions for real ones. They have always believed that personality is an evil habit which should have long been eradicated. They have preached resignation to the dark side of modern life, defining as actual and consequently as worthy of recognition all that is trivial, accidental, and outdated, in short, everything that they might pick up in the streets. This is the way they understood the great idea that "the actual is the rational"; they branded every noble urge with the word *Schönseligkeit* without understanding the sense in which the word was used by their teacher.* If we add to this their absurd and ponderous language, the arrogance of narrow-mindedness, we shall be giving due credit to the intuition of society which has regarded these clowns of science with mistrust. Hegel never missed an opportunity to plead and beg that one should beware of formalism.** He argued that the truest definition taken literally or carried to the desperate extreme, would lead to trouble—he railed, but in vain. They have taken his words literally, have carried them to desperate extremes. They cannot adjust themselves to the eternal progress of the truth; they cannot recognize once and for all that every declaration must be denied in favour of one supe-

* "There is a more complete peace with reality brought about by its cognition than the desperate consciousness that the transient is evil or unsatisfactory, but one should reconcile oneself to it because there can be no better." *Philosophie des Rechts.—A.H.*

** For example, throughout the Introduction to his *Phenomenology.—A.H.*

rior to it and that it is only in the continuous sequence of stages, of struggles and changes that the live truth is born, that these are but the snakeskins that it sheds to emerge freer than ever. They cannot (though they do hold forth on similar matters) adjust themselves to the thought that there is nothing to lean upon in the development of science, that their only salvation lies in rapid onward movement; they clutch at every passing stage as if it were the whole truth. They mistake a one-sided definition of the object for all of its definitions. They demand maxims, ready-made rules. Arriving at a sequent station they in their ridiculous credulity each time believe that they have reached the terminal of the absolute, that this is their destination. They adhere strictly to the text and for that reason cannot grasp its meaning. It is not enough to understand what is written: one has to grasp what lies between the lines, what shines in the eye. It is necessary to digest a book in such a way as to depart from it. And this is the way the *living* understand science. Understanding is the revelation of the sympathetic homogeneity which goes before. The living assimilate science in a living way, the formalists in a formal way. Take Faust and his colleague Wagner, for example. To the former science is a vital question: "to be or not to be." He is liable to fall, to despair, to err, to seek enjoyments, but his nature penetrates deeply beyond the crust of the external. His lie has more truth in it than the shallow, infallible truth of Wagner. What is difficult to Faust is easy to Wagner. The latter is surprised that Faust cannot understand the simplest things. And one has to be very wise indeed not to understand them. Science does not torment Wagner, but on the contrary soothes, pacifies and holds forth hope to him in difficult times. He has cheaply purchased his tranquillity because he has never really been troubled about anything. Where he meets with unity, reconciliation, and salvation and therefore smiles, Faust finds disruption, hatred, complications and therefore suffers.

Every student *passes* through formalism—one of the stages of his formation—but it is the man with the living spirit who passes through, while the formalist goes no further. Formalism to the former is merely a passing stage, to the latter, a terminus. Thus nature, achieving its perfection in man, pauses at her

every step, perpetualizing it in a new genus which represents both a milestone in her progress and the one and supreme form of existence at this level. Neither nature nor science, however, could rest content without following up the final consequences of their conceptions. Nature has transcended itself in man and thereby effaced itself. Science presently is undergoing a similar process: it is achieving its supreme destiny; it is the all-consuming sun, the mind of the real, and consequently the vindication of the latter. Science has not yet paused to rest upon its lofty throne; it has transcended its apex and points to the egress from itself into practical life, aware that not the whole content of the human spirit has been exhausted within it, although the whole of it has been comprehended. It will not, however, be dethroned by submerging itself in life. What it has achieved within its own sphere will remain its own for ever. Nor will man be compelled to sacrifice the spheres of life by yielding himself to science. But the Orthodox Buddhists are fiercer champions of science than science itself: they would rather lay down their lives than yield her autocratic reign over life. "There is no science, but science and abstraction is its prophet," is their motto. They reply to everything with resounding words. Instead of bridging the chasm separating the abstract from the real, and thought from life, they cover it lightly with a veil of artificial, dialectical embellishments. To stretch all things real on the bed of Procrustes is not difficult for those heedless of protest from reality. The layman sometimes wonders how easily the formalists subject the strangest facts, the most extraordinary phenomena to their general laws. Yet, he cannot help but feel that this is sleight of hand, astounding perhaps, but disconcerting to those who demand a sound and conscientious solution. To some extent the formalists may be forgiven for they are the first to be deluded by their own trickery. Voltaire once related how a physician seeking to convince a healthy man that he was blind, argued that the absurd fact that he could see failed to disprove his contention and that therefore he considered him to be blind. In this strain the Buddhists used to harangue with the Germans until the latter, for all their gentle kindness, perceived what lay behind it all. It turned out that the facts were not at all governed by the laws

of the Buddhists. In this respect they resembled the Emperors of China, who regarded themselves as rulers of the earth though no land beyond that of China paid homage to them.

The dilettantes, who are as yet outside of science, may come to their senses and take to science in all seriousness. At any rate there may be still a suspicion that this miracle may come about. The formalists, on the other hand, are completely above such suspicion. They are calm, unperturbed and can be expected to go no further. They are indeed utterly unaware that there is any further way to go. This placid contentment is the origin of their very grave and incurable malady. Though slightly glassy, their gaze is still and unrippled within. They feel that they have only to rest content and enjoy life. The rest will take care of itself. Why should people trouble with anything when everything has been digested and explained and mankind has achieved the *absolute* form of existence,* which is clearly proved by the fact that modern philosophy is the absolute philosophy and science and is always identical with the epoch provided it has come to be. This argument seems irrefutable to them. They are undaunted by facts, for they ignore them. If asked why, under this absolute scheme of existence, workmen starve in Birmingham and Manchester, or at best obtain barely enough food to avoid being incapacitated, they reply that this phenomenon is merely fortuitous. If asked how they fit the absolute formula to the march of events which show its non-absolute character, they reply with reference to paragraph so-and-so of so-and-so. This, to them, constitutes full proof and why trouble, therefore, with the exact implication of the words given in paragraph so-and-so? It is very difficult to open the eyes of the formalists. Decidedly like their Buddhist counterparts, they regard death and annihilation in the infinite as their supreme aim and delivery, and the higher they ascend in the icy spheres of abstractions, the more divorced are they from the things of life, and the more tranquil. It is thus that the egotists secure a sort of happy tranquillity by stifling all human feeling and keeping aloof from everything unpleasant or disturbing. To egotism as well as to

* This is not my invention, but what Bayerhoffer's *History of Philosophy* says (*Die Idee und Geschichte der Philosophie* von Bayerhoffer, Leipzig 1838, final chapter).—*A.H.*

formalism one must be born however. Anyone may turn away from scenes of suffering, but not everyone can cease to suffer at the sight of such scenes. This is what Hegel, whose name is used in vain to advertise all the absurdities of present-day formalism, just as the trademark of Farina to sell Eau de Cologne produced throughout the world, has said on formalism:*

"The formalism which has been deprecated and despised by recent philosophy, and which has arisen once more in philosophy itself, will not disappear from science, even though its inadequacy is known and felt, till the knowledge of absolute reality has become quite clear. Having in mind that the general idea of what is to be done, if it precedes the attempt to carry it out, facilitates the comprehension of this process, it is worth while to indicate here some rough idea of it, with the hope at the same time that this will give us the opportunity to set aside certain forms whose habitual presence is a hindrance in the way of speculative knowledge. In my view—a view which the developed exposition of the system itself can alone justify—everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well. At the same time we must note that concrete substantiality implicates and involves the universal or the immediacy of knowledge itself, as well as that immediacy which is being, or immediacy *qua* object *for* knowledge. If the generation which heard God spoken of as the One Substance was shocked and revolted by such a characterization of his nature, the reason lay partly in the instinctive feeling that in such a conception self-consciousness was simply submerged, and not preserved. But partly, again, the opposite position, which maintains thinking to be merely subjective thinking, abstract universality as such, is exactly the same bare uniformity, is undifferentiated, unmoved substantiality. And even if, in the third place, thought combines with itself the being of substance, and conceives immediacy or intuition (*Anschauen*) as thinking, it is still a question whether this intellectual intuition does not fall back into that inert, abstract simplicity, and exhibit and expound reality itself in an unreal manner." In his *Philosophy of Right* Hegel declares that between

Phenomenologie, Vorrede.—*A.H.*

self-cognition and reality there most often lies an abstraction which has not yet disengaged itself to become a conception. When reading this and similar excerpts, one cannot but help wonder how those good people could read Hegel all their lives and fail to understand anything. The truth of the matter is that in a book the reader understands only that which is more or less lodged in his mind. The Emperor of China must have been aware of this when thanking a missionary, who had taught him mathematics, for *reminding* him of things which he had forgotten, though certainly he must have known them in his capacity of Omniscient Son of Heaven. And so it is indeed. Only that is understood in Hegel which harks back to what had in embryo pre-existed in the mind. A book is merely a midwife. It only assists at the birth, but is not to be held responsible for what is born.

It should be remembered, however, that Hegel himself often lapsed into the *German* malady, the symptom of which is the acceptance of learning as the ultimate aim of universal history. He has said as much.* In the third part we have stated that Hegel was often unfaithful to his first principles. But no man can be expected to rise above his age. He was nonetheless the greatest representative of science and by pursuing it to its ultimate point, dealt the power of its exclusiveness a blow, perhaps reluctant, but effective nonetheless; for every forward step brings science a step closer to the practical spheres of life. Hegel, completely absorbed in science, could not take such a step himself. To the Germanic world sprung from the Reformation science was as art to the Hellenic world. But in their one-sidedness, neither science nor art could give complete satisfaction and supply all answers to all questions. While art portrayed, science comprehended, but the new age demands that that which has been comprehended should be put into effect in the real world. The genius of Hegel constantly tore at the fetters imposed upon him by the spirit of the times, by education, habits, the way of life, and his Academic chair. Witness how grandly his *Philosophy of Right* is unfolded. It is not its phra-

* In *The History of Philosophy,* if I remember correctly.—*A.H.*

seology, its expressions which we shall set forth, however, but its inner and real meaning, the spirit of the book.

The province of abstract law is resolved in and transcended by the world of morality, i.e., the world of legal standards clarified for itself, but Hegel does not stop at this and from the heights of law swoops into the current of world history. The science of law is thus consummated and transcended. The evolution of the personality follows the same pattern. Rising like vapours from natural spontaneity, the indistinct individualities are clarified in the sun-rays of the idea and are resolved in the infinite spaces of the universal. They are not, however, destroyed there. Incorporating the universal, they fall in benign showers, in crystal drops to their native earth. The magnificence of the personality thus transfigured consists in that it has preserved both worlds, that it is the genus and the indivisible together, that it has become that which it was born, or rather, to which it was born: the conscious link between both worlds. It has cognized its universality and yet preserved its oneness. The personality thus evolved accepts cognition as the immediacy *of the highest order* and not as the fulfilment of the pre-ordained. Its return to earth is a dialectical movement as essential as its ascent. To dwell in the universal is to repose, to die, whereas the life of the idea is "the bacchanalian revel, where not a member is sober; and because every member no sooner becomes detached than it *eo ipso* collapses straightway, the revel is just as much a state of transparent unbroken calm. Judged by that movement, the particular shapes which mind assumes do not indeed subsist any more than do determinate thoughts or ideas; but they are, all the same, as much positive and necessary moments, as negative and transitory." We repeat: the universal is not the complete truth, but that phase of it in which the particular is dissolved and the process of transition has been completed. The universal is pre-eternal or post-eternal repose, but the idea cannot endure in repose: it emerges of itself from the sphere of the universal into life.

The complete trio grand and harmonious is evidenced only in the history of the world. It is only in the latter that the idea of complete life abides. Outside of it lie only the abstractions striving for completion and clamouring for one another.

Thought and immediacy are the two negations which are resolved in the process of history, their unity has been divided into opposites to be reunited in history, which transcends and realizes both nature and logics. In nature, everything is particular, individual, exists apart and is but loosely linked by an essential tie. In nature, the idea exists corporeally, unconsciously, subjugated to the law of necessity and obscure impulses, not transcended by free reason. The reverse is true in science: the idea exists in the organism of logic, everything that is particular is suppressed; everything is pervaded with the light of consciousness; the *implicit* thought agitating and impelling nature becomes, as it develops and frees itself from physical existence, the *explicit* thought of science. However complete science may be, its completeness is abstract and its relation to nature, negative. Of this science has itself been aware since the days of Descartes who clearly contrasted thought with fact, spirit with nature. Science and nature are two concave mirrors reflecting one another. Their mutual focus, the point of convergence of both the world of nature and the world of logic is man's personality. Concentrating more and more upon one point, nature arrives at the human ego. In the latter it achieves its aim. Now man's personality, opposing itself to nature and struggling with natural spontaneity, evolves within itself the generic, the eternal, the universal, the mind. And it is the consummation of this development that is the aim of science.

The whole of man's past history consciously or subconsciously set itself the ideal of achieving intelligent self-cognition and of elevating the will of man to the plane of the will of God. Throughout the ages mankind has been striving for moral and free action. But in history there has never been such action and could not be. Free action in history must be preceded by science. Without knowledge, without complete cognition there can be no really free action and as yet there has been no such complete cognition in mankind's past. Science which is leading to it, justifies history and at the same time renounces it. Real action requires no antecedent for its justification; in history is its soil, its immediacy. Everything that is antecedent is genetically essential, but self-existence and self-sufficiency will hold their place in the future just as in the past. The future will be

to the past as the grown son to the father. To be born and grow up the son needs his father, but when he is a man their relations must change, must grow freer, loftier and more affectionate. Lessing once termed the evolution of mankind its upbringing, an incorrect metaphor if unqualified, but apt enough within certain limits. And mankind, indeed, has hitherto displayed the unmistakable signs of immaturity. It is gradually being educated into consciousness. The system of this education eludes the superficial glance for its diversity and exuberance of creative effort, for the superfluity of forms and forces ostensibly unnecessary and contradictory. But such is the instinctive way of the evolution of the natural, of the development of the unconscious to the conscious, to self-realization. Let us turn to nature. Unable to comprehend itself and tormented by this inability, striving for some goal unknown to itself and yet the source of its agitation, nature aspires to consciousness in thousands of forms, utilizes all possibilities, probes all directions, knocks on every gate, creates innumerable variations on the same theme; and therein lies the poetry of life, the evidence of its inner wealth. Every stage in the evolution of nature at the same time represents a goal, a relative truth; it is a link in a chain and yet a precious ring in itself. Impelled by an obscure but great longing, nature rises from form to form, but, while passing from the one to the other, clings yet tenaciously to the first and develops it to the ultimate as if salvation itself depended on this form. And indeed, the form achieved represents a great victory, a joy and triumph: it is always the supreme existent form. From it nature flowers in all directions.* That is why it was so useless to attempt to marshal all its creations in a rectilineal column. Nature knows no superiors or inferiors; its works do not constitute a mere ladder. Nature is both ladder and the things that are mounting the ladder and each and every step is the means and the goal and the cause. *Idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipse natura*, as Pliny once said.

The history of mankind is the continuation of the history of nature. The diversity and heterogeneity to be found in history

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* Buffon's great idea: *La nature ne fait jamais un pas qui ne soit en tout sens.*—*A.H.* Nature never takes a step unless fully conscious of it.—*Ed.*

are astounding and little wonder that the ways of evolution have become more complex: the field has become broader, the problems loftier, the means more numerous, the purpose more explicit. The development grows more far-reaching and at the same time more complicated. The simplest state is that of the stone resting immobile at the lowest stage of development. But where consciousness begins moral freedom must begin and every personality effects its destiny in *its own* way, leaving the stamp of its individuality on the events. The nations, these vast and colossal characters of the world drama, perform the role of mankind each *in its own way*, imparting artistic finish and truthfulness to the action of the play. A nation would be a pitiful thing indeed if it regarded its existence merely as a step towards the unknown future. Such a nation could be compared to a drudge travelling an arduous path and bearing upon itself the golden fleece to be shorn by others. Nature, as we have observed, does not treat its subconscious children in such a fashion; and especially in the world of consciousness where there can be no stage which fails to bring its own satisfaction. But the spirit of mankind, bearing within itself an undeviating aim, an eternal aspiration towards fuller development, could not rest content with any of the past forms. And herein lies the mystery of its transcendence, of its overlapping personality (*übergreifende Subjectivität*). Let us bear in mind, however, that every one of the past forms contained this spirit, and that this spirit had no other form but the one whose limits it exceeded just because it had grown equal to this form, had been identical with it and had grown out of it. The history of the activity of the spirit is, so to say, its personality, for "it is what it does,"* the striving for absolute reconciliation, for the realization of everything in the mind, and for liberation from natural and artificial fetters. Absorbing and affecting the *whole* spirit of its age, every stage of history bears its own plenitude, in short, its own personality seething with life.

Aware of their destiny to emerge on the world arena, the nations, as they heard the voice announcing that their hour had struck, were seized with fiery zeal and began to live with redou-

Philosophie des Rechts.—A.H.

bled intensity and evinced such strength as no one could have suspected in them, strength which they themselves had never suspected. Towns and villages arose in the steppes and forests. The sciences and arts flourished; great efforts were made to prepare the luxurious caravanserais for the coming idea which flowed on steadily, a majestic stream whose waters engulfed ever new spaces. Those caravanserais, however, were not merely to serve as a transient abode of the great idea, but as its inevitable incarnation, like the mother's womb which not only translates the past into the future, but is also alive with its own life. Every phase of historical evolution has been its own goal and consequently its own reward and gratification. To the Greek world its own destiny was something absolute, beyond the bounds of which it saw nothing; nor could it do so since *there was as yet no* future. The latter is a possibility and not an actuality, for it does not properly exist at all. The ideal of every epoch is the epoch itself purified of accidents; it is the transfigured view of the present. It stands to reason that the more complete and all-embracing is the present, the more true and universal is its ideal. And such an epoch is ours. Contemplating the fulfilment of man's destiny, the nations were ignorant of the harmony combining all the sounds into a great symphony. On the ruins of the ancient world Augustine announced the lofty idea of the divine city, towards which mankind was marching, and pointed to the holy Sabbath of tranquillity. That was the poetico-religious commencement of the philosophy of history. It was obviously rooted in Christianity, but for a long time not understood. It was no more than a century ago that mankind decided to demand an account of life, intuitively guessing that there is some purpose behind its onward movement and that its own biography has a single, profound, and all-embracing meaning. By this mature enquiry mankind has indicated that its education is nearly completed. Science took upon itself to reply to this enquiry, but scarcely did so when man felt an urge to seek an egress from science—a second sign of maturity. Before it can be expected to open such an egress of its own accord, science must completely accomplish that which it is destined to accomplish. As long as there is but a single fixed point as yet eluding self-cognition the external will con-

tinue to resist. The number of such fixed stars is growing less and less, but there are some few which still remain. Education presupposes the complete and absolute truth. At the moment that man comprehends the truth, it shall be safely lodged in his heart; his education then will be completed and his conscious action will commence. With his head high, man will then depart from the temple of science, proudly conscious that *omnia sua secum portans*—to erect the divine city. The reconciliation wrought in science by knowledge has cancelled the contradictions. Similarly the reconciliation in life will cancel them through beatitude.* The reconciliation in life is the fruit of another tree of Eden: but the new Adam has had to earn its apples by the sweat of his brow and this he has truly done.

But how will all this come to be? What bearing has it upon the future? We may conjecture about the future because we are the premises of its syllogism, but we must do so only in a broad and general way. In the fulness of time the events will rend the clouds like lightning, will strike down the obstacles, and the future shall spring forth new born and fully accoutred like Pallas Athene. But, faith in the future is our noblest privilege, our inalienable blessing. Believing in the future we are filled with love for the present.

And our faith in the future will save us from despair in the evil hour, and our love of the present will live in good deeds.

March 23, 1843

* Here one inevitably recalls the great idea of Spinoza: ***Beatitudo non est virtutis praemium, sed ipsa virtus.—A.H.***

LETTERS ON THE STUDY OF NATURE[17]

> Nature is a bayadere dancing in the sight of the spirit, which rebukes her for the shamelessness with which she unfolds her nudity to all who would see. But having revealed herself she departs because she has been seen and the spectator departs because he has seen.
>
> *Colebrooke, "Sank-hia, Philos. of the Hindus"*

> ...Doch der Götterjüngling hebet
> Aus der Flamme sich empor,
> Und in seinen Armen schwebet
> Die Geliebte mit hervor.
>
> *Goethe, "Bayadere"*

LETTER ONE

EMPIRICISM AND IDEALISM

GLORY to Ceres, Pomona and all their kin! I find myself, at last, away from you, my dear friends. I am alone in the country. More than anything else I wanted to live quietly, all by myself. But I cannot say that those worthy individuals whom I have just glorified, have particularly gone out of their way to receive me. It has been raining day and night with the wind tearing at the shutters so that it is impossible to take a step out of doors. Yet, strange as it may seem, I feel better. I am myself again and in better spirits. I have found what I came for. In the evening I go out on to the balcony. Nothing obstructs the view. I inhale the damp, invigorating air, scented by the woods and meadows. I listen to the murmur of the forest and my heart is at peace. I feel finer and more cheerful. The meditative calm everywhere is soothing, conciliating.... At moments like these I feel that I could remain here for years on end. I can quite foresee that you won't like my idyllic vagary: "Man must not

isolate himself—that is egotism, desertion, the trite idea of the mad Genevese[18] who held that urban life in his day was artificial. As if the forms of the historic world were not just as natural as the forms of the physical world." Firstly, it is true that desertion in time of war is disgraceful; but why not take a holiday when a stable peace reigns happily on earth? Secondly, as far as Rousseau is concerned, I cannot say that what he said about the artificiality of life in the society of his day was absolutely untrue: that which is awkward, forced, decayed, is, indeed, artificial. Rousseau understood that there was something rotten in the world in which he lived and impatient, indignant and outraged as he was, he did not understand that the sanctuary of the decrepit civilization had two doors. Afraid of being stifled there, he rushed to the entrance and found himself frantically battling against the stream of people entering. He did not realize that the re-establishment of primitive life was more artificial than the existing dotage of civilization. It really does seem to me that our way of living, particularly in big cities—no matter whether in London or Berlin—is not very natural. Most likely it will change considerably. Mankind has never pledged itself to live always as it does today. Life in the process of development holds nothing sacred. I am perfectly aware that the forms of the historic world are just as natural as the forms of the physical world. But do you know that in nature itself—in this eternal present without regret or hopes—all that is alive, continually rejects past forms, as it develops, accusing the organism which was quite satisfactory just the day before of being unnatural? Recall the metamorphosis of insects, the proverbial example of the butterfly and the chrysalis. When the present rests *exclusively* on the past, it is inadequately supported. Peter the Great demonstrated solemnly that the past, represented by a whole country, was untenable when opposed to the will of a single person, acting in the name of the present and the future. The judicial irony of long duration is not recognized by life; quite the contrary, all that long duration, from the viewpoint of nature, is entitled to, is death.

As you see, I am in a mood to philosophize.... That is how the countryside *far niente* affects me. Let's drop this urban life! I never meant to speak of it. Since there is time I'd rather get

started on those letters on the present state of natural science which I had once promised.

Do you remember our interminable discussions in our student days? Starting usually from two abstract points of view we strove to understand the phenomenon of life but, far from attaining any serious results, we couldn't even fully understand each other. That is how nature is treated by philosophy and natural science, which both lay strange claims to being in possession of, if not the whole truth, at least, the only true path leading to it. The former uttered its oracles from some inaccessible heights; the latter meekly submitted to experience and went no further. They hated each other and they developed, mistrusting each other. Many prejudices took root on both sides. So many bitter words were exchanged that, no matter how they tried, they have been unable to make it up to this day. Philosophy and natural science frighten each other with bugbears and ghosts which really are frightful and disheartening. Is it long since philosophy has ceased to affirm that it has the power to invoke the essence, detached from the being, the general, the real, detached from the particular, the infinite preceding the finite, etc.? Positive sciences have little ghosts of their own. These are forces abstracted from action; properties accepted as the object itself and, in general, all kinds of idols created out of conceptions not yet understood: *exempli gratia*—the vital force, the ether, the caloric, electric matter, and others. Everything possible was done to prevent the two from understanding each other, and with perfect success. In the meantime it began to grow clear that philosophy without natural science was just as impossible as natural science without philosophy. To satisfy ourselves on this point let us turn to the present state of the physical sciences. It seems just brilliant. What one could hardly dream of at the end of the last century has been accomplished or is being accomplished before our very eyes. The small buds of organic chemistry, geology, paleonthology, comparative anatomy have grown in our century into huge branches and borne fruit exceeding our wildest hopes. The world of the past, obedient to the mighty voice of science, has left the tomb to bear witness to the upheavals which accompany the evolution of the surface of the globe; the soil on which we live, this tombstone of the

past life, is growing transparent, as it were; the stone vaults have opened, the interior of the rocks could not retain their secrets. Not only do the half-decayed, half-petrified vestiges again assume flesh, paleonthology also strives* to discover the law of the relation between geologic epochs and their complete flora and fauna. Then everything that ever lived will be resurrected in the human mind, will be saved from the sad fate of utter oblivion, and those whose bones have been completely decayed, whose phenomenal existence has been utterly obliterated, will be restored in the bright sanctuary of science where the temporal finds its repose and is perpetuated. On the other hand, science has discovered a world of invisible details beyond the limits of the visible; science has discovered that *monde des détails* which General Bonaparte conjectured in his conversations with Monge and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire** in Cairo. The naturalist, equipped with the microscope, investigates life to the last detail and observes its inner workings. The physiologist has met the chemist on this threshold of life. The question of life has become clearer and is formulated more precisely. Chemistry has made it necessary to investigate not only forms but also their modifications. In the laboratory it led to an inquiry into the secrets of organic bodies. Apart from the progress made in theory the physical sciences were strikingly adapted to practice outside the study rooms and the academies. Hand in hand with mechanics these sciences have surrounded us with their inventions and amenities. They contribute to a solution of the most important social problems by the use of machines, by bringing into play unemployed and wasted forces and by simplifying complex and difficult productive processes, by indicating how to avoid the expenditure of *more* effort than is necessary to achieve the end: they give us the means for freeing the hands of man from endless backbreaking toil.

From this it would seem that all that is left for natural science to do is to celebrate its victory and, justifiably conscious

* Remember the works of Agassiz[19] on fossil fish and the works of Orbigny[20] on the mollusks and other protozoans.—*A.H.*

** *Notions de Philos. naturelle* by Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Paris, 1838. —*A.H.*

of its great achievements, to continue working in the calm expectancy of further success. Actually this is not quite so. A discerning eye will easily see some constraint in all spheres of natural science. They lack *something*, something that the abundance of facts cannot make up for. Their truths have some blank spots. Every branch of natural science keeps us painfully aware that there is in nature something intangible, something we cannot grasp; that these sciences, in spite of a profound study of their subject matter, allow us to acquire an *almost* but not *quite* complete knowledge of it. And it is precisely this deficiency, this elusive something that holds the solution destined to transform that insubordinate and alien element of nature into thought and, consequently, is to be assimilated by man. The consciousness of that fact has crept into the very exposition of natural science. You often hear the sad complaint accompanying successes and discoveries: the increase in knowledge which has no limit, and conditioned externally by accidental discoveries, by lucky experiments, sometimes oppresses the spirit rather than gladdens it. The fact that the object persists in remaining alien to the spirit and stubbornly resists man, irritates him and at the same time involves him in an unflagging war of conquest which he can neither win nor desist from. This is the clamouring voice of reason which does not know how to stop midway—the voice of *naturae rerum* itself, which strives for clarification in the mind of man. You have probably noticed how quick naturalists are to call attention to the limits of their views as if fearful of hearing questions which they cannot answer; but such limits are illusory. Imposed as they are by personal will they are as external to the object as, say, the fence placed, by the right of ownership, to the field which it encloses. Naturalists of special fields loudly and boldly proclaim that the most natural and legitimate demands of reason are no concern of theirs, that man must not study problems which are impossible to solve.* For the most part this boldness is suspicious: it either springs from narrow-mindedness or from laziness. In other cases it orig-

* Impossible for whom? When? Why? What is the criterion? Napoleon held that steamships were an impossibility....—*A.H.*

inates on a higher plane, that is, that false consolation with which man wants to blind his own eyes to an evil for which there is no remedy. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tie a millstone to the neck of such problems, throw them into the sea and then forget them. They, like a guilty conscience, like the ghost of Banquo, come to haunt us at the feast of experiments, of discoveries, with the consciousness of real and magnificent merits, reminding us that the success is imperfect, that the object has not been conquered. . . . Indeed, can we possibly be satisfied to stop at the supposition of the impossibility of knowledge? It is just as impossible for the man of science to stop at this point and forget as it is for the miser to stop searching for the treasure he knows is buried in his yard. There has never lived an eminent naturalist yet who could have tranquilly disregarded this gap in his science; a mysterious *ignotum* tormented them but they attributed its intangibility to lack of factual material. We think, however, that it is their timid and unconscious use of logical forms that hinders them more than anything else. Naturalists recoil from an analysis of the relation of knowledge to the object, of thought to being, of man to nature. For them thought is the ability to decompose a given phenomenon and then to collate, generalize, tabulate the data found by them; their criterion of truth is not at all reason. It is, rather, the evidence of the senses which they rely on. Thought for them is an act purely individual, absolutely external to the object. They ignore form and method because these they know from their scholastic definitions. Their fear of systematic theory is so great that they do not even want to accept materialism *as a theory.* They would like to treat their subject quite empirically, passively, by merely observing it. It is obvious that no thinking being can achieve this any more than an organism can absorb food without digesting it. Their so-called empiricism leads, nonetheless, to thought but to a mode of thought in which the method is arbitrary and personal. Strange as it may seem, every physiologist knows well how important are forms and their evolution, and that content becomes a harmonious organism only on assuming a certain form. Yet it would not occur to any one of them that method in science is by no means a question of personal taste or some kind of external convenience; that over and above

its formal significance, it is the very development of content—the embryology of truth, if you like.

This strange syllogism of natural science has left its mark. The idealists have always been inveighing against the empiricists, trampling their doctrine with their incorporeal feet, without, however, advancing the question one step ahead. Strictly speaking, idealism has done nothing for the study of nature. This, however, calls for one reservation: it has elaborated, prepared infinite form, the infinite content of factual science. The latter has not, indeed, made use of it: that is the work of the future. . . . For the time being we speak, if not of the distant past, then of the passing moment. Idealism has always embodied something intolerably insolent: man, persuaded that nature is an absurdity and that the transient does not deserve his attention, grows arrogant, intransient in his one-sided views, and stone-blind to truth. Idealism believed, in its arrogance, that it needed only to utter some derogatory words about empiricism for it to dissolve in thin air. The supercilious metaphysicians were mistaken: they did not realize that empiricism was built on so broad a foundation that idealism would find it difficult to shake it. The empiricists have realized that the *existence* of an object is *no trifle*; that the interaction of the senses and the object is not an illusion; that the objects surrounding us cannot but be real if only because they exist; they turned confidently to what *exists* instead of seeking for *what should exist* but which, strangely enough, is to be found nowhere! They accepted the world and the senses with childlike simplicity and called upon people to descend from the hazy clouds where metaphysicians floundered in their scholastic incoherencies. They called to man to come down to the present and the real; they recalled that man has five senses on which his elementary relation to nature is based, and they gave expression in their views to the first moments of sense perception—the sole and indispensable precursor of thought. There can be no science without empiricism, just as there can be no science in one-sided empiricism alone. Experience and speculation are two essential, true, real phases of one and the same knowledge; speculation is nothing other than a higher, more developed form of empiricism. If you

treat them as opposed to each other, in an exclusive and abstract sense, they will do no more good than will analysis without synthesis or synthesis without analysis. If it develops normally, empiricism must invariably become speculation, while speculation is no empty idealism only if based on experience. Though chronologically the first phase of knowledge, experience has its limits. Beyond them it digresses from its path or else becomes speculation. These are two Magdeburg hemispheres which seek each other and which, once they are joined, cannot be pulled apart by all the king's horses. Although simple enough, this truth is far from having been recognized: the antagonism between empiricism and speculation, between natural science and philosophy persists. To understand that we must recall those times when natural science was divorced from philosophy. That happened in the grand epoch of the renaissance of science, when man, rejuvenated, became aware, once again, of the hot blood flowing in his veins and began to deliberate upon and study his environment. In those days all positive, practical minds chafed against scholasticism. As is usual in times of upheavals, they forgot all its merits and remembered only the heavy yoke it had laid on thought. They recalled how scholasticism, crushed, docile and submissive, occupied itself with empty, formal questions, and spurned it. The rebellion against Aristotle marked the rise of new, independent thought. We must not forget, however, that the Aristotle of the Middle Ages was not the original Aristotle but a tonsured one, adapted to Catholic morals. The canonized pagan had been disowned by both Descartes and Bacon. Note how scornfully the chemists of the eighteenth century disparaged the scholastic metaphysicians and how joyfully they proclaimed the right of experiment, observation, empiricism; how they rejected absolutely everything outside sense trustworthiness of the senses and trembled at the mere mention of the scholastic bonds. They felt better, more at ease, because their feet had touched the ground on which man is destined to stand. They had found the prop to lean against, their point of departure. They defended it zealously and went their slippery and arduous way. They were not afraid of hard work. The indisputable reality of their studies absorbed them. Nature, inexhaustibly rich in phenomena, could long quench

their thirst for knowledge. But, of course, they were bound to exhaust their conceptions for these were limited, and actually, they did so. However, their horror of scholasticism prevailed, and so they could not leave the circle which they themselves had circumscribed. Philosophy found it easier to arrive at the true and real principles of logic than to repair its reputation. Incidentally, the latter could have been repaired only in our days, for the ferment of scholasticism is only now dissipating. Idealism is nothing other than *scholasticism of the Protestant world.* It has always been just as one-sided as empiricism; it never wanted to understand the latter but when it did, it superciliously stretched out an unwilling hand, dictated the conditions of the peace treaty and granted forgiveness though empiricism never even dreamed of asking for it. There is not the slightest doubt but that speculation and empiricism are equally to blame for their lack of mutual understanding, and the problem at the present moment is not to justify one side at the expense of the other but, after explaining how they came to engage in that battle so like the one in the celebrated parable of Menenius Agrippa, to prove that this is something to be relegated to the past and buried, and that it would be absurd and harmful for both sides to continue this struggle. Both philosophy and natural science have outgrown their mutual antagonisms. They possess everything to enable them to understand the origin of this conflict and its historic *raison d'être.* Nothing but an inherited feeling of enmity remains to support the antiquated and deplorable recriminations. They simply *must have it out,* they must settle, once and for all, their relations to each other, get rid of their antagonism. All exclusivism acts as a restraint and precludes free development. But if they are to come to an understanding philosophy must renounce its gross claims to absolute power and perpetual infallibility. Philosophy has, truly, every right to the central place in science, and it can well profit by it when it ceases to demand it and openly rids itself of dualism, idealism, metaphysical abstraction, when its mature language stops shying at words or logical conclusions. Then its authority will have all the more weight since it will be truly recognized. Otherwise it may proclaim itself as absolute as it likes, no one will believe it, and each particular science will

nonetheless retain its own federal mentality.* Philosophy develops nature and conscience *a priori* and herein lies its creative power; but nature and history are great precisely because they do not require this *a priori*; they themselves represent living organisms which develop logic *a posteriori*. Why quarrel about seniority? There is but one science: there cannot be two sciences, any more than there can be two universes. From time immemorial science has been compared to a ramifying tree. The comparison is most apt: each branch of the tree, indeed every bud, is relatively independent. Each one can be taken for a distinct plant, but they all belong to a single whole, to the living growth of these plants—to the tree. Cut off the branches and what remains is a dead log. Remove the trunk and the branches will wither away. Every branch of knowledge has a unity of its own, yet it invariably contains something pre-existent, independent. These branches are, properly speaking, organs belonging to one body. Separate an organ from the organism and it will cease to be the conductor of life and become a dead thing, while the organism, in its turn, deprived of the organs, will become a mutilated corpse, a conglomerate of particles. Life is the unity persisting in variety, the unity of the whole and the parts; when the bond between them is sundered and the unity which serves to bind and protect is broken, each point starts on its own process and the death and decay of the corpse ensues with the complete liberation of the parts. Or here is another comparison. Particular sciences may be likened to the world of planets with a focus to which they gravitate and from which they receive light. But, as we say that, we should bear in mind that light is the resultant of two factors and not of one: were there no planets there would be no sun. It is this organic interrelation between factual sciences and philosophy that is missing in the consciousness of some epochs, and then philosophy is engulfed in abstractions, while positive sciences are lost in the mass of facts. The limitations being what they are, a way out must be found, sooner or later: empiricism will cease to fear thought; thought, in turn, will not recoil before the immobile strangeness of the

* In history everything is *relatively* absolute. Non-relative absolute is a logical abstraction which becomes relative the moment it passes outside the bounds of logic.—*A.H.*

world of the phenomena. Only then will external reality be mustered, for neither abstract metaphysics, nor particular sciences alone can cope with the task: it is speculative philosophy, brought up on empiricism, that is the only crucible where everything melts. Particular sciences are finite. They are limited by two pre-existent factors: the object placed firmly outside the observer and the personality of the observer directly opposite the object. Philosophy cancels the opposition between the personality and the object through logic, yet, while doing so, it preserves both. Philosophy is the unity of individual sciences. They are confluent in it and feed it. The idea that philosophy stands apart from science originated in the present age. This view is the baleful after-effect of dualism; it is, indeed, one of the deepest cuts of its scalpel. The ancients knew no such unlawful contest between philosophy and the individual sciences; they emerged hand in hand from Ionia and attained their apotheosis in Aristotle.* Dualism, which lent glory to scholasticism, contained the seeds of the inevitable division into abstract idealism and abstract empiricism; its merciless blade sought to separate the inseparable: the generic and the individual, life and the living, thought and the thinker. Nothing remained on the other side, or, what is worse, what remained were phantoms, taken for reality. Philosophy, not sustained by the particular sciences, by empiricism, is a phantom, metaphysics, idealism. Empiricism sufficient unto itself, outside the bounds of philosophy, is a catalogue, a lexicon, an inventory or, if not these, then it is false to itself. We shall see this directly.

What immediately strikes us in the physical sciences is that naturalists only verbally keep within the domain of empiricism. Actually they never stay within its confines. They overstep the limits of experimental knowledge without realizing it. It is impossible to find one's way if one works unconsciously within the sphere of science. In order to actually cross the bounds of some logical moment one must, at least, know exactly the limits of the exhausted form: nothing in the world is so confusing as the unconscious transition from one logical moment to another.

* Socrates regarded the physical sciences very much as our philologists do, but that was a passing misunderstanding.--*A.H.*

So long as natural science actually keeps within the bounds of empiricism, it daguerreotypes nature perfectly and translates reality, the particular, the phenomenal, into general terms. This is a detailed and necessary cadastre of the immovables of science. The material thus obtained is capable of further development which, however, may not take place for a long time to come. It is, indeed, difficult, almost impossible to remain within the confines of such empiricism. It demands extraordinary self-restraint and extraordinary self-denial, the genius of Cuvier or the obtuseness of some mediocre specialist. Naturalists who are so assiduous and loud in their praise of experience soon grow bored by its descriptive part. They are clearly loath to confine themselves to conscientious cataloguing. They sense that this is not science and try to commingle thought and experience, to bring the light of reason wherever it still remains dark. It is at this point, as a rule, that they become entangled and lost in categories obscure to them. They grope about, fearful lest the object obtained through the testimony of their senses should escape them and unaware that it has long since been modified. They are afraid to put their trust in thought and, involuntarily carried away by the tide of dialectics, they decompose the object into its opposite definitions and grow incapable of uniting the elements thus dissociated. The tendency to go beyond the bounds of empiricism is perfectly natural, for one-sidedness is repugnant to the human spirit. The strictly empiricist attitude to nature is characteristic of the animal which regards its environment merely practically; it is not content with a passive examination of natural products—it either consumes them or leaves them. Man has an irresistible urge to ascend from experience to the complete assimilation of all that is provided by knowledge—otherwise this becomes a burden; he has to *endure* it, which is incompatible with a free spirit. That is why the inveterate enemies of logic and philosophy could not escape their own theoretical visions which were, sometimes, no less absurd than the most transcendental idealism. Did not the chemists have their "*quinta essentia*,"* their "universal gas," their own theories of the

* Quintessence, the "very essence," literally, the "fifth essence" opposed in ancient Greek philosophy to the other four elements—water, earth, fire and air.—*Ed.*

origin of things, their theory of metals, their theory of phlogiston, and so on? The truth is that man is more at home in the world of theoretical meditations than in the multiplicity of facts. To be sure, the collection of material and its study and analysis are exceedingly important; but a body of facts not treated by thought leaves the mind unsatisfied. Facts and information are the evidence necessary for the case in hand—the trial and the sentence must needs follow; the jury will consider the evidence and then have *their* say. Facts are only a collection of uniform material, and not a living growth, however complete the sum of the various parts. Empiricists, realizing this instinctively, turn to abstract reasoning, thinking thus to grasp the whole part by part. That is how they lose the object, existing in reality, and replace it by abstractions, existing only in the mind. If they unreservedly trusted thought it would lead them out of the one-sidedness through that same dialectic necessity which compelled them to turn from immediate being to speculative meditations. They would realize the finite character of their knowledge, and the absurdity of stopping short amid the endless alternation of cause and effect, every cause becoming the next moment an effect and every effect a cause, amid the strange dissociation of form and content, of force and its manifestation, of essence and being. However, they place no confidence in thought. Seeing that their endeavours to attain truth through reason are vain, they grow, indeed, even more prejudiced against all thought; they repent having wasted time outside the empirical sphere. But why then do they resort to logic without first analyzing its meaning? They think that if they switch from empiricism to speculation their object remains intact; but classification into abstract categories cannot tackle the object as it is: reason, like a galvanic battery, is either idle or, if it does work, breaks up everything into two opposite elements, regardless of the result. Reason is unilateral; it is a component part. It is to this misty sphere of reason that the empiricists have risen and there have stopped short. Yet this sphere is only a point of transition, a path to be traversed. If they had but understood the meaning of rational science the phantom barrier between experience and speculation would have disappeared of itself. As it is, modern empiricism and philosophy look at each

other precisely through this barrier and get a distorted vision of each other. Empiricism blames thought itself for the abortive, ineffectual rationalistic truth it has encountered while philosophy lays the blame upon experimental knowledge. It is worse, however, to stop short at reflection than at empiricism. Everything in the physical sciences that is absurd and ridiculous actually originates in extrinsic reasoning and explanatory theories.*

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* I intend to cite subsequently several striking examples of the theoretical absurdities of the positive sciences; for the time being I shall just mention the courses in physics delivered by Biot, Lamé, Gay-Lussac, Deprez, Pouillet, etc., etc. Chemistry is principally concerned with practical matters, its subject matter is more concrete, more empirical. Physics, on the contrary, is more abstract in the questions it treats and therefore it is the triumph of hypothetical, explanatory theories (i.e., of such as are known beforehand as being so much twaddle). In physics the empirical object disappears from the very outset; only the general attributes, such as matter or force, appear. Then some external agents are introduced: electricity, magnetism, etc. An attempt was made to personify even poor heat as caloric—the anthropomorphism of nature in the Greek manner, but dry and graceless. And the theory of light? There are two opposing theories of light, to begin with. Both have been rejected, and both have been recognized! For there are phenomena which can be explained either by the former or by the latter. And what don't they call it: a fluid, a force, an imponderable! How can it be a fluid if it is imponderable—even if a light fluid? Why, then, not call granite a superheavy fluid? What a wretched definition of imponderability! Why not mention its being odourless, too, then? Force is no better. Why not say that light is action? Everything on earth can be attributed to force, as a sufficient cause. Why does no one call sound either a fluid or force (although Gassendi has mentioned the atoms of sound)? Why does no one call the outline of a body its imponderable form? To this the objection may arise that form is inherent to a body; while sound is the vibration of air. Yet has anyone ever seen the entire set of *imponderabilium* outside the body existing independently? "Well," they say, "but these are simply provisional definitions to keep us from going astray; we ourselves don't set store by these theories." Very well, but a time will come when it will be necessary to consider seriously the meaning of phenomena and stop merely playing with them. If, for practical purposes, we resort to unsound hypotheses, we will finally be led completely astray. This method does tremendous harm to pupils, for it offers them *words* in place of conceptions, and kills their curiosity by supplying an illusory answer. "What is electricity?"—An imponderable fluid. Surely it would be better for a pupil to answer: "I don't know!"—***A.H.***

Naturalists who have arrived at the stage of speculation imagine that analysis, analogy and, finally, induction, as a further development of the first two, are the only ways of cognizing the object without modifying it, which is exactly what is both needless and impossible. Firstly, analysis leaves nothing behind in the object in question, and ends by reducing the material supplied by empiricism to abstract generalities. Analysis is right: it accomplishes its task. It is those who resort to analysis yet fail to consider its effect and transcend it who are in the wrong. Secondly, the desire to leave an object intact and understand it without resolving it in thought is illogical and, indeed, absurd. A particular object, a phenomenon, remains intact if man regards it unthinkingly, if he is indifferent to it. The instant he has given it a name, he has taken it out of the world of particularities and raised it to the level of a generality. How can we cognize phenomena without drawing them into the logical process (without adding anything of our own, so to say)? The logical process is the only general medium of human cognition. Nature does not contain its meaning within itself –therein lies its distinctive feature. It is thought that supplements and develops nature which is nothing but existence and has to detach itself, so to say, from itself in man's mind in order to comprehend its own being. Thought adds nothing external but merely continues the necessary development without which the universe would be incomplete—that same development which begins with the struggle of the elements and chemical affinity and ends in the self-cognizant brain of man. There is a tendency to perceive the mind as a passive receptacle, a kind of mirror which would reflect the given without modifying it, i.e., with all its fortuities and without assimilating it—mechanically, unreflectingly. On the other hand, the given is perceived as existing in time and space, as an active principle which is absolutely contrary to the nature of things. That is exactly why naturalists have never succeeded. For all their desire to walk on their heads they are still on their feet. To explain an object externally is, in fact, tantamount to admitting that it is beyond understanding. To explain it by means of comparison is sometimes very useful but, for the most part, inadequate. No one resorts to analogies if he can express his thoughts clearly and

simply. There is good reason for the French saying that "*comparaison n'est pas raison.*" Indeed, from a strictly logical point of view neither the object nor the conception of the object is the least concerned whether it resembles something else or not: the fact that two things resemble each other in certain of their aspects is no reason for concluding that their unknown aspects are also alike. What ridiculous mistakes, for example, geology made when it tried to apply facts, deduced from a study of the Alps, to other zones! The working of a known general law is to be examined in every particular case not only by comparing this case with other phenomena, but also out of logical necessity. Frequently analogy replaces one empirical representation by another, or, to put it bluntly, throws dust in your eyes. For example, you are expecting an explanation of how the main seat of sensation transmits to the nerve, and it, in turn, to the muscles, the impulse of your soul, and you are given, instead, the picture of a musician, taut strings transmitting the fantasy of the artist, etc. The simple question is made complex. This analogy can again be reduced to yet another one, and the initial object is completely lost sight of for its similarity. This is like the method by which the portrait of a man is converted through a series of like replicas into the picture of a fruit. Or like those concepts, artificially simplified, supposedly to make them plainer as, for instance: "If we imagine that a ray of light consists of an endless number of globules of ether, contingent upon each other. . . ." Now why should I *imagine* that the light of the sun falls on me in the same way that children roll marbles when I am sure that it is not so? Such hypotheses, i.e., conventional untruths, are habitually resorted to in the physical sciences to explain phenomena. But the assumed lie does not remain exterior to the explanation (otherwise there would be no need for it), but penetrates it, and what we get in place of truth is a concoction of empirical truth and a logical lie. This lie, sooner or later, is exposed and rightly makes us doubt the truth to which it is joined. Chemistry and physics assume the existence of atoms—some twenty years ago atoms were the basis of all chemical investigations. However, in assuming their existence, you are warned, usually on the first page, that the naturalist is not really interested in whether or not the body is really made up

of corpuscles, indivisible and invisible yet possessing the properties, volume and weight. These were admitted just for the sake of convenience. Such half-hearted assumption only demeans their theory. They are responsible for the acrimoniousness of the earlier attacks, by philosophy on atomism, for the latter was offered to the philosopher's view in that mean form to be found in all introductions to courses in physics and chemistry. Atomists of antiquity didn't trifle with atoms; their point of departure, though one-sided, was, however, indispensable in the general development, and they arrived at atomism harmoniously and consistently. They opposed the atom to the Eleatic conception which dissolved all that existed in abstractions. Atoms, according to them, were the universal centralization of substance, its infinite individualization, the *being-for-itself of every point*, so to say. This is one of the truest, most essential aspects of the understanding of nature: it necessarily contains this divisibility and integrity of each part, no less than its continuity and unity. Naturally, atomism does not exhaust the conception of nature (in this it resembles dynamism); in atomism universal unity disappears while in dynamism the parts are obliterated and annulled. The task consists in fusing all these *existing-for-self* sparks into one single flame, without depriving them of their relative independence. Dynamism and atomism made their grandiose appearance at the beginning of our era as the all-absorbing substance of Spinoza and the monadology of Leibnitz, two majestic mileposts, two Herculean pillars of regenerated thought erected not to hinder further progress but to make it impossible to turn back. We shall yet have occasion to speak in our letters of monadology, of the atoms of Gassendi, but this alone will suffice to show you that atomism was no joking matter for thinkers and that behind atoms lay thought, truth. Atomism was the conviction, the belief of Leucippus, Democritus and others. Now, physicists, at the outstart, conceded that their theory may be an absurdity, but one that makes things easier to grasp. And why do they renounce atoms and show a readiness to admit that, perhaps, matter is not, after all, composed of atoms? Thanks to that same amiable reason of sloth and indifference with which they accept any hypothesis. Speaking frankly, that is what we can call cynicism in science.

Volcanoes may yet erupt bodies, says Pouillet, in which atoms will be visible. What, then, does Pouillet associate the term "atom" with? Yet there we have mathematics, the guardian and benefactor of physics, which points so logically, so clearly, to a rational conception of such abstractions. Mathematics says that the line is an infinite multitude of points, placed in a fixed order; it accepts the possibility of dividing space *ad infinitum*, but it means not the *actual* but the *abstract possibility* of divisibility; even more, it also implies the necessary extent and the stereometricity of actual form; it consciously takes a point, a line, a surface within the limits it knows. That is why you will not find a single mathematician who expects to see an aerolite with visible points or with a surface which would detach itself from the body. That is why a mathematician will never undertake an experiment to prove *infinite divisibility* by peeling mica, or dropping ink into a barrel of water and then frightening children with the calculations as to how much ink one drop of this water contains. He knows that if infinite divisibility were *actually possible* it would not be *infinite*. Undoubtedly mathematics has advanced in thought much further than physics has. Infinitesimal calculus amply proves it. Mathematics could not completely efface its kinship to logic. One should not forget (as mathematicians do) that beginning with Pythagoras this science was mainly developed by philosophers: it was Descartes, Leibnitz and even Kant who gave it a new lease of life, and it was by no means an accident that Leibnitz passed from monadology to differentials... However, let us return to our subject.

Naturalists are ready to experiment, work or travel and even risk their lives, but not to worry their brains with reflections on their science. We have seen the reason for this cogito-phobia: the abstract nature of philosophy, ever ready to sink into scholastic mysticism or hollow metaphysics; its affected self-sufficiency and its smugness, shunning nature, experience, and history had inevitably to repel the adherents of natural science. But, since all one-sidedness yields tares along with the fruit, so the natural sciences had to pay for their narrow-mindedness, even though the latter was due to a similar fault in the opposite camp. The fear to put their trust in thought and the impossibility of attaining knowledge without thought left its mark on their

theories: they are subjective, flimsy, inadequate. Every new discovery threatens to bring them toppling down; they cannot develop and are replaced by new theories. By accepting every theory as a personal affair, extrinsic to the object, as a convenient arrangement of particulars, naturalists throw open the doors to fatal scepticism and, sometimes, to astonishing absurdities. Thus, for example, there is nothing surprising in the appearance of homeopathy in itself: there have always been strange attempts at all times and in all branches of knowledge to create new doctrines which contained a small truth husked in a big lie. Nor is it surprising that ladies and paradoxical minds took a liking for being treated with these grains. They believed in homeopathy exactly because it was so improbable. But how to explain the split among the learned physicians some ten years ago? Homeopathic hospitals were built, magazines were published and the book catalogues had a special section: "*Homöopathische Arzneikunde.*" The reason is always one and the same: medicine, like all the natural sciences, rich as it is in data obtained from observation, has not attained that degree of development which the human spirit aspires to in its search for the living source of truth which alone could satisfy it. Naturalists and physicians always claim that they cannot afford to think of theory for they still have not collected all the facts nor made all the experiments, etc. The collected material may, indeed, be insufficient—that is even most likely the case. But, when you say that there is an infinite multitude of facts and that no matter how many of them you collect you still will never reach the last of them, that is still no reason for not formulating the question adequately and developing real demands, true conceptions of the relation between thought and being.*

The accumulation of facts and an exhaustive study of their meaning in no way contradict each other. Every living thing, as it develops, grows in two senses: it expands in volume and at the same time it is centralized. External development means

* Although Alexander the Great did send Aristotle all kinds of animals, the latter, however, was probably less acquainted with them than was Lamarck, a fact which did not prevent him from dividing the animals into Schorophora and Nematophora, which corresponds with Vertebrata and Avertebrata of Lamarck.—*A.H.*

internal development. A child grows physically and intellectually. Both forms of development are indispensable to each other and one of them dominates the other only if there is a one-sided over-development. Science is a living organism which allows the essence of things disengaged in man to develop to the point of complete self-cognition. Science, too, undergoes a twofold development: an external growth in the form of experiments and observations—this is the nourishment without which it could not survive. But what is acquired externally must be *processed* by an internal principle which alone imparts life and meaning to the crystallizing mass of information. Facts, like the deposits in a solution, accrue steadily and slowly, grain by grain; they accumulate without losing anything previously acquired, ever ready to accept the new without, however, doing anything more than merely receiving it. It is an endless progressive evolution, a rectilineal movement, infinite and passive, which, at one and the same time, both assuages and increases the thirst because one series of details opens up a vista of another, etc. This method, *taken alone*, does not lead to complete and true knowledge, yet it is the only path of the experimental sciences.

Now reason, under normal conditions, develops self-cognition. Enriched with information it discovers in itself that ideal point toward which everything converges; that infinite form which will use all that has been acquired for its own plastic self-realization, that vitalizing monad which powerfully compels the rectilineal and infinite path of aimless empirical development to curve around itself and sets it a goal not outside itself, but within itself: for nowhere else but there can man uncover the truth of existence, and this truth is he himself as reason, as thought in development to which empirical information converges from all sides in order to find its original and ultimate expression. This reason, this essential truth, this developing self-cognition, whether it be called philosophy, logic, science or simply human thought, speculative empiricism, or whatever you like—continually transforms empirical facts into clear, distinct thought, assimilates all manifestations of existence, bringing its idea to light. Man has no categories to aid him in attaining understanding save

those of reason; special sciences, in taking up arms against logic, have borrowed the latter's own weapons, and, indeed, its very mistakes.*

This strange relation between the natural sciences and thought cannot continue for long: the wealth of facts accumulated necessarily clarifies their views. They must inevitably decide, frankly and seriously, the question of the relation between thought and being, of natural science and philosophy, and declare resolutely whether it is possible or not to cognize truth. Either natural science should acknowledge that the mind of man is so constituted that it accepts an *illusion* as truth, *seeming* truth, as such and cannot know completely, or can know only subjectively and that, therefore, human knowledge is something in the nature of a generic madness. After that nothing is left but to fold one's hands, like Sextus Empiricus, and, with a supercilious smile, to say: "What nonsense all this is!" Or else, natural science must fully realize that such a view is repulsive, that human reason stands not outside nature but is nature's cognizance of itself, and that man's mind is, in fact, unique and true, as everything in nature is true and real in different degrees. They must realize finally that the laws of thought are the cognized laws of being and that, consequently, thought in no way embarrasses existence but, indeed, liberates it; that it is not because man is intelligent and because he carries his intelligence into everything but, on the contrary, he is intelligent because everything in nature is intelligent. Once man has realized this, he will have to discard that absurd antagonism with philosophy. We have said that experimental sciences had every right to turn their back on the philosophy of the past; but this one-sided phase, historically very important, is in its death throes if it has not passed out altogether. That philosophy which was incapable of recognizing and understanding empiricism and, what is even worse, was able to get along without it, was as cold as ice and inhumanly austere. The laws which it discovered were so comprehensive that all the particular elements

* Thus, abstract forces, causes, polarization, repulsion and attraction have all come to physics from logic, from mathematics and, since they were accepted uncritically and haphazardly, have lost their real meaning.—*A.H.*

were lost in it. It could not throw off its dualism and ultimately found its way out: went half-way to meet empiricism, while dualism humbly quit the scene in the robes of romantic idealism, a piteous thing, poor and anaemic, nourished with the blood of others. This school is the last representative of Reformation scholasticism. It vainly aspires to something not of this world, something inaccessible, non-existent, to those beautiful immaterial females, towards those disembodied, ardent embraces, to feelings without a heart to feel. And of this school it will soon be said, as Kozlov said of his mad heroine:

She kept waiting and waiting,
And then died before he came.

Thinkers and naturalists have awakened to the fact that they will get nowhere without each other. Frequently their principal issues unwittingly happen to coincide and identical questions arise. What then prevents them from coming to a complete understanding? Sloth, ready-made conceptions, prejudices transmitted from generation to generation and strongly ingrained on both sides. Prejudice is a long chain confining man within a fixed, limited circle of rigid conceptions; the ear and the eye have grown accustomed to them, and absurdities, enjoying the rights acquired by usage, become generally-accepted truths. Are they worth the trouble of analysis? Isn't it simpler, without examination or scrutiny, to repeat inherited opinions which, perhaps, were relatively true in their day but which have outlived their truth? Guild scholars and philosophers acquire a certain set of conceptions, a definite routine which they cannot shake off. In their student days they take for granted the first principles and give them no further thought. They are certain that they are done with this ABC to which it would be ridiculous and unnecessary to return. Definitions, classifications, and scholastic terms transmitted from generation to generation confuse the good sense and clear mind of the beginner so that he cannot discard them for a long time to come—and frequently for ever. Don't imagine that only limited minds pay tribute to the prejudices of their caste—far from it! When Goethe discovered, described and sketched the human intermaxillary bone of man, the cele-

brated Camper said to him: "That is all very well, but the *os intermaxillare* isn't to be found in the human jaw." Referring to this incident Goethe could not help adding:* "It may, perhaps, be termed youthful impudence when an uninitiated pupil dares to contradict a past master of his profession and tries to prove that he, nevertheless, is right; but many years of experience have taught me to look at it differently. Phrases repeated without end, fix themselves in the mind, and finally grow to be unalterable convictions, while the *organs of intuition grow dulled.* There have been cases of masters in their craft (*Handwerk*) who sometimes deviated somewhat from the beaten path, but they never left the highway; they were afraid of new paths. They believed that it would, nonetheless, be safer to stick to the old." "A newcomer," he wrote elsewhere, "is not tied down; his healthy eye can immediately discern that which the accustomed eye will no longer see." Not only do the naturalists truckle to habit and to usage; they are also checked or impeded by their singular conception of their personal rights in science: they invent truth as they would a new type of cannon shells. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, a man of genius, felt, undoubtedly much more clearly than others, the need to place natural science on a firm foundation. He touched upon the constructive idea, the universal type, the unity within the diversity of the works of nature, etc. But, mind you, he strove to do this without taking into account the generic thought of mankind. He imagined that all that was a private invention of his own and claimed a monopoly on it. In the same fashion every reasoning naturalist invents a principle, assumes a few leading ideas which particularly please him, then consistently introduces them throughout his book and there you have a ready theory. The result of the complete separation of natural science from philosophy often means many years of labour before they arrive at an approximate formulation of the law long known in another sphere, before they dissipate doubts which have long been eliminated. They toil and moil to rediscover America, they blaze the trail where a railway is already functioning. That is the result of the disunity of

* *Goethe's Werke*, Vol. XXXVI, Zur Osteologie, etc.—*A.H.*

science, of this feudalism which throws up a rampart around every strip of land and coins its own money behind it. The philosopher ignores facts and prides himself on his ignorance of practical affairs. No sooner does he deign to descend from his universal laws to the particular, i.e., to reality, than he is lost. Now, for the empiricist the reverse is true.

However, with the break of our century the word *reconciliation* has become current. With good reason, too. The mist is beginning to dissipate. The review of the main stages in this reconciliation will be the subject matter of the letters to come. For the time being, I shall offer some remarks of a general nature.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century a revolution was seething in the quiet of study-rooms, in the heads of thinkers, a revolution as formidable and violent as the one in the political world. The mental state was frightful to imagine: everything around was tottering—social morals, the conception of good and evil, faith in nature, in man, in creeds—and, instead of consolation, critical philosophy and sceptical empiricism were served up. Two unbeliefs, two scepticisms—and ruins all around. Critical philosophy dealt idealism a terrific blow; hard as empiricism had struggled against idealism, the latter had, nonetheless, withstood the attack. But a man emerged from its own midst whose blows brought it to the brink of the grave. This man was truly great in his implacable, incorruptible logic; his rupture with dogmatism was deep and deliberate. Truth was his only goal and he stopped at nothing in his search. He set up those terrible Caudine Forks called antinomies and dispassionately made the most sacred thoughts of man run that gauntlet. After Kant it was impossible to resurrect idealism completely, save, perhaps, in some particular aspects; everybody bowed low to the might of his genius. But such views were hard to bear. Strong as Fichte's stoic breast was, it could not yet withstand them. The impossibility of attaining absolute knowledge laid an impassable barrier between man and truth. Such conception was enough to drive one mad or desperate. Herder and Jacobi tried to save some ideas so dear to them from the Kantian shipwreck but emotions are a weak support in a battle with logic. At long last a man was

found who had an adamantine breast and could safely and quietly oppose his profound realism to critical philosophy. That man was Goethe. He was extraordinarily endowed with an immediate perception of things. He knew that and *examined* everything independently. He was not a college philosopher, nor a specialized scholar—he was a thinking artist. He was the first to re-establish the true relation of man to the world around him. He set a great example to naturalists. Without superfluous preparations he plunged directly *in medias res.* In this he is the empiricist, the observer. But just watch how the conception of the given subject grows and develops out of his observation, how it unfolds, depending on its existence and how, finally, a universal and profound idea is born. If you read *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, or his articles on osteology, you will immediately realize what a true understanding of nature really means, what speculative empiricism* is. For him thought and nature are *aus einem Guss: "Oben die Geister und unten der Stein."* For Goethe nature is life, that very life which is in him and that is why he understands it so well. Even more, nature speaks to us through his lips and herself initiates us into her mysteries. After him came a voice out of the domain of abstract science, which defined truth as the unity of existence and thought. This voice orientated philosophy toward nature as to some indispensable complement, as to its mirror. Magnificent was the spectacle of mankind, returning to earth, represented by its foremost members, the poet-thinker and the thinker-poet, clinging to the bosom of Mother Earth. That was both the return of the prodigal son and the rescue of the metaphysician from the pit into which he had fallen.

Schelling did nothing but point out the road, as Virgil did to Dante, but his manner of doing so showed the stamp of genius. Schelling has one of those great and artistic natures which attains the truth spontaneously, instinctively, through inspiration. There was always something in him akin to Plato and Jacob Boehme. This way to knowledge is the secret of genius and not of science. It is a secret he cannot pass on any more than the artist his secret of creation. But his inspired

* I am enclosing in the second letter a small article by Goethe written by him in *1780.—A.H.*

voice leads to truth and to understanding by calling for the inborn sympathy of man for truth. Schelling is the *vates* of science. In his letters to Schiller he wrote that he was quite unable to develop his thoughts in strictly scientific form. Goethe knew himself to be what he really was. He taught by means of facts. Supremely practical, he was able to get down to details without losing sight of the whole. Schelling, on the contrary, considered himself an essentially philosophical, speculative nature, and for that reason he tried to stifle his intuitive sympathy and prescience in scholastic forms; he overcame his own idealism in words but not in fact. How impractical and unrealistic his nature was is most clearly evident from the fact that he, while studying primarily natural philosophy, never engaged in a positive study of any one branch of natural science. His erudition was colossal but it was an encyclopaedia of natural science. He was a dilettante of genius. Goethe could, for example, be a specialist when the need arose—now a student in the anatomical theatre, now a keen observer or a draughtsman. He worked, carried on experiments, made a practical study of osteology for years. He knew that without specialization the general theory would smack of idealism, that one's own observation in the natural sciences is as important as the reading of sources in history: that is why he could suddenly, unexpectedly, discover a whole world or a completely new aspect of his subject. The empiricists never renounced Goethe: all his great ideas were accepted and appreciated by them,* while they neither understood nor recognized Schelling who held a hand out to them on behalf of philosophy. Naturalists, followers of Schelling, accepted the formal side of his doctrine; but they did not grasp the spirit of his writings. They failed to fan the sparks of profound reflection, scattered about in his writings, into bright flames. Rather they erected some strange metaphysical-sentimental edifice out of his views. They combined sterile scholasticism with purely German *Gemütlichkeit.* Not that they had expounded

* For example, his idea that the cranium is the result of the evolution of vertebrates; the metamorphosis of parts of the plant; the intermaxillare, and a hundred other remarks on osteology. See Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, de Candolle, and others.—*A.H.*

Schelling's natural philosophy either scientifically or systematically: they took two, three general cut-and-dry formulas, and fitted all phenomena, the whole universe to them. These formulas are like the standards in the recruiting station: no matter who goes in, he comes out a soldier. Even those philosophers of nature who contributed greatly through the practical part of their science neither avoided formalism nor sentimentalism. Take, for example, Carus. His contribution to physiology was tremendous but his general remarks, his introductions! What verbosity, what ideas! It is painful to see so serious a man compromising himself to such an extent. Even Oken, though superior to all the others, cannot be accepted without reservations. Nature, as conceived by Oken, is a cramped and inconvenient place to be in, and, besides, he is as dogmatic as the others. The idea, extensive and all-embracing, is there but Oken is to blame precisely because it is discernible as an idea, and nature seems to exist solely to bear it out. The study of nature in Oken's works lays claim, in the German manner, to the absolute, to consummated architectonics. Recall the remark made above that idealism becomes accessible to nothing but its own *idée fixe*; it has not enough respect for the world of facts to submit to its objections.

I don't remember where and when I read an article by Edgar Quinet on German philosophy. The article in itself was not of the best but it contained a delightful comparison between German philosophy and the French Revolution. Kant was compared with Mirabeau, Fichte with Robespierre, and Schelling with Napoleon. On the whole this comparison is true to some extent. I, too, am inclined to compare Schelling with Napoleon, only in a way opposite to the one used by Edgar Quinet. Neither the empire of Napoleon nor the philosophy of Schelling was able to maintain itself and for one and the same reason: neither the one nor the other was perfectly organized; neither had the strength to reject the one-sidedness of the past, nor to go on to the extreme conclusion. Both Napoleon and Schelling proclaimed to the world the reconciliation of opposites and their cancellation by a new order of things. In the name of this new order of things Bonaparte was crowned emperor. The smoke of guns, however, could not, in the end,

hide the fact that Napoleon had remained, at heart, a man of the past. The historical masquerade à *la Charlemagne* for which Napoleon donned so unsuitable a dress, and surrounded himself with his duke-soldiers was an *intermedia buffa*, to be followed by Waterloo, with a genuine duke in command. Schelling, in his domain, followed in Napoleon's footsteps: he promised the reconciliation of thought and being; but, having proclaimed the reconciliation of opposite trends in a supreme unity, he remained an idealist at a time when Oken instituted Schelling's rule over the whole polity of nature, and the *Isis*[21] —*le Moniteur* of natural philosophy—trumpeted forth its victories. Disguised as Jacob Boehme, Schelling began to foment a reaction to his own theories partly to avoid admitting to himself that others had left him behind. Schelling was a Boehme stood up on his head, just as Napoleon was a Charlemagne similarly placed. That was the worst that might have happened because it was extremely ridiculous. Jacob Boehme, full of mystical reflection, attains at all points profound philosophical views. If his language is difficult and fettered by mystical scholastic terminology, all the more honour to his genius which could express the immensity of his thoughts in this awkward language. Though he lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he had the firmness to go beyond narrow formalism, and the courage to accept the consequences, appalling to the timid conscience of his century. Far from crushing his powerful intellect, mysticism rather lent it wings. Schelling, quite the contrary, sought to descend from profound scientific reflection to mystic somnambulism, to cipher thought into hieroglyphs. This led to most deplorable results: people who were truly religious and people who were unreligious both repudiated him and ceded him a little Elba[22] in the University of Berlin. Oken has remained alone with his *Isis*. The vain struggle with naturalists, their disagreeable manner of basing their objections on facts, has made him bitter and capricious. He is loath to discuss his system with foreigners; he has known the epoch at its apogee, and if he is now working at something, it is only in silence. Let us hope, at least, that he will not essay to write a book in zoology in verse as Schelling planned to do for his theory. Whatever

success has been achieved in the sphere of natural science was done so outside natural philosophy. The empiricists did not trust it, shunning its difficult language, its general views, its practical inclinations, its exalted sentimentality. Cuvier warned the Paris Academy of Sciences against theories coming from beyond the Rhine. Cousin was even more outspoken, warning in his lectures against the spread of idealism in France. Incidentally, the French are endowed with so just a view of things that it is impossible to lead them astray. They will soon comprehend German wisdom. It is certainly not because the French are obtuse that German science has not crossed the Rhine.

The first instance of a scientific exposition of natural science is Hegel's *Encyclopaedia.* His doctrine, steadfast and rigorously consistent, is almost contemporary with that of Schelling's (he gave his first lecture on natural philosophy in 1804 in Jena). Hegel is the last of that brilliant constellation of thinkers of which Descartes and Spinoza were the first. Hegel set the limits beyond which German science will not go, and his doctrine points clearly to an egress out of it and, indeed, an egress out of any dualism and metaphysics. That was the ultimate, the mightiest effort of pure reason, so true and realistic that, in spite of itself, it continually became everywhere the thought of actuality. The austere outlines, the granite-bound stages of the *Encyclopaedia* no more limit its contents than the ship's railing hinders the eye from roving over the vast spaces of the sea. True, Hegel's logic retains all its claims to unchallenged power over other spheres, to an exclusive completeness ready to meet all exigencies. He seems to lose sight of the fact that logic is precisely not the completeness of life because it has curbed it within itself, because it has *abstracted* itself from the transient; it is accordingly abstract and contains only what is eternal. It is abstract because it is absolute; it is the knowledge of being but not being itself; it is above it and therein lies its one-sidedness. If it were enough for nature to know, as Hegel inadvertently admits at times, then on attaining self-cognition it would cancel its existence and ignore it; but, in fact, existence is as dear to it as knowledge. It loves life but life is possible only

in a bacchic whirl of the transient; while in the sphere of the general, the tumult and the eddies of life calm down. The human genius wavers between these opposites; like Charon it keeps ferrying back and forth from the temporal abode to the eternal one. This crossing, this alternation is history and this is what matters, after all, and not just crossing to the other side and living in the abstract and universal spheres of pure thought. Nor did Hegel alone understand this. Leibnitz, a century and a half earlier, said that unless the monad had a transient, ultimate existence it would dissolve in the infinite and completely lose the possibility of asserting itself. All of Hegel's logic discloses that the absolute is the confirmation of the unity of being and thought. But no sooner do Hegel and Leibnitz get down to the crux of the matter than they both lay all that is temporal and existing on the altar of thought and spirit. The idealism in which Hegel was educated, which he drank in with his mother's milk, drags him back to that one-sidedness which he himself had executed. He strives to suppress nature by means of logic, by means of the spirit. He is apt to consider every particular work of nature as a phantom, and look down upon every natural phenomenon.

Hegel begins with the abstract so as to arrive at concrete spheres; but the former presupposes the concrete from which they have been abstracted. He develops the absolute idea, and having brought it up to the point of self-cognition, he makes it appear in the transient existence. The latter, however, was superfluous, for the required result had been obtained without resorting to it. Hegel discovered that nature, life, develops in accordance with the laws of logic. He traced this parallelism phase by phase. Unlike Schelling's general remarks, rhapsodic and desultory, the result here was a harmonious, profound system engraved in bronze, every stroke a testimonial of his gigantic force. Hegel, however, treated nature and history as *applied logic* rather than logic as the abstract wisdom of nature and history. For that reason empirical science remained, with perfect equanimity, just as deaf to Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* as to Schelling's dissertations. We cannot contest the perspicuity and true judgement of these unfortunate empiricists so insolently ridiculed by idealism. Empiricism was an open

protest, a bold challenge to idealism and such it remained. No matter what idealism did empiricism foiled it. Not a step did it retreat.* When Schelling propounded his philosophy, a large number of philosophers thought that the time had come to marry the science of thought to the positive sciences. The empiricists remained silent. Hegel's philosophy brought about this reconciliation in logic, took it as a basis and developed it through all the domains of spirit and nature, subjecting them to logic. The empiricists continued their silence. They saw that the original sin of scholasticism had not yet been completely condoned. Hegel had undoubtedly raised thought to heights at which it was impossible to take another step without leaving idealism completely behind. This step, however, has not been taken and empiricism is still waiting for it imperturbably. But when it is actually taken it will mean the infusion of new life into all the abstract spheres of human knowledge! Empiricism, elephant-like, advances forward slowly but surely.

It is absurd not only to blame Hegel, but even Schelling for the fact that, having accomplished so much, they did not accomplish still more. That would be historical ingratitude. However, we cannot but admit that just as Schelling did not crown any of his conceptions with a single true consequence so, too, Hegel failed to deduce all the direct and outspoken results of his principles *impliciter*, they are all merely pre-existent in his doctrine. All that was accomplished after Hegel was the development of what Hegel had left undeveloped. He understood the true relation between thought and being, but this does not yet mean the complete renunciation of the old; it has remained in the morals, language, and habits. He understood his abstractedness through his own abstractions and was content with this. No one born in Egyptian captivity entered the Promised Land, for his blood was tainted by slavery. Hegel, by his genius, by the power of his intellect, wiped out the Egyptian taint in himself, and what little remained of it was more a bad habit than anything else. Now,

* We scarcely need repeat that empiricism is absurd when it goes to extremes, that its creeping on all fours is just as comical a sight as the bat-like flights of idealism; an extreme always causes the corresponding extreme on the opposite side.—*A.H.*

Schelling succumbed to it. Goethe neither had to suppress it nor succumb to it.

However, I suppose I ought to wind up.

I confess that when I sat down to write to you I did not quite realize how difficult a problem I had tackled, how inadequate were my ability and my knowledge and how great a responsibility my task imposed on me. Once launched on the task it became obvious that I was not in a position to carry out my plan. However, I shall not put down my pen. If I cannot do what I set out to, I will at least be satisfied if I can arouse a desire to acquire a clear and consistent knowledge of what I shall treat desultorily and incompletely. The value of such *Vorstudien*, as these letters, is only of an introductory character. They will constitute a general introduction to the main questions of modern science; eliminating false and inexact ideas, obsolete prejudices and making science more accessible. Science seems difficult not because it really is so, but because you cannot get at its simplicity without first breaking through the wall of ready conceptions which obstruct a direct view of things. Let those who enter these spheres know that the entire arsenal of rusty and useless weapons inherited from scholasticism are good for nothing; that we must sacrifice those artificial views, that unless we first discard all the *half-lies* with which the *half-truths* are clothed to make them easier to understand, we cannot enter the domain of science and arrive at the full truth.

The fundamental principles are not my own: they belong to the modern view on science and their mighty spokesmen. My only contribution is the exposition and good will. This reminds me of an emigrant prince who, if I am not mistaken, remarked as he distributed snuff-boxes and rings sent to him by Empress Catherine in Mitau: "*De ma part ce n'est que le mouvement du bras et la bonne volonté.*"*—I repeat his words.**

* On my part it's only a movement of the hands and good will.—*Ed.*

** It might not be amiss to call the readers' attention to the fact that the words: "idealism," "metaphysics," "abstraction," "theory" have been used in their extreme meaning, where they are false, exceptional. Now, if we take these words in a more general sense, apart from their historical implications, that is, put ideal definitions in their place, they will become

LETTER TWO

SCIENCE AND NATURE—
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THOUGHT

LET US BEGIN *ab ovo*. There are reasons enough for this. Let me indicate them. In order to understand that logical stage of the development of science at which natural science finds itself in our day, it is not enough to make brief mention of several of the most outstanding facts, some principles laid down by modern science, or some deductions which give its essence. Nothing has injured philosophy so much as ready-made conclusions torn out of their context, accepted nominally, devoid of all sense and repeated with arbitrary interpretations. Words do not express the full content of thought and of all the mental processes leading to it to such an extent as to be able, in the condensed form of final conclusions, to bring home to everyone their real and true meaning. One has to arrive at this meaning; the process of its development is cancelled, and only found in the conclusion in a final state. The latter expresses only the crux of the matter; it is a title of a kind placed at the end; separated thus from the entire organism it is either useless or harmful. What is the good of an equation of some line to a man who does not know algebra, even though this equation

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something quite different; however, I beg you to keep in mind that that is not the meaning I attach to them. For me these words are mottoes, banners of a biased view which immediately localizes the sore spot. Of course, Aristotle did not use the word "metaphysics"[73] in that sense. Every person who regards nature not as the source of food supply, but as something to be studied, can be called a metaphysicist, just as every thinking person an idealist. So I felt duty bound to explain my use of these words. If they irritate the reader, let him put others in their place—*le fond de la chose* remains unchanged and that is all that matters. One more remark: Hegel's views are neither accepted nor known in positive sciences. His method is barely known in France, yet Hegelism has had a great influence on natural science. Naturalists cannot discover the source of this influence but it is evident in Liebig, in Burdach, Raspail and in many others, even though most of them will probably disavow what we have said. They do not realize how it happened that they have taken from the environment the trend they have given science. I shall try, in one of my later letters, to prove what I have just said.—*A.H.*

contains all the necessary elements: its laws, construction and all possible cases? They exist only for those who know how equations are formed, i.e., for those who know the steps leading to the formula implied by it and latent in it. For them every sign means a certain order of notions. The whole truth is contained in a general formula. But a general formula is not that medium in which truth can develop freely—quite the reverse is the case: it is condensed, concentrated within it. A seed is just such a concentration of a plant: yet no one mistakes the seed for the plant. No one will seat himself in the shade of the acorn although it contains within itself more than a grown oak does—a series of past and a series of future oaks. It is sometimes possible to make use of the results arrived at without going into an explanation of their meaning. That happens when one is certain beforehand that the same words define the same conceptions, which are something generally accepted, pre-existent and constitute the links between the speaker and his audience. In a period of transition, such certainty is possible only in communication with close friends. For the most part those who speak in behalf of science imagine that the entire process which they discern so plainly behind the formal expressions, is known to their audience, and they proceed with their discourse, while every individual gives free reign to his personal opinions or beliefs and the words uttered stimulate him not to mental activity but rather awaken these sluggish and obsolete prejudices. Therefore, I pray, do not complain if I begin with a definition of science and with a general review of its development.

The office of science is to raise everything that exists into thought. Thought strives to understand, to assimilate the object outside it and sets forth with a denial of what renders it external, different, opposed to thought; in other words, with a denial of the immediacy of the object—it generalizes the object, after which thought treats it as a generality and seeks to understand it as such. To understand an object means to discover the necessity of its contents, to justify its existence, its development. What has been recognized by us as necessary and reasonable is no longer alien to us: it has already become a clear idea of the object. That idea which we have conceived

and comprehended belongs to us and we are conscious of it because it is reasonable and man is reasonable and there is but one reason.* We cannot comprehend what is irrational, but then it is not worth the trouble of understanding: it must necessarily prove to be not essential, not true. It turns out to be (using school language) something impossible to prove, for proof consists only in demonstrating the necessity that the object is essential, that it is rational, and what is rational is recognized by man. Man seeks no other criterion: justification by the intellect is the highest instance, admitting no further appeal. It goes without saying that the idea of an object does not belong exclusively to the thinker; he has not introduced it into reality—he only realized it. It pre-existed as latent reason, in the immediate existence of the object, as its right to existence, *revealed* in time and space, as the law practically executed, testifying to its indivisible unity with existence. Thinking disengages thought existing in time and space for the medium of consciousness, more appropriate to it. It, so to say, arouses thought out of its state of coma in which it is *still* plunged, incarnated in matter and existing through mere being. The idea of an object is disengaged not in the object itself: it is disengaged in an immaterial form, generalized, freed from its fortuitous character in the domain of consciousness, this reason of the universal. The object existence of thought, regenerated in the domain of reason and self-cognition, goes on as before, in time and space; thought

* The idea of there being *several reasons* is an absurdity which is beyond not only human understanding, but even of the imagination of the human mind. If we, for example, admit the possibility of two reasons, then what is true for one will be false for the other—otherwise they would not be different. At the same time, each of the reasons has the right to regard its truth as authentic, and this right has been recognized by us when we recognize two reasons. If we say that only one of them understands the truth, then the other reason will already be not reason but madness. Two different reasons, in possession of different truths, call to mind those humiliating cases of two persons taking contradictory oaths. A different understanding of an object does not mean that the reasons are different but, firstly, that people are different and, secondly, that truth is defined differently, from different aspects, by one and the same reason depending on the development of the latter.—*A.H.*

has received a twofold life: one being its previous, particular, positive existence determined by the material world; the other —of a universal character, determined by consciousness and the negation of it as a particular. The object is first completely outside of human thought; the personal mental activity of man begins by his search into what the truth and reason of it consist in. As thought divorces the object (and itself) of all that is particular and fortuitous, as it penetrates further into the reason of the object, it discovers that the latter is also its own reason. In its search for the truth of the object it finds this truth within itself. The more the idea develops, the greater is its independence and autonomy in respect both to the person of the thinker and to the object. It links them together, cancels the difference between them by means of a supreme unity, rests on them and free, self-sufficient, autonomous, prevails over them, thus fusing two one-sided elements into one harmonious whole.* The whole process of the development of the idea of an object by means of the thought of humankind from crude and irreconcilable contradictions between the person and the object down to the cancellation of the contradictions by the consciousness of the supreme unity in which they are two mutually indispensable poles—this whole series of forms which disengage the truth contained in the two extremes (the person and the object) from their mutual limitation by disclosing and realizing their unity in reason, in the idea— this is what constitutes the organism of science.

Many regard science as something external to the object, something arbitrarily chosen and invented by humans, and consequently they conclude that knowledge is invalid, or even impossible. Certainly, science does not lie in the material existence of the object; undoubtedly, it is the free activity of thought, notably, human thought. But that does not mean that science is an arbitrary creation of chance individuals, external to the object studied. If it were that, science would be, as we have said, a generic madness. A limited category outside existence could not be attached to thought; it is not essential

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* That is to say, existence as the only *being-in-itself*, and consciousness as the only *being-for-itself*.—*A.H.*

to it; thought has no confined, intransmutable determinateness—either *here or there*, it needs no alibi. If you want to use this category then you must reverse the expression and say that the immediate object is outside of thought—because it actually constitutes its externality. Nature is not only external to us, it is in itself *only* an externality; its thought, its consciousness, come into their own, appear not in it but in *the other* (i.e., in man). Now, the generic destination of man is to constitute truth both of *himself* and of the *other* (i.e., of nature). Consciousness is self-cognition; it commences with the cognition of itself as otherness and ends in self-cognition as such. Consciousness is by no means external to nature, it is rather the highest stage of its development, the transition from positive, indivisible existence in time and space, through the negative, divided definition of man as opposed to nature, and up to the revelation of their true unity. Whence and how could consciousness external to nature and, consequently, alien to the object have arisen? Man is not external to nature but is only relatively opposed to it, and not actually. If nature really contradicted reason, then everything material would be absurd and purposeless. We are accustomed to fence off the world of man from the world of nature by a stone wall. Unjustly so. Indeed, there are no strictly fixed boundaries and limits, to the great chagrin of all systematizers. In this case they, moreover, overlook that man has a universal duty of his own to perform in this same nature, and that is, to complete its elevation into thought. Man and nature are as opposite as are the two poles of a magnet, or rather, as the flower is opposite to the stalk, as the youth is to the infant. All that is not developed and is wanting in nature, exists and is developed in man. Wherein, then, lies their real opposition? They are unequal and impossible antagonists. Nature has no power over thought, while in thought lies the power of man. Nature is like a Greek statue—all its latent power, all its thought lie in its outward form. Everything that it could express it did, leaving it to man to discover what it did not. Nature is related to man as an indispensable antecedent, a presupposition (*Voraussetzung*); man is related to nature as an indispensable consequence, as a conclusion (*Schluss*). The life of nature is a continuous

development through which what is abstract, simple, incomplete and elemental becomes concrete, complete and complex. It is the development of the germ by the differentiation of all that is contained within its conception and the continual effort to bring this development to the most perfect harmony between form and content; that is the dialectics of the physical world. Man is the acme of all aspirations, all the efforts of nature. It is towards him they strive and into him they fall like rivers into an ocean. What can be more audacious than the hypothesis that human consciousness—the final conclusion crowning the evolution of nature—is at variance with it? Everything in the world is harmonious, coherent, purposeful and only our thought is something apart, something like an errant comet, an absolutely irrelevant malady of the brain.

If thought is to be represented as something unnatural, quite exterior to the object, a particular and personal property of man, it must be detached from its genealogy. But is it possible to understand the connection and significance of anything whatever if we arbitrarily take the extreme links? Can we understand the relation between a stone and a bird? Even if we trace it step by step, it is easy to go astray. But if we haphazardly choose two elements and juxtapose them in order to arrive at their connection, we will be confronted by a difficult, thankless and almost insolvable task: that is how nature and its connection with man, with thought, is regarded. Ordinarily, when one takes up the question of nature it is dismantled from its material basis. It is told, as once Joshua told the sun: "Sun, stand thou still...." But nature cannot stand still. It is a process; it is a current, a flux, a motion; it will slip through the fingers; in the womb it will become a human being and will break through the dam before you are able to pass from it to the world of man:

Ewig natürlich bewegende Kraft
Göttlich gesetzlich entbindet und schafft;
Trennendes Leben, im Leben Verein,
Oben die Geister und unten der Stein.

Goethe

If you halted nature for a single instant, as something dead, not only would you not arrive at the possibility of thought, you would not even attain the possibilities of infusoria, polyps and moss. Examine nature as it is and you will see that it is in motion; give it full scope, look into its biography, into the history of its development and only then will you get a coherent picture of it. The history of thought is the continuation of the history of nature: neither mankind nor nature can be understood apart from their historical development. What distinguishes these histories from each other is that nature remembers nothing—it has no past, while man bears within himself all his past, both individual and generic. History links nature to logic—without it they fall apart. The reason of nature lies only in its existence—the existence of logic consists exclusively in reason. Neither nature nor logic can suffer, neither is tormented by doubts or contradictions. The former has not reached that stage, the latter has transcended them. Herein lies their antagonistic incompleteness. History is the passionate, dramatic epic of the transition from nature to logic wherein the immediate becomes the conscious, while eternal thought is cast into transient existence: its agents are not general categories, not abstract norms, as they are in logic, nor meek slaves as are the works of nature; they are personalities embodying these eternal norms and fighting against fate indifferently brooding over nature. Thought, historically, is the generic activity of mankind, a vital and true science. It is that universal thought which, by itself, has undergone the entire morphology of nature and has insensibly arrived at the consciousness of its own validity. In every epoch its knowledge and conceptions crystallize in the regular shape of abstract theory, independent and absolute, which represents formal science. Each time thought lays claim to being the consummation of human knowledge, but it merely draws up the final report and formulates the result of thought of a certain epoch; it regards itself alone as absolute, whereas in reality what is absolute is that movement which impels consciousness ever onward. Logical development goes through the same stages, as nature and history. Like the aberration of the stars in the firmament, they repeat the movement of the earth.

Hence, you can see that fundamentally, it is all the same whether we expound the process of self-cognition either from a logical or historical viewpoint. We shall take the latter. We find the austere, lucid, self-satisfied course of logic less congenial: history is an enthusiastic struggle, the triumphant march out of Egyptian captivity to the Promised Land. The victory is assured in advance in logic which is conscious of its power, its irresistible force. That is not the case for history and that is why the exultant paean of joy will ring out when the Red Sea recedes to let our posterity pass through and will deluge Pharaoh's outworn and unjust claims. Logic is more reasonable, history more humane. No view can be more erroneous than the one which disregards the past—by means of which the present is attained as if this evolution were a mere scaffolding covering no intrinsic values. If that were so history would be humiliating: an unending sacrifice of the present to the future. The present of the human spirit embraces and preserves the entire past, which has not merely passed by it, but has developed into it. The past was not lost in the present or replaced by it but found its fulfilment in the present. What is false, illusory, inessential is only transient; or rather it never really existed, it was still-born death does not exist for what is true. There is good reason why poets compare the human spirit to the sea: like the sea it guards all the wealth once fallen into its depths. Only what is too feeble to withstand the salinity of its waters vanishes without a trace.

Thus, if we are to understand the present state of thought, the best path to follow is one which will show how mankind reached it, to review the morphology of thought: from its instinctive, unconscious peace with nature, preceding thought, down to the nascent possibility of complete and conscious peace with itself. We shall have to start by reconstructing those steps which have been almost completely obliterated because mankind does not know how to preserve what it has done unthinkingly. The instinctive lingers in its memory as a vague dream of childhood! However, that is no reason for your assuming that I am going to serve up to you *The Death of Abel* á la Gessner[24] or the Savage Man of the Encyclo-

paedists. My object is much simpler: it seeks to determine the necessary point of departure of historical consciousness.

Outside man there is a multitude of particularities, varied to an infinite degree and interwoven in a confused manner. Their external dependence, hinting at an internal unity, their fixed reciprocal interaction, is almost lost entirely amid fortuitous elements which disperse, regroup, conserve and annihilate "this heap of parts receding into the infinite," as Leibnitz so admirably put it. These elements are characterized by self-sufficient independence of man; they existed before him and they showed no concern for him after he appeared; they are unending, unlimited: they continue to arise and disappear everywhere. From the point of view of reason this cyclone, this vortex, this disorder, this rebellious spirit of his environment should have struck man with horror and dismay, should have crushed him and filled his heart with despair. But, confronted with nature for the first time, man regarded it with childlike simplicity; he had no distinct notion of things: he *did not retreat* yet from the world in which he found himself; negation had not yet awakened in his mind, and that is why he felt at home and, head raised high, his gaze met everything in the world about him undazzled. This empirical trust is possessed by the animal but there it stops. Man, however, is not long in perceiving that this confidence is inadequate, that he feels himself master of his environment. These particularities which exist unlinked among themselves lack something; they disintegrate and disappear rapidly without leaving a trace behind. It is man who gives them a pivotal point and this point is man himself. By means of his *word* man wrenches them out of the vortex in which they are swept away and vanish; in giving them a name man recognizes their existence, regenerates them in himself, doubles them and immediately introduces them into the sphere of the universal. We are so accustomed to the word that we forget the magnitude of this grandiose act—the ascension of man on the throne of the universe. Nature without man to give it a name is something mute, incomplete, a failure, an *avorté*. Man has blessed it by giving meaning to its existence, he has recreated it and made it articulate. There was a good reason for Plato growing so

ecstatic about man's eyes contemplating the heavens and finding them more magnificent than the firmament itself. Animals, too, can see and emit sounds and both these acts are great triumphs of life; but when man sees and speaks the disordered mass of particularities ceases to be a conglomeration of accidental things and stands revealed as a harmonious whole, an integral organism. It is noteworthy that also in this period of spontaneous harmony with nature, when reason, that sword of negation, had not yet severed man from the soil on which he grew up, man did not recognize the autonomy of particular phenomena. Everywhere man played the role of master, considering it within his right to take possession of all that surrounded him and subject it to his will. He regarded inanimate objects as slaves, as organs outside his body, belonging to him. We can impose our will only on something which has no will of its own or whose will we refuse to recognize; once we assign our aim to someone else that means either that we regard his aim as unimportant or else regard ourselves as his aim.

Man had so little regard for the rights of nature that he destroyed everything that stood in his way without the slightest compunction. He made use of whatever he liked. Like Hessler he forced the Swiss to construct the Zwing-Uri where they themselves were to be confined. He harnessed the forces of nature, opposing one against the other. Nature not only did not frighten man by its immensity and infinitude—a thing which he did not pay the least attention to, leaving it to the future rhetoricians of all ages to terrify themselves and others with myriads of worlds and all quantitative immeasurables—and not even by the calamities which it involuntarily heaped on the heads of people. Nowhere do we see man bend the knee before the obtuse and external force of the world. Quite the contrary, man recoils from its chaotic and disordered nature and kneels in ecstatic and fervent prayer to the divine. No matter how crude was the image man gave to the supreme being, the divine spirit, he invariably saw it as the embodiment of truth, wisdom, reason, justice reigning over and conquering the material aspect of existence. Belief in the universal

power of Providence makes it impossible to believe in chaos and fortuity.

Man could not long remain in primordial concord with nature, with the phenomenal world. He carried within himself the germ which, as it developed, must invariably, like a chemical reagent, have decomposed that childlike harmony with nature. Nature, as the outside world, could not be his aim; in his religious flights man strives to withdraw from the phenomenal world to the world reigning over all phenomena. The animal is never at discord with nature; it is the last link in the development of individual life that combines with the general life of nature without conflict; the dual nature of man lies precisely in the fact that he, in addition to his positive existence, cannot but take a negative attitude to material life. He remains at discord not only with external nature but even with himself. This disharmony torments him and it is this suffering that impels him onward. There are moments of weakness and exhaustion when anguish and something dreadful in this antagonism with nature crush man and he, instead of taking the path indicated by the holy finger of truth sits down, wearied with fatigue, midway, wipes the bloody sweat off his brow and sets up as the goal the golden calf: an easy goal but a false one. He deceives himself; at times he suspects it but, like the enraged Othello, blinded by fury, prays that he be deceived, though he craves to know the truth. To escape from what is disquieting and frightful in the discord with the physical world, man is ready to sink into the crudest fetishism, if only it will help him to find a general sphere to which he can attach his individual life, anything rather than be alien to the world and left to himself. All separatism and egotism is repugnant to the universal order.

As soon as man found himself at variance with nature he must have felt the need for *knowledge*, the need once again to assimilate and subdue the external world. Of course we cannot possibly suppose that the need for a theory of knowledge arose distinctly in the minds of people; no, they realized it intuitively. A vague sympathy and a purely practical attitude cannot, in themselves, satisfy the thinking nature of man. Like a plant, man, no matter where he is, invariably turns towards

light. However, he differs from the plant in that the latter can never attain the desired aim, no matter how it tries, because the sun is external to it, while the mind of man, his light, is within man himself and all he needs to do is—not to reach out for it but to concentrate within himself. At first this does not occur to man and if his intelligence divines the possibility of truth, he is still far from knowing the way to attain it. He is not free enough to understand: the heavy pall of animal instincts has not yet been dissipated; fantastic images flit through it but shed no light. Long is the path leading to consciousness. To reach it man must renounce his individuality and conceive himself as one with the entire genus. He must do unto himself as he did unto nature, with the help of the word, i.e., he must generalize himself. It is not enough that man go further than the animal, comprehending the self-contained autonomy of his *ego*, his *ego* is the affirmation, the realization of its own identity, the cancellation of the antagonism between the spirit and the body, by the unity of the individual. Man must not halt at that. He must identify himself with the supreme unity of his genus. This unity begins with the absorption of the individual, and man, frightened by this prospect and guided by a false instinct of self-preservation, seeks to maintain his personality and posits it as truth. In asserting only his identity with himself, man invariably finds himself divorced from the rest of the universe, from all that he feels is alien to his *ego*. This is the inevitable and agonizing result of logical egotism. And that is where, indeed, the logical movement begins in its attempt to find a way out of this sad cleavage; it brings man out of this antinomy back to harmony, but he is no longer the same. Man begins with the spontaneous admission of the unity of being and *contemplation* and ends in the knowledge of the unity of being and thought. The cleavage between man and nature is like a wedge which, as it is driven in, separates little by little everything into opposite parts, even the very spirit of man—it is the *divide et impera* of logic, the path to the true and eternal unity of what is split.

We have seen that man, by means of the word, has snatched from transitoriness, from evanescent one-sidedness, all that

he met on his way, all that stood revealed to his senses and to his experience. Man names only the general: he cannot name the unique, the particular, the accidental. For that he resorts to a more elementary medium—a pointed finger. Thus the object of knowledge is, from the very outset, divorced from immediate being and exists, as an element exterior to thought, in a generalized form. This generalized object constitutes an immediacy of the *second order*; man understands that it is alien and endeavours to dissolve the regenerated object which experience has imposed on him; he desires to know it and to remove this second immediacy and neither to doubt its alien character nor his ability to comprehend it as it is. When the need arose *to know* an object then, evidently, knowledge already regarded it as something alien to comprehension: that is what the ignorance of it presupposed. But what then lies behind the authenticity of knowledge, its possibility, if the object is completely alien to us? These two hypotheses are incompatible, or, at least, they do not condition each other. You can even call illogical this inborn faith in the possibility of true knowledge alongside the belief that nature is alien to us; but then do not forget that this illogicality was also a protest against the alienation of nature, a testimonial to the fact that it is not really so, a pledge of the reconciliation to come. The history of philosophy is the recital of how this illogicality was resolved in a superior truth. At the beginning of the logical process the object remains passive and the active role belongs to the person working on it, mediating its existence through his mind. His concern is to keep the object as it is, without involving it in the process of knowledge. But the concrete, live object has already withdrawn; what he sees are abstractions, inanimate bodies and not living beings. He tries, by a gradual process, to make up for all that is wanting in these abstractions but they remain unchanged, their defects continually indicating to him the path to be taken. This path can be easily traced in the history of philosophy.

Is there any need to contradict the absurd and platitudinous opinion according to which the philosophical systems are incoherent and precarious, one eliminating the other, and all of them contradicting one another, each one depending on indi-

vidual caprice? No! Those who are so weak-sighted that they cannot discern the inner contents lurking behind the exterior of a phenomenon, who cannot distinguish the invisible unity behind the visible multiplicity, will always, regardless of what you say to them, see science as an incoherent mass of opinions expressed by different sages, each after his own fashion discussing the various instructive and edifying subjects, invariably contradicting their teacher and wrangling with their predecessors: that is atomism, materialism in history. From this point of view not only the development of science, but all universal history would appear to be the work of individual fancies and strange combinations of accidents—this anti-religious view belongs to some of the sceptics and the half-educated mob. Everything that exists in time has a fortuitous, arbitrary edge which protrudes outside the bounds of necessary development and does not proceed from the conception of the object but from the circumstances under which this conception is realized. It is this aspect, this fortuitous residuum that certain persons can discern, pleased that the same disorder that reigns in their heads reigns in the universe. No pendulum in existence can answer the general formula which expresses the law of oscillations, for that formula neither includes the accidental weight of the plaque to which it is suspended, nor the accidental friction involved. Yet not a single mechanic would question the truth of the general law which is abstracted from the occasional irregularities and represents the eternal law of the oscillations. The development of science is like the physical pendulum at work: on the whole it follows the general law (in this case formulated by logic in all its algebraic generality) but in its details one can see everywhere temporary and occasional variations. The watch-maker-mechanic can, from his point of view, without losing sight of friction, keep the general law in mind; the ordinary watch-maker, on the other hand, only sees evidence everywhere of the accidental deflections of individual pendulums. Of course, the historical development of philosophy could neither be strictly consistent chronologically, nor be aware that every new outlook was the result of the development of the preceding one. No, there was much latitude for the free play of the spirit, even for freedom

of individuals swept away by passions. Every outlook appeared on the scene with claims to absolute, ultimate truth—they were justified, in part, in so far as the period in question was concerned—for the thinker there was no greater truth than the one he had attained. If thinkers did not consider their conceptions absolute they could not halt at it but would go on looking for something else. We should, finally, not forget that all systems implied foresaw much more than they gave expression to: their inadequate language failed them. In addition to what has been said, every actual step of development is accompanied by particular deviations: the wealth of forces, their fermentation, the individualities, the diversity of their aspirations send forth shoots, so to say, in all directions; one favoured stalk draws the sap further and higher but the simultaneous existence of the others is as obvious. To seek in history and in nature that external and internal system which by itself gives rise to pure thought in its own element, where the environment is not an obstacle and accidents are excluded, where the individuality itself is not admitted and there is nothing to interfere with the harmonious development of thought, means to know nothing about the true character of history and nature. Regarded from that point of view, one and the same person taken at different ages could, perhaps, be taken for so many different persons. Just see through what diversity the animal kingdom arrives to one prototype where its multiplicity disappears; see how, each time that it attains some particular form, this genus disperses in all directions, in almost incalculable variations on the principal theme: certain species outstrip the original type, others diverge from it, while still others constitute transition stages and intermediate links and all this chaos does not obscure its intrinsic unity for someone like Goethe or Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire; only an inexperienced and superficial examination does not discern it.

However, even a superficial examination of the evolution of thought will, indeed, find one sharp and difficult turning-point to perceive: we refer to the transition from ancient philosophy to modern philosophy, with scholasticism serving as their link. We must admit that the nature of their connection is not

obvious. But once we assume that this was a regression (which was not the case at all), can we deny that all antique philosophy was a finished work of art, remarkably complete and harmonious? Can we deny that modern philosophy engendered by the divided and dual life of the Middle Ages and reproducing in itself this division as it appeared (Descartes and Bacon) took the right direction in seeking to develop to the utmost both these principles and having said that final word, that is, produced the crassest materialism and most abstract idealism, it undertook the immediate and grand task of cancelling this dualism by supreme unity? Ancient philosophy fell because it never made a sharp and profound rupture with the world; because it never tasted of all the sweetness and all the bitterness of negation; it did not know the great power of the human spirit concentrated in itself, in itself alone. Modern philosophy, for its part, lacked those realistic and living attributes of antiquity where form and contents are fused. It is beginning to acquire these attributes now and in this rapprochement stands revealed the actual unity of the two philosophical systems: it is manifest in the very fact that they cannot exist without each other.

Truth and nothing *but* the truth was the subject matter of the philosophies of all times. It was seen from various angles and differently expressed, and every different view developed into a school, a system. Truth, after passing through a series of one-sided definitions, finds ever richer and ever more lucid expression. Every conflict between the two conceptions sunders one veil after another. Fantasies, images, ideas by means of which man strives to express his innermost thoughts evaporate, and imperceptibly thought finds its true tongue. There can be no philosophical system founded on a pure lie or an absurdity; every principle is founded on an authentic element, absolute truth, albeit conditioned, limited by the one-sided definition which does not explain it fully. When you are faced with a system whose origin, evolution, school seems to have some absurdity in its basis then, before passing judgement, have that much grace and courtesy for reason as to examine, not the formal expression, but the meaning which the school itself attaches to its principle. Then you will certain-

ly discover a one-sided truth and not an absolute lie. That is why every moment of the development of science, one-sided and transitory though it be, invariably has an eternal heritage to bequeath. What is particular and one-sided dies after some agitation at the foot of the mountain of science, exhaling its last eternal breath into it, breathing its truth into it. The mission of thought lies precisely in developing the transient into the eternal!

In the next letter we shall take up Greece. An excellent epigraph to Greek thought are the celebrated words of Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things. In him is to be found the definition of why the existing exists and why the non-existing does not exist."

Pokrovskoye, August 1844

LETTER THREE

GREEK PHILOSOPHY

THE EAST had no science. It lived in fantasies and never paused long enough to be able to clear up its thought, let alone develop it scientifically: it was so infinitely diffuse that it could not arrive at any self-definition. The East sparkles brilliantly, especially from afar, but man is overwhelmed and lost in this brilliance. Asia is a land of disharmony and contrasts. It has no sense of moderation in anything—whereas moderation is the main prerequisite of harmonious development. The life of the peoples of the East consisted of either the ferment of terrible upheavals or the stagnant calm of monotonous repetition. The Easterner had no sense of dignity: he was either a cringing slave or an unrestrained despot. His thought was, likewise, either too modest or too arrogant: now it overstepped its own bounds and those of nature, now it renounced human dignity and sank into bestiality. The religious and gnostic life of Asians alternates between feverish restlessness and dead stillness. It is at one and the same time colossal and infinitesimal, and begets conceptions of both amazing profundity and childish inanity. The relation between the individual and the object is realized, though vaguely. The content of Eastern

thought consists of fancies, images, allegories, or of the most elaborate rationalism (as with the Chinese), or of the most hyperbolical poetry where fantasy knows no bounds (as with the Indians). The East could never impart an adequate form to its thought because it had never reasoned out its contents but only dreamed about it in various images. There certainly could be no question of natural sciences: their views of nature led to the crudest pantheism or to complete scorn for nature. Amid the chaos of myths, allegories, and monstrous fancies you get an occasional glimpse of bright, heart-stirring thoughts and images of amazing exquisiteness. They atone for much and hold the heart, for a long time, under their spell. To them belong the admirable lines selected by us as an epigraph.* They are cited by Colebrooke in his work on Indian philosophy. What can be more exquisite than this picturesque, passionate bayadere abandoning herself to the gaze of her audience? Incidentally, it brings to mind another dancing bayadere who captivated the heart of Mahadevi. The few lines by Goethe which we quoted seem to complete this image. Yet the Indian conception would never have gone so far. It stopped, indeed, in its myths, at the point that determinate being is destined but to *pass by*. It did not carry away either Mahadevi or any Brahmin: the bayadere only appeared to vanish then and there; in Goethe, she is wrested, in all her dazzling beauty, from destruction: the eternal thought has also room for the transient:

Und in seinen Armen schwebet
Die Geliebte mit hervor.

The first free step in the element of thought was taken when man had left Asia and set foot on noble European soil. Ionia was the beginning of Greece and the end of Asia. The people had scarcely settled on this new land when they began struggling out of their swaddling clothes that had bound them in the East and thought ceased squandering itself in a debauch of fantasy and began seeking a way out of vague impulses in self-definition and self-restraint. In Greece man restrained himself in order to develop an unlimited spirit; he became

* At the beginning of these letters.—*A.H.*

definite in order to shake off the indefinite state of somnolence into which he had been plunged by amorphous multiplicity. When we come to the Hellenic world, we get a whiff of our native air. This is the West, this is Europe. The Greeks were the first to sober up after Asiatic inebriety, to take a clear view of life and get their bearings in it; they were perfectly at home on the earth—serene, lucid, humane. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and not in *Mahabharata* or in *Shakuntala* do we find something familiar and kindred to our spirit. Eastern poems always leave me depressed and ill at ease. Not in that medium can man breathe freely: it is too vast and, at the same time, too confined. Their poems are oppressive dreams from which man awakes panting and feverish, and still under the impression that he is walking across an inclined floor around which walls revolve and monstrous images flash by without evoking anything consoling or dear to the heart. The monstrous fantasies of Eastern writings were as repugnant to the Greeks as were the colossal dimensions of, say, Memnon, some seventy metres high. The Greeks never confused the enormous with the sublime or the overwhelming with the beautiful—they always triumphed over the abstract category of quantity: in the Marathon fields as in Praxitelean statues, in the heroes of their poems as in the serene images of the Olympians. They realized that the secret of the beautiful lies in the sublime proportion of form and content, of the internal and the external; that everything highly developed in nature was remarkable not for its prodigious maw but, on the contrary, for the absolutely necessary correlation between the external and the internal; where the external is too vast, the internal is too poor. Seas, mountains and steppes are immense, while a horse, a deer, a pigeon, a bird of paradise are comparatively diminutive. The idea of a sublime, musical proportion, limited and therefore infinite, is all but the principal idea of Greece which guided it in everything; it was manifest in that subtle harmony of all aspects of Athenian life which charms us by its artistry. The idea of beauty constituted for the Greeks an absolute idea; it cancelled, indeed, the antagonism between spirit and body, between form and content. In chiselling his marbles, the Greek each time fashioned a harmonious unity of

those elements which had yielded unreservedly to the overwrought fantasy of the East.

Within certain limits which it could not overstep without transcending its essence, the Greek world was wonderfully complete. Its life possessed a kind of *fusion*, that imperceptible combination of diverse parts, that harmony, which arouses the same admiration that a beautiful woman does; the modern world could not reach that fusion, that virtuosity, in life, science and institutions. That has remained a mystery which it could not purloin from the Greek sarcophagi.

There are people to whom Greek life seems insipid and unsatisfactory precisely because it is well-proportioned, kindred to nature and possesses the clarity of youth. They shrug their shoulders speaking about the joyous Olympus and its rakish dwellers. They scorn the Greeks because they enjoyed life instead of gushing or tormenting themselves with fictitious sufferings; they cannot forgive the Greeks for equally worshipping beauty's serene brow and the civic action of a citizen, an athlete's prowess and a sophist's dialectics. They rank much higher the gloomy Egyptians or even the Persians, let alone the Hindus. Thanks to Schlegel's initiative Indiamania has, for twenty years, been boundless. That proves nothing: you may also find individuals to whom everything healthy is repulsive—such perverse constitutions regard as true only those pleasures which are unnatural. But that is the domain of psychopathology. For us, on the contrary, the grandeur of Greek life lies in its simplicity behind which there is a deep understanding of life; it flows tranquilly between two extremes: between sinking into sensual spontaneity, which dissolves a personality, and losing reality in abstract generalities. The outlook of the Greeks seems to us to be materialist when compared with scholastic dualism or the transcendental idealism of the Germans. It may, indeed, be termed realism (in the broad sense of the word), and with the Greeks this realism existed prior to all sages and schools. A belief in predestination, in fate, is the belief of empiricism, of realism; it is based on the implicit admission of the reality of the world, nature and life: what is, is not accidental; it is predestined, it is inevitable, it must be. This belief in fate is at the same

time a belief in facts, in the *reason of the external.* Thought (which easily emancipated itself from the myths of polytheism) was bound, from the outset, to arrive at the contemplation of fate in terms of life-giving law, of the first principle (that is, Nous) of all that exists. On this first principle the whole great edifice of Greek learning was easily erected.

Greek thought had never gone as far as a rupture with nature or with existence, as far as the irreconcilable contradiction between the absolute and the relative. Nor was there anything hectic about it; it did not regard its work as a sacrilegious probing of a mystery, a criminal enquiry into the forbidden, as cabbala, an evil traffic with the dark forces. On the contrary, Greek thought had the limpid gaze of a man just awakened, who joyfully observes the world around him, aware, from the first moment, that he is called upon to comprehend it and elevate it into thought. His intention is pure and disinterested, and therefore he is bold and confident. He does not tremble like a medieval adept who spies into the mystery of nature. Their very aims are different. The former seeks knowledge, the truth. The latter seeks power over nature. For one nature has an objective meaning. The other only seeks to modify it, to obtain gold from stone or make the earth transparent. Of course these egotistic claims show a certain grandeur of the epoch too; there is something in the deformed shape of medieval alchemy which makes the adept superior to the ancient Greek. Spirit had not yet become the object for the Greeks; it had not yet become self-sufficient and independent of nature and, consequently, it did not posit it but accepted it as a fatal reality; the key to the truth did not yet lie within man. Now, the alchemist regarded himself as being precisely this key. The Greek could not dispense with external necessity; he did find the means of being morally free by recognizing this necessity, but it was not enough. He had to transform destiny itself into freedom, to subjugate everything to reason. This victory of reason had to be achieved through suffering, but the Greeks did not know how to suffer—they treated the gravest problems lightly. The Neoplatonics realized this and took another course; what the Greek views lacked became their first principle and starting-point—but it was too

late. With the Neoplatonics idealism became a dominant trend, an integral orthodox conception; thought then became different, it lost that grasp of reality characteristic of the true Greek philosophy. The reunion of the two above aspects is perhaps the most important task of science of the future.*

The beginning of knowledge is a conscious opposition of self to the object and the desire to transcend this oppositeness through thought. Ionian philosophy exemplifies this phase, richly and extensively developed. The awakened consciousness countenances nature and seeks to subjugate its diversity to unity, to something universal dominating the particular. This is the first impulse of a man when, roused from the vague dreams of immediate sense perception and no longer content with them, he craves not for images but for comprehension. At the outset man does not look for this universal unity either in himself or in the spiritual element in general; he looks to find it in the object itself—and withal as an element of the real, for he is so accustomed to spontaneity that he cannot break free of it at once. The object of the enquiry is also immediate, supplied by the empirical world, that is, by nature. In order to posit himself as an object man has to traverse a long path of thought and, among other things, to come to question the complete reality of nature. Practically, subconsciously, man acted as one who has power over the world around him, or rather over the particulars of his environment—he denied their autonomy. However, theoretically, in the general sense, consciously, he had not yet taken that step. On the contrary, man possessed an innate belief in the

* In setting down the principal features of Greek philosophy I have utilized Hegel's lectures on the history of ancient philosophy. All quotations from Plato and Aristotle are taken from them. His history of ancient philosophy possesses a high artistic perfection. This cannot be said about his history of modern philosophy which is poor, one-sided in places, or even biased (how little credit is given, for instance, to the great achievement of Kant!). Those familiar with German philosophy will find in my exposition of ancient philosophy some rather important digressions from the "Lectures on the History of Philosophy." In many cases I had no desire to repeat the German philosopher's opinions, purely abstract, and stamped with idealism, particularly since in those cases he was not true to himself and only paid a tribute to his day.—*A.H.*

empirical world, in nature, just as he has an innate belief in thought. In surrendering to this belief in the physical world, man sought to find in it "the first principle of all things," that is to say, the unity from which everything originates and for which everything strives—the universal which embraces the particular in its entirety. Where were the Ionians to find that audacity which would enable them to search their hearts for this first principle? Bear in mind that it was a thousand years later that Goethe dared to ask, "Is not the kernel of nature in man's heart?"—and was not understood by his contemporaries! With boyish simplicity, the Ionians tried to find the *first principle* in nature itself. They sought it as essence in existence, as the highest substance which would underlie all other things. Unaccustomed to abstractions, their mind could be satisfied only with the natural, visible first principle. Neither knowledge nor thought ever begins with the complete truth: it is their object. There would be no need for thought if there existed a ready-made truth. There is none. It is the development of the truth that constitutes its organism without which it is unreal. Through thought it develops from its exiguous, abstract, one-sided definition to a most complete, concrete, many-sided one. It attains this completeness by a series of self-definitions, delving ever deeper into the reason of the object. The first, the initial definition is the most external, the most undeveloped one—it is a germ, a mere possibility, a close concentration in which all distinctions are lost. But as it continues towards self-definition the truth finds more and more organs for its ideal being. Thus, reason in a new-born child becomes reality only when his organs are sufficiently developed and grow strong and mature enough—when his brain becomes capable of bearing his reason.

But where could they find in nature, in this vortex of perpetual change which does not manifest the same feature twice in succession, that universal principle or at least such of its aspects as would best approximate the idea of unity and rest in the restless multiplicity of the physical world? Nothing could have been more natural than the acceptance of *water* as this first principle: it has no stable definite form, it is to be

found wherever there is life, it is perpetual motion and perpetual repose.

Wasser umfänget
Ruhig das All!

In assuming water as the first principle of all things, Thales no doubt saw in it more than *the* water, flowing in streams. For him, water was not only a substance distinct from other substances such as earth and air, but in general a fluid in which everything was dissolved and from which everything was formed. What is solid settles in water, what is light evaporates. For Thales, too, it probably represented a prototype of thought in which all that exists is transcended and preserved. Only in this sense, broad and pregnant with meaning, does empirical water assume a genuinely philosophical sense as the first principle. Thales's water—a natural element and at the same time thought—is the first glimmer, the first gleam of the idea behind the crude physical crust which still envelops it. This is the infantile foresight of the unity of thought and being. It is fetishism in the sphere of logic, and an excellent kind of fetishism too. Water, that calm, deep medium, ever active through its divarication (condensation, evaporation), is the aptest image of a conception which is being split into opposite definitions and serves to connect the latter. It stands to reason that water does not correspond to the conception of the universal essence with which Thales associated it. The real conception of water, however, is not so important as is *his* conception of water, for that is what gives us an idea of his conception of the first principle.

When thought, method, and language are in a rudimentary stage, one-sided definitions imply far more than is contained in the strict, prosaic meaning of the words used. We shall often chance upon some deep meaning lurking behind an awkward expression and, therefore, it is exceedingly important to grasp the sense in which the system itself understood its first principles. To say simply that Thales assumed water to be the first principle or that Pythagoras attributed this role to number, without giving thought to what the former implied by water and the latter by number, means to take them for

half-insane or obtuse people. They have their own idea of glossology. They wanted to squeeze into the image they had chosen *more* thought than it could hold, but this is no reason for denying or neglecting that aspect of their thought which, though inadequately expressed, certainly has left a deep and lasting mark. Thus, in low forms of life we find indications of, or hints at, those parts and organs which are fully evolved only in higher animals. This rudimentary state, apparently unnecessary, is a prerequisite of the perfection to come.

Every school implied by its first principle more than it expressed formally, and therefore considered it absolute, and believed itself to be in possession of the whole truth—and was right in part. Now the philosophic system which followed usually saw only what was explicit and strove to transcend this one-sidedness, which lay claims to universality, by a new one-sidedness with the same claims. A fierce struggle ensued and the assailant did not guess, in his blindness, that the passing stage of mental development was indeed in possession of the truth but in an incongruous form, its deficiencies being made up for by its vital spirit. The passing stage, on its part, was as little aware of the fact that the side which was supplanting it had a right to do so in the name of that aspect of the truth it possessed. Nor was water alone the empirical receptacle for the Ionian idea of unity. It is too specific to be able to satisfy all the requirements of a universal first principle. Air, as an element essentially invisible and rarefied, was also assumed by some of the Ionians to be the first principle. At length they made an attempt to divorce themselves completely from the natural reality and pass into the sphere of those abstractions which constitute the propyleae of logic; they expressly denied the finite in favour of the infinite substratum like matter, the substance of the modern physicist. The infinite of Anaximander was precisely a substance destitute of any qualitative definitions. That was the first step taken by science, half-childish, yet steady. Diverging geometrical conceptions were reduced to that unity sought for in nature, the autonomy of the particular was not denied in favour of the universal principle, regardless of how the latter was defined. This subordination to unity and universality is a

genuine element of thought. No great perspicacity was needed to realize that polytheism stood no chance against this unity. The fate of Olympus was sealed the instant Thales turned to nature. Searching in it for the truth, he expressed his view, like other Ionians, independently of pagan conceptions. The priests bethought themselves too late of punishing Anaxagoras and Socrates, for the element in which the Ionians lived contained the germ fatal to the Elysian and other pagan mysteries. Those who would reproach the Ionians that, while taking an empirical element for the first principle, they yet showed an inadequate understanding of the element of thought, will be right. But, on the other hand, let them do justice to the purely realistic Greek intuition which impelled them to seek for the first principle in nature itself and not outside it, to seek for the infinite in the finite, for thought in being, for the eternal in the transient. They planted their feet on scientific ground. *The real first principle* could not, indeed, maintain itself on it, but that ground was capable of development. That was the first step: one who had gained it had the whole ladder in sight.

Before thought passed from the sensuous and real definitions of the absolute to those abstract and logical, it had, naturally, to attempt to express the absolute by means of an intermediary element—to find the truth between the extremes of the real and the abstract. This inclination to take advantage of every possibility is characteristic of the restless and ever active nature of life both in the historical and physical worlds: the organic development of matter does not miss a single possibility, without calling it into existence. Half-way between purely sensuous and logical definitions Pythagoras found something permanent which bound them together and belonged to both, which was neither sensation nor thought—that was number. The daring and, consequently, the soundness of Pythagoras's thought is obvious: all that exists, ordinarily taken for reality, was upset, and to supplant empirical existence something immateriate, ideal, was elevated to, and accepted for the truth, this being far from subjective but something ideal stamped off the materiate, as it were. As Aristotle remarked, the Pythagoreans conceived the universe as a

harmonious system of numbers and their interrelations. They wrested the *permanent relation* from the eternal changes of phenomenal being—it, indeed, dominates all that exists. The mathematical conception of the world enunciated by the Pythagoreans, and so extensively developed in modern times, has come down to us through the ages precisely because it possesses a profoundly true aspect. Mathematics is the intermediary between logic and empiricism. It recognizes the objectivity of thought and the logic of events; its hostile attitude towards philosophy has no formal grounds. It goes without saying that the relation between objects, moments, and phases, the harmonious laws which link them and the series by which they are evolved, do not exhaust *all* the contents of either nature or thought. The Pythagoreans overlooked the fact that they implied much more by number than its conception actually contained, and that the residue was something dead, passive, independent of the concrete contents—that it was an indifferent measure. For them, order, concordance, harmonious numerical combinations satisfied all the requirements—but that was because they, actually, did not stop at purely mathematical definitions. The genius of the teacher and the inspired imagination of his disciples complemented what was lacking in the first principle. As we shall see, that illogical complement constantly recurs in Greek philosophy—due to the transcending subjectivity of Greek genius, so to speak, and, on the other hand, to their incapacity to conceive pure abstractions. Yet it is this adherence of the Greeks to realism and their clairvoyance of the truth rather than the awareness of it that account for the narrow gulf separating the individual from nature in the ancient world.

Number left to itself could not sustain itself at the level to which the Pythagoreans had raised it. "It did not bear within itself the principle of self-motion," as Aristotle remarked. A number was, with them, not merely an arithmetical digit, the first proportional, key, series, a measure; it was for them an absolute unity as well, a possibility of self-divarication, it was a vitalizing monad, a hermaphrodite which bore within itself its division and did not lose its unity while developing into multiplicity. They were so thoroughly imbued with the sense

of order, agreement, harmony, numerical combinations, omnipresent rhythm, that they perceived the universe as a statico-musical whole. Who can indeed deny them the grandeur of their conception of the ten heavenly spheres, strictly arranged not only as regards their dimension and speed, but also musically? Perpetually travelling in their orbits, they emit harmonious sounds which fuse into one majestic, universal choir. Removed from everything poetical, the mathematical view is, probably, very near to everything fantastic and mystical. The maddest mystics of all ages drew their support from Pythagoras and created their theories of numbers. There is something sombrely majestic, ascetic, deadening, in the mathematical view. This is the element that substitutes the real passions, impels fantasy to astrology, cabbala and so on.

One more step along this path of generalization and thought had to sever the last fetters and appear in its own province, that is, to detach itself not only from the sensuous and the numerical definitions but, on the whole, from every concrete definition, and to sacrifice the fulness of the diversity to the abstract unity of the universal. On the one hand, this step emancipated thought from everything limiting it and, on the other hand, lead to the greatest abstractions in which everything was lost and which offer the greatest latitude precisely because they constitute a void. To free the object from the one-sidedness of realistic definitions means at the same time to make it indefinite. The more general the sphere is, the greater the number of complicating one-sided elements eliminated, the closer does it seem to approximate the truth. But in reality it is not so: rending one covering after another, man seeks to reach the kernel. Actually, as he removes the last he finds that the object has completely disappeared. There is nothing left to him save the consciousness that this is—not nothing, but the final result of removing definitions. It is obvious that this path will not lead to the truth. Unfortunately, they closed their eyes to this evidence. On the contrary, as they generalized categories and purged the object from all definitions, both quantitative and qualitative, they arrived solemnly at the most abstract recognition of the identity of the

object with themselves and took the *phantom* of pure being for the truth of real existence. Pure being becomes a sort of ghost that has left the dead body and hovers over it unable to revive it. The logical processes, the phenomenological movement of thought, can have no better hypothesis, no better point of departure than pure being, for the principle cannot be either determined or expressed by intermediary elements; pure being is something spontaneous and indefinite. Finally, there can be no real truth, at the beginning, but only a possibility of it. Give any definition, any development you like, to pure being and the result will be that being will become definite, real, and will no longer be true to the character of a principle, of a possibility. Pure being is that chasm which has engulfed all definitions of real being (while it is they alone that exist), which is nothing other than a logical abstraction just as a point or a line are mathematical abstractions. At the beginning of the logical process it is as much being as not-being. But one should not think that determinate being really arises from pure being—surely a real individuum does not arise out of the conception of its genus. Thought begins with these abstractions, and its movement necessarily reveals their abstract character and renounces them by its further evolution. Thought is, at the beginning of the logical process, precisely an ability for abstract generalization. In thought the finite and determinate attain infinity, at first indeterminate, yet determined then by a series of forms which finally acquire full determinateness, and thus conclude the infinite and finite in a conscious unity.

Pure being was taken for the truth, for the absolute, by the Eleatics: they accepted the abstraction of pure being for a reality *more real* than *determinate being*, for the supreme unity dominating diversity. This logical, cold, abstract unity was dispiriting; it did away with every distinction, every motion; it was eternal, mute infinity, a dead calm at sea, lethargic sleep, and finally—death, non-existence. The Eleatics, indeed, denied every movement and did not recognize the truth of diversity. It was Indian quietism in philosophy. Being testifies to only one thing—that *it exists*. Nothing more inconsequential can be said about an object than that it is. It is a repetition of

the word Om! Om! by a Brahmin who has reached the desired *proximity* to Vishnu and who has taken his stand on the edge of a precipice towards which he had rushed in order to free himself from his individuality. Being has no need of motion if it is only to be. In order to be active, being must lack something, strive for something, struggle with something, or else attain some goal. But what being might strive for, would necessarily be outside of it, and consequently would not exist at all. The Eleatics denied movement and non-existence very consistently. "Being exists," Parmenides said, "while non-being does not." True to that sense of the real characteristic of the Greeks, the Eleatics did not dare go to the ultimate logical conclusion. They were incapable of giving utterance to the view that pure being is identical with non-being. A kind of instinct warned them that all possible abstractions would not be able to destroy substratum, matter, and that being, though the poorest property of the latter, is, nonetheless, its most inalienable one, and cannot really be dispensed with—*there is no place to keep it*: one may only turn away from it and not recognize it in its changed form.

The celebrated Lavoisier chanced, in the eighteenth century, upon the same idea of the immutability of material being and inferred that the total weight of all the products of a chemical reaction must be equal to the total weight of the reacting substances, the quantity of matter being permanent, i.e., notwithstanding any qualitative changes the weight must remain the same. Basing himself on the idea of the Eleatics and Leucippus, he took up the chemical scales—and what grand results he and his followers achieved you yourself know. Human thought could not for long maintain itself at the terrible generality of pure being. Coming to rest in the abstract sphere of pure being inevitably led to the understanding that this sphere is complete indifference, like the hypothetical expanding force which acts in free space in Schelling's construction of the physical world: meeting no obstacle it expands to a point where it ceases to exist altogether and it is too late to save it by the contracting force.[25] The fact is that pure being, like absolute expansion, is not real, they are like the coordinates which geometry uses for determining a point:

these coordinates serve geometry and not the point, or to put it more simply, pure being is a scaffolding by which abstract thought ascends to the concrete. Not only is there no nothing, there is also no pure being and what exists is only being, determining itself and accomplishing itself in the eternal active process whose abstract and opposite moments (being and non-being) exist apart, independently of each other, only in the phenomenology of consciousness and not in the real, empirical world. These two moments, disunited, abstracted from the process that binds them, are illusory and impossible. They are true only as transitional stages of the logical process. In existence they are, on the contrary, real, and therefore, inseparably bound to each other. Real being is not the rigidity of death but an eternal genesis, the struggle between being and non-being, a perpetual tendency toward determinateness, on the one hand, and a similar striving to denounce all positive elements obstructing the movement.

"All flows!" the famous words were uttered by Heraclitus and the smelted crystal of the Eleatic being dashed forward in an unending stream. Heraclitus subjected both being and non-being to change, to motion: all flows, nothing remains immobile or unchanged. Everything moves, rapidly or slowly, being modified, transformed, oscillating between being and non-being. "Things," says Heraclitus, "are like a running stream; one cannot step twice into the same water."* For him, the absolute is the very process by which the natural diversity arrives at unity. The real is not passive obedience to the abstract materiality, nor the substratum of movement, nor the existence of what is moved but that which *necessarily* moves it, which modifies it. For Heraclitus being contains within itself its own negation which is both inalienable and inherent in it; this is its daemonic first principle which accompanies it always and everywhere, opposing it and cancelling what it has created, preventing it from falling into slumber, from being solidified in immobility. Being lives in

* "Bodies," according to Leibnitz, "only seem constant. They resemble a torrent in which the water is renewed every instant; they resemble Theseus's vessel which the Athenians were continually repairing."—*A.H.*

motion. On the one hand, its life is nothing but a constant, unremitting movement, an active struggle and, if you will, an active reconciliation of being and non-being. And the more tenacious and bitter the struggle is, the closer are they to each other, the higher is the life generated by them. This struggle is both the end and the beginning—it is a continuous reciprocal action from which they cannot escape. This is life's squirrel's cage. The organism of the animal is a constant struggle with death which invariably triumphs, but this triumph is again in favour of determinate being and not in favour of non-being. The multi-elemental tissue which goes to make a living body constantly decomposes into bi-elemental tissues (that is, inorganic) and is constantly reconstituted. Hunger reiterates its claims because material is constantly being consumed. Breathing sustains life and consumes the organism which uninterruptedly produces what is being burned up. Stop feeding an animal and its blood and brain will burn out. The more highly life is developed, the higher the sphere it has entered, the more desperate will the struggle be between being and non-being, the closer are they to each other. A stone is much more durable than an animal. In it being is stronger than non-being. It has but little need of its environment. It will not change either its form or composition without great effort exerted upon it from outside. It contains almost nothing within itself that might cause its decomposition, and therefore it is so tenacious of life, while the slightest touch of an animal's brain—this complicated, delicate, never solidifying mass—destroys the animal; the slightest disturbance of the complicated chemical equilibrium of its blood is enough to make it languish for its normal state, suffer and die if it cannot win, that is, regain normalcy. Passive inert being with its gross definiteness encroaches upon life; the life of a stone is a constant swoon, it is freer because it is nearer to non-being; life is weaker in its higher manifestations—it expends its materiality, as it were, to reach that height at which being and non-being are reconciled and submit to the supreme unity. Everything that is beautiful is delicate and fragile: flowers wither from cold winds while the rough stalk only grows sturdier. However, this stalk is not fragrant and has no multi-

hued petals; a moment of bliss passes by in a flash but it contains a whole eternity.

Becoming is an active process of self-determination, its opposite moments (being and non-being) losing in it their dead inertness which concerns abstract but not real thought. Just as death does not lead to pure non-being, so becoming does not come out of pure non-being; determinate being arises from determinate being which, in its turn, becomes a substratum in relation to the higher stage. What has arisen does not flaunt its existence—it is too banal, it is already implied. Nor does it display, as its truth, its identity with itself, its mere existence; on the contrary it reveals itself by a process in which its being is reduced to a mere moment.

Heraclitus realized that the truth is precisely the existence of two opposite moments. He realized that each of them in itself was untrue and impossible and that what was true in them was their tendency to change forthwith into its opposite. For this man who lived more than 500 years B. C. this idea was so clear that he could not perceive in existence anything permanent but that principle which passes into diversity and, on the other hand, strives from diversity to unity. He understood it, in spite of the fact that movement was, indeed, for him an inevitable, fatalistic phenomenon. In recognizing it, he submitted to the necessity for which he had no key. Why then were the *learned* men of our times so surprised, so slow in understanding, when the Heraclitean idea emerged not as a hint dropped by a man of genius but as the last word of a method evolved in a strict, clear-cut and scientific way? Was it this abrupt and abstract expression "being is nothing," that shocked them? Or, perhaps, they were frightened by the proximity of the two opposite elements? But it is impossible to understand an expression, torn out of living development, especially when one does not choose to know the method, nor concentrate his attention on it. Nothing is clear unless attention is concentrated on it—neither logic nor the game of whist. Practically, we take Heraclitus's view of things; only in the general sphere of thought we cannot understand what we do. Have not people, from time immemorial, admitted the fact that neither the dead inertness of an existing thing nor its

identity with itself constitutes its full proof? Do we not see in all things living, for example, anything but a process of eternal transformation, alive apparently, in change alone? Take bones, the most solid things in the organism: we do not even regard them as alive.

We have mentioned that the Eleatics, while taking pure being for the basis, had not the courage to admit that it was identical with nothing. So too, Heraclitus, who posited the principle of motion as the truth of existence, did not go to the point of the elimination of being in force, in the cause of motion, in substance. The chasm, separating the Greeks from the empirical outlook, was never so deep: no sooner does their thought reach the most extreme abstractions than elegant images and fantastic notions emerge that keep them hovering on the very brink of a precipice. Thus, instead of the ultimate, inexorable deductions of substantial relation, you find in Heraclitus *time* and *fire* as concrete examples of the process of motion. Time is really an apt image of the absolute origination. Its essence consists solely in being and at the same time in not being. Neither the past nor the future is real in time but only the present, the latter existing, however, only not to exist: it has just passed, it is just about to come, it exists in this motion as the unity of two opposite moments. Fire in nature also suits his thought admirably: fire consumes what is opposite to it—absolute unrest, absolute dissolution of what exists, the transition of the *other* into itself. Heraclitus saw fire everywhere. According to him water is extinguished fire, and earth is solidified water, but then the earth is again dissolved in seas where it is evaporated into the air. There it catches fire and creates water. Thus nature in its entirety is a metamorphosis of fire. The very stars are, as Heraclitus conceived them, not dead masses finished once and for all; according to him, water evaporates and is precipitated in dark and light processes; the dark one results in earth, while the light one rises into the air, catches fire in the sun's atmosphere and produces stars, meteors, and planets. Thus they are the result of this same reciprocal action of life, of this motion. Everything is rent apart by inner enmity and a striving for the supreme unity in friendship and harmony. Elsewhere he

observes that the universe is eternally live fire, its soul is a flame that rises and dies out according to its own law. So not only does he conceive nature as a process, he also conceives it as a self-active process. Nothing, however, is evolved from this motion. There is no unity which would arise in the midst of this alternation and evince the result and first principle of this activity. With Heraclitus, the principle of motion is a fatal, forced necessity which sustains itself in the diversity of its manifestations and for no seeming reason obtrudes itself as an irresistible force, as a phenomenon and not as a free, conscious goal. Heraclitus, indeed, ascribes no goal to motion. His motion is more concrete than the being of the Eleatics, yet it is still abstract. It clamours for some goal, for something permanent.

Before we take up the origin and the goal ascribed to motion by Anaxagoras, we must show another way of egress from pure being, diametrically opposite to that of Heraclitus, at least in formal expression, for from the general point of view atomism, which we shall take up presently, constitutes only a complement necessary and inevitable to dynamism. Atomism and dynamism repeat the two-pole struggle of being and nothing in a more definite and compact field. The principal idea of atomism is the negation of pure being in the name of determinate being. Here, not abstract being is considered as the truth of particulars, but rather the particular included in itself that is the truth of being: it is a return from the domain of the abstract into that of the concrete, a return to the real, empirical, extant. Reality is that unity which is not allowed to dissolve in abstract categories, and which is a protest against the Eleatic pure being in the name of the autonomy of determinate being. The particular exists for itself and is itself a confirmation of its quantitative and qualitative actuality. Leucippus and Democritus were the founders of this doctrine which has ever since run parallel to the main stream of philosophy, never, however, approaching it.* It rested securely on a reliable, albeit one-sided, understanding of nature and was of immense value to natural science. Atomism, founded

* With the possible exception of Leibnitz's monadology.—*A.H.*

on the assumption of the particular, opposes incontestable indivisibility, the individuality, as it were, of every point of existence to the unity of being and motion which embrace them. While everything in thought is generalized, in nature everything is molecular, even that which seems to us to be uniform and homogeneous. Motion according to Heraclitus is dependent on necessity, that is, on fatalism. The atom has a purpose in itself and its own existence; it exists for itself and attains its concentration. Atomism expresses the universal egotism of nature. According to this theory only one aspiration is true and that is nature's striving for individualization. Heraclitus conceives nature as absolute dispersion, which it is, as a matter of fact. But he does not perceive that the highest, most concentrated individuality—man—is precisely, in spite of his atomism, a universal generic individual whose egotism and self-concentration is at the same time radiating love. Idealism, on its part, fails to see that genus, the universal, the idea, cannot indeed do without an individuum, without an atom; until idealism grasps that, atomism will not capitulate to it; so long as both insist on an exclusive recognition, they both will remain at war with each other. Dynamism and atomism belong to those inextricable antinomies of science, incompletely developed, that we encounter at every step. It is evident that the truth is to be found on both sides. Nay, it is even evident that the two opposite conceptions express almost the same idea, the only difference being that with one, the truth stands on its head, while with the other, it is on its feet. The result is a contradiction which seems irreconcilable, yet each is irresistibly drawn to the standpoint of the other. However, minds, priding themselves on their lucidity, do not like to consider truth as the unity of one-sided conceptions, as the suppression of contradictions. Certainly, one-sided assertions are much simpler. The poorer the aspect of a thing we take is, the more obvious and the clearer is it, and also the more superfluous and futile: what can be more obvious than the formula A=A, and what can be more commonplace? Take the simplest formula of an equation of the first degree with one unknown quantity; it will be far more complicated but then it

will contain an idea, a means of determining the unknown quantity. To accept either this or that side of an antinomy is totally groundless. Nature teaches us constantly to understand the opposite in combination; surely its finite is not separated from the infinite, the eternal from the transient, unity from diversity? The inexorable demand, "either one or the other," is very like the demand "your purse or your life," to which a bold man must give a firm reply: "Neither," because there is no need to sacrifice either one or the other to your whim. To return to Leucippus, let us note that his atom was not a dead, indifferent point: he admitted the polarity of the indivisible and the void (being and non-being, again) and the interaction of atoms. Here he and his followers were lost in external explanations and admitted the chance which connected and disunited atoms; chance intervened as a mysterious force which did not satisfy the requirements of mind.

Anaxagoras posits thought as the first principle. Reason, the universal, becomes essence and an active mover. His *Nous* is that activity which manifests itself imperfectly and unconsciously in nature, and which unfolds in all its purity in consciousness, in mind. In nature Nous is embodied in particulars existing in time and space; in consciousness it attains its universality and eternity.[26] Anaxagoras, this "first lucid thinker," to use Aristotle's words, if he did not expressly state that the universe is a mind actuated by eternal process, at least he conceived it as a self-moving soul. The goal of movement is "to fulfil everything good contained in the soul." It will be noted that this purpose is not something external to thought. We are accustomed to place the purpose on one side and the one who pursues it on the other. Now, the goal taken in its universality, is implied in the pursuer, and is realized by him—the existence of the object is affected by its purposiveness: that which was is fulfilled, that which is contained is developed. A living thing is preserved because it is its own purpose, it does not know its own purpose but it has earthly desires and impulses, which are set, purposive definitions. No matter what an animal's attitude is towards its environment the result of their constant impact and interaction will be an animal organism: it only reproduces itself. In a purposive movement the effect is the

first principle, the fulfilment of the foregoing. Anaxagoras assumed reason and law to be this first principle and set it down as the basis of being and motion. Though he did not develop the speculative contents of his first principle, yet the step he took was of inestimable benefit to the development of thought. His Nous in which everything good is latent, his Mind self-preserving itself in its development and containing *within itself measure* (definition), ascends to the supreme power over being and controls motion. As we have seen, the absolute first principle was, according to the Ionians, the real empirical being posited as absolute. Then it was defined as pure being abstracted from existence—neither empirical nor real but logical, abstract. Still later it was conceived as movement, as a polar process. This movement might, however, become an unceasing rotation, purposeless movement and nothing else—a dreary series of origins, changes, the changes of these changes and so on *ad infinitum*. By positing the universal as the first principle, the mind, within being itself, and within motion—Anaxagoras finds the aim reigning in the world, a sort of thought latent in the universal process. This latent thought of being is that ferment, that first cause of fermentation, motion, unrest, which disturbs and agitates being in order to become *explicit* thought. In consciousness we again encounter that daemonic element which is inherent to inert materiality but which now proves to be not daemonic but rational, and this is manifested through the truth—the fulfilment of being, non-being, a motion, origin. One should not think that being is sacrificed thereby, and knowledge has passed over into consciousness as its opposite element. The universal would then have lost its speculative significance and become a dry abstraction. This kind of idealistic one-sidedness belongs rather to modern than to ancient philosophy. Heraclitus and Anaxagoras attained the limits beyond which Greek thought did not go; they acquired for thought that ground, those meagre and imperfect foundations on which the giants of Greek learning built their views. The ground remained; the movement of Heraclitus and the Nous of Anaxagoras did not completely exhaust their meaning, but Aristotle would not reject them; on the contrary, he would use them as

cornerstones for the colossal building he was to erect. One cannot but notice the complete logical harmony of the historical thought of the Greeks, those chosen children of mankind. The Eleatic views inevitably led to the Heraclitean movement which, in its turn, as inevitably led to rational substance, to purposiveness; it posed a question which Anaxagoras was not slow to answer. And this continuity of development, passing over from one self-definition of truth to another in organic coherence and living harmony, is called a haphazard and arbitrary replacement of one philosophical system by another.

When human thought attained this degree of power and consciousness, when it gathered strength and became aware of its invincible power the Greek world witnessed a brilliant, thrilling spectacle of the triumph of youthful enthusiasm in learning. I speak of the slandered and misunderstood Sophists. The Sophists, those splendid, luxuriant flowers of the rich Greek spirit, represented the period of youthful exuberance and audacity. They remind you of a young man who has just been released from parental constraint but has not yet acquired a definite pursuit in life. He abandons himself wholeheartedly to that sense of freedom, to his maturity, and proves by his very ardour that he is still a minor. The youth has realized the dreadful power which is his; nothing trammels his proud spirit, and he stakes his fortune, stakes everything in the world—that is, everything that the ordinary man, who clings to his moth-eaten riches, holds dear, and when the latter mournfully shakes his head in reproval, observing his extravagances, the youth only gives him a scornful glance; he has realized how fragile and unsound all things around him are and relies on one thing alone, that is, on his thought—that constitutes his spear and his shield. Such are the Sophists. What splendour there is in their dialectics! How inexorable it is! What abandon! What sympathy with all things human! What mastery of thought and formal logic! They held endless debates, these bloodless tournaments, which were as graceful as they were powerful—they pranced, full of youthful mettle, in the austere arena of philosophy. Those were science's days of chivalry, its spring. Socrates and Plato

had every right to be the opponents of the Sophists. From *their point of view* they renounced the Sophists, and led thought to a more profound consciousness. But detractors of the Sophists, who have been repeating their shallow accusations throughout the ages, only testify thereby to their narrow-mindedness and their dry, prosaic rationalism. They share the narrow standpoint of Mme. de Genlis's[27] not over *moral* morality, so well loved by those kindly deistic abbots early in the last century who severely rebuked Alexander the Great for his partiality for strong drinks and Julius Caesar for his ambitious dreams. From this point of view neither the Sophists nor Alexander the Great can be justified—but why not relegate this morality to reformatory courts handling petty misdemeanours and street disturbances? Why apply its standards of morality in a discussion of great historical events? Instead of pausing to refute obsolete and contemptible opinions, let us rather form a better idea of the epoch when the Sophists appeared in Greece.

What existed offered no danger to thought: it had already moved forward and flowed on impelled by some inexplicable necessity, which (whether it was aim or cause is of no consequence) was found to be reason. That idea had been dropped abstractedly, without any content ascribed to it—as infinite form or a personal divination. Yet reason was recognized as having boundless power. All that exists, the particular, the isolated, is merely a moment for Anaxagoras, everything determinate is dissolved in his Nous, its essence is negation itself—as is to be expected. Being is reflected in itself, it has renounced the modifying exterior and settled on essence as its truth. Now essence is determined by thought and consequently the latter possesses the absolute power of negation, the power of a corroding acid which decomposes everything, combines with everything to volatilize it. In short, thought realized itself as a power before which all principles but its own disappear. Everything that has been firmly established in being, in conceptions, in law and beliefs began to totter and fall. Whatever was touched by the hot flames of thought—which like the angel of death destroyed with merry abandon and rejoiced amid the ruins without giving thought to what

they were to be replaced by—proved to be unsteady and dependent. This unlimited latitude of negation, this idea which demolished the sound principles and scourged the false was expressed by the Sophists. They were terrible in their sincerity and terrible in their versatility; they were popular and in the very thick of life, no strangers to all the questions of the street and science. They were public orators, political men, teachers of the people and metaphysicians. Their minds were supple and resourceful, their language was intrepid and insolent. That is why they could, openly and boldly, express what the Greeks did in practical life but concealed from everybody, even from themselves, fearing to discover whether they did well or not to act as they did, yet too weak not to trespass against the positive law. The Sophists were accused of immorality because they brought to the light of day what had been concealed by darkness, because they divulged the family skeleton of Greek life. In practical spheres, in his acts, man is seldom so abstract as in his mode of thinking. Here he is subconsciously versatile because his entire being is involved.

The Greeks of the times of Pericles could not live freely within the bounds fixed for them by sacred ancestral traditions, as customs unalterable for them. This life was indeed charming in the *Iliad* and in Sophocles's tragedies but they were already head and shoulders above it. They felt it but some kind of tacit agreement kept them from avowing it. While daily violating their hereditary traditions they were prepared to stone any one who dared to raise his voice against them, to give their deed a name and refuse to regard it as a crime. This is one of those deceitful hypocrisies to which man has constant recourse, imagining it to be highly moral. While admitting verbally that traditions were sacred, the Greek yet avoided fulfilling his duties at every step, but he did this furtively as a criminal or a rebellious slave might. The crime of the Sophists and, later, of Socrates, was that they raised to the sphere of universal consciousness what everybody considered to be a particular case or an exception, that they vindicated by thought the fact of moral freedom, that they recognized fear of Homeric tradition exactly for what it was. They fearlessly allowed the light of thought to play on every-

thing in existence and subjected everything to an analysis. Through them science, having reached the heights it had, turned suddenly back upon the whole body of truths, received and transmitted by public opinion. The result was what might have been expected; paganism and all ancient Hellenic conceptions could not withstand its Medusa's gaze and withered under it. But what followed was not Olympic mirth, but the ringing laughter of man elated by his victory. At first the Sophists probably yielded frivolously to the consciousness of this terrible power of mind. They forgot themselves in this joyful saturnalia and amused themselves, playing with their power—that was the moment of the poetic enjoyment of thought. From a sheer excess of power, they took pleasure in tearing off the veils of what was inconsistent in the positive, and their joy knew no bounds. Let us not rebuke them: ere long a tragic figure is to appear in the history of reason and suggest another vocation to thought; he* is to discipline their wild life by moral principles and consecrate himself to a great sacrifice in the name of a great victory. In the meantime the Sophists had prepared their compatriots for this moment. They had let the light of thought play upon all human relations; thanks to them science openly entered life. They taught man to rely on himself alone, to attribute everything to himself, to consider himself to be a self-sufficient centre around which everything in the world revolves in a whirl of modifications. But in the name of what should he consider himself this central point? This is an essential and inevitable question. The Sophists did not solve this question which proceeded directly from their first principles, or rather, it was not solved by those Sophists whom history is pleased to call so, for it was precisely the question posed by the great Sophist, Socrates, who shared their point of view but who outstripped them all in the scope of his thought and the grandeur of his character. It was not a youth on a spree but a grown man who had paused to seek a foothold for the rest of his life, a man firm of step and mighty in his strength. Socrates dealt the existing order in Greece a heavier blow than all the

Socrates.—*A.H.*

Sophists taken together. He went further than they did precisely because he was their enemy. The Sophists were the brilliant Girondists while Socrates was a Montagnard, but one who was moral and pure. The views of the Sophists contained a world of the personal and the rationalistic, in them thought had not yet gained a firm footing (as is always the case in reflection). They tested the formal power of thought, so to say. They were ready to prove everything and justify everything. However, that proved nothing; it is possible to find a good side even to the most reprehensible act—but that is no justification in itself and implies solely that there are no purely abstract acts any more than there are any purely one-sided phenomena. The genuinely firm basis lies in that objective first principle of thought which the Sophists, before Socrates's time, had not discovered. Socrates found logical development at a point where it recognized the unsoundness of the external world if compared with thought, and man (i.e., a thinking individual) as truth. Man, however, considered as a particular individuality, perishes, involving thought in his own destruction. Socrates saved thought and its objective significance from the personal and, consequently, fortuitous element. He pronounced to be essence not the individual *ego* but the universal as good, reposing-in-itself consciousness, independent of real existence. Socratean thought is as corrosive and virulent as the thought of Protagoras who said that man was the measure of all things and contained a definition of why the existing exists and why the non-existing does not exist. Socrates, however, perceived in the general movement a principle of repose. This principle, the essence maintained and determined by purpose, is the *truth* and the *good*. This good, this essential purpose, does not exist as something ready; man has to create his eternal and intransient contents, to develop it through his consciousness in order to be free in it. Thus, for Socrates, the truth of the objective is developed by thought. That was the affirmation of man's infinite subjectivity and the absolute liberty of self-cognition, that great cornerstone laid by Socrates at the foundation of that great edifice which still remains unfinished. This cornerstone is, at the same time,

a boundary post: half of it lies already outside Hellenic soil and the antique world.

Socrates had no system, but he had a method. It was, indeed, a live and ever active organ of human thought. His method consisted in the development of self-cogitation. Whatever aspect of the object he chanced upon, having begun with the total one-sidedness of a generality, he would arrive at the most multi-sided truth, never losing sight, however, of his principal ideas which he led through all spheres both practical and theoretical. Man must develop from within himself, find in himself, understand what is his predestination, his purpose, the ultimate goal of the world; he must arrive at the truth through himself. This is the mark which Socrates attains in everything, and, incidentally, it transpires that in proportion as thought attains inner objectivity the accidental and personal is destroyed and lost: the truth becomes thought that is being eternally established. All his dialogues were an unending battle with what existed. He rebelled against the sacred Athenian traditions in the name of another sacred right—the right of eternal morality, of the autonomy of thought. He cautioned against the acceptance of ready-made opinions, truths taken for granted and not even discussed, so familiar did they seem, yet which everybody interpreted in his own way in the certainty that his opinion was what was generally accepted. He dared to place truth higher than Athens, reason higher than narrow nationalism. He took, in relation to Athens, the same stand as Peter I took in relation to Russia. The most majestic teaching of Socrates was he himself: his grave and tragic face, his practical activity, and his death. He typified and represented that fusion of all elements in ancient life which we have already had several occasions to mention: a man who constantly took part in public discourses, an artist, a warrior, a judge, he examines every theoretical and practical issue of his age, is always lucid and true to himself, ever anxious for the good, and subjugating everything to reason, that is to say, liberating everything in

In those days learning drew upon life and was submerged in it. The activity of a philosopher in Greece was not confined to his school within whose walls the debates might have gone on for centuries before anybody ever heard of them. The philosopher was par excellence a people's teacher and counsellor. A crown was offered to Empedocles and Heraclitus. Zeno fell in a heroic war. Love and respect for Pythagoras verged on worship. Pericles walked in an Athenian square with his wife, supplicating pardon for Anaxagoras. Philip of Macedonia blessed his fate for his son having been born in the days of Aristotle. Plato was called Divine by the Athenians. Only when the philosophers of the ancient world had discerned, with anguish in their hearts, the fatal disease consuming the ancient order of things, did they retire from public affairs. Socrates was as much a statesman as a thinker and was put on trial as a citizen who wielded immense influence and undermined inviolable standards of Athenian life in the name of the right of investigation. The tragedy of Socrates's fate (as he himself was perfectly aware, judging by his discourses in prison from which he did *not want* to flee) was precisely that he was right in the eyes of mankind and guilty in the eyes of Athens. From this contradiction, so sharp and glaring, it is clear that Greek life had begun to decay due to its one-sidedness. The national was already outdated, once the national judgement could be diametrically opposed to the judgement of reason. That was why Socrates came out in arms against Athens and that was why it was impossible to save the city by executing him. Nay, the death of the philosopher proved that he was right. The Athenians themselves realized it ere long. Blind persecutors realize only on the next day that the execution is pernicious.

The revolution made by Socrates in thought consisted precisely in that thought had become an object in itself. It is from him the conception dates that *truth is not essence as it is but as it appears in consciousness, that truth is cognized essence.* Mark this well: *c'est le mot de l'énigme* of all philosophy. After Socrates, thought concentrates on itself, delves further into itself in order to develop consciously the unity of itself and its object, nature ceases to be independent of

thought. Socrates's views did not, however, go so far. One of the salient points of his doctrine which, by its one-sidedness, was especially conspicuous in the Hellenic world was his neglect of everything outside philosophy and especially of natural science. Socrates often repeated—the expression has become proverbial—that all his knowledge consists in that he knows nothing—and he was right. By his powerful dialectics he dissolved a whole body of traditionally formed opinions which had passed for knowledge. That was a negative disengagement of thought from real contents, and not yet its true contents; he recognized in thought and consciousness a live form of truth, but these were not yet really filled with real contents. He conquered the past but the new had no time to grow on its fresh grave, though its cradle already existed. Hence that unintelligible appearance in Socrates of the *daemon*, who is invoked by the incompleteness of the Socratean conception. If the contents of thought had been really complete there would have been no need for any daemon—there would have been no room for him.*

What was one-sided in the doctrine of Socrates was not supplemented by his early followers. But it was not the Megarian school or that of the Cyrenaics that his great shadow invoked but the beautiful and luminous personality of Plato who finally appeared to complete the edifice for which Socrates had laid the cornerstone.

Proclaiming the right of independent reason, Socrates conceived it as the essence and purpose of self-cognizing will. Now Plato, from the outset, posited thought to be the essence of the universe and tried to bring under its sway all things that exist—perhaps even to a greater extent than was needful. I have mentioned above that the stone laid by Socrates over-

* Aristotle pointed, with the greatest perspicacity, to the abstract character of Socrates's doctrine. "Socrates speaks on virtue better than Pythagoras but he is wrong: he regards virtue as knowledge. All knowledge has logos (rational foundation) and logos is in thought alone. He sees all virtues in knowledge and removes *the alogical aspect of the soul*, that is, passions, feelings, character. Virtue is no science. Socrates has made logos out of virtue, while we say: virtue is with logos! It is not knowledge, but it cannot be without knowledge." Aristotle defined virtue as the "unity of reason and unreasonableness."—*A.H.*

lapped the boundary of the ancient world. That might, with still more justification, be applied to the platonic conception. What we call the *romantic element* appeared for the first time in him. He was a poet-idealist, there was a streak in his nature which, under certain conditions, must inevitably have developed into Alexandrian Neoplatonism. Plato held that the spiritual world of science was the only true one, as distinct from the phantom world of existence. That true world is revealed to man through thought which, by a succession of *remembrances*, awakes and evolves the truth, slumbering and forgotten in the soul abandoned to the physical being. Once brought into consciousness, the awakened ideal world proves to be the truth of the real world, its fulfilment, and abides in majestic repose, having renounced the vanities of transient being, and preserving this renounced world in itself. Thus genus is the truth of the species, the universal is the truth of the particular, and, similarly, the idea is the truth of the universe. Plato holds that the transient, physical being is *a barrier* to absolute knowledge; saying which he seems to forget that it is yet also a prerequisite of being and knowledge. Do not think, however, that this romantic element, or rather the element including something romantic, is an exhaustive definition of platonic thought—far from it! You had better recollect that the ancients called him the architect of dialectics. That is where his power and energy really lay, that is where he arrived at his profound speculative philosophy which preserved a degree of idealism which bore the imprint of his personality and that of the rising epoch, yet did not hamper his free thought. Plato is compared by many with Schelling. We also did so in our first letter, and, true enough, the poetical thought of Plato, which delighted in arraying itself in the luxurious vestments of myths and allegories, is, in the modern world, closest to Schelling's poetic presage of truth and his ardent aspirations to it. Yet Plato has outstripped him precisely by his irresistible dialectics and even more by his complete, lucid idea of the dialectic method and of the movement of logic in general. Schelling formulates the ready-made contents of his thought in scholastic form, while Plato reaches, in his dis-

courses, truth through dialectics: for him truth is inalienable from his method.

Plato gave an excellent exposition of the development of knowledge in his book *On the Republic*. The initial stage or the point of departure of the logical movement is, according to him, spontaneous intuition, sensuous consciousness passing into sensuous notion, into what is called *opinion*. The second degree of knowledge, intermediary between opinion and science, is the sphere of investigation through reasoning, through reflection; it is the attainment of general and abstract first principles, the assumption of hypotheses, arbitrary explanations (all physical and, indeed, all positive sciences have arrived at this stage in our day). This is where scientific knowledge proper begins, but it is not yet attained: the rational sciences *never attain* dialectical clarity for, as Plato observes, they proceed from hypotheses and do not ascend in their analysis to the absolute first principle; their argument is based on conjectures; their thought seems to be not in their object for were it so, the objects themselves would be thoughts. The method used in geometry and allied sciences he calls rational assuming that ratiocination is intermediary between intellectual and sensuous contemplation. The third degree, at last, is cogitation in itself, comprehending thought. It assumes a hypothesis not as the first principle but as a point of departure leading to the first principle which contains nothing conjectural at all. Plato calls this degree dialectics. In our ordinary consciousness, that is immediately real which is furnished by our sensuous perception, and the rational definitions thereof. But Plato tries everywhere, in all his discourses, to reveal the unreality and inconsistency of the sensuous and rational, taken alone, their unsoundness when confronted with the speculative and the ideal. These struggles can reveal that the fire of negation flowed in his veins too, that the heritage of the Sophists still lingered within him, and not only lingered but had, indeed, been transformed into enormous power. The nature of his genius, however, was not abstractedly destructive but, on the contrary, conciliatory. He extracted the intransient from the transient, the universal from the particular, genus from the individuums—not only to demonstrate the reality and truth of

the universal and thus eclipse the particular, to destroy what is individual, concrete, particular; no, he extracted the generic element in order to save it from the vortex of transient existence, and more, in order to do what nature cannot do without human thought—that is to say—to reconcile them. Here Plato is a speculative philosopher and not a romanticist. He calls the idea what is universal, generic and fixed in thought; arriving at the idea he tries to give it a definition and at this point his dialectics becomes conciliatory and cancels, in itself, the contradictions pointed out by it. The determinateness of the idea consists in that unity, remains itself in diversity. The sensuous, diverse, finite, relatively extant, is not true for others—it is an unresolved contradiction which is resolved in the idea alone; but the idea does not lie outside the object: it is both what tends to self-definition through diversity and what abides free and single in this diversity. Plato remarks that the truest and most difficult thing is to show the same in other and other in the same, and in such a way as to enable the *other* to be the same to some *other*. What a magnificent idea! Yet just imagine how the crowd would hoot down a thinker who would appear in our days with a speech so queer for ordinary minds.

The respect transmitted throughout the ages for the ancient philosophers is based on the fact that nobody ever reads them. If our worthy people would consult them they would discover that Plato and Aristotle were as cracked as Spinoza and Hegel and used just as obscure a language—to say nothing of absurdities. Most men of our days (I mean those who regard themselves as scholars) have grown so unaccustomed, or have never been accustomed at all, to definitions of thought that these do not shock them, only when they resort to them unconsciously. Nobody is surprised, for instance, that man is physiologically something indivisible, a single entity—an atom, while anatomically he is a great multitude of the most diverse parts—that our body is both our *ego* and our *other*. Nobody is surprised by the process of origin constantly at work about us, that muffled struggle of being and non-being without which it would be mere indifference. Nobody is surprised at this permanence of transience around us. Put into words what these worthy people see and feel daily—and they will not under-

stand you and never recognize their intimate friends in your description. I am sure that many would be greatly shocked to learn the ultimate inference at which Plato arrives everywhere, armed with his relentless dialectics and his genius capable of penetrating into the innermost core of truth. For Plato, the absolute is what is both finite and infinite simultaneously; that which can *contain within itself* its own opposite is powerful and full of spirit and vigour. Body (taken in itself) perishes in encountering opposition, while spirit is able to withstand any opposition; it lives in this opposition and is abstract without it. The infinite taken alone, in itself (Plato says as much in no uncertain terms), is inferior to what is limited and finite because it is indefinite. The finite has its purpose and measure, while the infinitely abstract being, if determinate, is not *only* external but is precisely unity in diversity; it is alone real and as it grows conscious it is elevated above the finite and furnishes the medium for eternal repose and contemplation beyond which platonic thought does not go and which it does not want to leave. This last word of Plato, that reign of the idea in a state of repose and self-contemplation represents all that is excellent, and all that is one-sided in his conception. In historical retrospect, too, he was, for his predecessors, that lucid and serene sea towards which they bore their waters. He had fulfilled their destinies, as it were, and becalmed them on his great bosom. Parmenides, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, the Sophists, Socrates, had all equally found room in the platonic conception and yet his thought was *his* thought. The tributaries were lost in the sea though they were in it and though, without them, the sea would not have existed. However, to sustain our simile: the sea was infinitely broad, the shores out of sight—and that is the whole trouble. Water and air are elements in which man lacks something; he is fond of the earth and the diversity of life and not an elemental infinity which amazes one and keeps one amazed for a long time—but that is a state one cannot remain in for ever. In this space with its shores invisible because of the distance lies the strength of Plato. Tranquillized in the bliss of contemplation he thought to forget those shores. In vain! The fantastic images and notions tormenting his spirit forced their way into

his dialectics revealing their passionate features in the calm waters of pure thought. They came uncalled for. Of what dialectic use were they? No logical necessity made them surge up in Plato's soul any more than it did Socrates's daemon. They came to substitute the lost, transient things. They had that aspect of beauty which, though denied to abstract thought, is dear to man's heart. They disturbed the majestic tranquillity of pure speculation, and Plato welcomed this disturbance as a seafarer welcomes the sight of clouds which break the dead monotony of the ever mute heavens.

Plato's views on nature were poetically contemplative rather than scientifically speculative. He begins with *notions* in *Timaeus*; the Demiurge arranges and harmonizes chaotic substance; he animates it and gives it the cosmic soul. Willing to produce a world like unto himself, in the heart of the world the Demiurge placed the soul pervading all things. The platonic universe is a single animate and intelligent being.* "Do we therefore rightly conclude," he demands, "that there

* Let us mention here, in passing, the theology of the ancient world. It is the weakest side of its philosophy. It is significant that the Neoplatonics discarded all the questions which had formerly occupied them for theodicy. The pagan world was in this respect extremely inconsistent. A thinking person could not stop at the conceptions of polytheism. It was impossible indeed to content oneself with Olympus and the good old Greeks who lived on it. Xenophanes, the Eleatic, says: "If oxen or lions had hands, oxen would make gods like oxen, horses would make gods like horses." But having renounced the traditional notions the Greeks could neither reconcile their philosophic outlook with that of religion nor could they sacrifice paganism at one stroke. They could go on only by accepting paganism as a substitute for thought, a paganism that was indefinite, shaky, hesitant. That is why neither Nous, nor the soul of the world, nor the Demiurge, not even the entelechy of Aristotle satisfied them entirely. Religion for them is always an accident, *deus ex machina*. They suddenly take a leap from pure thought to religious conception, and leave both in the domain of irreconcilable contradiction. Herein lies one of the limitations of the Greek views. Do not expect a pagan to give a complete answer to a question concerning the divine. Whether he admits it or denies it he is equally wrong. It occurred to Cicero to formally reconcile ancient religion with philosophy. His interests were neither religious nor philosophical. He was a statesman and wrote for the public benefit prosaic tracts *de natura deorum* and vainly interpreted *à la* Dueis the great learning of the Greeks.—*A.H.*

is but one universe; or is it more right to assert that there are many and infinite? But indeed there can be but one" ... for were there two, they would be parts that would again constitute a whole.

Plato assumes fire and earth to be the primary elements: "... the Divinity, beginning to fabricate, composed the body of the universe from fire and earth. But it is impossible for two things alone to cohere together without the intervention of a third; for a certain collective bond is necessary in the middle of the two. And that is the most beautiful of bonds which renders both itself and the natures which are bound remarkably one...."

As you see in this lofty thought about connection is already latent the possibility of development into conception, idea, subjectivity. That platonic idea (as many other thoughts of his or his adherents) has been repeated to this very day in vain and does not seem to have been appreciated by anybody. The physical world has, for its extreme definitions, a solid element and a living element (earth and fire). "But now it is requisite that the world should be a solid; and solids are never harmonized together by one, but always with the mediums. Hence, the Divinity placed water and air in the middle of fire and earth, and fabricated them as much as possible in the same ratio to each other; so that fire might be to air as air to water; and that as air is to water so water might be to earth."

That duality of the medium furnishes Plato with the principal number of everything natural—*four*—that very figure which the Pythagoreans held to be really complete. The logical inference, syllogism, is constituted of three moments precisely because the medium, which is diffused in nature, fuses in rational unity; the conciliatory medium in nature is dual; it offers a contradiction as it is to be found in nature—unreconciled. The artificer "... accurately polished the external circumference of the spherical world and rendered it perfectly smooth. Its spherical shape contains all forms; its equilibrium can never be disturbed; it has no distinction from *other*." To have an external distinction is a feature of the finite: the exterior is not for itself but for another object. Now, the

universe is all objects; so the idea contains determinateness, differentiation, limitation and other-being; yet all this is dissolved and cancelled in it by unity, and therefore continues to be such a distinction as does not pass out of itself. According to Plato, the Divinity took something of the essence, ever identical with itself and indivisible, and something of the essence, corporeal and divisible, and combined the two; in this unity is combined nature, identical with itself and *with other*, with nature different from itself; and he made this combination, the living soul, be the pervading medium between the divorced. Note Plato's expression, *with other*. He does not say: other than what?—and herein lies the profound speculative meaning of his expression. It is an other, not as compared with something but *in itself*. He assembled these three essences in a still higher unity, in which they preserved their distinctness while remaining identical in the idea. The reign of the idea is, in its permanence, an ideal inaccessible to the aspiring world; it has its image or its imprint in the world, finite and abandoned to time. Yet this world which is striving through the transient to eternity has, in turn, as opposed to itself, still another world whose very essence is transience and changeability. So, the eternal world, placed in time, is realized in two forms in the world of self-reconciliation and in the world of wandering self-distinction.

From all this we may deduce three definite moments: first, amorphism, invisibility ready to assume any shape, substance, matter, recipient medium, the universal matron nursing her charge for self-subsistent being. Form is realized by it and it passes into form itself; it is passive matter which makes everything valid. With its help arise the phenomena of external being, of individuality in which duality is irreconcilable—yet what does manifest itself is not purely material but something universal, ideal. In contemplating nature, Plato never confuses the two principles in it: "the necessary and the divine," the subjected and the dominant, what is based on interaction and on itself. Without the necessary it is impossible to ascend to the divine—herein lies its visible significance but the autonomy of the divine lies in itself alone. Thus in man he distinguishes what belongs to his immortal soul (the divine) and what

belongs to his mortal soul (the necessary). All passions belong to the mortal soul and in order to keep these passions from molesting the divine soul God separated it from the mortal soul by the neck, this "isthmus and boundary, that the two extremes might be separate from each other." With the heart he conjoined the lungs, soft and bloodless, in order that they might relieve the heart when it is wrapped in the fire of ire. The lungs are porous and so constituted as to be able to absorb the air and moisture and thus cool the scorching heat of the heart. Enlarging upon the constitution of the body, Plato says the following about the liver:*

"However, as the Divinity perceived that this part would not be obedient to reason ... and would be ... hurried away by images and phantasms.... Considering this, he constituted the form of the liver, and placed it in the habitation of this desiderative part ... that the power of cogitations, descending from intellect into the liver as into a mirror receiving various resemblances and exhibiting images to the view, might at one time terrify this irrational nature by employing a kindred part of bitterness and introducing dreadful threats ... For those who composed us ... so constituted the depraved part of our nature that it might become connected with truth; establishing in this part a prophetic knowledge of future events. But that Divinity assigned domination to human madness may be sufficiently inferred from hence; that no one while endued with intellect becomes connected with a divine and true prophecy; but this alone takes place either when the power of prudence is fettered by sleep, or suffers some mutation through disease, or a certain enthusiastic energy: it being in this case the employment of prudence to understand what was asserted either sleeping or waking by a prophetic and enthusiastic nature; and so to distinguish all the phantastic appearances as to be able to explain what and to whom anything of future, past, or present good is portended. But it is by no means the office of that which abides and is still about to

* The ancients ascribed a rather strange physiological function to the liver. They considered it the source of dreams, misled probably by the abundance of blood in this organ. But the point is not Plato's opinion of the liver but what he had to say in connection with it.—*A.H.*

abide in this enthusiastic energy, to judge of itself either concerning the appearances or vociferations. Hence it was well said by the ancients, that to transact and know his own concerns and himself, is alone the province of a prudent man!" I could not resist the temptation of quoting these lines. What a deep sense for the truth guided the thought of the ancient philosophers! As you see, Plato understood clearly that the normal state of a spiritually and physically healthy man is far superior to any abnormal cataleptic, magnetic consciousness. In our day you will come across a host of people who give themselves the airs of philosophers and are convinced that clairvoyance is purer, higher and more spiritual than the possession of simple and ordinary mental faculties just as you find sages who consider the highest truth only what cannot be expressed by words and consequently is so personal and accidental that it is lost as soon as it is generalized by the word.

Plato's views of nature cannot be taken for a typical example of how the ancients regarded natural science. His striving toward the idea of repose in which everything transient subsided, the romantic chord which vibrated in his heart, his spiritual kinship to Socrates—all that prevented him from dwelling for long on nature. Therefore, after having defined, in the most general outlines, the stage represented by Plato, let us pass on to the last and finest representative of Hellenic science.

Aristotle is an empiricist in the highest sense of the word. He takes everything from his immediate environment—takes it as the particular, as it is. But once taken from experience, it never escapes his powerful hand; what he has taken does not preserve its self-sufficiency as a contradiction to thought; he never releases the object until he exhausts all its definitions, until its innermost essence manifests itself as a lucid, clear-cut idea—and therefore this empiricist is also, in the highest degree, a speculative thinker. Hegel remarked once that the *empirical taken in its synthesis is a speculative notion in itself*; it is just towards this notion that modern science is striving. The notion, however, does not reveal itself before it has traversed the whole path of thought, and before Aristotle has subjected all the objects to his terrible power of analysis,

made them run the gauntlet or, to borrow an expression from chemistry, before he has sublimated them into thought. Aristotle begins with empirical facts, with the undeniable fact of an event. This is his point of departure—it is not the cause but the beginning (*Initium*), the element preceding the cause, and being the first, it is essential, inevitable. He involves this empirical in the process of thought, smelts it in the fire of his analysis, and elevates it with himself to the heights of intelligence. There are no inert definitions for him, nothing immobile, solid, stagnant; there are no dead philosophemes. He flees repose and does not long for it—and that is an advance on Plato. The idea could not remain for ever an unclouded firmament free from the tribulations of the ephemeral—contemplation which finds its happiness in the absence or the muteness of everything particular. In spite of the quietist character in Plato, the idea was, indeed, ready to manifest itself in further self-definitions—yet it still continued in repose. Aristotle launched it on an active process, and everything solid, or what seemed to be solid, was involved in the universal movement, grew alive and returned again to the ephemeral, without losing the eternal. The idea *in itself* considered in its universality is not yet real, it is *merely* a universality, a supposition of reality, its conclusion, if you will, but not reality itself. The idea, wrested from the vortex of activity and existing outside it, is something insufficient, inert, and sluggish. Activity is the only thing that offers full life but it is not easily grasped. It is incomparably easier to conceive the universal as something abstract. Movement is complicated in itself; it is divaricated, split into two opposite moments; it can only be grasped by a quick, keen eye, it should be caught on the wing; while what is abstract is calm and obedient to reason and calls for no haste any more than a dead thing does. Hamlet was right when he assured the king that there was no need to hurry to Polonius's corpse; it could wait. A dead abstraction exists only in man's mind. There is no self-motion in it (if we separate from it the ever urgent dialectical need of the mind to leave the domain of abstraction).

Aristotle seeks the truth of an object in its purpose, he tries to determine the cause by the purpose. The purpose presupposes

movement. Purposive movement is development, which is the most perfect realization of itself, "the realization of the good as far as possible." "Everything and all nature have the realization of the good as their purpose"; the latter is an active first principle, logos, which disturbs the universal substratum (substantiality), stirring it to activity, which attains its own fulfilment through it and in it; which is plunged along with it into movement, yet possesses it to save the universal in a stream of changes. Such movement is not a mere modification but is activity. Activity is also constant change but one which preserves itself through all the changes while in mere change nothing is preserved for there is nothing to be preserved. Movement, change, activity, presuppose some field, some passive element in which they take place. This substratum is inert, abstract substance; all things that exist have invariably a material aspect but substance in itself is only a possibility, an arrangement, a passive frame, abstract and universal. It imparts to activity definite possibility, practical feasibility. Substance is a prerequisite, the *conditio sine qua non* of development. Hence the two Aristotelian elements—*dynamy* and *energy*, potentiality and actuality, substratum and form, fused in that supreme unity where the aim is at the same time its fulfilment (entelechy). Dynamy and energy are the thesis and antithesis of the process of reality. They are indissoluble, and are true in their existence alone; taken separately, they are abstract (this cannot be too often repeated, since the grossest errors arise from precisely this tendency to keep matter and form in unnatural separation). Substance, without form, inert, and abstracted from activity, does not constitute the truth but is a logical moment, that is, one aspect of truth. Form, on its part, is impossible without substance. There can be no reality without possibility; that would be plain nonsense. Actually these two elements are always indissoluble, they do not exist apart; the process of life consists in their interrelation and their junction. It is in this active process, striving for self-fulfilment, that Aristotle attempts to grasp the idea in all its scope. The platonic idea accomplished, having cancelled its negation, as it were, has found an internal harmony, lives in majestic repose; Plato, indeed, adheres to essence but essence

as it is, abstracted from being, is not yet either reality or activity. It leads to manifestation just as manifestation leads to essence. With Aristotle, essence is inseparable from being: therefore it is not at rest. For him the idea is not accomplished in abstract absoluteness but as it is being accomplished in nature and history, that is, in reality. Let us recapitulate his reasoning.

Activity and possibility find their true and complete unity in the idea; in inferior spheres, they are dissociated, opposed to each other and only strive for their reconciliation. All that can be perceived by the senses constitutes the finite essence in which substance and form are separated and external to each other. Therein lies the whole meaning of the finite and its entire limited character; here essence is suppressed by activity, submits to it but does not become activity itself; it passes from one form to another, the substance alone remaining permanent—this medium where the transformations take place, this passive endurance; determinedness and form are in negative relation to substance, the moments being divorced, and there is no complete harmony in this sensuous combination. Now, when activity contains what must be—when it has *within itself* the purpose of its aspirations, then movement becomes action—energy manifests itself as intelligence, the substance becoming the subject, the live medium of change; and the form the coordination and unity of the two extremes—matter and thought, of universal passivity and universal activity. In sensuous essence, the active principle is still separated from substance. Nous prevails over this separation but it (Nous) needs substance, it presupposes it, for otherwise it has no ground to stand on. Intelligence or Nous is here a conception, life-giving and dismembered in its embodiment. (Aristotle calls Nous in this case soul, logos, self-moving and self-becoming.) The full, the most perfect development is, finally, the fusion of dynamy, energy and entelechy, wherein everything is reconciled: potentiality is at the same time actuality, immobility is eternal movement, it is the eternal intransience of the transient, self-cogitating reason, *actus purus*! Then *passive* substance, you might observe, is, according to Aristotle, the first principle. By no means! For passive sub-

stance is a phantom, an abstraction that only wears the mask of actuality and materiality. So speculative a genius as Aristotle could hardly have taken as the first principle a dry abstraction, an unrealized possibility. Here is what he says: Much ... "which is in capacity may happen not to be. It is requisite, therefore, that there should be such a principle, the essence of which is energy.... A doubt, however, here arises: for every thing which energizes appears to have the capacity of energizing; but every thing endued with capacity does not energize; so that capacity will be prior to energy. But, indeed, if this were the case, nothing will have any substance; for it will happen, that a thing will have the capacity to be, but will not yet be."

Such speculative absurdity completely refuted, in the eyes of his realism, that absurd hypothesis. He goes on to say: "But if the case is as theologists assert, who generate all things from night, or if as the natural philosophers, who say that all things subsisted together, the same impossible consequence will ensue. For how could matter be moved if there was no cause in energy?" Energy is the prior and highest. (Recollect what a remarkable distinction Augustine draws between the chronological priority and the priority of dignity, *prioritas dignitatis*.) Substance is passive; pure action anticipates possibility not in time but in essence. Expediency advances, reveals this priority.

True to his principles, Aristotle begins physics with movement and its elements (space and time) and proceeds from the universal to the isolated and particular elements of the material world, never however losing sight of his principal idea—the live flow, the process. Not only does he conceive nature as life—and therein lies the basis of his studies of nature—but he considers this life as a single entity, having a purpose in itself and identical with itself. It *is not transformed into other* by motion, but evolves its transformations from its contents, remaining in it and preserving itself. Everything is in mutual reaction, according to him. Beings which fly, swim or vegetate are not alien to each other. They themselves represent their own mutual relation which can be reduced to unity. There is no systematized order in Aristotelian physics: he presents one

aspect of an object after another and one definition after another, without any inherent need, developing every such definition to a point of the speculative notion, but without connecting them. For him only one connection exists: that which is to be found in nature itself—life and movement. But this is not enough for science: life does not yet constitute the self-conscious idea in all its entirety.

Proceeding to the idea of nature, Aristotle first analyzes nature as a cause, acting towards some purpose, which has a purposeful aspiration, and only then does he turn to necessity and its relations. Usually the order is reversed. First what is necessary is taken up and the essential is considered to be what is determined by purpose and not what arises out of external necessity. For a long time the whole conception of nature was reduced to demonstrating necessity. Aristotle begins with the ideal element of nature; purpose for him is an "inner determinateness of the object itself." It contains, according to him, the activity of nature, its self-preservation, constant, unflagging, and, consequently, independent of chance or accident. The purpose posits both the precedent and the sequent, cause and effect; in conformity with it, every particular action is related to unity so that the effect is precisely the nature of a thing. A thing becomes what it was before. One who accepts accidental existence thereby denies nature, for the essence of nature is that it actuates itself; nature is what achieves its own goal. The nature of a thing is the universal identical with itself which, so to say, repulses itself, that is, realizes itself. But what is being realized, what arises originally underlay it: it is its purpose, genus, which pre-existed as a possibility. From purpose Aristotle proceeds to the medium, to the means. "If then it is both by nature and for an end that the swallow makes its nest and the spider its web, and plants grow leaves for the sake of the fruit and send their roots down (not up) for the sake of nourishment, it is plain that this kind of cause is operative in things which come to be and are by nature." Their instinct compels them to seek a medium which conforms to their self-preservation; a means is nothing other than a special concept of purpose. Life is a purpose set to itself, it attains, reproduces and preserves the organism it has

called to life. The plant or animal becomes what it is because it lives in the water or in the air—it is a closed logical circle. This faculty of modification which belongs to living things is not a mere accident or the result of the environment alone. This faculty is stimulated by the environment, but it is realized in the measure to which it corresponds to the idea inherent to the animal. "Hence clearly mistakes are possible in the operations of nature also ... if where mistakes occur there was a purpose in what was attempted, only it was not attained, so must it be also in natural products, and monstrosities will be failures in the purposive effort." Nature contains within itself its means, these being its own purpose: it is like a "doctor doctoring himself." Speaking about necessity Aristotle wins a magnificent victory over the idea of external necessity in the development of nature, giving the following example:

"The current view places what is of necessity in the process of production, just as if one were to suppose that the wall of a house necessarily comes to be because what is heavy is naturally carried downwards and what is light to the top, wherefore the stones and foundations take the lowest place, with earth because it is lighter, and wood at the top of all.... Whereas, though the wall does not come to be without these, it is not due to these, except as its material cause: it comes to be for the sake of sheltering and guarding certain things. Similarly in all other things which involve production for an end; the product cannot come to be without things which have a necessary nature, but it is not due to these (except as its material); it comes to be for an end." It is the motive force for which the necessary is necessary, but the goal does not yield to the necessary and, on the contrary, keeps it under its sway, hinders it from escaping from purposiveness and restrains the external force of necessity.

I omit the excellent deductions of Aristotle on space and time solely for the reason that they might seem too abstract to you, and shall proceed to his psychology (which, though, might also be called physiology). Now do not imagine, however, that what is to follow is the metaphysics of the soul, and that Aristotle will, in the manner of the scholastics, set the soul before him and apply himself in dead earnest to its

analysis, to discovering what kind of thing it is, whether it is simple or complex, spiritual or material. No, the speculative genius of Aristotle could not dally with such abstract toys: his psychology examines the activity of a living organism, and no more. From the very outset he draws a line of demarcation between his views and the dualism of metaphysics. He says that the soul is considered as something apart from the body in the action of thought, speaking logically, and as something inseparable from it in sensation, speaking physiologically, and immediately adds by way of explanation:

"The physiologist, however, and he who is skilled in dialectic, will define differently each of theses as for instance, what anger is; for the latter will define it to be the appetite of inflicting reciprocal molestation, or something of this kind; but the former, the fervor of blood or heat about the heart. But of these, the one assigns matter, and the other, form and reason; for reason is the form of a thing.... Thus, with respect to a house, one definition of it will be that it is a shelter from wind, rain and heat; another will assert it to be stones, tiles and wood; and another says it is the form of these (stones, tiles, and wood) for the sake of these things." Soul is the energy by which potentiality is transformed into reality, the essence of the organic body, its εἶδος* by means of which it becomes, as far as that is possible, an animate body. The soul attains a form most appropriate to it—that is what it is active for. "Hence, it is not necessary to investigate," Aristotle remarks, "whether the soul and body are one; just as it is not necessary to investigate wax, and its form nor, in short, the matter of each thing, and that of which it is made...." What is interesting in the relation of the soul to the body is not whether they are identical or not. The essential question is, according to Aristotle, whether the *activity is identical with its organ*. The material aspect is only the possibility and not the reality of the soul: the substantial element of the eye is vision; deprive it of its faculty of sight and the meaning is lost though the substance remains unchanged.... The eye, its composite parts, the act of seeing belong to a single entity,

* Image, idea.—*Ed.*

their complete truth lies in their union, and not in their being isolated: thus the soul and body constitute a living indissolubility. Aristotle defines the soul in three ways: as nutritive, sensitive and rational—in accordance with the three principal functions of the soul and the three corresponding kingdoms: vegetable, animal and human. The vegetable and animal natures are associated in man in a supreme synthesis. Proceeding to the relations uniting the three souls, Aristotle observes that the vegetative and sensitive souls abide in the rational one, the nutritive soul constituting the nature of plants; the vegetative soul, the first degree of activity, is also present in the sensitive soul, but only as its possibility. It exists in it as immediate being-in-itself. The universal, essential, does not belong to it, yet cannot exist without it; it turns from the subject into a predicate, and from the highest activity descends to the role of substratum. That is the same relation between the animal-vegetative soul and the thinking soul: the supreme being of an animal descends in a thinking being to the state of *one of its natural definitions*, of universal possibility, both being subjected by it for being-for-itself (that is, by entelechy). How amazingly true and profound is this conception of nature! Aristotle left behind not only the Greeks but almost all modern philosophers as well. Let us proceed with his analysis of the functions of the soul. But the sensitive power . . . "is that which is in capacity, and that which is in energy". . . . "It suffers, therefore, not being similar; but having suffered, it becomes similar, and is such as the sensible object," and it is in this passive aspect of sensation stimulated by the external that Aristotle finds that which distinguishes it from consciousness. The cause of this distinction is that sensuous activity has the particular for its object, while knowledge has the universal, the latter itself constituting, in a way, the essence of the soul. For that reason everybody can think whenever he will, and thought is free. To feel, however, is not within the power of man: sensation calls for an active agent. Potentially, sensation is what is sensated, actually; it is passive until it rises to the same level as impression; but once this level has been attained, it is ready and becomes identical with the thing sensated. The energy of that which is

sensible and of sense, is one and the same, but their essence is not the same. I say, for instance, sound which is in energy, and hearing which is in energy, ... are the same; ... The function of hearing is their unity, sensation being a form of their identity, the cancellation of the contradiction between the object and the organ. Sensation receives forms without matter: thus wax received an imprint taking not the metal itself but only its form. This comparison of Aristotle's has given rise to interminable controversies on the soul as empty space (*tabula rasa*), filled subsequently with external impressions alone. However, this comparison does not go so far: wax, indeed, takes nothing from the seal; the form pressed on it is not essential to it but is just its external contour. Now the soul receives form by its very essence, transforming it so that the soul is a living and assimilated totality of everything perceived. The perception by the soul is active; while perceiving, it cancels passivity, liberates itself from it:* the reflection of con-

* This makes me recall an argument which was going on for a long time between the idealists and the empiricists about the first principle of knowledge. Some offered consciousness as the first principle; others—experience. Endless debates were held, fat volumes were written and both sides were, evidently, in the wrong because both assumed an abstraction for the truth. By his great *nisi intellectus*,[28] Leibnitz indicated where the solution of the question at issue lay but he was not understood; they stamped it a dialectical subterfuge, a distortion of the question and demanded the laconic this or that: the priority of experience or consciousness, *la bourse ou la vie*! Now this problem interests nobody. The fact that the truth is to be found on both sides and that it is impossible to remain in one category without passing into the other, brings one directly to the conclusion that the truth consists in the unity of one-sided definitions which define neither the one nor the other entirely and each of which is indispensable to the other. And what was the aim of the disputants? Why were they eager to establish that insignificant chronological priority of experience over consciousness, or the other way round? Probably they thought that the assertion of this priority would give them ascendency, not realizing that no matter in whose favour the question was solved, the victory would belong to the adversary. If the beginning of knowledge is experience, then this real knowledge should prove that any assumption anticipating it is not knowledge and, consequently, this assumption must be renounced, because it is ignorance. In reality, the beginning is that moment of knowledge when it is equal to non-knowledge—when it is a mere possibility of knowledge transcended by development. Knowledge is equally inconceivable without experience or intelligence. If, phenome-

sciousness supplies distinction again; but this distinction, which has already both moments within consciousness and is perceived in relation to thought, contains its immediacy, its material aspect, without which it is impossible—an external spark igniting thought. Once brought into existence, thought cannot stop. It cannot have a passive attitude to its object for it alone is activity. The object of thought manifests itself in the form of thought, deprived of the objectivity of the perceived, and the two categories of movement are now in thought. There is no other existence for thought but active being-for-itself: *it has no being-in-itself at all*, its being-in-itself, its material existence, is precisely *its other*. "... Intellect is in capacity, in a certain respect, intelligibles, but is not one of them in entelecheia, before it understands or perceives intellectually." It lives in action. "But it is necessary to conceive it as of a table in which nothing is written in entelecheia." This example was misunderstood just as was the example with the wax. The activity here belongs to the book itself, and the external is a mere pretext. Of course, reason is the clean slate prior to thought. Reason is the dynamy of the cogitated, but it is nothing without thinking; and again, it thinks its own self; the external cannot write—it can but impel the scribe. "Intellect, too, understands itself by the assumption of the intelligible: for it becomes intelligible by contact and intellection: for that intellect is the same with the intelligible. For intellect is the recipient of the intelligible, and of essence. But it energizes possessing.... Since, however, in every nature, there is something which is matter to each genus (and this because it is all those in capacity), and something which is the cause and effective, because it produces all things (in such a manner as

nally, experience is anterior to consciousness that only means that it serves as an external requisite for manifesting the understanding which preceded it yet which would remain a mere possibility unless stimulated by experience. Similar abstractions, kept in contradictory polarity, lead to antinomies in which contradiction is repeated *ad infinitum* with a monotony that is enough to drive one to distraction and which indicates that there is something wrong in the problem at issue. Speculative science uninterruptedly revolves around these antinomies. We shall have occasion to meet them once again.—*A.H.*

art is affected with respect to matter), it is necessary that these differences should, also, be inherent in the soul. And the one is an intellect of this kind, because it becomes all things; but the other, because it produces all things, as a certain habit, such, for instance, as light.... And this intellect is separate, unmingled and impassive, since it is in its essence energy; for the efficient is always more honourable than the patient, and the principle than matter ... but separate intellect is alone this very thing which it is; and this alone is immortal and eternal." If we take Nous to be the faculty of arriving at external knowledge and not activity and if we subjugate thought to the results of such knowledge, thought will be inferior to its own result—a dull and poor power of reproduction.

His analysis of thought Aristotle concludes with the following, purely Hellenic words: life is a high and excellent gift that "... we enjoy for a small portion of time.... And on this account vigilance, the energies of sense, and intellection are most delightful. Hope, too, and memory are pleasing through energies. But essential intellection is the intellection of that which is essentially the most excellent; and the most essential of that which is most essential." So, the energy of thought Aristotle ranks above the object of thought. Living thought for him is the supreme state of the great process of universal life. Here is a Greek for you in all the power and beauty of his development! These are the last solemn words of the *plastic* thought of the ancients, the boundary beyond which the Hellenic world could not pass if it was to remain its own self.

Autumn 1844

LETTER FOUR

THE LAST EPOCH OF ANCIENT SCIENCE

ARISTOTLE's doctrine failed to attain that scientific form which, having become self-sufficient in itself and its method, would have rendered it independent of its author; it did not attain that mature self-sufficiency which would have enabled it to stand alone, detached from his personality, and, consequently,

could not be fully transmitted to his followers as a heritage which needed only to be developed and continued. His science, like the empire of his disciple, Alexander the Great, did not entirely possess that vitalizing unity, that central pivot to which everything would be related. Both lacked what had once been imparted to them by the genius of thought and the genius of will. The potentiality of Alexander's empire lay in the circumstances of his epoch, while its actuality was to be found in him alone; his empire fell to pieces with his death and though the consequent events conformed both to his personality and contemporary circumstances, the empire could not continue as an organic whole, a social individuum. Similarly, the conceptions of Plato and his predecessors enabled Aristotle to rise to those heights to which his genius entitled him. But genius is a question of personality; nobody can demand that every peripatetic, for example, should be endowed with that talent which would place him on a level with Aristotle, a man of genius. All that resulted in a formal, dogmatic study of Aristotle, instead of penetrating into the spirit that animated his science. His disciples could have comprehended and assimilated Aristotle's doctrine if they had first mentally transferred themselves on to his ground, had disregarded the words and concerned themselves with their meaning. For that, however, to be achieved, the individual will of a man of genius had first to become an impersonal method, something which mankind had yet to live another two millenniums to achieve. In our day, Hegel's achievement lies precisely in the fact that he evolved a scientific method which, once you have grasped it, makes you forget the personality of the author himself who, often to no purpose at all, intrudes his Teuton traits and the professorial uniform of the University of Berlin, completely oblivious of such incongruities in the medium in which they occurred. However, such intrusions of personal opinion are so unimportant and untypical in Hegel that no one (if he is a gentleman) pays any attention to it, and, indeed, Hegel's own method is used to tear to pieces those of his deductions which stamp him not as an instrument of science but rather as a man unable to disentangle himself from the web of trivial and accidental relations; those who

base themselves on his principles boldly combat his inconsistencies, firmly confident that they are on *his* side and not *against* him. The stronger a person's influence is, the deeper the imprint of his particular individuality, the more difficult is it to discern the generic features in it. Now, science is precisely generic thought, it belongs to everybody just because it belongs to nobody.

The ethereal principle, the delicate breath of a spirit, profound and full of a live understanding, which hovered over Aristotle's writings, was immediately congealed when it fell into the ice-box of his followers' ratiocination. His words were repeated with grammatic precision, but the effect was that of a death-mask which had preserved every single feature, every wrinkle, but had lost the forms of pulsing life. Aristotle could not infuse his philosophy into the flesh and blood of his contemporaries and make it one with them; nor were his followers or his method prepared for that. He raised the object in hand from simple empiricism to the sphere of manifold speculation and having exhausted its contents took up another. It is thus a fisherman keeps probing the depths to pull up his catch and add it to his haul. The sum total of those additions constituted the body of Aristotle's science but the means of accomplishing this was again his powerful personality which compensated for the deficiency of the method he had discovered, for the latter was nothing but formal logic. The secret first principle which cemented all the works of Aristotle, certainly found no scientific expression anywhere, though traces of it could be detected occasionally. That is why his early followers, while assimilating what was expressed in scientific form, lost everything that belonged to the eagle eye of genius. The omissions or defects of a great thinker stand revealed not in him but in his followers, for it is they who cling with a rigid and absolute fidelity to the letter of the word, whereas a man of genius, by virtue of the very inner working of his spirit, transcends all formal limits, even those set up by his own hand. It is exactly this facility to leave the bounds of one-sidedness, even those of his age, that constitutes the grandeur of genius. Both Aristotle and Plato lost their lustre in the philosophic schools that came after them. They remained

a kind of benevolent shadow, lofty and inaccessible, to which everybody traced their origin and was anxious to adhere but which nobody really comprehended. After numerous ramified schools, academic and peripatetic, which achieved nothing of importance, Neoplatonism made its appearance as the heir to all ancient thought, the consummation of Plato and Aristotle. By Neoplatonism, ancient thought passed into the new world. But it was more like transmigration than development. We shall see that presently. Aristotle's personality was buried, along with his body, under the ruins of the ancient world until the great Arab resurrected him and brought him to a Europe wrapped in the pall of ignorance. The medieval world, which had a real craving for chains of every kind, submitted servilely to the authority of Aristotle though it comprehended him not at all. But in the hands of the *doctores seraphici et angelici*, so humble in their relation to him, Aristotle became a scholastic, Jesuitic pater, dull and pedantic. The poor Stagirite had to take his full share of the hatred displayed by resurrected thought which revolted with the fury of a Luther against scholasticism and the fetters of romanticism.* Properly speaking, there was no scientific movement after Aristotle up to the

* Anticipating the objections of some philologists we deem it necessary to point out that we have in mind the destiny of Aristotle in the West. In the Eastern Empire—probably up to the Turks—there must have been people who read and interpreted ancient philosophers, Aristotle included, regarding the latter from their own point of view. The history of science, however, has nothing to do with it. It is not bound to occupy itself with everything people do everywhere. Everything that deviates from the main stream or does not fall into it, what stagnates in backwaters or falls exhausted half-way, everything that is accidental or particular, has claims to historical importance only if it leaves its mark. Otherwise history forgets of its existence—and therein lies its great mercifulness. Less time is allotted to the teaching of the history of China than to the history of any one single city of Italy. Do you really suppose that the reason is bias, proximity, or distance? In that case Plutarch must have been an extremely partial man. Why else should he have written the biographies of Pericles, Alcibiades and others and not of every Athenian citizen? Or else why didn't he include in his biographies a description of how his heroes cut their teeth or were weaned? Or how they whined and scolded in their dotage, and so on. History, like the French Academy, does not offer a place in its ranks to anybody; it examines the claims only of those who themselves knock at its doors.—*A.H.*

"great reinstation" of the sciences of the sixteenth century (*instauratio magna*), even though mankind had made enormous strides in the interval, which led it to a new world of thought and activity. For our purpose we might, without any loss, skip from Aristotle to Bacon. Allow me, however, to sum up very concisely the time intermediary between Hellenic science which ended with Aristotle and modern science and which began with Bacon and Descartes and matured in the person of Spinoza.

Entering its final phase, Greek science sought the *obvious*. It accepted only the obvious as the truth. Its demands became clearer yet simultaneously more shallow. Its enquiry aimed at the external criterion of truth, but sought it in personal thought. That criterion is certainly to be found only in thought but in thought freed from everything personal. A search for the criterion, i.e., a check, from a rationalistic point of view, is an insoluble task. The mind which has detached itself from the object and taken a negative attitude can apprehend the truth as its law but it will never consider this law as the truth of the object. And precisely in this alienated concentrated state of thought, when thought loses its footing and seems to feel a sort of void within, does the need arise for rigorous dogmatism; thought seeks to entrench itself, to fortify itself against all aggression, unaware that its worst enemy is already within its own breast. How could people help but seek an invulnerable bulwark within themselves and in their theoretical world when everything around them had begun to break down and stood revealed as false or senile? The heyday of Greek life was coming to an end. Evil days, full of suffering and humiliation, came to Greece. The conquerors of the East had not the power to defend themselves against the rugged West. All elements in Greek life were so closely interlinked that neither art nor science could survive the civil polity without undergoing a change. Hellenic science needed Athens but a self-confident Athens. Simply, what they needed, was free youth which would allow thinkers to abandon themselves to thought. But how could it remain carefree at a time when the last king of Macedon, his head bowed, walked through the streets of Rome, chained to the victor's chariot? A corrosive

poison had already been consuming Hellas. There was no faith either in science or in the state or in the people, let alone in Olympus: it was spared out of a kind of courtesy, and to frighten the mob. It was those days, and not the days of the Sophists, that witnessed, indeed, the ugly spectacle of the rhetoricians-dialectics who spoke and preached without any convictions. It was a species of cold quibbling in science, hypocritical and perfidious, fleeting and hollow; on rare occasions sparks were struck, reminiscent of the Athenian mind, biting and poetical, facile and profound. This phenomenon belonged to social life rather than to science. It reflected the civil decomposition in the sphere of thought. But this same sphere witnessed the rise of the most vigorous reaction against social immorality, Stoicism.

The doctrine of the Stoics was pre-eminently moral. It came to grips with vital problems. It sought to give counsel, to fortify the heart against the blows of fate, to arouse the proud consciousness of duty and to make the individual sacrifice everything for its sake. What else could thinkers preach, who were witnesses of the last act of a tragedy in which the world was collapsing and when its visible ruins made it hard to discern the future which was quietly and imperceptibly settling amid that scene of agony full of impotent, senile lust and exhaustion, disgusting in its cynical servility. Nothing was left to the philosopher but to fold his arms and take a courageous stand against them, to brand society by his aloofness and cry aloud its shame, and when all hope for its salvation was lost, to do his utmost to save at least a *few persons*, wrest them from the contaminated environment and awaken moral sentiments in their breast. The Stoics consecrated themselves to this task. Yet their doctrine was sad, austere and "yielded nothing to the graces." It taught how to die, to vindicate the truth at the cost of one's life, to be firm and unswerving in adversity, to surmount sufferings and disdain pleasures; all of these are virtues but the virtues of a man plunged in misery. All that was too gloomy to be normal. The Stoic's hand, ever ready to sever the thread of his own life, was unflinching towards others. It handled everything with rude fingers and the delicate, scarcely perceptible aroma that

enveloped all things Athenian like an aura, either vanished at their touch or else did not exist for them at all. That was the time when the Roman spirit, practical and precise, sharp and cold, began to be all-pervading, became the universal, predominant influence. On Roman soil the Stoics attained their complete development. In Greece they had been theoretical rather than otherwise while here they opened their veins and made fires in their own gardens. It is precisely the Roman element that was dominant in them. Theirs were dry, vigorous but embittered minds, and their hearts were hard, though lacerated. They were practical but extremely one-sided and formal. Their rules were simple and pure. But in their abstract purity they, like oxygen, provided no healthy medium for breathing precisely because they contained no admixture which would mitigate their extreme purity. The moral precepts of the Stoics aimed at producing *wise* men. They believed that only the individual could possess virtues. They aimed to cultivate morality in the wise man alone and not in the republic, as did Plato. They were the first to give voice to the great thought that the wise man is not tied down by any external law for he bore the living source of law within him, and was under no compulsion to account to anybody but his own conscience. This was a profound idea, pregnant with meaning but such as was uttered only in those times when thinking people perceived the incompatability between the existing order and consciousness revealed in all the ugliness of its falsehood. This idea was the complete negation of positive law and yet the Stoics, in emancipating the wise men, expounded their morality in maxims, that is, in ready-made articles of their code. Maxims in the philosophy of morality are detestable. They humiliate man, expressing supreme distrust for him and regarding him as immature or stupid. Besides, they are useless because they are always too general. They can never cover all circumstances which vary in every particular case, and moreover they are unnecessary. Finally, a maxim is a dead letter. It offers no escape when contingencies arise, and when they do, the force of things rejects the abstract rule, bursts it as it would a frame unable to retain its contents. A moral man should always know unhesitatingly how to conduct himself in every partic-

ular case, and not because he follows a set of maxims but because he has a general idea from which the case in point may readily be deduced. He improvises his conduct. Now, the Stoics, formalistic and distrustful, regarded morality from a juridical point of view and made up their moral maxims. Their doctrine definitely showed a tendency to establish itself and congeal as a fixed dogmatism.

And as the austere, ascetic Stoicism, with its suicides and rigorous rules, took possession of minds, another doctrine, completely opposite to Stoicism (in its expression), spread as rapidly. It was Epicureanism, the last, purely Greek attempt to reconcile thought with life and the individual with his environment in a bright and somewhat cheap way. "We declare pleasure to be the beginning and end of the blessed life, for we recognize this to be our first and natural good. . . ." To this conscious pleasure we should strive, eliminating all that is in the way as evil. So blessedness is the criterion of Epicurus. Nothing is more absurd than the endless stories told by worthy people that Epicurus preached that the goal of life was the gross and bestial satisfaction of passions. This idea is as narrow-minded and shallow as that presenting Heraclitus as always weeping and Democritus as always laughing and that the Sophists were charlatans and swindlers. All that belongs to a special view of philosophy which is as true as the idea formed about a ball by those who are watching it from the ante-room. Blessedness is undoubtedly the goal of life. All things living and endowed with consciousness have an inalienable right to enjoy life. But the question is what constitutes the blessedness of man. For an animal it lies in the appeasement of hunger and the satisfaction of its natural instincts, and the same holds good for the man-animal. But one should not forget that man is not in his normal state an animal. Equally abnormal is the man who would denounce his physical nature as unworthy of himself. There is no blessedness for man in immorality. It is precisely in morality and virtue that he attains his supreme happiness. For that reason it is quite natural for man to love virtue and morality. Moralists are determined to force man to do good, to act morally, just as physicians make him take bitter and un-

pleasant pills. For them the very fact that man performs his duties *unwillingly* is what makes it meritorious. It does not occur to them that if these duties were true and moral, it would be a strange kind of man who would find their performance repulsive. It does not occur to them to demand the reconciliation of heart and mind in such a fashion as to enable man to consider the fulfilment of a genuine duty not as a heavy burden but as a pleasure, since it is a line of conduct most natural to him and acknowledged by his mind. If virtue is only a compulsory duty, an external dictum, it cannot be loved—one can make sacrifices for its sake or submit to it, but that is all. One can, finally, be virtuous for selfish reasons: in expectation of a reward. Here the aim is also blessedness but on a lower, more ulterior level. Retribution lies in virtue itself; a moral deed is a ready compensation, is bliss in itself. Otherwise we lapse into doubt, so well expressed by Schiller:

GEWISSENSSKRUPEL

Gerne dien' ich den Freunden, doch tu' ich es leider
mit Neigung.
Und so wurmt es mich oft, dass ich nicht tugendhaft bin.

ENTSCHEIDUNG

Da ist kein anderer Rat, du musst suchen, sie zu ver-
achten,
Und mit Abscheu alsdann tun, wie die Pflicht dir
*gebeut.**

Doubt

* „I serve my friends willingly but, unfortunately, it gives me pleasure: my conscience often reproaches me with being immoral because of that.

Decision

There is nothing to be done but try and hate them and do with abhorrence what is dictated by duty.—*A.H.*

He who finds bliss in virtue can say, like Epicurus: "sensible adversity must be preferred to insane happiness." which is self-evident, for insane happiness is an absurdity for man. To enjoy it he has to renounce his supreme essence—reason. Every immoral act, committed consciously, denies and insults reason; pricks of conscience remind the man that he has acted like a slave, like an animal, and this reproachful voice destroys his happiness. Stoicism is opposite to Epicureanism in form rather than in reality; did not the former want to be self-sacrificing because in self-sacrifice it saw more human satisfaction than in cowardly indulgence and licentiousness? Stoicism only expressed its outlook differently, interpreted it from a different angle. Called into existence as a reaction, a protest, it undertook, in an abrupt and ascetic way, to reform morals. It was like the severe and austere Catholicism which came into existence after Luther. Now, Epicureanism, quite the contrary, true to Greek genius, understood the problem raised by Stoicism in a marvellous and humanly simple way, and did not divide the human soul into two terrible opposites of duty and desire, setting them against each other, but strove rather to reconcile them in that beatitude which would satisfy both duty and passions. The fulfilment of duty was, according to it, inseparable from enjoyment, that is, it was natural and reasonable. The state of moral dualism contradicts the very meaning of the self-conscious being; it is also an absurdity like that wherein an animal, to appease its hunger, claws its own breast. Simple organic harmony protests strongly against Stoic melancholy and their teeth-gnashing; such ascetism and persecution of everything natural led straight to Origen's corrections of physical nature. It will be noted that the purity of the morals of Epicurus's disciples has become proverbial, and that is only natural. A person who recognizes his right to enjoyment easily understands the rights which enjoyment has over himself. Passions do not frighten him; not as enemies or thieves in the night do they creep into his heart. He is familiar with them and knows their place. He who aims only to master his passions thereby imparts to them a vigour and intensity they do not possess. He makes them rivals to reason. Passions grow in vigour and intensity pre-

cisely because an enormous importance is attached to them. Lucretius says that sometimes we should yield to the need for pleasure lest it become an obsession with us. Epicurus who is quite the opposite of the Stoics joined with them in the final words of his doctrine. "Freedom from fear and desire," he says, "is the highest bliss." Note, too, that both schools attached to the personality of man an importance infinitely greater than had any of the philosophic doctrines which preceded them. That was the sign heralding the recognition of the infinity of the human spirit which was bound to develop in the new world. You may raise the objection that Epicureanism, however, contributed to the spread of sensuality and materialism in Rome. Yes, but in what epoch? When Rome was corrupted to the point of idolizing Claudius, Caligula, etc., and people sought to forget, to escape from the civic world, from forebodings and reminiscences, and they interpreted Epicureanism according to their own lights.

Epicureanism had a great influence on natural science. Epicurus was almost as much of an atomist and empiricist, as the natural scientists of the last century, and in part, of the present. Despite his great boldness, he did not pursue his conception to its logical end any more than did the Greeks, or even the Stoics themselves who, while opposing the beliefs of the pagan world, yet yielded to a kind of fatalism and to mystical influences. Epicurus accepted the absurdity of the accidental association of atoms as a cause of the origin of all things existing and spoke admirably of the supreme being "who lacks nothing and is indestructible, immutable and must be venerated not for some external reasons but because it is worthy of such by its very essence." This testifies only that he felt the limits of his conception and foresaw the supreme principle reigning over the diversity of the physical world. But, in addition, he spoke of certain subjugated gods—types that serve as eternal ideals for people.[29] How he reconciled this host of gods with the accident of origin is not clear, and probably, was not clear to him either. The deistic philosophers of the eighteenth century, and naturalists in general, furnish numerous examples of the most complete contradiction between their physical theories and some attempts or other at

une religion raisonnée, naturelle, philosophique. Despite this inconsistency, the influence of Epicureanism was considerable. The Epicureans accepted facts and experience not only as their point of departure but as an irrefutable criterion. Usually, thinkers just rested one foot on facts and then immediately passed over to the abstract and the universal, reducing them afterwards to logical multiplicity; the Epicureans took a different path to truth: they clung to the empirical. That path made it impossible, because of its one-sidedness, for the Epicureans to disentangle themselves from empiricism and attain all-embracing synthetic thoughts, but it contained something so irresistible, so manifestly irrefutable and tangible that it at once became accessible, popular and practical. For all its types and ideals, Epicureanism dealt the death-blow to paganism. Stoicism risked changing into mysticism and indeed Platonism did change into it. Aristotle might have been interpreted in many ways, but that was impossible in so far as Epicureanism was concerned; it was simple and positive. That is exactly why it was reviled so maliciously. It was no more licentious or atheistic than other philosophic doctrines in Greece—but, after all, why should we take up the cudgels on behalf of pagan orthodoxy? All ancient philosophers are open to suspicion of being polytheistic and all of them, Epicurus included, have retained traces of it. It was its accursed positiveness and experimental method that so exasperated people like Cicero.

Soon the biting wind of scepticism attacked the dogmatism of both the Epicureans and the Stoics, and the last ideas of the ancient philosophy which were growing senile and stubborn in their dogmatism, crumbled away before its powerful gusts and were dissipated in the twilight mists that descended on the Greek-Roman world. Scepticism was the natural sequence of dogmatism. Dogmatism had called it forth against itself. Scepticism came as a reaction. Philosophical dogmatism, as everything inert, rigid, settled in self-complacency, is repugnant to the ever active, ever-striving nature of man. Dogmatism in science is not progressive—on the contrary, it makes a live thought settle in a stone crust around its own principles. It is like a solid body thrown into a solution in order

to precipitate crystallization. However, human thought has not the least desire to crystallize. It flees stagnation and inertness, it sees in dogmatism a quiescent repose, lassitude and, finally, something limited. Dogmatism, indeed, must of necessity have the *ready absolute*, something pre-existent and kept in the one-sidedness of a logical definition. It is satisfied with what it has; it does not involve its first principles into movement—on the contrary, they are the immobile pivot around which it revolves, in chains. As soon as thought begins to discern this granite-like immobility, the human spirit, this *actus purus*, this motion par excellence, rebels and bends all its efforts to sweep away and destroy this reef which it finds so galling, and there has never yet been a case of dogmatism, firmly established in science, being able to stand up against such pressure. Scepticism, as we have said, was a reaction called forth by that semi-legal dogmatism in philosophy. It cannot exist as such where rigid conceptions are impossible, where nothing is accepted on the strength of authority, and there is no tendency to make science a set of cut-and-dried standards like the Twelve Tables instead of the live, flowing thought it should be. However, until science conceives itself precisely as the live, flowing thought and consciousness of mankind which, like Proteus, assumes all shapes without retaining any one of them, so long as ready-made truths are accepted without any justification, and are taken from the street, rather than from the mind, and, indeed, even find a place and right of residence in it—so long will bitter and cutting scepticism raise, from time to time, its head of Sextus Empiricus or Hume and kill, by its irony and negation, *all science* because it is *not all science*. Doubt is a permanent element in all the stages of developing scientific thought. We find it in science in Greece and later on will invariably find it in every attempt made by philosophic dogmatism; it accompanies science throughout the ages.

The nature of that scepticism which the thought of the ancient world assumed at its close was very noteworthy. Directed against the two forms of dogmatism, it achieved *de facto* what dogmatism strove for; it divorced the personality

from everything concrete, emancipating it from everything positive, and thereby acknowledged negatively its infinite worth. Scepticism liberated the mind from the ancient science on which it had been educated. That liberation, however, was not a conscious, harmonious proclamation of its rights and its autonomy, that was a reactionary liberation, like that of '93, when thought liberated itself from the ancient world and cleared the ground for the world to come. Scepticism was a result of the most terrible sensations that could visit the human mind. Not only did it doubt the possibility of knowing the truth, nay, it even did not doubt the impossibility of knowing it. It was convinced that being and thought were equally impossible of control, that they were incommensurable values, and probably even imaginary ones. It posited *probability* instead of the criterion, and, with a bitter smile, let things rest there. Once convinced of the inability of the mind to rise to the truth, the sceptics abandoned all attempts to do so and merely argued that the attempts of others were absurd. Do not, however, be deceived by this indifference: that is that desperate indifference born of the helplessness with which you gaze at the body of your deceased friend. You have to resign yourself to his loss; there is nothing you can do about it. So, broken-hearted, you go about your own affairs. However bold a front Sextus Empiricus* tried to assume, man is not so easily reconciled to mistrust of himself, to the certainty that his mind is not absolute. The very laughter of the sceptics, their very irony, prove that their hearts were not at all at peace with the world. Laughter is not always an expression of gaiety.

* Sextus Empiricus lived in the second century, A.D. A man of extraordinary but purely negative intelligence, he not only denied everything but, what is still worse, accepted everything. In his dialectics there is a kind of irony that is enough to drive one mad. He rejects causality, for example, but later he says: so there is a sufficient reason to reject the cause as a cause, and if so—the cause for rejecting causality is also invalid. Like Kant, he enumerated the series of antinomies, and left them all as antinomies. His last word was: "Only when he who flees the evil or he who strives for the good is told that there is neither the one nor the other, will the agonies of the spirit end, and life will become happy." The world which had brought forth these words was bound to be re-created.—*A.H.*

The ancient world had no weapon whatever against scepticism because the latter was more consistent than any philosophical system of the ancient world. Scepticism alone in the antique world was not tainted by a spineless and frivolous complacency towards paganism; it did not so readily open its doors to all kinds of conceptions which facilitated, for a while, insoluble problems and which contaminated the whole organism. A real science could have cancelled scepticism—repudiated negation itself; for it, scepticism was only a stage. But ancient science did not possess that power. It was conscious of its sins and did not dare to come out openly against scepticism which had declared it insolvent. Scepticism liberated the mind from it and cast it in a void that had no contents at all: the yawning depths of negative thought swallowed up everything. Scepticism brought to light an infinite subjectivity, devoid of all objectivity. True to itself it did not attempt to say the last word, and that was a good thing too: it would not have been understood anyway. The sceptics sought repose in their own personalities. Mistrustful of the universe, the mind, the truth, they suggested that everybody look within himself to find his last refuge, his last resort. But did not that lead straight to positing self-cognition as the essence? Is that not proof that at the close of the ancient world the human spirit, which had no more trust in the world, law, polytheism, or science, foresaw that self-concentration alone offered compensation for all the losses sustained? This prophetic fore-knowledge of the infinite dignity of man, scarcely visible in the scepticism which had come to destroy the plastic, artistic learning of Greece, far overstepped the bounds of the contemporary state of thought. It took man two millenniums to rise to the consciousness of his grandeur and his dignity.

After the insane and feverish times of the first Caesars, more tranquil days came to Rome. The old man who had risen from his deathbed felt that, far from losing all of his strength during his illness, he had even acquired new vigour. He did not realize that that was the last show of resistance put up by life, the last effort after which death was certain to come. Order was restored and the life of the empire flourished in all its splendour and power. Paving her stone highways

and erecting her palaces for eternity, she could still captivate Gibbon by her artificial beauty. True, there was an obscure presentiment in the air, some feverish shudder convulsed the limbs of the empire. Strange crowds of savages, fair and long-haired, gathered on her frontiers. These barbarians were regarded by the slaves with less hatred than were their masters. Far-sighted people realized that a tempest was inevitable, but as usual they were few. Officially, Rome stood four-square as ever and dominated the ancient world. Officially, Rome was still the *Eternal City*. Blind trust in the stability of the existing order held possession of most minds. The whole ancient world gathered in Rome as in one node, in one ruling organ. That is exactly why Rome lost its own character and represented not itself but the whole universe. All the vital juices of the subjugated nations flowed into it. It seemed to draw them in so that, to use the well-known poetic expression of Caligula, they could behead the ancient world with a single blow. Austere Rome could conquer the world and adapt its mind to the thoughts of others and its heart to an alien art, but it could not continue Greek life. Its soul was a melancholy combination of abstractions and practical sense, infinite power and a void not to be filled by anything, neither by victories, nor by forensic casuistry, nor by voluptuous pleasures, nor by the debauchery of tyranny, nor by sanguinary spectacles. The life of Greece did not pass on to Italy. *Des Lebens Mai blüht einmal und nicht wieder.*

As opposed to the civic and political centre that Rome was, Alexandria attracted the last and most complete representation of ancient thought. Cohorts of the ancient world, physical in Rome and spiritual in Alexandria, rallied around their age-worn banners not in order to win but to dip them at last before a new banner. The problem which absorbed all the problems in Neoplatonism consisted in defining the relation of the particular to the universal, of the world of phenomena to the noumenon, of man to God.

The last letter told you that whenever Greek thought found itself face to face with this problem, it proved incompetent. Whenever it rose to this height it grew dizzy, delirious and succumbed to pagan conceptions. Neoplatonism approached

these problems more comprehensively and more seriously. It had absorbed many Judaic traits, as well as Eastern ones in general, and combined all these elements unknown to Greek science with a deep study of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. Almost from the outset, it stood just outside the domain of paganism though its greatest representative, Proclus, clung stubbornly to Greek polytheism. Polytheism idolized, personified various forces of nature, gave them a human form corresponding to the nature of the natural elements thus represented by these living images. The Neoplatonics conceived the abstract moments of a logical process, the moments of world development as phases of the absolute spirit, immaterial and immanent to the world and self-contained. They conceived it as "alive within the motion of substance," as Derzhavin so admirably expressed it. In rough outlines, Neoplatonism is a kind of paganism rather mystical than artistic. The Neoplatonics, indeed, wanted no idols but by adopting their hieroglyphic language they so obscured the meaning of their words that it is hard to guess what is the symbol and what it represents, all the more so since they did their utmost to prove their devotion to paganism, and confuse things by symbolizing abstract truths under the names of various gods and goddesses.* The Neoplatonics tried to justify paganism rationally, to demonstrate scientifically its absolute character and, naturally, succeeded only in delivering a new blow to ancient religion. Once reason and science intervened in the domain of the fantastic conceptions it was only to be expected that they would bring to light the invalidity of the latter. No matter what philosophy tries to justify, it justifies only reason, that is, itself, Proclus's point of departure was exalted meditation. By his life, by his spirit, must man prepare himself for an exalted state lifting him to the heights of contemplation which alone allows man to acquire a knowledge of the absolute. The absolute as it is in itself, abstracted from the conditional, cannot be known. It is an abstract remaining-in-itself unity which becomes intelligible by revealing, happening, develop-

* Proclus expresses this most clearly; he was initiated into all the mysteries, and astonished the priests by his theological subtleties.—*A.H.*

ing. But the development of this unity, however, is not an unrestricted self-expenditure lost in arithmetic infinity; indeed not, while developing, it retains its identity. The interaction of this polarity, limit, measure, mark a transition to concentration. Hence, Proclus deduced his three elements: *Unity, Infinity, Measure.* It should be remarked, however, that despite the power and heights attained by this conception, it proceeded not from what was logically antecedent but from immediate knowledge resulting from exaltation; its idea was correct but its method was neither scientific nor justified. Religion proceeds from absolute truth; it needs no such justification. But the Neoplatonics wanted science, and as a science their outlook, in spite of the heights it had attained, was unsound.

Every fibre of its soul, all its sympathies and the attitude of thought to the transient, drew Neoplatonism out of the domain of ancient thought and into the world of Christianity. And yet the Neoplatonics did not want to embrace Christianity; they dreamed about pouring new wine into the old bottles. Neoplatonism was a desperate attempt, majestic but unsuccessful, of the ancient mind to save itself by its own means. But how could Neoplatonics, with their abstract, difficult and occult language, their philosophic eclecticism, their theurgic gnosticism and love for the supernatural, stop the fall of Rome, bar Epicureanism and scepticism? And, finally, how could they possibly communicate with the people at large in this language? Neoplatonism was thrown into the shade by Christianity as everything abstract is by what is full of life. All their doctrines breathed the spirit of the future, but all of them lacked *something*, that imperative invocation, that lightning which would fuse the fragmentary and half-formulated ideas into a homogeneous whole. The magnificent words: reconciliation, renewal—παλιγγένεσις ἀποκατάστασις πάντων —* groped for life among the Neoplatonics and the Socialist-visionaries of our days. But they remained abstract, difficult to understand like their theodicy. Neoplatonism was for scholars, for the elect. Among us (that is, among the Christians), Tertullian says,

* Rebirth and return of everything to its original state.—*Ed.*

"the children have more knowledge of God than your wise men." It was insane to struggle with Christianity but the proud philosophy, exactly like proud Rome, did not realize it at first. Strangely enough, Rome seemed in the odious age of the dashing Caesars to lose its reason and lapsed into the miserable dotage of one who grows vain and petty on the brink of his grave. The Gospel was already preached in its squares but the Roman aristocracy and the wiseacres looked smilingly down upon the poor Nazarene heresy and wrote despicable panegyrics and vulgar madrigals, without perceiving that the slaves and the poor, all toilers and sufferers, were listening to the new message of redemption. Tacitus did not understand at first, nor did Pliny subsequently, what was going on under their very eyes. The Neoplatonics, no less than the Stoics and the sceptics, saw what a strange state the civic order and morals were in, but absorbed in their meditation, they could not even plunge headlong into atheism and sensuality out of sheer despair. The insolvency of the positive world led them to scorn everything temporal, natural, and to seek another world within themselves, a world independent and absolute. A deep and eager enquiry into the external world caused them to recognize the abstract and spiritual alone as truth.* However, this spiritual world was conceived by them on a higher and a more comprehensive plane than by all the preceding schools. It alone answered their aspirations. Christianity, indeed, alone corresponded to Neoplatonism, and yet the Neoplatonics were pagans not out of habit or because, born pagans, a *false pride* kept them such. No, they really imagined that pagan myths were the best incarnation of the truth. Inclined to regard everything material as a mere illusion, these people perpetrated at the very outset so gross an error that it was easy for them after-

* Here is what Porphyry says about his teacher:

"Plotinus seemed to us a superhuman being; he was ashamed to have a body, and considered his parentage and birthplace of so little importance that he never spoke of them. He never allowed his body to be reproduced by an artist. When Aurelius asked his permission to draw his portrait he replied: 'Is it not enough that we are obliged to carry our body within which we are confined by nature? Should we also leave behind us the image of this prison as though it had something majestic in its aspect?'" It is a purely romantic trend.—*A.H.*

wards to accept consequences which did not issue out of their principles, and reconcile themselves to what they did not even want to be reconciled with. But what, then, prevented them from renouncing an obsolete, dead conception? Simply that it was not as easy to do so as it seems.

The old and the vanquished does not immediately descend into the grave. The resistance and longevity of that which is at the point of vanishing are based on the instinct of self-preservation inherent to all that exists. This is the instinct that defends to the utmost everything once endowed with life. Universal economy does not allow the existing things to descend into the grave before they have exhausted all their strength. Conservatism in the historical world is as true an element of life as is perpetual motion and renewal; it expresses a most emphatic approval of the existing, a recognition of its right. The urge forward, on the contrary, expresses dissatisfaction with the existing, and seeks for a form better adapted to the new stage of the development of reason. Content with nothing, it is indignant, it feels cramped under the existing scheme of things. Historic development moves in obedience to both forces, balancing them against each other and thereby saving itself from one-sidedness. Memory and hope, *status quo* and progress are the antinomy of history, its two banks. *Status quo* is based on the factual admission that every form realized is a genuine chalice of life, a victory achieved, the truth irrefutably proved by being. It is based on the correct idea that at every historical moment mankind is master of all life has to offer and has no need to wait for the future in order to enjoy its existing rights. The conservative tendency awakens hallowed memories dear to people's hearts and enjoins them to return to the parental house where life was so young and carefree, forgetful that this house had, in the meantime, become cramped and dilapidated; this view proceeds from the golden age. Now, perfection strives for the golden age, protesting against the recognition of the definite as the absolute; it regards the truth of the past and present as a relative truth which has no right to eternal existence and which testifies to its own limited character precisely because it is transient. It also treasures the memory of the days of old but it has no desire to make it the goal of its visions of

the future, of its sacred aspirations. The pagan world, exclusively national and spontaneous, always lived under the seductive spell of memories. Christianity, however, made hope one of its fundamental virtues. Though hope invariably triumphs over memory, the struggle between them is, nevertheless, often bitter and prolonged. The old world puts up a formidable resistance which is but natural: is it possible for life not to cling tenaciously to the forms it has achieved? It does not know yet new forms—those forms are itself. But for someone to realize that he has outlived his day is a self-denial well-nigh impossible. It is Caton's suicide. The declining order of things has attained its full development, has been universally applied and has struck deep roots in the human heart. The new order, on the contrary, is only arising; at first it is universal and abstract; it is poor and naked while the old is rich and strong. The new has yet to be created in the sweat of one's brow, whereas the old persists, and stands firmly, resting on the crutches of habit. The new has to be investigated, it demands self-development and sacrifice; the old can be accepted without analysis because it is there, a fact which constitutes a major right in people's eyes. The new is regarded with distrust because its features are so youthful while the decrepit features of the old have become so familiar that they seem eternal. The force and charm of memories may sometimes overcome the temptation of hope: people may long for the past whatever the cost—for they see the future in it.

Such was Julian the Apostate. In his day the question of life or death of the ancient world rose in all its dreadful acuteness: it was impossible to ignore it. Three possible solutions offered themselves: paganism, that is, the days of old; memories and despair, that is, scepticism—neither the past nor the future; and, finally, the acceptance of Christianity and along with it, the entry into the new world to come, with the dead left behind to bury their dead. Julian was an ardent visionary, a man of spirit and energy. Having nothing practical to do at first, he became wholly absorbed in Greek learning; then he retired to distant Lutetia where he took up the crucial question of the contemporary age—and decided it in favour of the past It will be noted in passing that Bysantium was not the prin-

cipal seat of Neoplatonism; nor was the life of Julian passed in it. They could dream of the good old ways and the re-establishment of the ancient order of things only outside the new capital, outside the city by which Constantine renounced paganism and the life of the ancient capital inseparable from this paganism. Theoretically not only did it seem possible to resurrect the past but also to enlighten it at the same time. Julian was a man of strict morals and lofty virtues. In him the ancient world seemed to purify itself, to grow radiant, as if consciously prepared for a noble and honest death. Julian's will was firm and fine; his intellect that of a genius—but all to no purpose! To resurrect the past was simply impossible. There are few spectacles more grandiose and reassuring than that of the impotence of such giants like Julian when they have to battle against the tide of the times. By the power they possessed and the effect it failed to produce, one may easily judge how futile were the attempts of the dead but not yet buried past when opposed to the nascent future. Of course, the memories of Athens and Rome, mournful and reproachful, appeared on the empty walls and exercised an irresistible attraction. Of course, this magnificent world, sinking into its grave, was a deeply pathetic sight—even we, aliens that we are, are moved now to tears—but what has been done cannot be undone. Its death was a tragic fact that could not but be accepted by those present at the funeral. There is no contesting the fact: a peculiar kind of gloomy poetry surrounds the people of the past. There is something pathetic in their funeral procession moving against time, in their ever unsuccessful attempts to resurrect the dead. Recollect the Jews who still expect in our day to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel and who are still struggling against Christianity. What can be more pathetic than the plight of the Jew in Europe, this man who abjures the broad stream of life around him in favour of static traditions. He cannot open his heart to anyone since everything that was near to his spirit perished ages before. With envy and hatred he regards everything European, aware that he can lay no legal claims to any of the fruits of this life and that yet he cannot dispense with European comfort.

Every sudden change leaves behind representatives of the defeated side. You may find the Jewish immobility in Saint-Germain, or even in our old and new Old Faith Believers. The Neoplatonics were in the same position. As we have already said, they were, by the very structure of their mind, by every word of their doctrine, outside the ancient world and claimed that close kinship with it which did not exist in their soul. By a species of nationalism they arrived at an allegorical justification of paganism and imagined that they believed in it. They wanted to resurrect the past order of things in a certain philosophico-literary manner. They deceived themselves more than others. They saw in the past their future ideal but clad in the vestments of the past. If, at the time when Neoplatonism was in its prime, that life, long-interred, could in reality have arisen from the grave, even if only for a moment, its worshippers would have been shocked by it not because it had been bad in *its day* but because *its day had already passed.* It represented an environment quite different from that which the contemporary man needed—what could, indeed, Proclus and Plotinus have done during the hard times of the Punic Wars? Nonetheless, people devoted to the past suffer profoundly. They are as far removed from their environment as are those who live in the future alone. Such sufferings necessarily accompany every revolution. The period preceding a new phase of life is distressing and unsupportable to every thinking man. Every problem assumes a tragic turn, people are ready to accept the most absurd solutions—anything in order to calm themselves. Bigotry goes hand in hand with cold disbelief, the wildest hopes with despair; suspense is agonizing; one is impatient for events while apparently nothing is happening.*

* Look what terrible words escaped the lips of Pliny, Lucian, and Seneca. You will find in them the eulogy to suicide, bitter reproaches of life, a longing for death, and what a death, too—"the death with the hope of annihilation!"—"Death is the only reward for the misfortune of birth, and what is the good of it if it leads to immortality? Deprived as we are of the happiness not to be born, can we also be deprived of the happiness to be annihilated?" (*Hist. Nat.*) What an utter frustration, what a deep despair possessed those people!—*A.H.*

That was a time of secret underground straining to the light of day, a time of travail, of distress and suffering. It is like a journey through the arid steppes; joyless and arduous, with no shade to take shelter in, no spring to refresh oneself at. The fruits taken along are spoilt; those chanced upon on the way are sour. The unfortunate intermediary generations—they usually perish midway, wasted with fever, those escheated generations which belong neither to this world, nor to that! It is they who bear the brunt of the past evils and are deprived of the future joys. The new world will forget them as the joyful traveller, in the bosom of his family, forgets the camels, which have borne all his effects and fallen on the way. Happy are those who closed their eyes after having seen, even though from afar, the trees of the Promised Land. Most of them die delirious, or staring at the merciless sky as they lie on the hard and scorching sand. The ancient world drank this cup of gall to the dregs in the last centuries of its life. History knew no more brutal and violent changes. Christianity alone could have saved it but it opposed the pagan world so strongly, discarding all old beliefs and convictions, that it was difficult for people to make a complete break with the past. They had to be reborn, in the words of the Bible, to be able to renounce the sum total of acquired truths and rules, a thing extremely difficult to do. Practical, everyday wisdom strikes far deeper roots than does the most positive legal code. The new world, however, could only start from this rupture with the past. The Neoplatonics were reformers, they wanted to repair and whitewash the old building. They wanted to make use of the new without sacrificing the old—and they failed. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." At first, ancient thought aristocratically ignored Christianity. When it understood it at last—it entered, frightened, into combat with it. It exhausted all its resources in combat with it, to no avail. It was intelligent but impotent and outdated. It persisted for five centuries. At length, in 529, Justinian banished all pagan philosophers from the empire and closed the last Neoplatonic school; the last *seven* exponents of ancient learning took refuge in Persia. The Persian Chosroes[30] obtained permission for them to return to their native land but they be-

came wanderers lost in obscurity—they did not find an audience.[31] In a few years a frightful epidemic broke out. The forces of nature, the very globe, seemed to take part in the final act of the tragedy. People died off by the hundred, cities were depopulated, the hearts of those who survived were wrung with grief—in these convulsions the ancient world died. Emperor Leo the Isaurian attempted to destroy its spiritual legacy: he burned down the great library in Byzantium and forbade the teaching of anything but religion in the schools.

The new world, whose encounter with old Rome was so solemnly and profoundly symbolized in the persons of Apostle Paul and Caesar Nero confronting each other, triumphed.

You may reproach me that after promising to write about studies of nature I have so far spoken least of all about the natural sciences. But such a reproach would scarcely be justified. The purpose of my letters is not at all to acquaint you with the factual side of the natural sciences—it was solely to show, as far as possible, that the antagonism between philosophy and natural science becomes more absurd and impossible with every passing day; that it rests on a mutual misunderstanding, that empiricism is as true and real as idealism, and that speculation is that common ground on which they join hands. To achieve that contemplated aim, I thought it necessary* to reveal the origin of this antagonism between philosophy and natural science, which naturally led me up to a definition of science in general and a sketch of it historically. In logic, science comes out all complete as did the armed Minerva from Jupiter's head, it has neither birth nor childhood. In history it grows out of a scarcely perceptible embryo. Without knowledge of the embryology of science, of its destiny, it is difficult to understand its modern state. Logical development does not demonstrate the fundamentals of science so plainly, so vividly, as does history. Logic regards everything from the point of view of eternity—hence everything relative and historical is lost to it. Logic considers that it has cancelled some absurdity simply by exposing it; history knows how tenacious are the roots by which absurdities are bound to

* See the beginning of Letter Two.—*A.H.*

the earth, and it alone can disclose the state of the modern conflict.

Nor would this reproach be justified in another sense; we have only spoken about the ancient world where all scientific development was concentrated in philosophy. The ancient world had no science in the strict sense of the word. It was stimulated by the noble impulse to know, to explain phenomena, and understand its environment. Pliny said that ignorance of nature was proof of black ingratitude; yet ancient scientists more often than not confined themselves to this noble impulse and superficial theories. The ancient world did not know how to observe, to investigate phenomena, or cross-examine them. That is why natural science consisted of general views, remarkably correct, and of isolated facts, for the most part, desultory and ill-digested.* Science was dilettantism, an aesthetic need and not a burning thirst for the truth. That is why both Pliny and Lucretius contented themselves with a sympathetic understanding of nature and its poetic contemplation. *Historia Naturalis* by Pliny offers examples of this on every page: when he describes the heaven he stops, with Italian partiality for the sun, to describe it as a divinity *all-seeing and all-hearing*, an all-animating divinity, a divinity, dissipating sad thoughts. Then he turns to the earth and again it is all inspiration (with some rhetoric, though). He calls it a mother, gentle and gracious, who nourishes, shelters and sustains us, and after our death conceals our earthly remains in her bosom. "The air roars and is condensed into thunderclouds, water rains down, stiffens into hail, rushes in streams, while the earth—*at haec benigna, mitis, indulgens usuique mortalium semper ancilla, quae coacta generat.* She has her answer for our every need. She has even produced poisonous plants so that one who is tired of life could easily put an end to it without throwing himself down from the rocks." (*Histor. Natur.*, Lib. II, LXIII).

What the ancients sought for was the gratification which a poetic understanding of nature and not a study of it might

* One branch of natural science, closely connected with mathematics and demanding observation—astronomy—developed in its most scientific form in the days of Hipparchus and the Ptolemys. That is why the "Almagest" was able to maintain itself up to the days of Copernicus.—*A.H.*

grant them; yet looking back, we find a great exception in the person of Aristotle, that giant among men, who was also, in all things, an eminent representative of the ancient world. His general views on nature are already known to us but he was also great as an observer who left behind excellent monographs. As is known, Alexander the Great did not forget, during his campaigns, to detail whole detachments of soldiers to capture animals which he then sent to Aristotle. So the latter was the first to engage in a study of comparative anatomy. He had already arrived at a conception of the harmonious evolution of the animal kingdom; his classification, as we have already had occasion to observe, is still in use. Aristotle's views on natural science was, as in everything else, speculative and extremely realistic. Accepting nature as a process, as activity that realizes the possibility inherent in it, Aristotle was equally removed from the idealism of Plato and from the materialism of Epicurus, though both of the two elements were to be found in him. Materialism noticeably gained preponderance in those of his followers who were specially concerned with natural science. Strato, for example, sought to explain all that exists exclusively by physical means. He rejected every metaphysical cause that lay outside the domain of nature. The purposefulness of the cosmos seemed to him nonsense or, at best, a mere supposition that had no proofs to rest on. All phenomena and their nexus he assumed to be the effect of an accidental interaction of the principal properties of nature contained in eternal matter. The world of sensations is, according to him, also a manifestation of a natural force, conditioned in a special way in the organism, whose material elements combined —originally without any purpose—and subsequently profited by the opportune conditions to develop to the utmost. These limits, once attained, the organism ceases to develop and merely reproduces itself to preserve the species.* Lucretius and Pliny the Younger may be called the most thorough representatives of this conception which finally became the general

* Buhle, *Geschichte der Phil. seit der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften*, 1800, Teil 1.—*A.H.*

view held by the ancient naturalists. Transplanted to Roman soil, Greek thought, in some spheres, became clearer and more general. At the beginning of his famous poem *De rerum natura* Lucretius refers to the obscurity of Greek philosophers with the same kind of irony the French now use in referring to German science. Lucretius is indeed lucid and absorbing. The Epicurean views, warmed by the poet's fiery blood, bloomed luxuriantly. At first glance, the combination of poetry with Epicurian materialism seems strange, but consider that this man with his ardent heart and earthly passions had to choose between declining paganism, the obscure asceticism of the Neoplatonics, and the free views of the materialism of his days. The fairy-tales of mythology are charming and graceful—especially to us who know them to be merely fairy-tales; in Lucretius's days they were growing to be repulsive. Opposition to paganism was all the fashion, was a matter of good tone. It is in vain that Cicero tried, with his eloquence, to pass, Talleyrand-like, between philosophy and paganism, to reconcile them formally and to force them into impossible wedlock. Julius Caesar openly said at a meeting of the senate that he did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and later Seneca repeated it from the stage. We know how strict the ancient Greco-Roman world was in relation to opinions, especially in the times of Lucretius. Half a century later the Caesars realized that they had to use their power to bolster up paganism. In that same senate Caligula recounted his mysterious visions, his ardent worship of idols, the rendez-vous given him by the moon, and so on. Heliogabalus went even further.

Lucretius begins *à la* Hegel from being and non-being as active first principles which interacted and coexisted. To express these logical abstractions he uses the language of the atomists; atoms and the void are the poles, the extremes striving for equilibrium. Atoms race in the infinite void, meeting each other, flying on together, penetrating into each other, and combining to form other bodies while others are lost in the immeasurable void.* Whole worlds arise where the conditions

* In passing let us say that the ancients were very poor chemists (in a theoretical sense). They, however, foresaw and divined chemical affinity;

for their formation exist, and worlds perish where these conditions do not. Yet this formation and disappearance affects only parts, while the sum total of all things that exist, containing all within itself, is eternal and infinite. "If any one ... should throw, or attempt to throw, a flying dart.... I will ask you what then would be the case with the javelin. The case will be, that a limit can nowhere exist; and that room for the flight of the javelin will still extend its flight." The universe lives in these metamorphoses. These are its life, its development, and at the same time—its goal. The charming ignorance of the physical world displayed in Lucretius's writings sometimes provokes a smile; the part lie and part truth to be found in him is evident from the above. Yet more often than not he captivates the reader by the passion blazing throughout his poems. No one else showed so sympathetic an understanding of life in the interval which separates Lucretius from Goethe. And only in the ancient world could the idea be conceived and realized of giving an account of cosmology and physics in a poem, in verses! That was because they regarded everything plastically, particularly nature. Love for life, for pleasure, in wise moderation, scorn for death* and a certain fraternal affectionate attitude for all things living, is what Lucretian philosophy propounds. He plunged into physics because paganism with its fatum and its Olympic deities of doubtful behaviour did not satisfy him. He solemnly and repeatedly proclaimed that Epicurus was the greatest of the Greeks, that morality—conscious morality, human morality—to which all pagan religion constituted an obstacle—started with him,** and that since then man him-

they understood that certain substances combine with some for which they have an affinity and do not combine with others for which they have none (homeomery).—*A.H.*

* Among other things Lucretius says, to console the dying, is that all the dead are of same age for time does not exist for them.—*A.H.*

** Recall the eloquent pages of *De Civitate Dei* by St. Augustine, in which he denounces the vanity and inconsistency of pagan religion, its depravity.—*A.H.*

self is the measure of morality, etc. Taking this as his point of departure and stimulated by his fiery heart, he went, of course, to extremes but, as he went, he encountered and narrated a world of beautiful things. His geogony is one of the best passages in his poem. He tells about the development of the planet after the struggle of the elements and up to that state of equilibrium when plants sprang into existence. Then came especially developed plants which found it irksome to be attached to the earth and longed to be free from their stalks. Thus the animal appeared, and at last man, who was born right out of the earth on a stalk. Although all that is rather amusing, it is yet difficult to imagine this transition from plants to animals in a more poetic way than that of a flower detaching itself from a stalk and flying off, a butterfly. Note that Lucretius also mentions that the necessary conditions for the origin of organic life is warmth and moisture. Rejecting the immortality of the soul, he yet accepts some ethereal soul which is so light and volatile that no sooner does it fly out than it is lost in the infinite void; its component parts are different in different cases: thus the lion's soul has taken in some fire and that of the deer some cold wind! Now the earth is aging and therefore it has lost the ability to create new genera and is content to preserve those existing. It created them in its youth, when it was overflowing with energy and an excess of power. Thus even deformed beings could appear, from whom nature later withdrew their right to life (so Lucretius conjectured the existence of fossils).

Historia Naturalis by Pliny, an encyclopaedia, conceived and executed on an enormous scale, is a general symposium of knowledge, cosmological, physical, geographical, and so on. This might have proved to be the limit beyond which the knowledge of nature would not have gone in the Roman world had not Galen followed him. Galen, however, was occupied exclusively with medicine and therefore his discoveries, outside the domain of pure pathology all belonged to physiology and anatomy. Prior to Galen the current ideas of the nervous system were very confused; cords or tendons were often called nerves, and even when the latter were recognized, their functions were vaguely or incorrectly understood. Galen was

the first to show that nerves come from the brain, that they and the brain were the cause of perception, that the nerve made the muscles contract at will, and, consequently, was an organ which controlled movement. He proved that by the fact that the muscles lost their faculty of motion if the directing nerve was cut, and that faculty was lost precisely below the point of the incision, that is, in the part isolated from the brain. The soul, that is, its seat, has ever since been sought for exclusively in the brain.* Pliny's view originated from the same principles as that of Lucretius but it was more richly stocked with information and more consistent. He himself exhaustively defined his views. He says that the universe together with the enveloping heavens is an eternal, boundless entity that has no beginning and no end. Enquiries made in that which lies beyond the universe are futile and, moreover, scarcely intelligible to the human mind. The universe is sacred, eternal, immeasurable, all in everything and itself in all. It is finite, yet like the infinite, regular in all its manifestations, yet like the irregular (essential and yet apparently fortuitous). It embraces everything in light and darkness; it is the product of the essence of things and at the same time, it is itself the essence of things. One should not think, however, that Pliny comprehended very profoundly what he expressed so poetically. He was far behind Aristotle; thought had already lost its freshness and lucidity, it was too copiously clothed in rhetoric, and too superficial. Pliny could not, for example, understand the allusion of the Pythagoreans and Aristotle about universal gravitation, and asserted that light bodies strove upwards and heavy ones downwards, interfering with each other and remaining in equilibrium due to this mutual

* Galen was the first to observe that arteries were filled with blood and not with air. When corpses were dissected the arteries were naturally found empty, and before Galen it had been assumed that air circulated in them. Incidentally, Galen says: "If people could discover the composition of air, animal heat would be explained: combustion is maintained by the same elements as life." This is a prediction of oxygen! In the sixteenth century Cisalpinus took it into his head that the centre of the nervous system lay in the heart, and he was a very, very learned physician. That was medieval natural science!—*A.H.*

opposition: thus the earth does not fall because it is sustained by the atmosphere. How could such an extensive mind be satisfied with wretched explanations like this is as hard to understand as are the various fables which are to be found among his sound zoological descriptions—for instance, one about the fish *ehineis* which can stop ships by the action of its muscles, about androgynes which can change their sex, of women who give birth to elephants, Astomoi which feed on air. The ancients accepted experience and tradition with childish credulity, taking the world of facts to be as real as the world of thought, of traditions, and regarding legends as facts. Actually, the unity of being and thought, of fact and conception, constituted their spontaneous creed which hindered reflection and analysis, prevented the rise of a genuine science, and was perfectly typical of their artistic dilettantism. For that reason they so often confused empiricism and dialectics, experience and tradition, speaking in the same breath of both, and shifting arbitrarily from one to the other.

December 1844

LETTER FIVE

SCHOLASTICISM

SINKING into senility, Greco-Roman life imperceptibly renounced now one of its basic elements, now another; but these were half measures, events rather than convictions, or convictions which failed to become events. From Socrates and even previously, philosophy had striven to transcend the one-sidedness of the Hellenic conception and in many ways disavowed it. It did so, however, only within certain limits beyond which it rarely passed for all its vitality. The events of history introduced customs contradictory to the religious standards of ancient life; but these were ushered in secretly, unconsciously. The deification of the Caesars, for instance, actually nullified paganism, transferring the gods to quite another plane: a statue had been a mystical combination of stone and the most general of the human or divine qualities, while the worship of Claudius or Nero confused the divine with a real man. It

was a kind of atheism. The fundamentals of civic life in the ancient republics still regarded as solely just and true were profaned by an absurd travesty of them in the times of the empire. All those renunciations were, as you see, insincere, sly and fitful. The educated, realizing the absurdity of paganism, were blasphemous free-thinkers. Yet paganism remained the official creed and what was reviled at home was worshipped in the streets, because the mob would have it so. It could not be otherwise: it was all that they had. None found the courage to deny the fundamentals of ancient life for all to hear. And in the name of what could such lofty audacity arise? Within the life of Rome there could appear only the sombre, mournful renunciation of Sextus Empiricus, the mocking malice of Lucian, the cool erudition of Pliny and, finally, the disavowal expressed by licentiousness and apathy, the spiritual languor and emotional fervour which is unaffected by religious or civic tenets, but can produce tears over the death of an eel and applause over the dying gladiator pressing to his lips an image of the *deified* Caesar, i.e., the reigning Caesar of the moment. The disavowal leading to rebirth, to creation, was absent in Roman life and potentially lay in Christianity alone.

Christianity was directly opposite to the ancient order of things. It was not the half-hearted and impotent renunciation previously mentioned*—it was a renunciation filled with

* Compare the *creative* destruction of St. Augustine with the *esprits forts* of the ancient world, with their gnashing of teeth. Pliny, for instance, said that man's sole consolation is that the gods too are not omnipotent: they cannot became mortal, nor render man immortal, nor eradicate the past, nor alter the fact that two times ten is twenty. Bitterly, he rebuked the people who would not be satisfied with Olympus, but who, unable to forego it, invented fresh chains for themselves, bowed down before the abstract monstrosities, *chance* and *fortune*, and trembled like madmen before their own inventions. Lucian was the Voltaire of his age: take his *Tragic Jupiter*, for instance, this comic opera on Olympus. His Jupiter is confused by an argument between a Stoic and an Epicurian who denounce the gods. Quite at a loss, Jupiter convokes a council. But then there is a fresh argument over precedence. Jupiter decides that the golden gods should be first ensconced, then those of marble with the deities of Praxiteles at their head. Now Neptune demurs. He refuses to be placed

power and hope. It was outspoken, merciless and sure of itself. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and the polemics of the early Christian writers show how to repudiate what is old and decrepit. But this can be done only by those who are inspired by a new and holy faith. To the Christian the virtues of the pagan world were no more than blazing sins. In the statue worshipped for its loveliness by the Greek he could see only sensuous nakedness. Rejecting the beautiful temples of Greece, he preferred to erect his altar in a basilica so as not to serve the true god where false gods were worshipped. In place of pride the Christian chose humbleness, in place of enrichment, voluntary beggary, in place of sensuous pleasures he enjoyed privations.* Christianity was the direct antithesis of the ancient world. There are many who believe that the last three centuries are as far removed from the Middle Ages as the latter from the ancient world. That view is not incorrect. The era of reformation and enlightenment was the final phase of Catholicism and feudalism and though it may have in many ways overstepped the circle traced by the Vatican, it yet organically constitutes a continuation of the foregoing; the principles of West European socialism have remained intact, Christianity is still the moral basis of life, the new conception of law has grown out of the self-same Roman *ius canonicum* and *leges barbarorum*, and it differs not in its

below some dog-faced Egyptian monster of gold. The question of precedence is finally abandoned. But suddenly the Colossus of Rhodes rolls in with a great clatter and tramping and insists that far more copper went into the making of his body than did gold in the making of any of the golden gods. While they are bickering and while Jupiter is gathering ridiculous advice, notably the advice of the Olympian Skalozub[32] Hercules who craves permission to set the portico rocking over the heads of the company, the Epicurian has worsted the Stoic, and Olympus is thoroughly disgraced. Such vitriolic mockery could have served to shake paganism, particularly in certain circles, but it left a void in the heart. Moreover, the same people who censored paganism regarded the socialism of the ancient world as their ideal. They wished to preserve Rome and Greece with their civic systems, one-sided and closely aligned with religion.—*A.H.*

* The expression is borrowed from a letter of St. Gregory of Nazianzen to Basil the Great: "Do you remember," he asks, "how we enjoyed privations and fasting?"—*A.H.*

underlying principles, but in its interpretation (often arbitrary), shaped to suit the new stage of enlightenment. Neither Luther nor Voltaire drew a fiery line between the old and the new, as did Augustine. To them such a line of division would have been just as meaningless, as to Socrates and Plato who, though they had risen above the life of old Athens in many ways, were an integral part of it. Christianity's contrariness to the ancients called not for *reformation,* but for *transformation.* Sensuous and artistic, the ancient world took everything easily, with the smile of youth; everywhere it penetrated to the *idea,* yet nowhere it sacrificed its spontaneity or passed to the extreme deductions. Its science was a poem, its art religion, its conception of man not separated from that of a citizen, its republic rested on the wretchedly oppressed caryatids of slavery, its morality consisted of juridical duties.* In its citizen it respected his voted rights, his privilege, but not his human self. That youthful world was absorbingly beautiful and, at the same time, unpardonably light-minded. In philosophizing it rejected the most important problems because they were not easily solved, or rested content with frivolous solutions. Abandoning itself to luxury and enjoyments, it gave no thought to the slaves shackled in the dungeons after their return from the fields. But suddenly the exquisite theatrical scenery confining the vision of the ancient world was gone and infinite vistas opened before it, regions hitherto unsuspected in the world of harmonious proportion. Its very foundations seemed to be dwarfed by this infinity, and the face of man, hitherto lost in civic affairs, was redeemed by God's word and elevated to inaccessible heights. Everyday values and civic values grew unimportant. The personality of the Christian overshadowed the collective personality of the city. His own infinite dignity now stood revealed to the Christian. The Gospel solemnly proclaimed the rights of human beings and the latter for the first time learned *what they were.* Everything had to change! The old love of one's country, beautiful

* If some thinkers did rise above public morality they had already gone beyond the confines of the ancient outlook. In this respect Seneca was perhaps above them all—and for that reason he stood at the very limit of the ancient world.—*A.H.*

and sublime, but unjust and limited, gave way to the love of one's neighbour, narrow nationalism to unity of creed. Whereas Rome had proudly conferred citizenship upon those chosen for the honour, Christianity offered the water of baptism to all. The ancients unquestioningly believed in nature, in its reality, accepted it as a fact, for they saw it with their own eyes. To them nature was everything and beyond its bounds there could be nothing. In transient nature they saw the eternal and the spiritual. To them beauty was the supreme expression of the highest. They could never detach themselves from nature and for that very reason never came to know nature. The new world on the other hand refused to believe precisely in material nature, in the appearance of things. It rejected the reality of the transient, believed in the happenings that were spiritual. It regarded beauty as the most elementary expression of the divine. It was inflexible, aware of its scission with nature; it strove for a spiritual conciliation with it in thought, for the expiation of nature within itself. The ancients had lived for the moment of the day, had often thought about the past, but never of the future. Even if the terrible thought of *fatum,* which haunted them incessantly, did occur to them, it did so only to impell them to pleasures with such advice as *non curiamo l'incerto domani*, a drinking song from *Lucrezia Borgia.* Hence that rapturously sensual *bien-être*, that luxury in pleasure, that passionate languor verging on the poetical or on abominable bestiality, in comparison with which our luxury is cheap and our licentiousness ridiculous. The after-life did not seem to exist for the ancient world. In the nether world Achilles told Ulysses that he would willingly become a slave if only to return to earth. The thought of death terrified them sometimes, but thoughts of a future life almost never occurred to them. The belief in immortality had, on the contrary, become one of the cornerstones of Christianity. Realizing his own immortality and the transience of all things of nature, man came to regard everything around him in quite a different light.

"The two cities have brought forth two loves: the earthly city, a love of self unto scorn of God; the divine city, a love of God unto scorn of self." (*De Civ. Dei.*)

While the preaching of the Gospel changed the inner man, the decrepit polity continued its existence obviously contradictory to the dogmas of religion. The Christians adopted the Roman state and Roman law. The vanquished and expiring world thus found a path into the camp of the victors. The Eastern Empire, which had embraced Christianity in all its purity, carried on in the manner of Caesarian rule, which Diocletian, one of the worst persecutors of Christianity, elaborated to the point of absurdity. The Western Empire, too, witnessed the advent of a new, likewise unchristian element —Teutonism, that common spirit of the savage hordes terrible in their innocent thirst for blood, in their nomadic restlessness, in their fighting fraternity and love of untrammelled willfulness. It was necessary to pacify and tame the savages; it was necessary to break the iron of their unhampered will with a will even harder, more unyielding. That great task was taken up by the higher priests of Rome. In its performance they lost their aloofness to the things of this world. Catholicism tore the Teuton from his ground, gave him another grounding, but itself, at the same time, took root in the very earthliness from which it strove to remove the laity. Anxious to rule over the things of this world, the priest had to become practical, to concern himself with the flesh pots. To renounce them, he was compelled first to accept them. An interminable struggle began between the clerical and secular order of things. Slowly but surely Catholicism gained the upper hand, achieved victory to enjoy the fruits of its labours in the person of Leo X, for instance, who more resembled a valorous Caesar than a regent of St. Peter. The struggle penetrated all aspects of life. The oddest contradictions were constantly to be found in one and the same person. This fight between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, which repeated itself in various forms, resembles the contest between the serpent and the man described by Dante, in which the man at times becomes a serpent and the serpent a man. There is one thing that is not to be found in this battle: egotism and apathy. Everything is swept into the fight, into the vortex, and in everything there is an element of infinity and something of madness.

The scientific interests of the time were concentrated upon scholasticism, that hard, dry and lumbering amphibian which replaced genuine science up to the time of indignant unrest and the liberation of theoretical activity in the sixteenth century. Scholasticism established its relation to the truth and the subject of its studies on a curious, purely formal and imitative basis. Do not think that scholasticism was Christian wisdom. No, it was to be found among the fathers of the church in the early centuries, especially in the East. It was neither wholly religious nor wholly scientific. Wavering in faith, it turned to syllogisms and wavering in logic, it turned to faith. It subjected its dogmata to the most elaborate ratiocination and the latter to the most literal assumption of the dogmata. The one thing it had long dreaded like the plague was independence of thought. Anything but parting with the guiding strings of Aristotle or some other acknowledged authority. Natural science was out of question: the scholastics were so scornful of nature that they would not be concerned with it. Nature so horribly contradicted their dualism; it took no part in their everlasting debates, and what attention could it expect from them, convinced as they were that the highest wisdom existed solely in their definitions, differentiations, etc.? They regarded nature as a lowly slave ready to serve any whim of man, to abet his evil desires, to distract him from the higher life; at the same time, they were afraid of its mysterious daemonic influence; they implicitly believed that the forces of the universe were in personal contact with every man and were either hostile or benign. It was inevitable that the study of natural science should be replaced by astrology, alchemy and sorcery. From the confined view of scholastic dualism the significance of everything natural was perversely determined: everything that was good was taken from nature and placed outside of it, though no one thought to enquire just where its boundaries lay. Everything natural, physical was hidden behind a veil. The flesh was a thing to be ashamed of; it was the dissolute mistress of the spirit, a connection that was deeply deplored. The people of that time imagined that inside the globe there was Lucifer devouring Judas and Brutus, to whom all things ponderous of the material world and

everything evil of the moral world gravitated. They wanted to trample upon, to destroy all that was mortal—to know it not. There was nothing in scholasticism of world sorrow, of conciliation, of love, though it held forth on the latter at great length. It was the apotheosis of the abstract and formal thought of an egotistic personality which had come to realize its own worth, but was as yet unworthy of conceiving that as such it was entitled not to ignore nature, but to set free both nature and itself through genuine thinking filled with love for all. The scholastics had not sufficiently comprehended Christianity to interpret redemption not as the *denial of what is mortal, but as its salvation.* Christianity actually nullifies dualism and that was something beyond the austere vision of the Catholic theologians.* Notice that this was one of the gravest errors of the Western outlook which subsequently aroused so violent a reaction; it imparted to the Middle Ages their dismal, constrained and gloomy character.

The scholastic world was a sad world. It was a world of woe where everything spontaneous was annihilated, a world of dull formalism and dead views of life. Thought ceased to be a virtuous need, as Aristotle called it. It harassed and tormented medieval man; it realized its power of division and went between the heart and the mind, between the subject and the predicate, between spirit and matter, striving to exalt the inner world and thereby discredit everything external. The unity of being and thought had stood in the foreground among the ancients and the contradiction of the two was equally conspicuous among the scholastics. The famous debates of the nominalists and the realists would otherwise not have arisen. The fact that there was a Roger Bacon who did not scorn to experiment, or a Raymond Lully, who, amid a thousand and one fantastic and poetic ventures, plunged into chemistry, proves nothing. Isolated instances such as these had no bearing

* Paul the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans says:
"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also ... groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This the scholastics would not understand.—*A.H.*

on the general background. Dry and rationalistic spiritualism, literal interpretations, logical subterfuges, dialectical impertinences and servility to the authorities, such were the typical features of scholasticism up to the Reformation in the sixteenth century. At the end of that century, Pierre de la Ramée perished because he had dared to rebel against Aristotle. Giordano Bruno and Vanini were put to death for their scientific convictions, the one in 1600, the other in 1619. How much of genuine science could spring up in this stifling atmosphere? There was only formalism, a pale shoot of ivy creeping up the prison walls. Formalism shed only a languorous, moonish light without warmth or colour. The questions it posed* were so far removed from life and so petty that the jealous censorship of the Pope could well endure them. Scientific studies at that time acquired a purely bookish nature, quite alien to the ancient world. Those who desired knowledge opened the books and turned away from life and nature. Searching for the truth, the scholastics looked behind. They sought simply *to learn it*, certain as they were that the whole of it had been fully set down. Needless to say they made no progress. This habit of theirs to a certain extent entered into the very blood of the German scholars.

At last, after a millennium of restless slumber, mankind had gathered sufficient strength for a new feat in thought. Fresh needs awoke in the fifteenth century; the gentle breeze of a fresh morning began to blow. The age of regeneration had begun. The interests of men came to centre more and more upon real things, upon sea voyages then undertaken to unknown parts of the globe, upon the strange idea of Copernicus which sometimes mortified the scholastics, upon the inconspicuous discoveries at the furnace in a stifling workshop, discoveries of which the alchemist Claude Frollo once said to the humble abbot *beati* Martini: *ceci tuera cela.* It was not architecture, however, that perished, but ignorance. The new demands grew audible in Italy earlier than else-

* The subjects of scholastic argument are sometimes amazing. For instance: "Had Adam in his primordial state been familiar with the *Liber sententiarum* of Peter Lombard or no?"—*A.H.*

where. Rienzi the dreamer recalled the Rome of ancient times and intended to restore it. He was applauded by Petrarch, a reconstructor of classical art and a poet who wrote *in the vulgar vernacular.* Greeks often arrived from Byzantium with the golden fleece which had been buried in their land for ten centuries. Marsilio Ficino, a friend of Cosimo Medici, excellently translated Plato, Proclus and Plotinus. The very study of Aristotle assumed a fresh character. Hitherto he had been as oppressive as a yoke; he had been studied formally, mechanically, from clumsy translations. Now the original was taken up. True enough, the minds of men had been so corrupted by scholasticism as to become unable to understand anything in a simple way. Sensuous perception had been dulled; clear thinking was considered vulgar, while logomachy devoid of content and supported by the letter of the authorities was taken for the truth. The more ornate, imposing and unintelligible the writing, the higher the writer was ranked. Volumes of nonsensical comments were written about Aristotle. Talents, energies, whole lifetimes were spent on the most useless logomachy. But in the meantime the horizons broadened. Direct study of the ancient writers could not but help usher in new ideas, vivid and fresh and whose influence proved of inestimable value. Medieval minds, feeble in capacity, weak and unaccustomed to think for themselves, could not with their own efforts rid themselves of lifeless formalism. They had no language with which to talk of real things. They were indeed ashamed to do so because they regarded such things as sheer nonsense.

Suddenly a new tongue was discovered, ready-made, complete, well-knit and admirably suited to express the things that the scholastic doctors could not and dared not express. This strange tongue, moreover, rested on illustrious names. Conscious of their immaturity, the new scholars adopted new authorities and rebelled against the old. All spoke in quotations from Virgil and Cicero. Aristotle, on the contrary, was renounced. In the sixteenth century Francesco Patrizzi submitted to Pope Gregory XIV a work in which he drew attention to the contradiction between the doctrine of Aristotle and that of religion, which for five centuries running had been

overlooked by the good scholastics who had justified their dogmata by Aristotle, and Aristotle by their dogmata. Finally, one of the oldest and nearly the chief centre of scholasticism—Paris—witnessed the advent of the Huss of Peripateticism, Pierre de la Ramée, who declared that against any man he was prepared to defend the following thesis: "The whole of Aristotle's teachings are false." The cries of indignation raised in the midst of the scholars reached the palace of Francis I. The King had him put on trial *to condemn* him, and though he defended himself like a lion there was no mercy. He was indicted and banished; he wandered all over Europe harassed and persecuted, arguing and moving from place to place. For half a century this man fought against Aristotle and finally fell. He preached against the Stagirite just as the Huguenots preached against the Pope. His resemblance to the Protestants is great. He was more prosaic, perhaps more commonplace and shallow than his enemies—shallower than many commentators of Aristotle (Pomponazzi, for example), but his demands were practical and timely; he loathed formalism and hair-splitting, demanded practical application and fruitful results. He was inferior to Aristotle, just as many Protestants were weaker than Catholicism, but he fought against Aristotle just as the Protestants fought against Catholicism in the sixteenth century. The same period produced a grand and uninterrupted procession of great and strong men who erected the propylaeum of new science. They were headed by Giordano Bruno (not in the order of time, but in importance), and then by Vanini, Cardan, Campanella, Telesio, Paracelsus* and others. The principal thing about these great men was their keen, true sensation of crampedness, their dissatisfaction with the close confines of contemporary science, their absorbing search for the truth, their perspicacity.

The time of rebellion against scholasticism was full of dramatic intensity. A scrutiny of the biographies and writings of these vigorous men who broke the chains with which science

* He, in truth, may be regarded as the first professor of chemistry in world history.—*A.H.*

was shackled will show that they were involved in a twofold struggle. One part of the struggle proceeded in their souls, a hard and spiritual fight, constantly agitating and imparting to many of them an eccentric, almost frantic aspect. The other was external, a fight which ended at the stake or in a dungeon; for scholasticism, terrified by the assaults, took refuge behind the Inquisition, replied to the daring theses of its opponents by sentencing them to death, silenced them with the hangman's pincers which tore out their tongues. Many may wonder at the vacillating inconsistency and strength of will displayed by these men, at the incompleteness of their ideas and completeness of their sacrifices. But is it possible to rid oneself of historical prejudices at once? It was not lack of understanding that accounted for their vacillation. The truth is always more simple than the absurd, but the mind of man is no empty receptacle of understanding, no *tabula rasa*. It is, indeed, clogged from the day of birth with historical prejudices, beliefs, and so on; it was difficult for the mind to recover a normal attitude to simple understanding, and especially so in those days. There is nothing surprising in the fact that Paracelsus believed in alchemy and that Cardan called himself a magician.* They found it hard to rid themselves of opinions hallowed through the centuries or to reconcile them with the growing consciousness. Nor did they achieve this. They were in such an exalted state that they could never arrange things properly. It was the age of first love, of ecstasy, an age of amazing events. It would be useless to expect scientific methods from them. They had only just discovered the foundations of science, had only just unfettered thought and its portent was grasped rather by their hearts and imaginations than by their minds.

Centuries had to pass before science could evolve methodically those truths which Giordano Bruno proclaimed with such ecstasy, inspiration and foresight. These convictions came to be part of their very being, lent them strength, and heartened them in open battle. Harried from country to country and beset with perils they did not yield to prudent fear and bury the

* Even Francis Bacon could not entirely rid himself of astrology and magic.—*A.H.*

truths they were destined to proclaim. They propounded them everywhere and wherever it was impossible to do so openly draped them in masquerade, clothed them in allegories, hid them under secret signs, covered them with a veil transparent to those who were attentive, who wished to know, but inscrutable to enemies. Love is more discerning and resourceful than hatred. At times they were compelled to take recourse to their stratagems to avoid frightening away the timid spirits of their contemporaries; at other times to avoid immediate execution at the stake. It is easy for a man to set forth his convictions today when he is concerned only with finding the clearest way of expressing himself. In that epoch it was impossible. Copernicus draped his discovery with the authority of the ancient philosophers, which perhaps preserved him from the persecutions that later befell Galileo and all his followers. Cunning was imperative. "Cunning," said one thinker, "is the femininity of will, the irony of wild force." Machiavelli knew a thing or two about this sort of cunning. All this gave an air of tremulous anxiety and agitation to the active thinkers of the time. They were at peace neither with themselves nor with the world. Only he can be fully tranquil who is a zoological specimen, or who, having once and for all allayed all doubts, finds the external world in accordance with his inner convictions. They were restless because the surrounding order of things was growing more and more vulgar and absurd, and their inner world was shaken. Having discerned the one and the other, they could not conceal that they were at odds with the world and could not help being restless. People like Bruno were not blessed with the great gift of leading a happy and tranquil life in an environment antagonistic to their convictions.

To give a vivid example of the inspired and youthful thinking of this epoch I shall set down a few principal ideas of Giordano Bruno who had doubtlessly outdistanced all his associates.*

* For the most detailed data on Bruno, with numerous quotations, see *Gesch. der neueren Philosophie*, by Buhle, II, Bd., pp. 703-856. The author has availed himself of many unknown writings by Bruno, which he found in the Göttingen Library.

Bruno's principal idea was to evolve and comprehend life as a single, universal, infinite principle and consummation of all existing things, to conceive the universe as a single entity and to conceive this very entity as the infinite unity of reason and being—the unity which forced its triumphant way through the barriers of diversity. These were the cornerstones of Bruno's conception, directly opposite to the dualism of scholasticism. Life is one, the mind is one, and the unity which links them is one, and consequently, concludes Bruno, if the mind is regarded in the totality of all its moments it will comprise all things that exist. Was this not a direct prognosis of the logical philosophy of our times?

"Within its bounds, nature can produce everything from anything and the mind can know everything from anything," said Bruno. He conceives of nature and the mind as of two phases of one and the same development. "One and the same matter undergoes all forms: that which has been a seed turns into a blade of grass, an ear of wheat, nourishing juice, an embryo, a man, a corpse, earth.... But there is some residue left of this development—matter. It itself is *absolute*, while its manifestations are conditioned. Matter is *everything* because it is nothing in particular; the active possibility of forms is inherent in it. By life it is developed to the point of transition into mind. Nature contains a vestige of the idea (*vestigium*); after its physical being (*post naturalia*) there begins cognition, the shadow of the idea (*umbra*). Neither the works of nature nor the conception taken separately ever reach completeness. Thus, for example, every man is at every moment everything he can be at this moment, but not everything he can be in general according to his essential being. The universe, on the contrary, is what it can be, actually and at once, for it embraces all substantiality with all the constant forms of its varying works. Herein lies its great unity and self-identity. Every point of the universe is a point of convergence. Its centre and periphery are indivisible just as the greatest and the smallest—every point being in the power of God." "But," adds Bruno, "to know the truth it is not enough to conceive unity as a point uniting differences: it should be conceived in such a way as to enable us to deduce all the contradictions from it." One may imagine

how the doctors *sublissimorum dialecticorum* gaped when they heard such profound, inspired speech. I shall add another quotation to show how strikingly true was his view on evil.

"There is no actual contradiction between the *umbrae of the idea.* The same conception combines the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the evil. The evil, the imperfect has no idea of its own, on which it can rest, and according to which it might be determined (according to its ideal). Everything real presupposes its own idea and conception; but the point is that the conception of the evil lies in the other (in the opposite); the evil has no conception of its own; and, moreover, the conception on which evil depends denies its reality; and so the evil is non-existent existence, something negative (*non ens in ente, vel, ut apertius dicam, defectus in effecto*)." Hegel, I believe, did not give Bruno all the credit he deserved. Was this because Schelling had ranked him so high? This was quite understandable. Bruno was a live, beautiful link between Neoplatonism, which had exercised noticeable influence upon him, and Schelling's philosophy of nature, upon which he in turn exercised great influence. Hegel did not want to recognize Bruno as a man of the new world, just as he did not want to regard Boehme as a man of the Middle Ages; or perhaps in the heart of this supreme German thinker there were national ties with *theosopho teutonico*, while the hot and virile blood of the Italian was less congenial to him. Boehme was a great man, but that was no reason why Giordano Bruno should not stand at his side. He too was a great man.* As we leave Italy, let us note that brilliant initiative in the new science that had been displayed by Latin thinkers. Gifted as they were in all other spheres, however, they took but little part in the *new* philosophy, as though the whole of their capacity for philosophic thought had been spent on their early initiative. The *new* philosophy, the philosophy of the Reformation produced a dualism superior to the scholastic variety, but it was dualism nonetheless, and deceived the hopes of the live and realistic Latin minds which even at

* We shall not bypass Boehme, though it should be stated that he had little influence on the history of science. It is only in our century that he has been scientifically interpreted and understood.—*A.H.*

the end of the sixteenth century had risen above dualism. If it is so, Latin thought may yet consummate what has been begun.

In that age of excitement and vigour, people clamoured against the medieval life on all sides, denounced it everywhere and demanded change in all things: the church of Rome was finishing its struggle against Lutheranism, suffering the acceptance of the Protestants as an accomplished fact. Scholasticism had decidedly realized its impotency against the onset of new ideas, i.e., the ideas of the ancient world. Science, art, literature, everything changed to the antique, so that the Gothic church again gave place to the Greek peripteros and the Roman rotonda. Classical views compelled people to see things in a clear way. The Latin tongue of Rome taught them the use of mainly and vigorous speech. The school Latin, in use until then, had been poor, distorted and clumsy, a language that had lost its soul, as it were. The ancient writers had a humanizing effect upon the unnatural people of the Middle Ages, roused them from the egotism of romantic rapture and psychic aggravations. Remember how Goethe in his *Römischen Elegien* described how the Italian skies had affected him, a man raised under the dull skies of Germany. And that is just how the scholars of the sixteenth century were affected by classical literature. "Away with the trite, scholastic arguments," medieval man exclaimed. "Let us listen to the odes of Horatius, let us breathe deeply under these bright, azure skies, let us feast our eyes on those exuberant trees in whose shades wine may flow, and lovers' embraces are no longer sinful. '*Humanitas, humaniora*' " rang out from all quarters and man felt that these earthly words sounded a *vivere memento* which had come to replace *memento mori* and to link him with nature by new ties. *Humanitas* reminded people not that they would turn to earth again, but that they had sprung from the earth; and they rejoiced, therefore, to find it underfoot, to be able to walk upon it. It was Catholic severity and the German trend to melancholy which prepared the way to this sharp change. A closer scrutiny of the Middle Ages will, of course, show that then the people perfunctorily rather than otherwise submitted to the dicta of the Vatican and to the romantic tenor. Life everywhere stealthily sought to compensate itself for the poverty and narrowness of

the medieval order. It rested content with doing penitence at regular intervals, with a show of conformity or, later, for greater convenience, with buying indulgences. Life, nonetheless, was gloomy and constrained. Owing to the conventions every man concealed from his neighbour the thought that happened to occur to him or the feeling he happened to have at the moment. He was, indeed, ashamed of his thoughts and feelings, and afraid of them. There was much that was lyrical and touching about romanticism, but little that was bright, simple and sincere. Man, of course, abandoned himself to joys and pleasures even then, but he did so with the feeling with which a Moslem drinks wine, yielding to an indulgence which he has renounced. Yielding to his yearnings he felt humiliated because he could not resist a desire which he could not deem just. The human breast, from which it was impossible to banish what was earthly, heaved uneasily, craved a more even tenor of life. Everlasting constraints became as galling as the metal on the body of a knight permanently armoured. Man longed for peace of mind, something which romanticism could not offer, because it was essentially based on discordance and contradictions: its love was platonic and jealous, its hopes attached to the afterlife; inconsolable grief lay at the bottom of its inner world; its poetry was pervaded with this self-lacerating grief ever concentrated upon its own personality, ever reopening its fictitious wounds which oozed tears instead of blood. The egotistic romanticist luxuriated in these torments, in his simplicity regarding himself as a martyr. The longed-for peace, the yearned-for tranquillity was to be found at the outset in the art of the ancient world, in its philosophy. Soft, humane shoots began to take root in the hard soil of Gothic conceptions. The romanticist was on the point of realizing that the first requisite of enjoyment is to forget oneself: he kneeled before the artistic works of the ancient world and learned to worship the beautiful disinterestedly. Greco-Roman thinking was resurrected for him in sparkling vestments. Those parts of it which should have decayed had done so in its millennium-old grave. Purified, ever young like Achilles, ever passionate like Aphrodite, it stood revealed to the people and they, as always susceptible to novelties, callously forgot romantic art, turned away from

its virginal beauty, from its coy drapings. The worship of ancient art was no passing whim. This was its proper due. This was the only right that it still possessed and would continue to possess for all time: this was its truth which could never pass away, the immortality of Greece and Rome. But Gothic art too had its truth which could not be discarded. In an epoch of strife, however, there is no time for such considerations.

Europe accepted ancient learning in the same way that Russia, under Peter I, was later to accept European enlightenment. However, one should not ignore the fact that the classical education which had spread all over Europe was an aristocratic education. It belonged to an *undefined* and yet very real class of *educated* people *proprie sic dictum*, magistrates, clergymen, scholars and knights as they passed from military to court aristocracy, and, finally, the well-to-do and leisured. The peasants, the plain people of the cities, i.e., the tradesmen, apprentice workmen not only failed to take any part in this change, but were separated from the well-educated sections by a broader and deeper gulf than before. The new languages which came into use at that time did nothing to narrow the gulf. Though circulated in the vernacular, the ideas that were written and spoken were of Latin and Greek origin, just as the ideas written and spoken in Latin during the Middle Ages had nothing at all to do with Rome. The change plunged the masses into the starkest ignorance. Formerly they had had their troubadours and legends. Their preachers had preached to them and their friars had visited them. There had been a link between them and higher education. Now the talented and the educated absorbed elements which were alien to the people and did not appeal to them. It should be borne in mind that the new civilization had had no time to work itself into the inner life of those who had embraced it to the extent of enabling them to express themselves freely, i.e., in their own way. The poets who sang praises to Greek gods and Roman heroes borrowed their raptures from Virgil. The prosaics wrote and spoke in imitation of Cicero, but the melancholy and indifferent crowds did not heed them: they had been deprived of their singers, of legends and sagas which had stirred their hearts with familiar sounds and kindred images. This secession from the

masses, which was not fostered by feudal prejudices, but subconsciously grew out of education itself, has complicated and confused the development of true citizenship in Europe. An aristocracy of education and knowledge is by far more humiliating to the masses than an aristocracy of blood. The former is based not on a spontaneous attitude or on obscure beliefs, but on the consciousness of superiority, on overweening scorn for the masses. This artificial education which was coming to replace feudal Gothism, was arrogant, looked down on all. This overweening haughtiness may be found in all of its representatives, in Voltaire and Bolingbroke, in the doctrinaires of the Revolution of 1830 and in the professorial philosophers of Berlin. And yet the genius of Europe was not disheartened by the split, did not languish in despondency, regretting the days of old, and despairing of getting over the accomplished fact. Not a little of passing evil occurs along with the permanent good even in the private life of a single family, let alone in the complex life of an entire nation. The evil is an unfortunate but sometimes necessary condition of good, and eventually it passes away, while the good remains. A vigorous nature assimilates the evil, struggles with it and overcomes it. It is able to extricate itself from difficult situations, to bury what was dear to its heart and, still true to itself, go forth to fresh deeds and labours. Weak natures, on the contrary, are lost in lamentations, long for the impossible, for the return of the past. They cannot get their bearings in reality and, like the Etrurian priests,[33] sing nothing but funeral songs; they have not the sense to discern the new life and its bridal hymns.

Whereas the classical education bypassed the masses and severed them from the upper classes, the Reformation, with its schisms, did nothing of the sort. The mysticism and doctrines stimulated by the Protestants, their mysterious simplicity which had come to replace the majestic ritual of Catholicism, their problems of religious dogma touched the conscience of every man. Even the British nature forgot its practical mood and plunged into the labyrinth of theological subtleties. The Germans, needless to say, did the same. The consequences of these quarrels and strife accorded well with the popular spirit:

Cromwell and Pennsylvania in England and Jacob Boehme in Germany. We shall say a few words about the latter.

Self-cognition reveals itself not in science alone. The logical form is the final, culminating form beyond which knowledge proper does not go. Far from being an exclusive organ of self-cognition, science is for a long time to be an inadequate, still rudimentary organ of it. Of course, science, in the absolute sense of the word, is the eternal organism of the truth, but it is time we agreed that in reality, i.e., in time and history everything is relative and that, therefore, only historical science is meant when we speak of actual development. In logic everything is completely *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is precisely for this reason that the transient has not yet found in it its identity with the eternal. As long as reason and truth are separated, and form and content oppose each other, science will not be in a position to deduce the complete truth of self-cognition or the complete self-cognition of the truth, which is the same. While the higher forms are being evolved, man becomes more and more self-cognizant in other spheres of activity through experience, events and the whole of his interrelation with the environment, through exalted poetical presage. At first man's self-cognition was his *instinct*, the animal's unconscious sagacity, vague irresistible impulses, the gratification of which, while relieving the animal side of his nature, stimulated his human aspect. The nascent mind unfolded its content in two directions. In the practical sphere it appeared in the formation of communal life as everyday wisdom of conduct and action, as a versatile link between labour and the environment and as the development of the moral will. The thought which evolved in this sphere had all the plenitude and vitality of the concrete, inexpressible in abstract terms. Everything practical appeared in the form of the particular, arbitrary, one-time gratification of the physical or spiritual needs: the higher meaning of its creative whole was lost because of the clatter of hammers, the dust, the fragmentary character of life. But as soon as man had wiped his brow after the arduous labour of settling down, he felt an urge of a different kind. He was now disturbed by something new, and his naive mind, still unseparated from the senses and unaware of its potentialities, began to clothe nature

and thoughts in vivid colours of childish fancy. Unchecked at first, his fancies assumed, as they became more balanced, the exquisite and harmonious aspect of a work of art. In it the contents and the envelope were actually combined, thought was spontaneous and spontaneity was spiritualized. In the form of a statue, man perceived outside himself the reconciliation he had sought, and therefore worshipped it and called it Apollo or Pallas. Not for long though. Restless thought corroded the work of art, subjugated the form to itself and reduced it to mere symbolism and itself ascended to the heights of inspired, mysterious contemplation. In this symbolism self-cognition found an image, a tongue that facilitated the comprehension of the truth ineffable, yet ever present to the consciousness. Here the image was no longer the living and integral body of an idea as had been the case with the work of art. Having conveyed its meaning to man, having served its purpose as a chalice of the truth, this symbolic image was ready to disappear, to fade away in the light of the self-cognizing idea. The last faint glimmer of this image mirrored man's own features, but transformed and ennobled them. Man recognized himself in the reflection, yet was afraid to do so. Symbolism was the tongue, the inspired hieroglyphics of mystical self-cognition. The language used by Pythagoras, Proclus and Jacob Boehme, the images they employed, may always be interpreted differently: they serve as mirrors of reason to reason, as mirrors of sensuality to sensuality. These light and inspired hieroglyphics become queer phantoms in the rough hands of the sensual mystics, who return to materialism through bigotry; the spirit that animated them, their religious idea flies away. The lacy veil barely quivering between man and the truth becomes a clammy shroud, and the vivid thought which shone in the eyes of inspired contemplation changes into the mad and melancholy stare of the sorcerer and cabbalist.

I thought it necessary to remind you of all this before approaching the strange personality of Jacob Boehme. His inspired mystical contemplation, which sprang from a sacred source, led him to conceptions so broad in scope as to be undreamed of in the science of his times, to the truth which mankind learned but yesterday, whereas Boehme lived some two

hundred odd years ago. And the very same conceptions of Boehme, clothed in queer, mystical and alchemical vestments, have given rise to the most eccentric and most insane deviations from the simple-hearted acceptance of the truth. Swedenborgians, Eckartshausen, Stilling, and their followers, Hohenlohe and the present-day German seers, the conjurors, the lepers, the deranged, all these bigots of diverse, unread magazines and diverse mad-houses have drawn a great part of their obscurantism from Jacob Boehme.

I cannot outline completely the whole of Boehme's doctrine and will confine myself to setting down several of its features. But then, *ex ungue leonem*!

Boehme's language is crude and obscure, but his sharp, original speech is full of vigorous, fiery poetry. Here are the principal ideas of his philosophy of nature.

"Everything arises from *yes* and *no*. *Yes* considered outside of *no* is eternal peace, everything and nothing, eternal silence, freedom from all suffering and consequently from every joy, indifference, unperturbed stillness. But *yes* cannot exist without *no*; the latter is indispensable for its transition from indifference. *No* is in itself nothing, and nothing is a striving towards something (*eine Sucht nach Etwas*). *Yes* and *no* are not different from one another, but distinct. Without distinction there would be neither image nor consciousness and life would be an eternal, dispassionate, indifferent emanation; desire presupposes that something for which we strive is not. *No* impedes the infinite radiance of the positive and at the point where the two meet life bursts forth. This is a transition which preserves the infinite development for finite determinedness. Entering diversity, the unity divaricates and in this divarication returns, in consciousness, to a new spiritual unity. There would be no light if there were no darkness, and even if there were light, would it light up anything if there were nothing to impede it? But light creates darkness by itself, the weariness of indifference striving for distinction. And this accounts for the eternal need *to be something* (*Etwasseinwollen*). The *ego* (i.e., subjectivity) of nature is manifested in this need for divarication.... Revealing the eternal and divine will, nature is the work of serene eternity; it forms, produces, divaricates in order to be

joyously conscious of itself.... That which consciousness expresses in the word, nature moulds into properties. The first property of eternal nature (Boehme distinguishes between the eternal properties and their temporal manifestations. He calls the former eternal nature and the latter physical nature.) is the absolute *desire* to become something, and the second is *counteraction* impeding the desire, transition, the cause of life and suffering; the third is *perception*, the consciousness of properties; the fourth is *fire*, shine, to which the natural and tormenting destruction of the foregoing has risen; the fifth is *love*; the sixth is *sound*, utterance and the comprehension of the relation between the properties; the seventh is *essence*, the intermediary personality, the subject of the six foregoing properties, their soul.... Everything in nature reveals itself; nature voices everything; self-manifestation is a medium through which the object reveals its interior. To be internal alone is unbearable; the internal craves to be external. The whole of nature voices its properties and evinces itself.... The intense life of nature reveals its essence (as man's thought), while the desire (of man) implies a striving to realize oneself (according to Boehme, to reveal oneself through nature). External nature is made up of six eternal properties; in the seventh property it rests as on the Sabbath.... Water and air are nearer to indifferent unity as everything soft and free from sharpness. Solids, on the contrary, stand higher owing to their complexities and their divarications which are already transcended within them. One can divine the cause by the visible world, by the sun, the stars, the elements, or the living beings, for nothing has its inception elsewhere, and the inception and cause are inevitable where the object has arisen. The true cause of everything, the ultimate inception is omnipresent divine spirit.... It is not far—it is near; one has only to discern it," exclaims Boehme in exultation. "'You dull man,' I would say to an unbeliever, 'if you think you have nothing of the divine in you, you are not the image of God; and if at odds with him, how can you be one of his children?'"

From the same principle of essential division Boehme strives to deduce the bad and all that is evil. He assumes the evil to be one of the conditions of phenomenal being. It has a common

origin with the good; a quality is already evil in its limitation, in its egotistic divorce from unity, in its isolation at the expense of all other properties. Boehme poetically (though poetry in this case is at the expense of grammar) derives the Latin *qualitas* from the German *Qual*—suffering, and *quellen*—to flow from a source, the quality to suffer (*die Qualität quält sich ab*); striving to free itself in the universal unity, it feels its deficiency because it is *something* physical, covetous, selfish. But this alienation is overcome by illumination and that which was suffering in darkness bursts into light and enjoyment, and that which was fear, torment and trepidation becomes a joyful cry, and a song, and ringing.... Evil is a necessary element in life, and it must necessarily be transcended.... Without the evil everything would be as colourless as a man devoid of his passions; when self-sufficient these become evil yet they are also a fount of energy, a fiery impetus.... Kindliness which contains no evil, no egotistic element is a futile dormant sort of kindliness. Evil is its own enemy, the primary cause of unrest, constantly striving towards equilibrium, i.e., towards the transcendence of itself.

That will be enough. If you wish to grasp the broad ideas which lurk behind these strange words and are scattered everywhere in Boehme, you will find them even in the poor excerpts I have given. But if his words seem to you (as to many before you) mere ravings, I do not undertake to reassure you.

The basic views of the Reformation did as much to foster the scientific development of thought as feudalism had done to hinder it. The inquisitiveness of the searcher came into its own. Scrutinizing the debates of that time and their manner, one is both elated and saddened: one can see that thought is given its place, that it is gaining recognition, and at the same time that it is dry, cold, formal and would annihilate life if life could be annihilated. In science the victory over the medieval outlook was not as resounding as in the sphere of art. Raphael, Titian, and Correggio have rendered dualism in art impossible. In science, Catholic idealism called scholasticism was vanquished by Protestant scholasticism called idealism. As artistry was the guiding spirit of the Greek epoch, so abstract thought was the main feature of the Reformation—that scholastic and extremely

prosaic dualism. As it developed, life grew increasingly drab and shallow.* In the chronicles of that science we shall meet no more with the majestic, live personalities of the sage-citizens of the ancient world, or with the austere, sombre faces of the medieval savants, or with the vigorous, fiery countenances of the people of the sixteenth century upheaval. Philosophers like other people grew older and older. Their abstract concerns and learned interests alienate them from life. After Bruno, philosophy has had only the one great biography *del gran Ebreo* of science (Spinoza).** Hegel accounts for this in a rather curious way. According to him, the civil order in modern times has reached that rational perfection in which the individuality no longer needs to be concerned with the external, and everyone is shown his place. The external and the internal, he asserts, stand alone and in such a way that the external order of things goes on of itself and that man can, without giving thought to this order, establish his inner world by himself. I do not think this is easily proved by German history from the Westphalian Treaty to our day, but be that as it may, Hegel has uttered a perfectly German idea, which is—*non vitia hominis.****

LETTER SIX[34]

DESCARTES AND BACON

*Hier, können wir sagen, sind wir zu Hause und können wie der Schiffer nach langer Umherfahrt auf der ungestümen See "Land" rufen.***** That is Hegel's homage to Descartes. "It is

* It is strange that in Protestantism as in science the Latin nations appear only on the frontispiece with their Arnold of Brescia and Girolamo Savonarola and their Huguenots, and then, as though waiting for something, they leave it to the Teutonic world to gather the first fruits.—*A.H.*

** Perhaps we should add Leibnitz and Fichte.—*A.H.*

*** *Gesch. der Phil.* Teil III, pp. 276 and 277. A lengthy biography of Hegel, written by Rosenkrantz and published a year ago, proves this best of all. It contains excerpts from his papers of great interest and of his life story, almost of no interest at all: a characteristic German life without events, with the changing of academic chairs, *mit Sparbüchsen für die Kinder, Geburtstagsfeiern*, etc.—*A.H.*

**** Now we can see that we are at home; like seamen who have long ranged the stormy seas we can exclaim "Land!" (*Gesch. der Phil.* Teil III, p. 328 and *ibid.*, p. 275.)

from Descartes," he continues, "that we date *true abstract* thought; that is the source from which *pure speculation,* a new science, our science, will develop."

We, too, say "land," but in its opposite meaning. For Hegel thought meant sailing over to this shore as to that tranquil harbour situated at the entrance to its kingdom. We, on the contrary, see the *new* philosophy as the shore on which we stand, ready to take off with the first favourable wind, ready to express our thanks for the hospitality received and having pushed off, to make for other shores. The fate of the new philosophy is quite similar to that of all the movements of the Reformation: nothing of the old has been left in peace, nor has anything new risen. Old bricks went into the erection of new buildings and consequently they are neither new nor old. All that has come from the Reformation has made tremendous strides; everything was necessary and everything stopped midway. It would have been strange if the science of this epoch of great beginnings had accomplished its work. Science had not the strength to detach itself from the other elements of its historical epoch; on the contrary, it is the conscious, developed thought of its time; it shares the lot of all around it. Protesting loudly against scholasticism it, nonetheless, absorbed scholasticism in its blood. Pure thought is the scholasticism of new science as pure Protestantism is regenerated Catholicism. Feudalism outlived the Reformation. It penetrated into every aspect of the new European life; its spirit had struck roots in those that marched against it; true enough, it was modified; it is even truer, that alongside of it, there arose something that was really new and powerful. But this new element, waiting to reach its majority, remains, while still a minor, under the tutelage of feudalism which lives regardless of the Reformation of Luther or of the Reformation of the end of the last century. And how could it be otherwise? Who constituted its opponents since then? Recall—premature enterprises, little-developed generalities, chance attacks, readjustments made within its bounds. Unvarnished, open feudalism was replaced by a more rational, modified form; a feudalism sure of itself by one prepared to defend itself; the feudalism of blood by that of money. Scholasticism supplants feudalism in science. Could it,

after that, truly be a science, a harbour? Can we expect mankind to feel at home in it? No!

The dualism of scholasticism has not been obliterated. It has only discarded its tattered mystico-cabbalistic attire and appeared in the form of pure thought, idealism, logical abstractions. This constitutes great progress. In this way, i.e., by elevating dualism into the general sphere of thought, philosophy has placed it on the blade's edge and thereby brought us right to an egress out of itself. Modern science begins where antique science left off, at that point to which the antique world had elevated thought. It raised the problem of the antique world but did not settle it; it only led up to the point of its solution and stopped, sensing perhaps that this solution would simultaneously be its own death sentence, that is to say, that its real and active authority would be relegated to history. Hegel behaved, perhaps, more openly than he had meant to. Perhaps the joyous words "harbour," "home," accidentally escaped his lips. By this exclamation he threw in his lot with the science of the Reformation. However, there is no disgrace in being found on the same shore with Spinoza!

All that we have said should by no means conceal the magnitude of the revolution in thought and the progress it led to in science. Since Descartes science has not lost its footing. It stands firmly on self-cognizing thought, on the self-autonomy of reason.

Antique philosophy and modern philosophy constitute two great cornerstones for the science of the future. Both are incomplete; both contain unscientific elements; both were great preparatory factors without which a true, complete science could not have developed. Both belong to the past. You remember that antique philosophy always contained within itself some element of spontaneity: a fact, an event which had dropped on them like an aerolite and was accepted as truth by intuition, out of faith in life, in the world. That is how ancient philosophy accepted the very unity of existence and thought; it was right fundamentally but wrong in its mode of accepting it. That was faith, instinct, the feel of truth, if you like, but not conscious thought. Such spontaneous element is quite antagonistic to the conception of science. The ideas of the Middle Ages were a re-

action to spontaneity; that, however, did not prevent them from suffering from a similar shortcoming. They cut through the umbilical cord which united man to nature, and man turned completely toward the inner world of reflection, sought in it alone the solution of his problems. But this spiritual world was purely personal; it had no object. "The reality of being," as Giordano Bruno said so admirably, "is conditioned by a real object." The object of medieval man was he himself, considered as an abstract entity. To deny spontaneity is just as unscientific as to accept it unthinkingly. The mind, concentrated within itself, occupied solely in itself, "became dry and lamentable scholasticism and wove out of itself a web, very delicate and lacy, but absolutely superfluous," says Bacon. Faith of man in intelligence led scholasticism to acknowledge as real every absurdity if constructed logically, and since they were devoid of all content, they borrowed it from the realm of the imagination, from psychological spontaneity, turning to it for support as the empiricist turns to experience. Thus, on the one hand, the heavy stone, and, on the other, that frightful void peopled with phantoms. People of the revolutionary age saw that scholasticism would never get them anywhere and grew to hate it; but the negation of scholasticism does not yet mean the institution of modern science. The poetical perspicacity of Giordano Bruno has as little in common with science as the audacious negations of Vanini.[35] The task of prime importance, the problem which no thinking mind could evade, was for thought to establish the relation of thought itself and being, to the object, to truth in general. And, truly, it is with these questions on its lips, that a new science appeared on the scene. Its father was undoubtedly Descartes. Bacon's significance is different—we shall take him up later.

Descartes occupied himself for a long time with sciences as they were taught in his days. Then he abandoned books for they did not solve a single one of his doubts and gave him no satisfaction whatever. He saw as clearly as Bacon did that the old ship of medieval life was sinking and breaking up. He did not start quarrelling with its pilots as his predecessors had, but dived into the sea making for the other shore. And, like Bacon, he decided *to begin at the beginning*: to begin absolutely freely

in the domain of thought. It called for a good deal of courage to undertake this rupture with the past and to set down to the erection of the new. Descartes, tormented by uncertainty and, perhaps, by his conscience as well, took up the pilgrim's staff and went to the Notre-Dame de Lorette to supplicate for assistance in the work he had undertaken. There, prostrated before the altar, he prayed that his doubts be allayed.[36] The manner in which Descartes set about his task is his greatest merit. He began with absolute doubt as the real and eternal principle of the development of science, not to reject all that is true but rather to justify it and, in justifying it, to emancipate himself. When he rose to those rarefied heights in which he allowed nothing pre-existent to enter, when, in this gloom where everything was swallowed up, but he himself, he concentrated within the depths of his spirit, descended into his very thought, put consciousness to test—then it was that the famous confirmation of his own being escaped his lips: *Cogito, ergo sum.* That was bound logically to lead to the unity of being and thought; thought becomes apodictic proof of existence; consciousness recognizes itself as indivisible with being—it cannot exist without being. That is the programme of all future science; that is the first word of the view in which Spinoza will have the last word; that is the topic which Hegel will develop scientifically. *Nosce te ipsum* and *Cogito, ergo sum*—are the two famous watchwords of the old and new science. The new has followed the lines laid down by the old and *Cogito, ergo sum* is the answer to *Nosce te ipsum.* Thought is the real definition of my *ego.* But Descartes spent all his strength on this syllogism, so simple in appearance and which is not even a syllogism. Frightened by the magnitude of his principle, by the width of the breach between the past and the present, he wavers and snatches at the tatters of the old view; the past penetrates into his soul. In him scholasticism, already fading, declining, regains strength and is transformed. He is like the Quakers who came to Pennsylvania and brought with them across the ocean the old customs which then took root in the new state. Recognizing only thought which he linked indissolubly with being, Descartes dissociated thought and being; he took them for two different entities (thought and extent). Herein lies your dual-

ism, scholasticism elevated to a logical form. Ill at ease, he turns to formal logic. According to him, rational proof (by means of thought) has an absolute right to reality, to truth; while truth must be proven not by thought alone but by thought and being. Erdmann,* a conscientious German scholar, quite justly remarked that Descartes could not have avoided that line of development, living at the time he did. His task was to raise the banner of Protestantism in science and proclaim a new path; to proclaim thought as the all-exhaustive definition of man. That was a feat great enough for any one individual to accomplish! Descartes was too perspicacious not to realize that in his system thought and being were completely dissociated and there was nothing to bridge the two; that these constituted two indifferent, self-sufficient things. He always realized that so long as they remained entities nothing could be done, for entity was entity precisely because it was sufficient unto itself. Descartes accepted (though he did not deduce) the supreme unity linking the opposite moments; thought and extent constitute the attributes, the different manifestations of the supreme being. How did he arrive at this unity? Through *innate ideas*. So his protest against any content was not, after all, profound! In accepting innate ideas, an element of psychological spontaneity, insubordinate to logic, forced its way into his doctrine. Thus Descartes became at one and the same time the greatest and last bulwark of scholasticism; in him scholasticism was transformed into idealism, transcendental dualism which it was more difficult to discard than Catholic scholasticism. We shall see how the scholastic element retained its vitality all throughout the epoch of modern philosophy down to our times. The science of Protestantism could not be anything else. If there were different demands and different, more valid, sympathies, they were not of science. Beginning with Descartes, science elaborated a method, paved a way which was to lead to an egress out of itself and which it could not take, for it had nothing to convey over it.

Descartes, with a mind as purely mathematical and abstract as his was, examined nature exclusively from a mechanical

* Erdmann, *Versuch einer Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 1840-42. I. Th. Descartes.—*A.H.*

point of view. There was something austere and ascetic about him that kept him from understanding what was alive. His rigid, geometrical dialectics was inexorable; he was an idealist by the very cast of his mind. He conceived being, matter, as *extension*. "All other attributes," he says, "can be abstracted from matter, all but extent; that alone is inherent to it." Quality ceded its place to a more external definition of the object—quantity. Mathematics found all doors opened up to them in the natural sciences; everything was made subordinate to mechanical laws and the universe became an apparatus of extent in motion.* We must note, however, that at the beginning of the seventeenth century scientific thought was, indeed, for the most part, completely taken up with astronomy and mechanics. That was the time of great inventions in both fields. This mechanical view, which began with Galileo and reached its zenith in Newton, contributed almost nothing to the concrete branches of natural science; its influence was felt (except for astronomy and mechanics, of course) only in physics. The Cartesian view of nature which, according to the law of compensation, was so idealistically spiritual that it lapsed into the crudest mechanism and materialism (as was then noted particularly by English and Italian physicists), had practically no influence on natural science.

"A close examination," said Descartes, "shows us that the substance of things and bodies consists only in their having extent in length, width and depth. Perhaps bodies are not what they seem to us; perhaps they deceive our senses; but undoubtedly that is true in them which I understand clearly, distinctly and can deduce mentally; that is why I avow that I recognize no substance of material things other than their geometric dimension, divisible in all ways, mobile and capable of having a form and that I consider in matter only divisibility, contour and mobility. Everything physical is explained and deduced with the greatest precision from those mathematical laws which determine the inalienable attributes of being. It is my opinion that physics needs no other foundation." Matter, taken apart from its qualities, as conceived by Descartes, has no intrinsic

* I shall go into this question in greater detail in the next letter.—*A.H.*

power; it is a virtual void, something dead and inert—he always has to resort to external forces. "There is but one substance in the universe; all its various forms originate in movement. Movement is nothing but the action as a result of which substance passes from one place to another; it is the displacement of certain parts of the body in respect to those relatively near. Movement and repose are different states of matter; movement requires no more effort than does repose. As much effort is required to set a body into motion as to stop it. Effort is required to remain in a state of repose. The transposition of a body is a twofold action. Both bodies are active: one remains in its place, the other is removed (the force of inertia). Movement depends on that which is moved and not on that which moves; it is impossible to impart movement to one body without violating the equilibrium of other bodies; hence the existence of whole systems of movement and their complexity. The cause of movement is God." Then come the general mechanical foundations of dynamics. All that exists is composed of corpuscles and their modification in magnitude, place, combination and transposition. Organic life is exclusively growth, i.e., it is agglomeration by the acquisition of other corpuscles. Descartes set physicists a dangerous example when he had recourse to personal hypotheses wherever understanding proved insufficient. Thus, for example, the movement of heavenly bodies, according to him, was due to a tornado twirling them around the sun. In his attempt to deduce mathematically all phenomena of the life of planets, he arrives at a hypothesis which he himself is not certain of (*quamvis ipsa nunquam sic orta esse*).* Admitting that body was absolutely alien to spirit, Descartes never could attain an understanding of life; his researches into physiology began with the premise that the body "had, supposedly, no spirit." But then what is this living body? Who gave him the right to consider it in this fashion? This makes it quite natural for him to consider the body as a statue or a machine made of earth. "If clocks can go, why should it be difficult to understand that man, made as he is, can also move?" After such an artifi-

* Though, perhaps, such phrases are official reservations such as those used by Copernicus and even Newton.[37]—*A.H.*

cial and disheartening anatomical and physiological analysis, Descartes must, probably, himself have realized that not everything in the body of an animal can be explained mechanically, and diligently took up the study of zootomy. However, like all systematizers, he was deaf to the voice of truth and twisted facts as he pleased. For example, he explained the whine of a dog as a simple reaction of *this machine* to the action of the stick. If a machine, he says, was built internally and externally like a monkey or any other animal it would then be impossible to differentiate between them. Man alone is not a machine because he has a tongue, a mind, a soul. While the reasoning soul is closely connected with the body, it is arbitrarily connected, because the soul is absolutely the opposite of the body. Although the soul is, at bottom, connected with the body as a whole, its main habitat is, however, in the brain, or, to be more exact, in one *little gland* (*Glandula Conarion*), situated in the centre of the cerebrum (incidentally, because the other parts of the brain are paired: consequently, the indivisible soul could not be lodged in one of them without its taking ascendency over the other). Could this futile question have arisen if Descartes had had the slightest understanding of the life of the organism? He considered the organs of the animal to be *exclusively* a mechanism brought into motion by some incomprehensible power. Movement is impossible if matter is only a mute, inactive, passive occupancy of space. That is absolutely untrue: matter has an inherent repugnance to stupid, meaningless, passive repose; it itself, so to say, *ferments*,* and this fermenting, developing from form to form, negates its own extent, seeks to free itself—and does so, ultimately, in consciousness, while retaining its being. The conception of matter is not exhausted by extension; that extension which is not active, not moved by the effect of its own action is as much of

* Contemporaries of Descartes perceived the inertness of his matter. Henry More wrote him a letter in which he called matter obscure life, *materiam utique vitam esse quandam obscuram, nec in sola extensione partium consistere, sed in aliqua semper actione.* "*R. Des. Epist.*" 1, Ep. 4. XX.—*A.H.*—"Matter is obscure life and consists not only in the extension of parts but also in some kind of continual activity." R. Descartes. Letters, 1, Letter 4, XX.—*Ed.*

an abstraction as thought without body. These two are opposites, the extremes of life.

Descartes had one magnificent vocation—to give science its start and a *principle*. He could hold the pressure of scholasticism and dualism in check only long enough to formulate the principle. No sooner had he uttered his *Cogito, ergo sum* than the dike gave way. He began by protesting against medieval science but it was already in his veins—he lent it his fullest support. He justified it scientifically. But not all the intellectual demands of that time were expressed in pure scientific terms. This can be seen very clearly in Boehme. In France, for example, long before Descartes's time, there was a particular, practical, philosophical view of things. It was not scientifically grounded, had no expressed theories, was not subordinated to any abstract doctrine, to any single authority. It was a free conception, based on life, on reflection and on the report of past events; in part it was acquired by a long, active study of antique writers. This view had a simple and direct attitude to life and drew its material and counsel from it. It gave the impression of superficiality because it was simple and humane.[38] German historians speak of it disdainfully, with *Vornehmtuerei*, perhaps, because this view gives, in a single formula, all that is intangible in life; because it expressed itself plainly and often *treated of day-to-day* questions. Montaigne's views had, however, tremendous importance. They were subsequently developed further in Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists. Montaigne was, in some respects, the precursor of Bacon who was the genius of this conception.

The contrast between Bacon and Descartes is sharp. Descartes had a method but no real content save for the formal capacity to think. Bacon had empirical content *in crudo*, but science was missing, i.e., he had not completely assimilated it precisely because the time had not yet come for content to be so comprehended by thought as to be able to develop it scientifically. Descartes voiced a protest in the name of theory, in the name of pure thought; Bacon did so in the name of that recalcitrant element of life which regards, smilingly, all one-sidedness and pursues his own path. The result of medieval life, of this world of malicious exclusivism and

—a science about nature and based on nature. He wanted a science in which facts would be transformed by observation and analysis into general ideas. Consequently, he examined everything directly and clearly in order to learn, to analyze, but not with the intention of being ensnared by systematism and then of tightening the knot. He very frequently began with a simple idea and arrived at very complex results. He was extremely conscientious and did not turn the question of science into something personal; he recognized the objectivity of truth; his erudition was enormous; his memory took the upper hand; he was acquainted with all past historical development. His antipathy for Greek science and Aristotle did not prevent him from referring to them in a masterly manner and using them. He was far from being a poet but his interpretation of Greek myths is excellent. What a curious sensation you experience when, on reading or turning over the leaves of medieval scholastics, of the philosophers of theoretical emancipation,[39] you suddenly come across Bacon. Do you remember, for instance, how in the days of your youthful dreams when theory followed upon the heel of theory, when faith in oneself and one's friends was infinite, when one dreamt of transforming science and the world and when enthusiastic speeches supported poetical fancies—unexpectedly, the practical man appeared on the scene with a genuine knowledge of life, one who knew that you couldn't get far on abstractions, that revolutions in science and history were not so easily made? Do you remember the extraordinary impression made by his appearance? Do you remember how, at first, frightened by his sceptical and cold ideas, you rejected them? But later you began to blush for your dreams, succumbed to the newcomer, drank in every word of his, revealed your most cherished beliefs in exchange for his sober view of things based on reality and, according to you, infallible? This practical newcomer was Bacon. What probably also happened to you was that, as you gradually found yourself more in accord with the new views and examined them more closely, your own dreams again rose before you. They were, of course, only dreams, but some of them were so far-flung that you hadn't the heart to barter them for practical wisdom. All this is repeated when

one passes from the energetic reformers to the dispassionate Bacon. Here you have not the restless and passionate nature of Giordano, nor the violent Cardan;[40] he is not one of the wanderers impelled onward by thought, one of those homeless vagrants bearing within himself, along the highways of Europe, nascent consciousness and intellectual activity. Nor is he one of those persecuted toilers who frequently drop out on the way from their internal discord and external sufferings. No: you have before you the writings of a man of balance, a chancellor accustomed to handle state matters, a peer left without an occupation because he has been crossed off the list of peers.... In the soul of this man everything had been consumed by the searing flame of *amour-propre,* ambition, power, honours, wealth, failure, prison and humiliation; but the intellect of a genius remained his and, too, his imagination so cool and subordinated to the mind that it boldly called upon him to discard the luxurious flowers of poetical speech on the royal path of his vast and clear-cut ideas.

What strikes us as we pick up the works of Bacon is his extraordinary intelligence, his good sense, keen practicality and his amazing versatility. Bacon cultivated his mind by participating in public life. He learned to think by his contacts with people. Descartes avoided people, at first in the suburbs of Paris, then in Holland. People interfered with his work. That is why Descartes introduces you to pure thought while Bacon introduces you to the physical sciences. Descartes's idealism was based on dualism. Bacon's ideas contained something daemonic which scholasticism could not tolerate even for a single hour. Bacon began with the same premises as Descartes, with the negation of the existing, ready dogmas, but for him this negation was not *a logical manoeuvre*, but a practical rectification. Bacon's negation, after freeing man from scholasticism, placed him face to face with nature; he recognized its laws from the very outset; even more, he wanted to subdue his self-willed thought, corrupted by arrogant scholasticism to its evident objectivity. (Descartes, quite the reverse, placed nature *hors la loi* by his *a priori.*) Bacon modestly suggested that empiricism was the elementary stage of knowledge, the means for arriving, through phenomena,

through facts, at that all-pervading substance from which Descartes attempted to deduce phenomena. They worked hand in hand, and if neither they nor their followers met, that is not because of an innate irreconcilability, but because neither idealism nor empiricism had developed far enough to become a genuine method, nor to include genuine content. Leibnitz calls Cartesianism "the vestibule of truth"; we have every right to call Bacon's empiricism its storehouse.

We shall take up the merits and defects of this storehouse in the next letter.*

Sokolovo, June 1845

LETTER SEVEN

BACON AND HIS SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

BACON'S fundamental idea strikes us as being so simple that it is difficult, at first glance, to realize its full significance. More than once have we had occasion to remark that the further science penetrates into reality, the simpler are the truths which it discovers. They seem to *evolve by themselves.* Their simplicity, like the simplicity of works of nature, can be grasped either by the unsophisticated, *direct* understanding of a person who has always been one with nature, or by the vigorous mind which, by dint of hard work, has rid itself of preconceived conceptions, of preliminary half-truths. Mankind arrives at simple truths as a result of the strenuous efforts of great geniuses in the course of thousands of years. Oversubtle truths have always existed. To be able again to understand simple truths, one must undergo the entire phenomenological process and again come to be on natural terms with the object. The practical, everyday truth seems paltry. Things that we observe *intimately and frequently,* do not seem worthy of at-

* Bacon should be read in the original. All throughout his works you unexpectedly meet ideas of extraordinary veracity and breadth. To prove this and to let you become more closely acquainted with Bacon I shall quote several passages from his works; he will express his own views far better than I can.—*A.H.*

tention. To see their immensity we must have distance: *il n'y a pas de grand homme pour son valet de chambre.* The less a man knows the greater is his contempt for the ordinary things which surround him. Take up the history of any science—it invariably begins not with observations made, but with magic, with distorted and misunderstood facts, expressed in hieroglyphs, and ends by disclosing the essence of these mysteries, of these sage truths, truths so elementary, familiar and ordinary that no one even wanted, at first, to consider them. In our day we have not yet completely rid ourselves of that prejudice which makes us expect in the truths of science something extraordinary, *inaccessible to the crowd*, something detached from the miserable vale of tears in which we live. In Bacon's day everybody held this opinion, but he courageously rose against it. Dualism, exhausted in the previous epoch, lapsed, in the Protestant world, into a sort of melancholy and helpless madness. Bacon demonstrated the futility of fetishes and idols with which the science of his days was replete and demanded that people reject them and return to a view of nature, childlike in its simplicity. It was not easy for minds, deformed by scholasticism, to return to a natural understanding of things. The confined, suppressed minds of medieval thinkers harboured, under their humble hairshirt of formalism, a madly arrogant claim to power. What attracted them was not the sacred right of reason, nor the power of thought, inseparable from it. No, their aim was to bring natural phenomena under the heel of their despotic caprices, to overthrow arbitrarily the laws of nature. Recluses, bookworms, people living in the abstract, they neither knew nature nor life; both nature and life frightened them by their mystery, their power, their allurements. They seem to have held both nature and life in contempt, but that was one of the numberless falsehoods of those days. They understood that it would not be easy to dominate nature and, with the infinite ambition of the shackled captive, attempted to make it subject to their spirit. The noble striving to attain knowledge became, in them, an impure lust for power just as the gentle feeling of love was transformed, in the heart of Claude Frollo, into a venomous vice. Take a look at the alchemist at his furnace, surrounded by magic signs and terrifying apparatus! Why

those pale cheeks, that feverish air, that panting breath? Because the man is filled not with a chaste love for truth but with the lust for torture, for doing violence; because he is engaged in *making* gold or *homunculus* in the retort. The objectivity of the object signified nothing to the haughty egotism of the Middle Ages. It was in himself, in his concentrated thought, in his overwrought imagination that man found his whole object, nature, events being called in as servants *to help when the need arose and then be dismissed.* The Reformation could not swerve men away from this path; it drove their minds still deeper into the realm of the abstract; it lent Catholic science, at times passionate and energetic, an air of cold and lifeless circumspection. What Protestantism cultivated was not the heart, but its languorous and tearful *Gemüt.* The most eccentric, most deformed kinds of mysticism spread quickly in Sweden, England and Germany side by side with the purely formal theological trends of Puritanism and Presbyterianism, samples of which you can see in *Woodstock* and in the *Old Mortality.*

Amidst all these movements there arose a man who said to his contemporaries: "Look down. Look well at nature from which you would flee. Descend from the tower you have climbed and from which you can see nothing. Approach the world of phenomena—and study them. You cannot escape from nature in any event: it lies on all sides and your imaginary power over it is self-deception. Nature may be subjugated by its own weapons, but you do not possess them. So, discipline your mind which has been spoilt by facile and futile logic-making to the point when it would admit the indubitable existence of the environment, when it would submit to the omnipresent influence of nature—and filled with love and respect, commence forthwith your conscientious labours." Many of those whom these words reached stopped their futile ranging through the verbal quagmire of scholasticism and indeed set down to work selflessly. At Bacon's initiative work was begun in the physical sciences which subsequently resulted in Newton, Linnaeus, Buffon, Cuvier.... Others listened indignantly to the strange speech of Baron Verulam, so indignantly, indeed, that two hundred years later Count de Maistre judged it still nec-

essary to *annihilate* Bacon and to give evidence of that hatred which the *loving* hearts of the obscurantists still harboured for him. But what is the basic idea of Bacon's doctrine?

Before Bacon, science commenced with generalities, but where these generalities originated no one could tell. Scholasticism believed that Caius is mortal *because* man is mortal. Now, Bacon argued that, on the contrary, we are justified in saying that man is mortal because Caius is. That was no mere change in the order of words. Phenomena, empirical phenomena, were granted the right of the first premises, logical *anterioritatis*. Herein lies the principal method used by Bacon: he starts from the particular, from experiment, from the observation of phenomena and arrives at a generalization, at a collation of all that has been thus acquired. For Bacon experience is not a passive perception of the external world with its attending circumstances. Quite the contrary, it is the conscious interaction of thought and things external, their joint activity, which, while developing, Bacon keeps in curb, neither allowing thought to make conclusions to which it is not yet entitled, nor allowing experience to remain a mechanical accumulation of facts "undigested by thought." The greater and richer the sum total of observations, the more inalienable is the right to deduce from them the general rules by means of induction. But as he discovers them Bacon, ever doubting and cautious, demands another plunge into the stream of phenomena, in search of a generalization or a qualification.

Before Bacon, experiment was an accident, it was used as a basis even more rarely than was tradition, let alone intellectual speculation. Bacon turned it into an essential, primary factor of knowledge, which subsequently accompanied the entire development of knowledge, which presupposed constant verification, and, by its irrefutable precision and its concrete universality, acted as a curb on the inclination of abstract minds to rise into the rarefied atmosphere of metaphysical generalities. Bacon believed as much in the mind as in nature but his confidence was greatest when they were at one because he foresaw their unity. He demanded that the mind, leaning on experience, should progress hand in hand with nature, that nature should guide the mind as its pupil until it was in a

condition to lead nature towards complete elucidation in thought.

That was new, extremely new and grand; that was the resurrection of real science, *instauratio magna*. Bacon had every right to give this title to his book which marked the commencement of the great renaissance of science. Although he says that "to say truth, I am wont for my part to regard this work as a child of time rather than of wit," still let us give honour and glory to the first one who incarnated the spirit of the times and was its medium; he merits that honour and glory doubly since he realized that he was only an instrument of the spirit of the times and not an individual seeking to crush his contemporaries! This modesty did not prevent Bacon, however, from being aware of his strength. When he began writing his book all branches of science were in a most lamentable state. Bacon fearlessly summoned before his court of judgement contemporary knowledge in its Gothic raiments, and condemned it. I remember someone comparing him with a general reviewing his army. Yes, that is a very apt comparison. He was the collected chief inspecting his regiments before battle. All branches of human knowledge marched past him and he inspected each one, pointing out its defects to some, giving counsel to others, and doing it with that straightforwardness which is characteristic of genius because he knows he can accomplish what he has undertaken. Don't imagine that Bacon limited himself only to a general outline of experiment and induction. He developed his method to the minutest details and he instructed by means of examples; he commented, explained, repeated his words so as to attain clarity and every step leaves you amazed at the rich resources of his mind, at his erudition, formidable by the standards of those days, and by his complete antithesis to the medieval manner. Even in his light tone, in the smile which occasionally breaks through the most serious material, you can identify something familiar to us, unstilted, without the cap and gown, without the affected solemnity of the scholastics.

Bacon's method is nothing other than a personal (subjective) and external means of understanding an object. He him-

self once expressed both the profoundly practical nature of his method and its subjectivity in the following words: "But the course I propose for the discovery of sciences is such as leaves but little to the acuteness and strength of wits, but places all wits and understandings nearly on a level. For as in the drawing of a straight line or a perfect circle, much depends on the steadiness and practice of the hand, if it be done by aim of hand only, but if with the aid of rule or compass, little or nothing, so is it exactly with my plan." From the point of view of logic, this profoundly human view is, of course, unjustified but his method, nonetheless, is historically of tremendous objective significance. But then it has, incidentally, as realism in general, more philosophical significance than is expressed by words. Bacon, by his method, riveted science to nature so that philosophy and natural science had either to halt together or else advance together. This was the practical recognition of the unity of thought and being. The empiricism of Bacon is pervaded and animated by thought, which was least of all appreciated in him. It was not the narrowness of his views that led him to rely on experiments alone but his view of them at the beginning, the first step which could not be avoided. For him experience is the means of discovering "the eternal and immutable forms of nature," but form, according to him, is the general, the genus, the idea, only not the abstract idea, but *fons emanationis*, *natura naturans*, a creative element of life which fulfils itself through its particular definitions of the object, as a source from which its distinctions, its attributes, emanate, a source inseparable from the thing itself. Bacon's subjective empiricism lies rather in his words, in the maladroitness of his language, in his antagonistic fear lest it bring him closer to scholasticism. But we must not forget that such a man could not only exhaust all the possibilities of his method but also far exceed what could be deduced strictly from his method. Descartes is far superior to Bacon in method and greatly inferior to him in the results attained because Descartes is a man of abstractions. Of course, Bacon has his share of one-sidedness which infected a large part of his followers, but he himself was far removed from crude empiricism. Here are his own words: "There

remains simple experience; which, if taken as it comes, is called accident; if sought for, experiment. But this kind of experience is no better than a broom without its band, as the saying is;—a mere groping, as of men in the dark, that feel all round them for the chance of finding their way; when they had much better wait for daylight, or light a candle, and then go. But the true method of experience on the contrary first lights the candle, and then by means of the candle shows the way."... "For hitherto men have used great and indeed overcurious diligence in observing the variety of things, and explaining the exact specific difference of animals, herbs, and fossils; most of which are rather sports of nature than of any serious use towards science. Such things indeed serve to delight, and sometimes even give help in practice; but for getting insight into nature they are of little service or none. Men's labour therefore should be turned to the investigation and observation of the resemblances and analogies of things, as well in wholes as in parts. For these it is that detect the unity of nature, and lay a foundation for the constitution of sciences."

"... Some minds are stronger and apter to mark the differences of things, others to mark their resemblances. The steady and acute mind can fix its contemplations and dwell and fasten on the subtlest distinctions: the lofty and discursive mind recognizes and puts together the finest and most general resemblances. Both kinds however easily err in excess, by catching the one at gradations the other at shadows."

"Hence it is that men cease not from abstracting nature till they come to potential and uninformed matter, nor on the other hand from dissecting nature till they reach the atom...." Neither the atom nor uninformed matter are true, but true are bodies as they exist in nature. "Contemplations of nature and of bodies in their simple form break up and distract the understanding, while contemplations of nature and bodies in their composition and configuration overpower and dissolve the understanding.... These kinds of contemplation should therefore be alternated and taken by turns; that so the understanding may be rendered at once penetrating and comprehensive, and the inconveniences above mentioned, with the idols which

proceed from them, may be avoided." Aware of this, Bacon concentrated, however, all his intellect on experiments, on investigations and observations because he regarded experiment as the foundation of science, because he clearly saw the ruinous influence of the abuse of syllogistics and the unsoundness of metaphysics when the factual information is insufficient. He understood perfectly well that the collection and collation of experiments alone did not yet constitute science but he also understood that there could be no science without factual information. "Another error," says Bacon, "of a diverse nature from all the former, is the over-early and peremptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods; from which time commonly sciences receive small or no augmentation. But as young men, when they knit and shape perfectly, do seldom grow to a farther stature: so knowledge, while it is in aphorisms and observations, it is in growth; but when it once is comprehended in exact methods, it may perchance be farther polished and illustrated, and accommodated for use and practice; but it increaseth no more in bulk and substance." He did not aim to achieve a self-confined whole before first completing the contents; he preferred hard work to unripe fruit. Bacon's method is extremely modest: it is filled with respect for the object; it studies it in order to learn from it and not in order to wrest from the object a justification of some preconceived idea; it endeavours to bring everything to the notice of consciousness. "For whatever deserves to exist," says Bacon, "deserves also to be known...." He was able to find the real and the true even where we usually only see vain illusions.*

Bacon's positive and essentially English genius had no turn for scholastic metaphysics. The philosophy of his days did not interest him at all. Like Descartes, he began with negation, but with practical negation. He rejected the old dogmas because they were untenable. He revolted against the authority of the old doctrines because they hampered the independence of the mind. "As for antiquity," he says, "the opinion

* For example, not only gymnastics, but cosmetics and even the theory of luxury found a place in his *Novum Organum*.—*A.H.*

touching it which men entertain is quite a negligent one and scarcely consonant with the word itself. For the old age of the world is to be accounted the true antiquity; and this is the attribute of our own times, not of that earlier age of the world in which the ancients lived; and which, though in respect of us it was the older, yet in respect of the world it was the younger. And truly as we look for greater knowledge of human things and a riper judgement in the old man than in the young, because of his experience and of the number and variety of the things which he has seen and heard and thought of." In undermining the authority of the past Bacon pointed to the future. It was in the future that people were to uncover the truth, at the cost of their efforts. He argued that truth could not be found by turning back, as the scholastics advised; that truth was something to be sought for and not something lost. For him, negation of authority was inseparably linked up with faith in progress. Having rejected sterile dogmas, he found himself face to face with nature, which he directly set down to study, to investigate as an indubitable fact. It never even occurred to him to deny nature which, for him, would have been equivalent to denying his own body. To indulge in such negation for a person like Bacon would have meant to commit an obvious folly, to sink into an oppressive darkness. Bacon knew, for example, that the senses were deceptive, but such knowledge led him to the practical truth that experiments must be multiplied and verified by a large number of persons acting as a control on each other.

Bacon's faith in mind and in nature is unshakable. He speaks with equal repugnance of scepticism and of metaphysics. He is perfectly consistent in this: what he requires is knowledge, information and not grievous complaints on the impotence of mind and the intangibility of truth. What he requires is active development, truth and its practical application. That philosophy which does not lead to action, according to him, is worth nothing. For him knowledge and action are two aspects of one and the same energy. A man of this cast of mind is least of all capable of romanticism, mysticism and scholasticism.

As you now see, Bacon and Descartes represented in science two opposite principles of medieval life. The contradictions of dualism were most distinctly and sharply revealed in them and through them. The followers of Descartes and Bacon pushed both trends, idealism and empiricism, to such extremes that in their formal contradictions they of dialectical necessity overlapped each other and one side, confined with its exclusive conception, obtained a hearing through its adversary. You remember that at the birth of its activity, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, human thought was by no means so exclusive; that, on the contrary, it cancelled the dualism of the scholastic conception by its exalted prescience. Such was the view held by Giordano Bruno and his adepts. The whole of nature, of the universe seemed to them one universal life, everything being animated by it: a blade of grass and a planet, man and a corpse equally constituted a receptacle for it, and it all, while existing freely and repeating itself in the diversity of the concrete world, continually tended to unity in conscious thought. But neither was there in science the strength to develop this view, nor the ability in the medieval mind to turn from its romantic, sombre reveries to such a lucid understanding. That was a prophetic sign, the goal of future scientific development, shown at the beginning of the movement; it could not yet maintain itself at such heights. History offers many such examples: at the very outset of the new tendency its essential idea manifests itself in all its glory but in a form of an inapplicable generality. In a short time, the men of action realize this to their horror and despair; the bright idea is tarnished by circumstances, is lost, ruined, and what contemporaries cannot grasp is the fact that what has perished is the seed, which will arise subsequently victorious and triumphant, after having first experienced all the contradictions and having armed itself with all that the environment could provide. Neither Bacon nor Descartes could halt at prescience as did Bruno. They aimed further and did more, but Bruno's basic idea was superior to theirs. Bacon was not opposed to the science of *people* of *prescience*; he himself, as we have already said, was full of intuitive ideas; but being an Englishman, a man of business, he

wanted to simplify the question, to make it as positive as possible.

For the sake of a thorough examination of one aspect, the empirical one, he intentionally ignored some others. His followers proved that they *asked nothing more* than to be allowed to remain in this one-sidedness. What was lacking was only a doctrine diametrically opposed to Bacon's for the old question of dualism *to quicken* into a new struggle and for once rejected life, practical interests, physical events to line up on one side, with reason as essence, as thought and self-consciousness contemptuous of being and confident of its principles—on the other. This trend appeared, as you know, in Descartes. The unity of thought and life which manifested itself with all the grace of youth in Bruno was again ruptured. Dualism found a new language but it was a language which invariably led to the extreme of both idealism and materialism and, at the same time, to a way out of all dualism. The question of dualism was solved neither in life, nor by the Guelphs and the Ghibellines but in the theoretic sphere of abstract thought. That was something medieval thought was bound to come to—otherwise it would not have been true to its historical origin.

In the antique world thought had never been entirely conscious of its opposition to being; in modern science it engaged in a bitter civil war: such conflict could not but leave its mark. We shall put it simply—which will be by no means an exaggeration: idealism strove to annihilate material being; to consider it as something dead, as an illusion, a lie, a void, for, truly, to be some accidental manifestation of essence does *not* amount *to very much.* Idealism saw and recognized only what was universal, generic; the essence, the human mind, detached from all that was human. Materialism, equally exclusive, endeavoured openly to annihilate all that was immaterial, denied the general, considered thought to be a secretion of the brain and experience the sole source of knowledge. It recognized truth only in particularities, in things perceptible and visible. Materialism recognized the thinking man, but not reason nor mankind. In brief, these two views were diametrically opposed in everything, as is the right and the left hand, and it never

occurred to anyone that both the right and the left belonged to the same breast and were equally indispensable if the organism was to be complete. Both sides made astounding logical mistakes. Neither one of them could develop their principles at all without borrowing something from those of the adversary and, for the most part, did something different from what they intended. Idealism started off *a priori*; it rejected experience and meant to begin with *cogito, ergo sum*; actually it began with innate ideas, forgetting that these represented empiric phenomena which were taken for granted, not deduced, and thus destroyed *a priori*. Idealism wished to attribute all reality, all reason to the mind and, at the same time, admitted that matter contained within itself an independent and autonomous principle of existence which allowed extension to range proudly at the side of thought as an element alien to it. In idealism those truths are always accepted as universal and pre-existent, which have yet to be deduced.

Materialism also possessed in reserve similar pre-existent truths which it could not deduce. Hume was quite justified in saying that the materialists *believed* in the authenticity of experience. Materialism has continually posed the question: "Is our knowledge true?" but answered quite a different one: "Where do we draw our knowledge from?" It did well to proceed always from the phenomenology of knowledge but it did not remain true to its principle of exact observation. Otherwise it could not have failed to see that thought, and truth, were based on the activity of the mind and not on an external object; this activity, though stimulated by experience—quite true—is yet independent and develops in accordance with its own laws. Otherwise the general could not have developed because the particular is absolutely incapable of generalizing itself. The materialists did not understand that when empirical phenomenon reaches consciousness it also becomes a psychological phenomenon. Materialism wanted to found a purely *empirical science*, not realizing that that was *a contradictio in adjecto*, that experience and observation, accepted passively and arranged by means of external reasoning, furnished actual data but lent them no form while science is precisely

the form of the self-cognition of the real through which the real cognizes itself. All the efforts of materialism, all its subtle analyses of intellectual faculties, the origin of the language and the association of ideas conclude with the declaration that particular phenomena are true and real. It cannot be contested that phenomena of the external world are true, and the inability to recognize this on the part of idealism is conclusive proof of its one-sided view. The external world (as we have already pointed out in one of our previous letters) is "manifest proof of its reality." It exists precisely because it is true; that is just as undeniable as that the inner world (i.e., thought), that *actus purus* of mind, is also true and is also a real phenomenon. The crux of the matter lies not in this admission, but in the connection between the external and the internal, in the transition from one into the other, in the understanding of their real unity. Without this it will not help much to know that the object is real because man will not have the means of grasping it. From the point of view of consciousness, of method, materialism is far inferior to idealism. If materialism were philosophically logical, it would have exceeded its bounds, ceased being itself, and therefore it is pointless to pause on the obvious inconsistency of its views: it is already implied. Its great significance lay elsewhere in the *purely practical** domain, in its application to life; it had at its disposal the entire fund of human knowledge which it had investigated, evolved, and utilized for the noble end of bettering the material and social life of man, of dissipating prejudices and

* There was a time when idealism in Germany thought it creditable to be useless, impractical and spoke contemptuously of the utilitarianism of philanthropic and moral doctrines of the Scotch, English, and French thinkers. At that time the idealists preached against the factual sciences, claiming to be of superior cast, alien to the world of practical activity. It never occurred to them that a person who was impractical and kept aloof from his times was, for the most part, not a superior being, but a windbag, a dreamer, a romanticist, a victim of artificial civilization. The Greeks would not have understood this idea, it is so absurd. The idea of self-alienation from life could have been engendered only in the dark and closed cabinets of theoreticians and, only in Germany at that, where social life, after the Treaty of Westphalia, was not one of the most brilliant.—*A.H.*

gathering facts. The absurdities of its doctrines which have not been exploded will be; what was true and good remained and will remain. Errors of logic should not make us lose sight of this.

It is incredible that materialism and idealism should continue to misunderstand each other to this day, yet it is so. I know very well that not a single tract appears without idealism referring to this antagonism as something belonging to the past; that there is not a single empiricist of note who does not admit that experience, without a general view, without speculation, cannot produce the full effect—but this avowal is perfunctory and ineffectual.* Is that all we can expect after the fruitful and grand ideas cast abroad by the great Goethe, and then by Schelling and Hegel? Honest men of our days have understood that it was necessary to reconcile empiricism and speculation, but they went no further than theoretically admitting this. One of the distinctive traits of our times is that *we know everything and do nothing*. Science is not to blame for this. Science, as we have had occasion to observe, reflects in a purified and generalized form those elements by which it is surrounded and conveys them to the consciousness. Jean Paul Richter says that in his days, in order to reconcile antagonistic principles, you took one part of light and one part of dark, mixed them together in a jar, and that, as a rule, produced a charming penumbra. It is that vagueness *entre chien et loup* which is so dear to the irresolute and apathetic majority of our times.

But let us return to Bacon.

His influence was tremendous; it seems to me that even Hegel did not fully appreciate him. Bacon, like Columbus, discovered a new world in science which people were familiar with from time immemorial, but had lost sight of in their preoccupation with the higher interests of scholasticism. He shook the blind faith in dogmatism; he discredited the old metaphysics in the eyes of thinking men. After him there began an unceasing reaction everywhere against the transcendental theo-

* I leave out several attempts made quite recently in Germany and even in France.—*A.H.*

ries of scholastics in all fields of knowledge. After him there began the indefatigable and disinterested toil of investigation, of conscientious research. Societies were organized in London, in Paris, and in various cities of Italy for the purpose of studying nature. Naturalists redoubled their activity. The sum total of phenomena and of observed facts grew in direct ratio as were dissipated metaphysical phantoms, those words, as Bacon said, which were meaningless and obscured the clear gaze of the observer and gave him a false conception of nature. Since Bacon was unable to transmit his universality to his followers, their one-sidedness is very comprehensible. Lucid and practical minds, after long years of idleness, found something to do, found a vital objective, many-sided and absolutely new, which, moreover, compensated for the labour expended with quite unexpected discoveries and which shed light on a multitude of phenomena. This was not the tedious and dry development of *hocceitas* and *quiditas*,[41] deduced from under the scaffolding of a logic deformed, unnecessary and interspersed with quotations. No, this was something alive, warm, palpitating with life. Having felt the magic attraction of work in the field of the natural sciences and of practical work in general, could these people have spoken about metaphysics without rancour? All of them had undergone from their youth up the torture of peripatetic exercises; all of them had studied a distorted Aristotle. Could they help, after that, giving themselves up wholly, even if it were an unjust and one-sided action, to the study of nature? Incidentally, their negation did not have at first that restricted character which manifested itself subsequently when materialism itself presumed to abandon its role of insurgent in order to institute its own metaphysical system, its theory with claims to philosophy, to logic, to an objective method, that is to say, to everything the absence of which constituted its strength. This systematization of materialism began much later, with Locke. His disciples committed numerous errors but did not, however, fall into dogmatism. Bacon's early followers were different. Hobbes, one of them, was appalling in his fearless consistency. The doctrine of this thinker who, according to Bacon, understood him better than any other of his contemporaries, was sombre and austere. He excluded

everything spiritual from his science. He denied the general and saw only an uninterrupted stream of phenomena and particulars—a stream which had its origin and end in itself. He found nothing to prove the existence of the divine in his rigid set of vehement ideas. A distressed witness of terrible revolutions, he perceived only the dark side of events. People, as he saw them, were born enemies grouped in society because of egotistic interests and who, had they not been restrained by mutual advantages, would have thrown themselves on each other. Consequently, he did not hesitate to fly in the face of his country, and cynically declare that he judged despotism alone capable of assuring a well-administered state. Hobbes was a terror to his contemporaries; the mere mention of his name made them shudder. Southern materialism, as it appeared in Lucretius's native land, had a different aspect. Abbot Gassendi resurrected it in its old apparel of Epicureanism and the atomic theory but his Epicureanism was brought into alignment with the Catholic dogma and so ably that the Jesuits found his *philosophia corpuscularis* incomparably more in accord with the doctrine of mysteries of the Roman church than was Cartesianism. Gassendi's atoms are very simple: these are the same atoms which we met in Democritus, those very *infinitesimal,* invisible, *intangible* and indestructible particles which go to make up all bodies and all phenomena. Combining, acting on each other, moving and setting in motion, these atoms produce all the great diversity of physical phenomena, themselves remaining unchanged. It is conspicuous that Gassendi is very positive on the point of the indestructibility of matter. This view, as far as I know, is first and concisely expressed by Telesio.[42] It is also to be found in Bacon but Gassendi expressed it admirably. "Material being," he said, "has a very strong point in its favour: the whole universe cannot destroy an existing body." Of course, what he had in mind was being and not form or a qualitative definition. Gassendi's reference to the narrowness of the human mind is reminiscent of the manner characteristic of naturalists of later days. He himself realizes the deficiencies of his theories, which he leaves, nonetheless, intact. He redeems these defects (again, as the naturalists do) by an intelligent and serious exposition of all his information

on nature. Gassendi, like Newton after him, can scarcely be regarded as a philosopher:[43] they are great men of science, not philosophers. There is no contradiction in this if you grant that the contents of the real are elaborated outside of the philosophical method. Englishmen who call Newton a great philosopher do not know what they are talking about.

Since I have mentioned Newton, allow me to say a few words about him. His views on nature were purely mechanical. This does not necessarily mean, however, that he was a Cartesian. He had so little sympathy for Descartes that after reading eight pages of his book (as he himself admits), he closed the volume never to open it again. However, this mechanical view swayed minds other than Descartes. The passion for abstract theories was so great in the seventeenth century that the followers of Descartes and Bacon, opposed to each other in all things, joined hands on the mechanical construction of nature, on the desire to express all its laws mathematically and thus to apply their mathematical method to them. Newton continued the work begun by Galileo who, incidentally, stood on the same ground on which Newton subsequently found himself: for Galileo the body, matter, was something dead, stirred into action by inertia, whereas force was something different, coming from the outside.

Mathematics must necessarily be a part of all branches of the study of nature; quantitative definitions are extremely important and are almost always inseparable from qualitative definitions, changes in them invariably resulting in changes in the other. The same component parts, in different proportions, result in a diversity of organic tissues, in a variety of forms of the crystallization of organic and inorganic substances. So, obviously, mathematics is of tremendous importance in physiology, let alone in more abstract sciences such as physics or those exclusively quantitative sciences as astronomy and mechanics. Mathematics introduces in natural science logic *a priori*, by means of which empiricism recognizes reason. Having expressed in the simple language of mathematics the laws which rule in the world of empiricism, a series of phenomena reveal unsuspected relations and results which leave no doubt as to the veracity of the deduction. That is all so, but a *purely*

mathematical view (no matter how self-sufficient it is) cannot embrace all the subject matter of natural science. Nature retains *something more*, which is not subject to it. The category of quantity is one of the most substantial qualities of all that exists; however, it does not exhaust all that is qualitative and if we adhere in our study of nature exclusively to it, the result will be Descartes's definition of the animal as a pyro-hydraulic machine moved by levers, etc. Of course, the extremities are levers and the muscular system is a very complex machine. However, Descartes was unable to explain the influence of will, the influence of the brain on the regulation of the parts of the machine through the nerves. Mechanical, physical and chemical definitions are indispensable if we are to understand the living world. These are those preliminary stages which had to be overcome or cancelled before the complex process of life could appear. But it is precisely that unity which cancels them that constitutes the new element which cannot be subordinated to any one of the preceding elements but, indeed, subordinates them to itself. The inner activity characteristic of the whole living organism and of every one of its cells still eludes mathematics, physics, even chemistry, although the forms of its activity and its quantitative definition belong entirely to the domain of mathematics, just as the interaction of constituent elements is governed by physical and chemical laws. The recourse to mathematics where it is not essential, even where it is futile, is very symptomatic: mathematics elevates man into the sphere which, formal and abstract as it is, is nonetheless purely scientific—it is the complete external reconciliation of thought and matter. Mathematics is a unilateral development of logic, one of its aspects, or, if you like, the logical movement of mind itself in terms of its quantitative definitions. It has preserved that same independence in regard to the concrete, and that same infallibility of deduction, through pure reason; in addition it has that tempting clarity, a quality which, incidentally, is always directly proportionate to its one-sidedness. Bacon, who understood very well the importance of mathematics in the study of nature, pointed out, in his time, to the danger of mathematics overwhelming other aspects (incidentally, he says, that the scientists' preoccupation with quanti-

tative definitions is due to their thoughtlessness and superficiality and that if they confined themselves only to them, they would lose sight of the inner contents).*

Newton, on the contrary, committed himself exclusively to the mechanical view. It is hard to imagine a mind less philosophical than Newton's. He was a good mechanician, a mathematician of genius but he was no thinker. The theory of gravitation, in all the grandeur of its simplicity, with its universality and extensive applicability, is but a *mechanical representation* of phenomena, a representation, perhaps correct, but not justified by logic, i.e., inadequately conceived as a hypothesis which lays claim to the greatest probability. Nor were the properties of attraction and repulsion attributed by Newton to bodies as essential to a body as Newton thought. Consequently, these were hypothetical facts or self-evident observations, as you like, but not logical facts. Or, further, the trajectory of celestial bodies being what it is, is interpreted by mechanics as the resultant of two forces: one of them becomes comprehensible thanks to the preceding hypothesis; the other, however, remains absolutely incomprehensible (the tangential force). This force (or the impulsion which produces it) is neither contained in the conception of the body, nor in that of the environment: it appears *à la deus ex machina* and has remained such to this day. But this does not trouble the constructors of celestial mechanics. Mathematics, as a rule, grows indifferent to all logical demands but its own. Once Copernicus, while deliberating over his great idea, proposed to work out a simpler way of calculating the orbits of the planets. Then Newton declared that he left it to the physicists to solve the problem of the reality of hypothetical forces and offered the convenience of his theory for mathematical formulas as its major virtue.

* Bacon criticized astronomy very sharply (*De Aug. Scientiarum*[44]). "Certainly astronomy offers to the human intellect a victim like that which Prometheus offered in deceit to Jupiter. Prometheus, in the place of a real ox, brought to the altar the hide of an ox of great size and beauty, stuffed with straw and leaves and twigs. In like manner astronomy presents only the exterior of the heavenly bodies (I mean the number of the stars, their positions, motions, and periods), as if it were the hide of the heavens; beautiful indeed and skilfully arranged into systems; but the interior (namely, the physical reasons) is wanting."—*A.H.*

In spite of the immense success of Newton's theory, his mechanical interpretation of nature could not hold its own. The first emphatic protest against an exclusively mechanical view was raised in the chemical laboratories. Chemistry remained more true to the real Baconian method than all the other branches of natural science. Empiricism, it is true, dominated it but it remained almost entirely free from abstract theories and from the constraints imposed on the object. Chemistry remained faithful to the objectivity of matter and its properties, which it had recognized.

But an even more energetic protest came from another quarter. Leibnitz, another great mathematician, and an equally great thinker, rose in arms against the exclusively mechanico-materialistic view. Treatment of the main principles of his system would lead us too far afield and, therefore, I beg leave to conclude first my narration of Bacon's school, to bring it up to Hume, i.e., to Kant, then again to return to Descartes and to trace the history of idealism in the interval between them. In this history we shall encounter only two figures, but of what calibre! We shall see to what heights the genius of abstraction can rise, how intelligence can develop Cartesianism. Spinoza marked the limits of idealism. To advance further, it was necessary to leave idealism behind. To remain within it meant limiting oneself to the role of a commentator of Spinoza, a sponger at his sumptuous board. Leibnitz undertook to advance another step. Leibnitz is the first idealist of modern cast, familiar, kindred to us. The austerity of the Middle Ages and the stilted impassiveness of Protestantism have left their deep mark on the sombre Descartes and on Spinoza who, inaccessible in his moral purity, had retained much of Jewish exclusivism and Catholic asceticism. Leibnitz had almost completely freed himself of the influences of the Middle Ages: he knows everything, loves everything, sympathizes with everything. His spirit is receptive to all ideas; he knows everyone in Europe and corresponds with everybody. He has not that sacerdotal pompousness of the scholastics. As you read him you feel that the day is coming with its realities, which will make you forget your reveries and dreams; you feel that the time

has come to abandon the telescope for the magnifying glass, that there has been enough discussion of the one substance—the time has come to speak of the great multitude of monads.*

Sokolovo, June 1845

LETTER EIGHT

REALISM

BACON's inductive method acquired more and more followers. The discoveries which followed one another with amazing rapidity in medicine, physics, and chemistry drew the minds more and more into the sphere of natural science, observations and research. Attracted by empiricism, easy analyses of the facts and apparent lucidity of inferences, Bacon's followers wanted to make experience and induction not only a source but also the consummation of all knowledge. They regarded the raw, undigested material acquired through immediate perception, generalized by analogy, and analyzed by rational categories, as the sole possible truth for human reason, if not the most

* We are obliged to omit some very remarkable phenomena and several outstanding personalities who appeared in the seventeenth century not in the main current of science but, so to say, in one of its tributaries. Here belong English and French mystics who held out their hands to empiricism and made peace with it (like legitimists make peace with the radicals) on the common ground of the recognition of the impotence of mind; then there are a number of sceptics who, like the mystics, distrusted intelligence incomparably more than experience (so great was the reaction against the dogmatism of the scholastics). Among them is the celebrated Bayle who came out in defence of religious tolerance recognized in Russia by Peter the Great and not recognized in France by the *great* Louis XIV. Bayle was one of the most tireless militants of thought of the seventeenth century. He took part in everything, had a voice in all burning questions, ever humane and caustic, evasive and audacious. He acted anonymously but was known everywhere. Persecuted by the Jesuits, he took refuge in Holland where he was likewise persecuted by the Protestants from whom there was no escape. The Catholic king of France enriched him by condemning his Protestant pamphlets while the Protestant king of England all but deprived him of his bread.... All this taken together is a vivid picture of the seventeenth century, seething with activity and disorders.—*A.H.*

meant nearly anything: conception, the universal, thought, image, form and even impression) are formed from the interrelation of his senses and intellect on the one hand and the external world on the other. For this, let us take a child who does not yet speak, or a man *in his natural state* and begin our observations. Condillac, yet more consistent, begins with a statue, endows it with the sense of smell, then of hearing and step by step arrives at the laws of thought within the *statue*. They called it observation and analysis and Bacon's reproachful ghost did not shake a rebuking finger at them from the grave. The whole of the eighteenth century had constant recourse to the child and the wild man. Intending to describe the man of the future, Jean Jacques[45] found nothing better than to represent him as the remotest, prehistoric man. Neither a child nor the hypothetical idiot, nor the cannibal, let alone the doll with a sense of smell, are normal human beings. The keener the observer, the more false will everything be that he will find in them. Suppose we could restore the forgotten and unconscious state of the primeval workings of the mind; what then? We should learn the historical phenomenology of the consciousness and the physiological interrelation of the senses and the energy of thought, and nothing more. Zoology and botany base their findings on specimens which are normal and fully developed. Why then should anthropology turn to the savage? Surely not because he is nearer to the animal, i.e., further removed from man. Man has not departed from his natural state, as the eighteenth century thinkers believed. He *is* approaching it, and it is the primitive state which is the most unnatural to him. That is why he emerges from that state whenever the possibility arises. The remoter the past and the closer he is to the primitive state, the more unnatural he is. This scarcely occurred to the philosophers of those days. But what are the conclusions drawn from observing the *hypothetic subman*? Locke holds that the simple ideas (consciousness of impressions, memories of them) are conveyed directly to the vacuum of the mind. While receiving perceptions, the mind is passive and contributes nothing from itself, but merely retains them. Therefore, the simple ideas have the greatest authenticity. But the trouble is that while receiving the

simple ideas, people invent signs for them. Catching man at this invention, Locke quite justly observes that man gives a name not to the real thing, but to the universal, collective conception, genus or any class to which the thing belongs, and consequently to something non-existent. At this point Locke must needs have finished with his analysis since, if the word does not express the truth, then the mind has no means of comprehending it, for the word stands for what the mind conceives. True enough, one may ask: how does Locke know that of the two objects—the particular thing and the universal word—reality and, consequently, the truth belong to the former and not to the latter? He has no criterion as yet: he is just seeking for it. It is very simple: he is a materialist and therefore he believes in the object and the authenticity of the senses. Were he an idealist, he would, with no more justification, assume the word and the universal to be the truth. As a matter of fact, he is not really seeking for a criterion. He knows perfectly well what he is after. He merely feigns to be a conscientious investigator. Furthermore, the universal named by the word shows the relation of the real object to our intellect. Thus, not the external impressions alone are a source of knowledge, but also the very activity of the mind. Not only does Locke recognize this, but confers on the mind the exclusive right of disclosing the relations between objects. He admits that that which is revealed by the mind (complex ideas) is *essential,* yet not *as* authentic as are the simple ideas. This is the embryo of the whole of rational knowledge. Mind is conceived as the dark empty void impinged by the images of external objects which excite some guiding formal activities within it; the more passive it is, the nearer it is to the truth, the more active, the more dubious. Here the famous *nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu* is placed proudly alongside or opposite to *cogito, ergo sum*!

As for Locke's phenomenology, his *Essay on Human Understanding* is something in the nature of a logical last confession of the rational movement. In it he sets down the phenomenon of his consciousness and the supposition that in every man ideas arise and develop in the same way. Locke reveals, among other things, that with the correct use of mental activity, the

complex conceptions necessarily lead to the ideas of force, of substratum, and, finally, of essence (substance) of cognized manifestations (attributes). These ideas exist *not in our minds alone*, but *in reality* too, though we cognize only their visible manifestations through the senses. Bear in mind that from his principles it is obvious that Locke was by no means justified in making inferences in favour of the objectivity of the conception of force, essence, etc. He did his best to prove that consciousness is a *tabula rasa* filled with the images of impressions and having the property of combining those images so that the *similarity of the diverse* should constitute a conception of genus. But the idea of essence and substratum does not indeed follow either from the combination or from the transposition of empirical material. So a new property of intellect appears, and one, moreover, that has objective meaning, as admitted by Locke himself. What horror would have filled Locke's followers if they had recognized in this *property* those very inborn ideas of idealism against which they had so tirelessly battled all their lives. For some idealists did not identify inborn ideas with ready-made maxims, visions, irrefutable and meaningless facts alien to consciousness and forced upon it, but rather conceived them as the indispensable forms inherent to the workings of the mind, those forms being the apodictic proof of their own actuality, i. e., what Locke says about the conception of essence. While agreeing with Locke, the materialists naively took exception to the expression "innate ideas" and argued that they could not be innate because they might not develop. What of that? The organic process should inevitably develop the animal's blood system, nerves and so on, according to its generical conception (perhaps pre-existent and consequently realized), but it also may *not* develop. It needs the external conditions for that. Were they absent, the organism would not be. Instead, some other process, which has nothing to do with the organic normalcy, would take place. Now if the conditions emerge which are necessary for the origination of the organism, then blood and nerve systems will inevitably develop according to the general type of the order, class, and genus to which the organism belongs, in both cases the generic conception remaining true and, if you like, innate,

inherent, pre-existent. The fact is that it is impossible, sharing Locke's point of view, to escape from these formal contradictions and inconsistencies. Rationalism (i.e., the stage of intellect when the empirical contents are analyzed in their logical elements) contains in itself no means of solving the contradiction which is set by itself and is conditionally true only in relation to itself. At this analyzing stage, reason is like a chemical reagent: it breaks up a given chemical unit, but, while doing so, disengages only one part and unites with the other. That is the gist of the argument about the innate ideas, essence, etc. There are two aspects to all similar problems: in their extremes they are one-sided and contradictory; midway they are blended. Taken apart, they are simply false and result in the inextricable series of antinomies in which both sides are in the wrong, as long as they exist in abstract remoteness from each other; they can be true only if their unity is conceived. But the consciousness of this unity goes beyond the bounds of that stage of thought which people of reflective thinking do not want to leave behind; I say do not want to, because one has to work hard and acquire much inert stubbornness to keep from following the dialectical impulse which of itself brings one outside ratiocination. The mind free from a system accepted, indeed, imposed on itself, halting at a one-sided definition of an object, involuntarily turns to the side which compensates it. This is the first beat of the dialectical heart. On the face of it, the heart too merely oscillates, but in reality this beat attests to the live stream coursing continuously; and with each dialectical transition, with every pulsation, thought becomes ever more pure and virile. Let us take, for example, Locke's one-sided view of the origin of knowledge and essence. It is obvious that experience stimulates consciousness, but it is equally obvious that the consciousness thus stimulated is by no means produced by experience, which is only a requisite impulse. Such an impulse cannot be responsible for the consequences, because the latter are beyond its power, because consciousness is not a *tabula rasa*, but an *actus purus*, the activity not external to the object, but on the contrary, its innermost core, for thought and object, in general, do not constitute two different things, but two aspects of something whole and single. If you adhere firmly

either to the one side or to the other, you will never extricate yourself from the resulting contradiction. There is no consciousness without experience, as there is no experience without consciousness, for who will bear witness to it? Consciousness is supposed to have the *property* of opposing experience in some ways, while it is evident that experience is a pretext, *prius* without which this property would not be manifest. Philosophers dared not accept thought as self-sufficient activity for whose development experience and consciousness, occasion and property are equally necessary. They wanted either the one or the other and lapsed into fruitless repetition. In these tautologies, ever contradictory, there is something so repugnant to man, something which so reviles him and is so destitute of meaning that man, if he has failed to overcome the rationalistic standpoint, renounces his best possession, belief in reason, to save himself from them. Hume had that intrepidity of negation, that heroic self-effacement, while Locke halted midway. It is for this reason that Hume stands head and shoulders above Locke. It is easier for the logical mind to deny and lose everything near and dear than to halt midway without deducing the ultimate conclusion from the first principles.

The question of essence and attribute, or the visible existence of essence, leads us to a similar antinomy. Analyzing being, reason arrives soon, bypassing through a series of qualitative and quantitative definitions, through a series of abstractions, at the conception of essence which posits being, calls it into existence. By renouncing its modifying exterior, being strives to reflect in itself and reveal its essence as opposed to its external manifestations, as it were. But as soon as the mind attempts to comprehend the basis, the cause, the inner working of being apart from being, it discovers that essence without manifestation is as great a nonsense as being without essence; the essence of what is it then? Return manifestation to it—and you will be back in the sphere of the attributes of being. It is that complement comparable to a sound which should complete the chord. But what is the meaning of this dialectical necessity which pointed to essence whenever man wanted to pause on being, and pointed to being whenever he wanted to pause on essence? It is apparently a vicious circle, whereas in point of

fact it is an indissoluble bond. This contradiction clearly shows that one cannot pause on the poor categories of rational analysis, that neither being nor essence taken apart are true. Above I drew a comparison between reason and a reagent, but a more apt comparison may be drawn: reason may be compared to a galvanic battery which in a sense decomposes everything into two parts, but which disengages one component only by having drawn the other to the opposite pole. Antinomy does not bear evidence to its falsity. On the contrary, it hinders the unjustified workings of the mind, forbidding it to accept an abstraction for the whole. It summons the opposite to the pole as it might a witness in a lawsuit and proves that it is equally veracious. The dialectical train of thought seems at first humiliating to a thinking person, even fills him with sorrow and despair—by its marshalled dreariness and unexpected reversions to the beginning. It is as offensive as the sight of his own roof is to the traveller who has lost his way and, after hours of wandering, finds that he has returned to where he started. But his indignation should be followed by the desire to realize the situation, to analyze what has happened, and this analysis is sooner or later bound to lead to the higher spheres of thought.

Locke acted illogically when he admitted the objectivity of essence and equally illogically when he inferred that it is impossible to know essence for the sole reason that it cannot be separated from its manifestations; whereas it is precisely through the latter that essence can be comprehended. Attributes are the tongue with which to express the inner world (recollect J. Boehme). Locke acted illogically when he assumed reasoning to be the source of knowledge; whereas his entire conception was based on the fact that there is nothing in consciousness besides that which is received from the senses. He trips himself up at every step. To put it bluntly, Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* will not bear criticism. It owed its tremendous success to its timeliness. The metaphysics of materialism could not develop, since Bacon's school had no bent for metaphysics. The great things achieved by it were achieved outside of its system. Its system was good as a reaction to scholasticism and idealism; and as long as it regarded itself

as a reaction it was useful; but as it passed from protests to systematized order, to theory, it became untenable. Logically the whole of Locke's conception is a mistake as glaring as are all constructions of practical spheres which proceed from idealism. In the sphere of thought Locke indeed represents common sense beginning to lay claim to dogmatism, rational prudence, equally removed from lofty intellect and vulgar stupidity. His method in philosophy is comparable to *esprit de conduite* in morality. With this method it is difficult to stumble, but equally difficult to depart from the beaten track. Locke's exposition is wise, steady, bright and full of practical observations. His conclusions are self-evident because his subject matter is so. He invariably keeps to the golden mean and abstains from extremes. But it is not enough to dread the direct consequences of one's principles in one direction or another in order to rise to the level of a reasonable reconciliation of both.

Proceeding from the same principles, Condillac was more consistent. He rejected the thought that reasoning might be a source of knowledge, for it not only presupposes perception, but actually is nothing but perception. He accepted the very association of ideas not for the free working of the mind, but for the inevitable effect of perceptions. In this way, all spiritual processes were reduced to perceptions. On the other hand, the same Condillac argued that "the bodily organs of the senses constitute an accidental origin of knowledge, of sensuous perception. This, however, served him to no purpose. Condillac's logic was not without merit so far as the external mechanics of thought is concerned. It is distinct, clear-cut, and teaches strictness and circumspection of a kind. But it is not a method with which great things can be built. It is a method of artificial classifications, identifications, etc.

The metaphysical materialists did not at all write what they wished to write about; they did not even touch upon the inner side of their problem, but merely spoke of its external workings; the latter were described accurately enough, it cannot be denied, but they thought that was all there was to it, and were mistaken. The theory of sensuous thinking was a kind of mechanical psychology, just as the Newtonian conception was mechan-

ical cosmology. Besides, it should be always borne in mind that Locke's school regarded thought as the particular, separate, and personal ability of one typical man. The mind as generic thinking which exists and evolves in history and science failed to gain their attention. For that reason they all lacked historical understanding of the past stages of thought. Nothing could be stranger than their analysis of the ancient philosophers. Try as they would, they could not comprehend the contemporary and nearly contemporary thinkers. Condillac, for example, wrote a detailed analysis of Malebranche, Leibnitz and Spinoza. It is obvious that he read them extensively, but it is likewise obvious that he never identified himself with them, that he was biased and sought only to oppose his own views to what they said. And that is no way to analyze philosophers.* The materialists, indeed, could not understand the objectivity of the mind and therefore they, naturally, falsely defined not only the historical development of thought, but also the general relations between mind and object and, at the same time, the relation between man and nature. For them, being and thought are either dissociated or react upon each other in an external way. *Nature minus thought is a part and not the whole*; thought is as natural as extension; as a stage of development,

* Incidentally, many probably thought it strange that a greater part of the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reading Plato and Aristotle, did not understand at all the unity of the internal and the external (Plato's Idea, Aristotle's Entelechy) clearly defined by the one and the other. Could narrow-mindedness alone account for this? Not likely. The modern man is so divorced from nature that he cannot be easily reconciled with it; he also ascribes greater meaning to this separation than did the Greek. The Greeks had no difficulty in understanding the indivisibility of essence and being, because they had not realized the full width of the gulf separating them. The Middle Ages on the other hand brought this separation to the ultimate extreme, and far from being satisfied with the way the Greeks had bridged the gulf, even lost the ability to grasp it. The Greek abandoned himself to sympathy with the truth; the new man desires analysis and criticism; he has killed sympathy within himself by reflection and scepticism. The Greek never separated either man or thought from nature. Their coexistence was for him a fact, if not perfectly intelligible then self-evident. The new science has destroyed this harmony in both of its trends (realism and idealism).—*A.H.*

as a mechanism, chemism, or an organic process—only at a higher level. This simple idea could not be grasped by the materialists: they thought that nature without man is complete, self-confined, sufficient unto itself, and that man is merely an outsider. Of course, natural productions taken separately can do without man; but if you consider them together, you will find that they are incomplete in all ways and that they are fortunate precisely in their inability to realize their incompleteness. The organisms of animals, for example, are abstract for all their wholeness, circumscription and concreteness. In addition to their own meaning, they hint at some onward development. They are full of indications of something more complete and developed, indications which point to man. To prove this there is no need of philosophy; comparative anatomy will do. In nature, regarded without man, there can be no concentration and self-scrutiny, no consciousness and self-generalization in a logical form. And the reason is that we have declared man himself to be the highest stage of development. Nobody is surprised that man cannot see without eyes, since the eye constitutes the sole instrument of sight. Man's brain is likewise an instrument of nature's consciousness. In a state of eternal immaturity, nature is subjected to a law which is essential, fateful, and vague to itself—precisely because it lacks *this* developed ego, that is, man. In man the law grows distinct and becomes conscious reason. The moral world is free from external necessity to the extent that it is mature, i.e., conscious. But as consciousness in reality is not separated from being, is not something else, but, on the contrary, is its consummation, the object of its importunity, the elucidation of its indistinctness, its truth and justification—the physical world freed and justified in the moral world is thereby justified in its own eyes. Nature, taken without consciousness, is only a torso, a stunted growth, a child which has not attained to possession of all its organs because not all of them are fully developed. Human conciousness without nature, without a body is thought with no brain to conceive it and with no object to stimulate it. The natural aspect of thought and personality and their fraternal interdependence is a stumbling-block for both idealism and materialism, the only difference being that it trips them up from

different angles.* Schelling found the struggle of different views of mind and nature at its highest and most extreme stage, when, on the one hand, the *non-ego* had fallen under Fichte's blows and the power of reason was proclaimed in infinite spaces, cold and void, and when the French, on the other hand, denied everything non-sensuous and like cranium diviners[47] sought to interpret thought in terms of bumps and hollows and not the other way round. He was the first to enunciate, though incompletely, the high unity we have mentioned. But to return to Locke and his followers.

Locke was timid and more conscientious than dialectical. Without logical necessity from his point of view, he renounced the basic principle from which he himself had proceeded. By assuming essence to be reality, he completely recognized the

* To conclude what has been said about Locke and his followers, let me cite the following excerpt from the *Handbook of General Anatomy* by Henle, the apothecary ever at his microscope and consequently free from all suspicions of idealism. Having analyzed in detail the nervous activity and energy of the organ of thought, he declares: "Analyzing the complex workings of our spirit, it is possible to reduce them to simple notions or categories; but the desire to deduce these categories from something external would be as insane as to explain colours by sounds. Attempts such as these presuppose what they have yet to explain. That was the way of Locke's school which tried to deduce notions from external experience. The assumption *nihil in intellectu, quod non ante fuerit in sensu* is false to such a degree that physiologically it can be rather asserted that nothing can pass from the senses into the mind. The external cannot even produce sensations unless they precede as a possibility. How then could the external penetrate into the organ of thought? The external only evolves what is dormant in the latter. Interacting with the external world, the energy of the senses becomes specific by the corresponding excitations which replace, as they develop, the original sensations. The senses supply the corresponding excitation to the organ of thought. Certain sensuous notions correspond to the impingement on the senses. The degree of the development of the former is proportionate to the sensation, to the experience of the senses (*von den Erlebnissen der Sinne*). Developed thought is to the original workings of the mind as the imagination of a trained eye is to scintillation and coloured spots. To return to the original notions is impossible. The history of development and the mode of perception have instilled in us the forms whereby we think," etc. See *Allgemeine Anatomie* von Henle, pp. 751-2. It constitutes the 6th volume of an excellent edition by which contemporary German medical students of nature honoured the memory of their illustrious teacher, S. Th. Sömmerring. *Vom Bau des menschlichen Körpers.*—*A.H.*[46]

autonomy of mind, which had already been partly recognized by assuming the complex ideas to be the source of reason. As soon as the idea of essence had come into its own, the possibility inevitably arose of reducing to unity the multiple diversity of the real. In essence, immediate being would then have found its medium and phenomenon its cause, causality being inseparable from the conception of essence. Just as Spinoza (we shall see that in the following letters), to reconcile the Cartesian dualism with the demands of his profound logical nature, had only one recourse, i.e., to destroy the reality of the phenomenal for the sake of essence, which constituted a kind of way out from dualism, so, too, materialism, in the last analysis, should have effected not a timid and hesitating semi-recognition of essence, but the full repudiation of it. Essence is the thread by which the mind retains everything; sever it, and everything will disperse, disintegrate; there will be only disjointed phenomena, only individuals which will flash up momentarily and disappear at once: the universal order will perish. Atoms, phenomena, heaps of facts, accidents will remain, but the harmonious integral cosmos will be no more. And that is splendid: when one-sided thinking comes to this extreme, it will be nearest to emerging from its limitations. Undoubtedly, the first materialist genius belonging to the trend of Bacon and Locke was bound to arrive at this or else renounce materialism. That genius was David Hume.

Hume belongs to the small number of thinkers who went the whole way, who, having laid down their first principles, had the courage to follow up the consequences without fear, manfully to accept both good and evil, to remain true only to their starting-point and the logic of their course. Such a man can finally achieve tranquillity, will derive conciliation from the accuracy with which his inferences follow from his initial principles. Of mediocre people who arrived at this tranquil harbour there were many, but Hume was endowed with an extraordinary intellect and an unusual gift for dialectics—and that was most important. He did not choose his first principles. He found them ready in his contemporary world, in his own country. He was in sympathy with them as a practical man, as an Englishman. His very way of life impelled him to them. He was a diplomat,

an historian and above all a merchant in spite of his aristocratic origin. The first principles of Bacon's method were, of course, nearer to his heart than Spinoza and Leibnitz. But from these first principles the weighty thinker deduced inexorable consequences. He set forth what his predecessors had not dared to touch. Where they had minced words and made concessions, Hume gently and nobly, yet with infinite firmness, went straight ahead. He was tranquil because he was right. His conscience was clear because he had thoroughly done that which he had set out to do. Have you seen Hume's portrait? His features are striking for their unperturbed serenity and gentleness. He is smart and gay in his French frock. His face is plump, his eyes sparkle with intelligence. He is slightly smiling; his features animated and noble. It does your heart good to look at him and you recall that there are many good things in life. Turn to the portraits of the other philosophers of his time, and you shall find something quite different. The dry, self-righteous face of Locke combines the expression of an Anglican preacher and the severity of a materialist law-giver. Voltaire's face is expressive of malicious irony alone. In him the marks of a great mind are somehow blended with the features of an orangutan. Kant with his disproportionately small head and enormous forehead is oppressive. There is something sickly about his face which is reminiscent of Robespierre. It bespeaks arduous and continuous toil consuming the body. His brain seems to have spunged up the face to achieve enormous labour of thought. Leibnitz with a kingly countenance like that of Goethe seems to say in every feature: *procul estote!* Now Hume, on the contrary, draws you to him. He is not only a man of thought, but a man of life. And such he was. He was able to combine high moral standards and lofty intellect with the qualities attracting all people who came near. He was the heart and soul of a small circle of friends, among them the great Adam Smith and, at one time, Jean Jacques Rousseau who had fled from their jolly companionship driven by his irritability and spleen. Hume was true to himself to the very end. At his death, he held a feast and parted gaily with life, clasping the hands of his friends in a dying grip and smiling at their parting toast. He was a whole-hearted man.

Neither Locke nor Condillac could bring their realism round to scientific requirements. Hume at first glance realized that from this standpoint all metaphysical demands and dogmatism would be an absurdity and said so plainly. He saw above all that he had refuted the possibiltiy to determine the authenticity of knowledge by intellectual criticism. He regarded authenticity to be an instinct beyond verification by logic. He considered it a prejudice. Our consciousness receives not the objects themselves, but their images. We assume those images to be the effect of the external objects, but proofs there are none: we accept this relation between the impressions and the objects prior to the development of judgement. It is pre-existent, supplied by instinct. The source of knowledge is experience, impressions which convey to us images and along with them the *moral conviction, the belief* that they correspond to the real objects which evoked these images in our consciousness. It is impossible to deduce the justification of instinct by intellectual efforts. There are no means for this in the workings of the mind. From this it is not to be inferred that our instinct is in the wrong, but that our mind is limited. Sensuous impressions and images, accumulating in the memory and repeated and blended with it in various ways, constitute what we call ideas. All ideas, everything thinkable, must first be felt. Omitting this or that aspect of the data furnished by impressions and collating them, we abstract what is general to them, take them in their relations and thereby attain general conceptions. In generalizing, the impressions, of course, lose part of their vividness, power and individual significance. Believing in his instinct and retaining a series of impressions in his memory, man ascribes various generalizations and consequences of his analogies to the objects, having however no right at all to do this. Experience furnishes only particular phenomena, sensations and nothing universal. Several times observing a similar consequence from a similar precedent man grows accustomed to connect these perceptions and to subordinate the one to the other, terming the former the cause or force and the latter the effect. Neither experience nor speculation justify this arbitrary assumption. Experience offers only a sequence of two different phenomena following each other in time without revealing any

other relation between them. The syllogism of causality is obviously incomplete as it lacks an entire premise. *B* constantly follows *A*. The deduction that *A* is the cause of *B* is unsound; for I find no other relations between the two dissimilars *A* and *B* apart from the story that first there appeared *A* and then *B* and that this was repeated several times. By assuming *A* to be the cause and *B* to be the effect we lose the last chance to compare them; for only their common denomination, in some way identical, can be compared; whereas cause and effect are conceptions so heterogeneous that comparison is impossible. The fact is that causality is by no means based on deduction or direct experience, but on habit. Man grows accustomed by necessity to expect similar effects from similar causes. If that necessity were mental the intellect for the first time too should have expected the same effect. But it did not do so until the second time, because it had begun to grow accustomed. What has been said about causality may be easily applied to the conceptions of necessity and essence. Experience never furnishes necessary relations in anything, but presents only the aggregate and simultaneous coexistence of dissimilars. The word "essence" is a collective name for a multitude of simple ideas fused together. We have no idea of essence whatever besides that received from the conglomeration of various phenomena and properties grasped by our mind. Through unification by similarity, aggregation, simultaneousness and causality ideas apparently grow firmer and more tenable. A closer examination, however, will reduce all these generalizations to the repetition of one and the same thing in different ways. (The effect—the disclosed cause; the hidden cause—an undisclosed effect.) For instance, the *ego* of a human being, i. e., the conception of self, appears as a sort of essence of all phenomena which constitute the life of a man. Nothing real underlies the conception of our *ego*. It is an acknowledgement of self continued uninterruptedly; the impression producing it therefore should also be continuous, but there is no such impression: our self is an aggregation of many impressions following one another. We attribute to this aggregation a fictitious nexus which we call the ego. This idea arises on the one hand from the conception of the continuity of the object and, on the other,

from the conception of the sequence of various objects which succeed each other in correlation; the more we notice the nature of the gradual sequence, the less are we able to distinguish the objects from each other and so in order to expose the contradiction based on simultaneous retention of continuity and sequence, man invents a substance or a self of his *I as an unknown something which preserves identity with itself while changing.*

Consommatum est! The work of materialism, of its logical side, was done. To proceed further theoretically was impossible. The universe disintegrated into a myriad of particular phenomena, our *I* into a myriad of personal sensations. If a connection is disclosed between phenomena and sensations this connection is, firstly, accidental and, secondly, deprives what it connects of vitality and completeness and, finally, in toto repeats the same in different words. The connection between the two has neither logical nor empirical authenticity, its criterion being instinct and habit. Mind refutes instinct, but evidence is on its side. Instinct in practice refutes the mind though for its part, it has no proofs. There has been a desire to reach the truth through sensuous authenticity alone. Hume led to the *truth of sensuous authenticity*, dwelling on reflection. And what happened? The actuality of mind, thought, essence, causality, the consciousness of one's *I* disappeared. Hume demonstrated that by this path only these conclusions can be reached. But could one not, at least, seize upon instinct, upon belief in impression as upon a lifeline of last hope? Under no circumstances. The belief in the actuality of impressions is the work of the imagination and differs from any other of its fabrications only by the spontaneous sensation of authenticity based on the greater vividness of impressions derived more from the real than the fancied objects. This belief, Hume adds, belongs no less to animals than to man. It can by no means be justified by our mind! What Descartes had done in the sphere of pure thought by means of his method, Hume had done in practice in the sphere of speculative science. He had cleared the gates to science from everything hitherto given, from all that went before. He compelled materialism to confess the impossibility of ac-

tual thought from its one-sided standpoint. The void to which Hume had led must have had a staggering effect upon human consciousness, but it was impossible to escape from it either by the method of the idealism of that time or by Locke's timid materialism. A different solution was needed. The voice of Hume brought forth Kant.

But before we treat of him and his idealist predecessors, let us see what Bacon's school was doing across the Channel.

Realism had obviously crossed to France from England. Even the ironic tone, the light literary vestments of thought, the theory of egotistic usefulness and the bad habit of blasphemy had all come from England. But what did the French contribute? Why are the words realism and materialism inevitably associated with the names of the eighteenth century French writers? If you take the logical basis, theoretical thinking as a whole, you will find that the French added practically nothing and could indeed add nothing. From the standpoint of realism and empiricism there was one method which was formulated by Bacon. In materialism one could go no further than Hobbes—perhaps only to plunge into scepticism and even that had been exhausted by Hume. The French, however, achieved very much and it is with good reason that they have gone down in history as representatives of eighteenth century science. We have had occasion to observe more than once that abstract logical schematics is least of all suited to grasp the *philosophy* of empiricism, not scientific in form, yet rich in content. Here it is obvious: if you examine not those few poor theoretical ideas which served as a starting-point for both English and French, but the development which these ideas received at the hands of the French and the English—you will be satisfied that France has achieved more by far than England. The British can be credited only with having taken the initiative.

In the sphere of science the Encyclopaedists transformed Locke in the same way as the Breton Club, at the time of the revolution, transformed the English theory of constitutional monarchy: they reached conclusions which either had not occurred to the English or from which they had turned away.

This accords perfectly with the national characters of the two great nations. The English make every general problem local, national; while every particular problem becomes universally human with the French. Whatever change the English desire, they are intent on preserving the old, while the French openly and frankly demand the new. A part of the English heart lingers in the past. He is a man of history by preference. From childhood he is accustomed to revere his country's past, to respect its laws, customs and beliefs, which is but natural: England's past *is worthy of respect.* It has developed so grandly and harmoniously. It has so proudly guarded human dignity even in the times of blackest tyranny that the Briton cannot detach himself from his sacred memories. This veneration of the past puts restraint upon him. The Englishman thinks it indelicate to trespass certain limits, to touch upon certain questions. He is an observer of the proprieties to the point of pedantry and submits to their conventional laws. Bacon, Locke, the English moralists, the political economists, the parliament which sent Charles I to the scaffold and Stafford who wanted to overthrow parliament, all of them strove above all to show themselves as conservative. They all advanced with their backs foremost, unwilling to admit that they were treading new and virgin soil. There has always been something confined about the thinking of insulars. It is clear cut, positive and firm enough, but the coast is always in sight, the boundaries visible. The Englishman always severs his thread of thought at the point where it deviates from the existing order; and the broken thread grows lax all the way.*

* Shakespeare and Hobbes are exceptions. Shakespeare's poetic insight into the depths of life and its comprehension are veritably infinite. Hobbes was extraordinarily bold and consistent but he may be described in the works of Mirabeau addressed to Barnave: "Your eyes are cold, your brow is not anointed." Byron, this Hume of poetry, belongs to quite a different England. Precisely since the year in which Byron was born (1788), this England watched the events of the revolution with intense, feverish attention, and like Garrick smiled with the one half of his face and cried with the other. It is this England which exclaimed "I have won," as she sent the *Bellerophon*, and blushed at this victory.

The French have no respect for the past, which so restrains the English. Louis XIV respected the past as little as Mirabeau: he openly threw the gauntlet to tradition. The French learned their history only in our century: in the past they had been making history, but did not know what they were continuing. They knew the history of Rome and Greece only in terms of French morals and manners, rouged and corseted. At the time in question, the French were intent on *deducing everything from reason*: both civil life and morals. They wanted to rely on theoretical consciousness alone and neglected the legacy of the past because it was at odds with their *a priori*, because by its spontaneous ready-made way of life it hindered their abstract work of speculative and conscious conception. And so the French, far from knowing their past, were its enemies. With this lack of all restraint, with their fiery, energetic temperament, their quick wits, their unrelaxing mental activity, their gift for brilliant and captivating writing, it is only natural that they should have left the English far behind.

The movement of thought to which Descartes and his followers had given such a strong impetus was on the wane. Descartes's exponents were alien to the French spirit. The French more readily understood and took to Rabelais and Montaigne than to Malebranche. Voltaire himself reproached Leibnitz for being too deep. With such a cast of mind as theirs nothing could have been more natural and timely than the spread of English philosophy in France in the early eighteenth century. The development and simplification of Bacon and Locke, of the *most* popular moral philosophy of England was wrought in France by skilful hands. Never before had such a vast body of various data been put into more eligible shape. Never had philosophical conception such an extensive sphere of application, such powerful and practical influence. The works of the British were completely eclipsed by the expositions of the French. France reaped what England had sown. England had had Bacon and Newton. France told their ideas to the world. England had offered Locke's timid materialism. Developed in France, it assumed the audacity of Holbach and his colleagues. England for centuries had led an intense juridical life....

And it was a Frenchman[48] who wrote *De l'esprit des lois*.[49] For ages, England had been proudly confident that there could be no more finished form of state than her own. But in France two years *de la Constituante* were sufficient to reveal the ineptness of such a system.

When Helvetius published his famous book *De l'esprit*, one lady remarked: "*C'est un homme qui a dit le secret de tout le monde.*" Now this lady who so aptly described not only Helvetius, but all the French thinkers of the eighteenth century, did not perhaps appreciate that to voice what others had kept to themselves is by far more difficult than to utter what had not occurred to anyone. The Encyclopaedists had indeed let out the general secret and for this were accused of immorality; whereas they were not more immoral than Paris society of that day. They were only bolder. When people come to have *secrets* their moral principles are disintegrating. They are afraid to notice this disintegration and convulsively clutch at the semblance while losing the essence, conceal their sores behind threadbare tatters, as if they would heal better if unseen. In such an age people most jealously and bitterly oppose the exposure of the secrets of moral conventions and one has to have great courage to speak out loudly, to say the things secretly known to everyone. It was for just such audacity that Socrates was executed. A public airing is the worst enemy of immorality. Vice flourishes in darkness, licentiousness dreads the light of day; it craves darkness not only for secrecy, but also to whet its unsavoury appetite ever yearning for the forbidden fruit. Brought to light, it stands confused. Where the doors are open for all to enter it is embarrassed and either slinks away or is cleansed. The same public airing will justify much that has been considered immoral according to prevailing confused notions or distorted traditions and, to put it boldly, will broaden the scope of the passions themselves when they do not clash with the destiny of moral being. The eighteenth century philosophers exposed the duplicity and hypocrisy of their contemporary world, denounced the deceptions of life, pointed to the discrepancy between conventional morals and private conduct. Society talked about virtue and morals, abhorred every-

thing sensuous, yet abandoned itself to vilest debauchery. The philosophers, for their part, proclaimed from the housetops that feelings too had their rights, but that sensuality alone could not satisfy a cultivated man, that the higher interests of life also demanded their own. In society egotism verged on the outrageous, yet concealed itself behind self-sacrifice and scorn for riches. The philosophers on the other hand proved that egotism is one of the essential elements of all things living and conscious; justifying it, they disclosed that human egotism is not only love for oneself, but also for one's kin, one's neighbour and humanity at large.*

The exposure of the universal secret and denial of hitherto prevalent morals made rapid progress. Under Louis XIV Fénelon's *Télémaque* was reputed a terrible book. The regent published it at his own expense. Early in his life, Voltaire amazed everyone with his audacity, but twenty years later Grimm wrote: "Our patriarch has fallen behind the times and clings tenaciously to his childhood beliefs." Voltaire and Rousseau were nearly men of an age, but what a gulf separated them. Voltaire was still struggling for civilization, when Rousseau was stigmatizing that artificial civilization of his. Voltaire, an aristocrat of the old century, opened the doors from the scented rococo hall to the new century. A courtier in silk stockings, he was present at the grand reception and, when Louis XV walked by, was named in full by the master of ceremonies: François-Marie Arouet. On the other side of the doors stood the plebeian Rousseau who had nothing of *du bon vieux temps* about him. Voltaire's caustic jibes were reminiscent of the Duke de Saint-Simon and the Duke de Richelieu, while Rousseau's witticisms anticipated those of the Committee of Public Safety. When Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* were published in 1720, Paris was so *shocked* by the book that the regent who had laughed heartily over the letters of Rica et Usbeck was obliged to yield to public opin-

* One should see the way, so vivid and thrilling, this transition from egotism to love is described by Diderot, this most profound of the Encyclopaedists, in his *Essai sur le mérite et la vertu*, if I remember right.—*A.H.*[50]

ion and harass the author a little for the sake of propriety; but when *Système de la nature* by Holbach et Cie was printed in London fifty years later, it failed to shock anybody. Public opinion, on the contrary, scoffed at the persecution of such books. That was the limit, however. This book represented the final conclusion of French materialism, Laplace's "*J'ai dit tout*"! After the appearance of that book, specific applications of it could be made; *Système de la nature* could be commented by "*le Culte de la Raison*"; but it was impossible to go any further in audacity of denial. Rationalizing from a confined point of view with a fearless and consistent mind, one had to arrive at Hume, Holbach, Grimm, or Diderot, i. e., at scepticism, which leaves you in the dark on the brink of a precipice; or at materialism, which accepts nothing but substance and bodies and precisely for that reason understands neither the one nor the other in their real meaning.[51] Arriving at this boundary, the human mind began to search for other ways. It was not the English or the French who cleared fresh paths, however, but the Germans who had been prepared for achievements in science by their two centuries of inaction, who had concentrated all on thinking and had withdrawn from life because life had been unendurable for them in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,* who had treasured the works of Spinoza and Leibnitz and had been trained by Wolfianism[52] to endure terrific mental strain.

The Encyclopaedists were one-sided to the point of absurdity, but not as shallow and superficial as the Germans supposed them to be because of the popular language. There is a fairy-tale about a giant in seven league boots who was compelled to weigh them down with cannon balls to retard his speed. I imagine he grew to feel handicapped when walking without them. The Germans have grown accustomed to read their ponderous philosophical treatises by the sweat of their brow. When they fail to get a splitting headache from a book they think (or rather, they thought some twenty years ago) that it is mediocre.

* I recommend reading Schlosser's *History of the Eighteenth Century.—A.H.*

If you at all remember the development of science, as set forth in these letters, you will grasp the historical necessity of Descartes and Bacon. You have seen that while passing from life into theoretical spheres and transferring its duality to this sphere, medieval dualism proceeded in two ways: along the path of idealism and that of realism. As soon as you grant the necessity of Descartes and Bacon, or rather their doctrines, you must expect both trends to develop to the last extreme—to the point of absurdity if you will. The extreme of realism was expressed by the Encyclopaedists; they as faithfully and fully represented one aspect of the human spirit as the idealists, the other. Brought forth by the times, both, thereafter, were to lose their exclusive claims and unite in a well-proportioned conception of the truth. It is to this reconciliation that Schelling and all his followers strove, as mentioned before. It is for this that Hegel built an extensive foundation; the rest will be the work of time. The language of the two opposite viewpoints is still too different: they lack mutual respect and impartiality. Strong natures, of course, are above personal or party opinions. In his history, Hegel, for instance, at first looked down upon Bacon's views and Bacon's school, but gradually, as he leafed through the works of the famous men of that time and grew used to them, he took fire and was carried away by the practical thinkers to such an extent that his voice trembled and his bosom heaved, that his speech took wing and these people of limited understanding nearly appeared to him as inspired crusaders behind the flowing banners of reason! Smiling bitterly then at his native idealists, Hegel remarked: "in Germany at that time they were fussing with the Leibnitz-Wolfian philosophy, its definitions, axioms and proofs."*

Sokolovo, September 1845

* *Geschichte der Philosophie*, T. III. p. 529.—*A.H.*

FROM THE DIARY[53]

1842

April

12—So that's what it feels like to hand in one's resignation: I have thrown off a weight, I feel regenerated and the fog has cleared up somewhat.[54] Of the two monsters who stood constantly at my side with bludgeons raised, one has disappeared. And it seems to me that my resignation is an obligation to work, for my leisure, and indeed all my time is my own. And I shall work. Though I still do not know what the outcome will be, what results this step will lead to.

I should like to write a propaedeutical essay for those who want to make a study of philosophy, but are confused as to the aim, claims and means of the science. In passing one ought to indicate the great harm done by good people fond of philosophizing. Enemies of science are less dangerous than these demi-pietists, demi-rationalists. I have begun; but what the results will be is more than I can say.[55]

13—I am continuing, in my free time, my reading of the course of lectures by Villemain.[56] I find it very useful: we have forgotten the eighteenth century; the century is revived in this book, we are carried back to the days of Voltaire, Buffon—and, say what you will, these are great names. It is interesting to trace how, at the beginning of his career, Voltaire amazes one by the audacity of his religious opinions as do Holbach, Diderot twenty years later. Voltaire was outdistanced; materialism gathered impetus. "*Le patriarche ne veut pas se départir de son rémunérateur vengeur; il raisonne là-dessus comme un enfant,*" writes Grimm who just as audaciously and insolently holds up his head and tramples morality underfoot. Here you also see *das Werden* of 1793. Diderot improvises:

Et mes mains ourdiraient les entrailles du prêtre
A défaut d'un cordon pour étrangler les rois.

And this phase of development is extremely important and has rendered signal service. Their error lay in the fact that they saw the genesis of the spirit in the temporal, in the finite; they took it for the product of matter, for matter itself. Their interpretation of genesis is, in part, true; if they had only gone several steps further they would have themselves realized that for them the word "matter" was coupled with something that possesses it, that animates it, something eternal, infinite, having as an aim manifestation and other attributes which do not inhere in passive matter. Just as Spinoza was right from his standpoint, so, too, were they right from theirs, and their point of view was as essential. In so far as atheism is concerned, it is more consistent than Voltaire's or Rousseau's timid deism. Incidentally, Rousseau chanced upon the right path for the attainment of knowledge of the divine, i. e., of the development of spirit up to the point of the contemplation of God. This creator of theirs, the geometer of *des Jenseits*, detached and idle, which we can have no knowledge of and whom we venerate, cannot satisfy either the rigorous aspirations of the religious mind, or the strict logical mind. The negation of God was a step toward the true knowledge of Him; the negation of Him as Jehovah or Jupiter who is a stranger on earth, holding judgement somewhere on high, has stripped Him of the last finitude attached to Him by religious ideas and of the last abstraction of philosophy. For them, from the point of view of analysis and *raison naturelle*, God only existed as nature, the universe, the eternal world of which Pliny says: *Aeternus, immensus, totus in toto, immo vero ipse totum*, the totality of the activity of a closed *idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura*. It is needful to allow this matter of the creator and the creation to ferment together and it must itself arise out of the Lucretian tendency along the lines of modern spiritual philosophy. This movement is stronger than reason, it is its phenomenology. But Holbach, Diderot and Co. made impossible the sensuous Catholic conception which inspired profound minds to rise far beyond materialism because they were able to detach

themselves (unconsciously) from its letter and ascend into the sphere of pure speculation, but which had fed the idolatry of the masses. What an immense edifice did the philosophy of the eighteenth century erect, with the brilliant and sarcastic Voltaire at one door, a transition, as it were, from the court of Louis XIV to the realm of reason, and at the other—the sombre Rousseau, half-insane, but full of love, whose witticisms were neither trenchant nor akin to the *grand siècle*;[57] they rather anticipated the witticisms of *Montagne,* Saint-Just and Robespierre. It was with disgust that Voltaire read in *Emile*[58] that "If the son of the king truly loves the daughter of the hangman, the father must not gainsay him." Here is the purely democratic *réhabilitation de l'homme* for you. The masses did not read in the manner of Voltaire. The jokes, hints, have their effect, but Rousseau's spirited language addressed to power should have seemed astounding. We have grown accustomed to it.

And all the celebrities of that age were, in England and in France, people in the thick of life: Montesquieu, Buffon and others. German thought and art came to the forefront later. Great and immense as it was, yet it was nurtured in the study. The biographies of Germans are impossible reading. Schiller ranks first among them, with perhaps Lessing beside him. Why then be surprised that Frederick II, practical man that he was, could find no answering chord within himself to the trends in his country. To rouse his sympathy they had to reveal all their might (Goethe, Hegel).

September

22—... The heroism of consistency, the self-sacrificing acceptance of consequences is so difficult that the greatest people halt before the obvious results of their principles. This is true of Hegel, of the development of early Hegelianism, of his principles, but Hegel would have renounced them, for he loved and respected *das Bestehende*; he realized that he would not bear the blow and did not wish to be the first to strike. It seemed to him that, for the time being, it was enough that he had arrived at his principles. The young generation started

devoid of all human dignity. The fortresses are packed with prisoners; one is persecuted for religion and poetry; for an insolent word about a minister—all of which is being done in silence, without any ado—and the people digest it all. There are other lands which are equally known for their horrors in the middle of the eighteenth century. For example, English Parliament cruelly suppressed the uprising in Scotland; but there it was an abnormality; while here it is a common occurrence. Scientists and the clergy are the myrmidons of power. The French, though oppressed by the despotism of Louis XV, were outraged by German villainy. In France you feel the influence of the new spirit in every literary work; when you read their works you smile: these people were dancing a step away from the abyss on the other side of which France was renewing herself. In Germany there is not a single ray of light; there is only one liberal there and that is Frederick II, the autocrat of Prussia.

August

17—I have a pamphlet by Frauenstädt[62] on Schelling. There is nothing so unprofitable as what Schelling is doing: arranging philosophical thought so as to adapt it to a given, immobile and extinct conception. That is scholasticism and, at the same time, a lie. How much poetry and wit is wasted on the explanation of myths, yet these explanations leave a disagreeable impression; you feel that this has all been subsequently invented. One can understand Schelling's position: his platonic spirit suffers at the sight of negation and nothing but negation; but how can we explain the fact that he was satisfied by views so wretched, mystical, artificial and incoherent? Starting with pantheism, he arrives at Judaism and calls this Judaism a positive philosophy. As he evolves his positive science it becomes increasingly oppressing and embarrassing; you feel that his solutions solve nothing, that everything is obscured and is not free. Little by little he completely wanders off the scientific path and, lost in the most eccentric mysticism, gives an explanation of satan, miracles, resurrection, the descent of the Holy Ghost, *au pied de la lettre*. It's hard to believe that this was written in

the nineteenth century; it might have come from a scholastic of the fourteenth century or from a theologian of the early years of the Reformation. The language and the views of Bacon are closer to us and sound more modern. It is further proof of how the German mind is always ready to swerve into the sphere of vague fantasies and to spend talent and genius on futile work, as long as it lies outside the practical domain, as long as it is not the domain in which man must abide. Nevertheless, after Kant they could have followed a sensible track. But when all is said and done, Schelling dealt a terrific blow to Christianity; his philosophy exposed, finally, the whole absurdity of Christian philosophy—his name, his quarrel with Hegel led all scientific Germany to turn upon him and give thought to his delirious speeches. There are things which cannot survive being made public, analyzed or exposed.

Schelling is Jacob Boehme, stood up on his head. The latter, full of mystic contemplation in all directions, rose to profound philosophical views, whereas Schelling, from his deep philosophical views, descended to infantile mysticism. Boehme, who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, fettered by mystic terminology, had the resolution not to stop at the letter, and the courage to face the consequences frightful for the timid conscience of that century; he used his intelligence, and mysticism lent it wings. Everything about Schelling gives evidence of the subordination of reason, of his making every effort to accept theism and tradition, though lacking true naive faith. Simple faith will not resort to his *Spitzfindigkeiten.*

September

18—Bacon and Descartes represent the genesis of philosophy as a science: without the method of the two, philosophy would never have developed in scientific form. Jacob Boehme, through more profound and powerful mediums, his genius-like intuition, attained great truths, but that was the path of genius, the path of individual power. However, genesis is not yet philosophy. Bacon's recognition of facts did not completely

subjugate nature to him; nor did Descartes's idealism subjugate the spirit. The seed dropped by Descartes sprouted in Spinoza who was the true and universal father of the new philosophy. "*Ego*," he says, "*non praesumo, me optimam invenisse Philos., sed verum me intelligere scio.*" This view proceeds from profound reflection and it is true. Spinoza attained astonishing heights. And what a full life of thought! He laid the foundation for the development of German philosophy; he exhausted one aspect of it (spirit, as a substance), and he was the first not to draw upon the external or religious or traditional means. Spinoza was an enemy of formalism, even though he clothed his doctrine in scholastic forms. This was a defect of the age. For example, the demand for artificial proofs, obscure in itself, was alien to his spirit. And no wonder: for him thought was the supreme act of love, the aim of spirit, its life. Without discussing his theory as a whole, I will mention those flashes of genius which continuously burst forth in him, for example: "*Homo liber de nulla re minus quam de morte cogitat et ejus sapientia non mortis sed vitae meditatio est ... Beatitudo non est virtutis praemium, sed ipsa virtus.*" His view on the temporary *sub specie eternitatis*, the unity of diversity is eternally alive in his mind and far outstrips all his predecessors. For him thought was an act supremely religious and purely moral. And how did his age accept him? And should it surprise us—since he died in 1677?

1844

June

29—There is a most noteworthy article by S. Jordan[63] in Wiegand's[64] magazine on the relation of universal science to philosophy. Criticism which has discarded religion, and is based on philosophy, must go still further and turn upon philosophy. The philosophical conception is the last theological conception, which subordinates nature in all its aspects to spirit, which assumes reason to be *prius*, which does not cancel fundamentally opposition between thought

and being by their identification. Spirit, ideas are the results of matter and history. In assuming that pure reason is the beginning, philosophy falls into abstraction wherein, moreover, it cannot stay as it is impossible for it to dispense with concrete representations. We find it painful and irksome to live in the sphere of abstraction and are constantly lapsing into the *other*. Philosophy wants to be a particular science of thought *und darum zugleich Wissenschaft der Welt, weil die Gesetze des Denkens dieselben seien mit den Weltgesetzen; dies muss zunächst umgekehrt werden: das Denken ist nicht anderes als die Welt selbst, wie sie von sich weiss, das Denken ist die Welt, die als Mensch sich selbst klar wird.* And therefore we must not begin with the science of thought and deduce nature out of it. Philosophy is not a science by itself, instead, it should synthesize all sciences disunited today.

July

4—I have been writing an article on natural philosophy for the new magazine[65] (and only God and Uvarov[66] know whether it will ever see the light of day). In this connection I have read, or rather, glanced through Schiller's *History of Philosophy*, from Bacon to Leibnitz. A boring book, although it contains interesting details. How enormously it differs from the history by Feuerbach! Then I got hold of the famous pamphlet by Fichte on the destination of man. It's a long time since I last read it, some dozen years or more. I don't remember in which epoch he wrote it, but it is strange to be content with this *profession de foi*, as the last word. Abstract speculation does not save him from scepticism; knowledge does not satisfy him, he wants action and faith (spontaneous and intuitive). But faith leads him not to the real, but rather to the idealistic world; true, for him this spiritual world is both here and *jenseits*, i.e., it is Hegel's sphere of the spirit and, in part, the religious future life, but behind it lies some strange desire to be not of the earth. Is it a tribute to the times, or the urge of a stoic, strict, moral nature? He places will above action.

August

9—I have read Feuerbach on Leibnitz.[67] Germany alone has such tremendous awakenings from its eternal slumber as Leibnitz, Lessing, Goethe. What immense activity, what universality! He is interested in everything, in contact with everybody, concerned with everything and he sheds the light of his genius everywhere, his mind is wide open to the world, ever ready to write, to explain, to reflect. It is precisely he who must have expounded monadology. Spinoza, who sacrificed everything for philosophy, saw only the substance around which the world of the accidental revolves; his substance must be one. For Leibnitz the substance-monad is the source of activity, of movement; it determines itself in distinction to others, alive precisely in differentiation and opposition. This is the transition in logic from a unit to multiplicity, it is repulsion from itself.... Science from Cartesian extension delves into the substance of Spinoza; but this substance is determined by the *force* of Leibnitz, living and substantial: which is not a single one but incalculable souls of the atom—monads. The monad is the ideal atom of an object, the force of matter, its unity; matter, being passive, it is impossible to find true unity in it because it contains a multitude of parts which go on *ad infinitum*; and since multiplicity does not become reality except through genuine unity, I "resorted to atoms" understanding them to mean force, etc. He is very close to concepts—the monad is, already, in a certain sense, a concept. The vagueness of the conception of materiality and matter as the nexus of the monads, their medium, finally, the vital tie between the whole universe, reflected and in relation with every monad and vice versa—all raises Leibnitz's view of nature incomparably higher than that of D-tes, B.[68] and Spin. In him, every drop of dew reflects that one sun which shines in the sky of Spinoza.

22—Activity should have a limit lest it be dispersed—that is the role attributed to matter by Leibnitz; matter confines the pure monad, it delimits the monads from each other, it is the passive limit of activity and, at the same time, its deter-

minateness. The monad continually strives to free itself of matter, i.e., to pass over from the particular to the universal. Its activity, life, its soul and body are the essential poles; it is universal idealism and empiricism; the genus—unity and the particular. Theodicy is unsuccessful, the problem impossible, no matter how you approach its solution. In religion a certain measure of arbitrariness is always possible and considerable. "Science is impossible where everything is possible." The difference between reason and madness is effaced, where then will science find its support? The views of people in Leibnitz' days were still strongly impregnated with anthropomorphism, by subjective theology; L. could not break loose of the influence of his environment; he was too vigorous for this and too absorbed in his times. He continued the work of Spinoza but did not have the strength to arrive at a detached view, as Spinoza did, and from the summits reached, remind the Christian world of "the category forgotten by them: the relation of the object to itself" (and not to man); finally, I suppose that L. was reluctant to run foul of the ideas of his age; what he lacked was Spinoza's *incorruptible honesty.* That supreme integrity of language eschews not only lies but also those obscure or half-veiled expressions which seem to imply anything but what they were meant to. On the contrary, it strives to be explicit and to avert any misinterpretation. Incidentally, in those days they knew how to set aside a modest corner for religion—it lived there by itself, science occupying the rest of the heart, and there was no quarrel between them. Descartes made a pilgrimage on foot to Notre-Dame de Lorette to kneel in prayer. He wanted help to overcome his scepticism and never to put religion to the test of reason, i. e., he did not want to ponder over it. Even materialists, such as Locke, were in their own way, religious, always in an incoherent and contradictory manner, like our Hegelian orthodox Slavophiles; Leibnitz, on the contrary, sought a live conciliation, and nothing came of it but obscurity which veiled his excellent doctrine for his disciples.

30—Hegel's Leben by Rosenkranz. R-z is a narrow-minded person and a mediocre thinker; consequently, the story is

told poorly and his view is most narrow but the book is important for its quotations and appendices. Hegel's life is the life and development of his system; he lived it quite in the German manner: in school, *gymnasium* and universities. His most poetic relations were those with Hölderlin; I cannot find any intimate ties with Schelling. Hegel outlined his system for the first time in 1800, at the age of thirty (he was born in 1770). An excellent present on the birth of the nineteenth century; it was then that he fell out with Schelling. The principal plan and the foundation of the system of that time did not change, but only developed further. In some places the quotations cited are reminiscent of a mystical influence; they abound in plasticity of expression, and pointed images are apparent everywhere—contradicting Redkin, demanding that scientific material should be expressed in the language of pure thought, etc. In the essay on the philosophy of nature there is an excellent passage on the structure of the globe: according to him the diversity of the elements was undoubtedly the result of the past, and remained its mute witnesses; (it should be noted here that Hegel regarded the earth as the universe of individuality, of its elementary processes, and as the disintegration [*Auseinanderfallen*] of the external mingling of earth and rocks). These elements today rest indifferently side by side, having lost all connections, as if paralyzed. This idea is extremely important; won't this premise allow us eventually to arrive at a solution of the question of why and how the planet was first composed of elements; what led to their formation into extant minerals; was it not an attempt on the part of the whole planet to live like a plant—an attempt to live with all its surface?...

In the chapter "Geist" Heg. then defined the family by indifference between slavery and freedom. "In the natural state man says to woman: 'You are flesh of my flesh'; in the moral state he says to his fellow creature: 'you are spirit of my spirit,' establishing thus the equality of relations. The *Philosophy of Right* of those days is abstract and full of scholasticism; its foundations are not sufficiently broad and seek to justify that which exists. The philosophy of religion is almost wholly

treated by them as it was subsequently. Abstraction and formalism led it to frightful results in after years; for example, it sees the need for a nobility, as a reaction in the form of submission, the need for all classes, the cowardice of the merchants, etc. To warriors who survived, it offers speculation in place of consolation, to compensate them for the misfortune of having remained alive, etc. In the philosophy of religion he plainly says that Protestantism is a temporary form and that a new religion may arise in which the spirit, on its own ground, in the magnificence of its own form, will be a combination of religion and philosophy. Subsequently, he did not express these ideas so bluntly. On November 2, 1800, in a letter to Schelling on his system, he says, incidentally: "*Ich frage jetzt nicht, welche Rückkehr zum Eingreifen in das Leben der Menschen zu finden ist.*"

September

3—... Hegel was the greatest representative of the revolution which should have introduced the new conscience of humanity to science from alpha to omega. In life he was nought. It stands to reason that the time and the country in which he lived were much to blame. Berlin, moreover, exercised its influence on him; in the practical world Hegel was a philistine. He did not scruple to ask for the protection of the Prussian Ministry against severe criticism printed in a Prussian review; on the occasion of the tactless and almost scurvy trick against Fries[69] he advised that restrictions should be imposed on the publication of the journal. Finally, his teaching of the *Philosophy of Right*, did as much good and dissipated the futile and universal theoretical demagogy, as it did harm by its stout defence of the existing evil and its scoffing at the *beautiful sentiments* of youth as though they were the worst of platitudes.

APROPOS M. GRANOVSKY'S PUBLIC LECTURES[70]

LETTER TWO

M. Granovsky has concluded his course of public lectures. I can still hear his voice, deeply agitated, vibrant with intense emotion, as he thanked his audience, and the thunder of prolonged applause with which they, one and all, expressed their gratitude. "I thank you once again. I thank those who, sympathizing with me, shared my sincere scientific convictions, and equally those who, while differing with me, frankly and fairly voiced their disagreement!" With these splendid words Granovsky concluded his course of lectures. You remember that after the first lecture I did not hesitate to call this course an event worthy of notice. Now I have some justification in saying that I was not mistaken. The interest aroused by M. Granovsky's lectures continuously heightened; his chair was invariably surrounded by a triple tier of ladies, and note that the lecturer treated his subject with all the seriousness which science demands, without strewing unnecessary flowers, or sacrificing depth for *pleasing lightness*. And I think that he could not have better expressed his respect and gratitude to the ladies who attended his lectures—and they were grateful to him for it. Thank God the days are passing for that humiliating attention to woman when, alongside a serious exposition of science, there existed, especially for her benefit, an intentional distortion of the subject, for the masculine mind alone was considered capable of deep thought.

Moscow society was given a taste, in the university halls, of a new pleasure, both stimulating and vastly absorbing; the teaching staff found open to them further possibility of actions and new paths to general sympathy. I am certain that, thanks

to the fine initiative of Granovsky, public lectures of no less general interest will be held in our university. They will mark a new rapprochement between the city and the university. In our country science cannot be separated from life: that is alien to our character. And every rapprochement between the university and society is of equal significance and importance to both sides. Teaching, if it is to win general public sympathy, must purify itself of the formalism of the school bench; it must emerge out of the cold isolation of dry, one-sided abstractions and face the realities of life; must be stirred by its problems and guided by its aspirations. Society must forget its daily humdrum life and rise to the level of general interest in order to pay heed to what is taught. It is ripe for this. It is attuned correctly: all that is vital and sympathetical will not fail to find recognition in it. The lectures by Granovsky are the best proof thereof. Such public lectures are a novelty here. It is quite possible that some of the audience at first came without serious intentions, for the novelty of the thing; but after the first three of four lectures the audience was completely won over and every face expressed absorbed, wrapt attention. This sympathy was in turn a powerful stimulus to the lecture. A necessary magnetic tie active on both sides is always established between the audience and the lecturer (if the one can really be said to listen and the other to lecture). At the beginning they seem strangers, but contact is gradually effected and when both grow aware of it, reciprocal influence gathers strength; words win the audience, and the audience, merging into a spiritual whole, imparts fire to the speaker. I shall say frankly, and I know that Granovsky will not take offence at my words: he visibly developed as his course proceeded; he grew, gaining in strength, on the lecture platform. His audiences did not lag behind him. The audience and the lecturer parted as friends; deeply touched, feeling a profound respect for each other, they parted with tears in their eyes.

What principally characterizes Granovsky's course is the heights to which all things human rise, the sympathy, ever ready of response, for all that is alive, vigorous and poetic, a vast, all-embracing love for all that is nascent, which he welcomes joyously, and a love for the dying which he buries

mournfully. Never did a hateful word escape him in his lectures; he passed coffins and opened them, without insulting the dead. The audacious thought of correcting the majestic course of the life of mankind was far from his scientific views; he respected the objective significance of events in everything and only attempted to discover their meaning. It seems to me that it was precisely this method of lecturing that aroused such a strong sympathy for Granovsky's lectures in society. To be able to find lovingly what is kindred, human, no matter what the century, the nation, the manifestations; never to disown our brothers, no matter what tatters they appear in, no matter how immature the age we found them in; to discern the eternal principle, that is to say, the eternal aim through the ephemeral shadows—this is a great thing for a historian to be able to do. Often as I listened to Granovsky I vividly saw Horatio, his heart breaking, telling the story of Hamlet near the bier on which his body rested. Horatio was far from the thought of resurrecting the prince—Hamlet's death for him was an event; through his tears he pointed to young Fortinbras who was to inherit the bloody throne; he could not but mourn the deceased. The same is true of Granovsky's sympathy for the Middle Ages. He did not seek to turn back the wheels of time. It is love and sympathy for the vanquished that makes the victory complete. Immobile ghosts of the past, left by the world on the new soil, can least of all withstand the warm breath of love; they dissolve into the roseate moisture which quenches the thirst of new generations. But this love is not easy to attain.

Russian historians are in a position which greatly facilitates an objective, sympathetic view of Western history. Our untrammelled thoughts, while elucidating the events of the Middle Ages, can maintain the heights of gentleness and forbearance, necessary in order to conciliate and love all that it treats: we were alien to the feudal life of Europe. We neither acquired that epoch's chattels, nor its blemishes. We are under oath, persons from another realm; we cannot take sides. That is not true for the German; he has to contend with his memories; he has a feeling of kinship and of hate for it; he will either collapse burdened by a rich heritage or else he must re-

nounce his parents. The past of Europe is still alive to him: on entering the arena of history he cannot retain a judicial aloofness; instead of harbouring a wholesome warmth his soul is either overcome by passion or else is consumed by scathing and relentless criticism. We must not deceive ourselves: this choler, this criticism is also a form of love but love carried to an extreme, jealous, vengeful, and wounded. The passionate partiality in the history of the West is excusable in a Westerner but would be strange in a Russian. How can a person drawn into the deep slough of events, into their very vortex, be a steady and impartial spectator? Would not that be either beneath or above the dignity of man? Would that not demand either a Talleyrand or a Goethe?[71] *Sine ira et studio!* You do not really believe that Tacitus wrote *sine ira*? I repeat what I wrote in my first letter: no one is in a better position than the Russian to be more objective in regard to the past of Europe. Of course, in order to benefit by it, it is not enough to be simply Russian; one must also attain the zenith of human development; be not exclusively Russian, that is to say, consider oneself not as opposite to Western Europe, but as fraternally bound to it. The conception of fraternity does not erase the distinctive traits of each brother, yet these traits must not make enemies of them, for then their bonds of brotherhood would be destroyed. In repulsing what we are opposed to, we eliminate the possibility of finding a vantage point; enmity at bottom is subjective. To be in opposition means to refuse to understand what we are opposed to because to understand means precisely to cancel the opposites. So long as thought fearfully repulses the opposite, it will be limited by it as something alien which will become a stumbling-block in its path. It is said in our code: "If a judge is an enemy of the plaintiff and a friend of the defendant, then neither the plaintiff nor the defendant may be judged by that judge."[72] It is very easy for us to arrive at this legal independence. We need only desire and know how to profit by our position. The past of Europe arouses in us neither regret nor remorse; it constitutes a great interest for us of another order.

Dich stört nicht im Innern
Zu lebendiger Zeit
Unnützes Erinnern
Und vergeblicher Streit.

Goethe

Granovsky (in spite of the reproaches levelled at him as he started his course) had an excellent understanding of what language he should use when treating Western questions. Wandering through the catacombs of alien ancestors, he never once said a single word, never made a single allusion to the present quarrels of their heirs.[73] He took up the dusty charter of the Middle Ages not in order to find in it a support for himself, for his own opinions; he had no need of the investiture of the Middle Ages, for he stood on different grounds. This is what it was that lent his lectures their good faith and sincerity, that breadth of view so rarely to be found in history; events, not cramped by any personal theory, took on life in his recital. I frequently had the occasion to hear ridiculous questions posed: why did he not express himself more plainly? What was it he wanted to prove? What was his aim? He loved feudalism yet rejoiced at its downfall, etc. All these questions, incidentally, have more to them than one might think: all things living are extremely elusive precisely because they contain, in one active process, a countless number of elements and aspects. The living is stirred into consciousness only by means of speculation or contemplation, while good sense can only see disorder in them—life slips out of its rough hands. The manifold aspects of life arouse fear and boredom in the narrow-minded: they must needs have *du positif*! Thus, polypuses, deprived of the possibility of locomotion, stick all their lives to one side of a stone and feed on the moss that covers it. These *spineless* minds would find it any number of times easier to understand history marshalled into line, from any one point of view, but Granovsky is too much the historian at heart to fall into pointless one-sidedness and not to profit by the excellence of his position.

History is very easily made a party weapon. Events were mute and obscure; people of today interpret them as they like. For the past to become known it must pass through the mouth of the present generation which frequently desires to act not merely as a mouthpiece for alien speech, but as a prompter. It makes the past bear false witness in its own interest. Such evocation of the past from the grave is degrading but some excuse can be found for these necromantic attempts, under certain circumstances: feudalism, the papal power, the aristocracy, the middle estates and others are not merely subjects for study and science for the West but party banners, questions of life or death. The past order of things has in Europe its accredited attorneys who proceed with the case; but we are less, indeed far less, involved in it than even the North American States. These are not our quarrels, nor conflicts; we enter into contact with Europe—not in the name of its private and past interests, but rather in the name of the great society of humanity for which both of us strove. Our sympathy is, actually, a presentiment of the future which will absorb everything extreme—be it the Roman-German or the Slav.

Granovsky has steered clear of another reef yet more dangerous than a biased view on feudal events: acquainted as he was with the writings of the great German thinkers, he nonetheless remained independent. He gave an excellent definition of the actual state of the philosophy of history at the second lecture, without confining its living development to any petrifying formula; Granovsky views the modern state of life as a great historical moment which it was impossible not to be aware of or to avoid with impunity; just as it is impossible to remain in it for all time, without becoming paralyzed. To make plain the depth of treatment of history by our lecturer, it is sufficient to say that he regards history as a normally developing organism; nowhere did he subordinate events to the formal law of necessity or to artificial lines of demarcation. In his exposition necessity was some secret thought of the epoch; its presence could be sensed far in the background, as some *Deus implicitus,* giving full scope to the free play of life. The greatest thinkers of Germany could not resist the temptation to impose on history an artificial structure, based on the in-

sufficiency of documents and one-sided theories. And no wonder: speculative thought was more akin to their spirit than a living historical viewpoint.[74] That abstract and unpleasant necessity was reduced to an absurdity in the works of Cousin, very well known in his time. Cousin is the Nemesis who chastises the Germans for their love for the abstract, for dry formalism. The Germans themselves must have burst out laughing when they read to what lengths they had led the kind and unsophisticated Gaul who had trusted them. The author understood necessity so superficially that he all but deduced Alexander of Macedon's crooked neck from the general formula of the development of mankind. That was the reaction to Voltaire's view, which, on the contrary, made the fate of the world depend on the form of Cleopatra's nose.

Granovsky promises to publish his course of lectures; when I send you the book I shall try to analyze the course itself and to discuss it in detail.[75] Permit me now to finish. I hope you will have no objection to that.

PUBLIC LECTURES BY PROFESSOR RULYE[76]

Ignorance of nature is supreme ingratitude.
Pliny the Elder

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL demands of our time is the circulation of authentic and useful data on natural science. Though abundant in science, such data are scarce in society. They should be launched on the stream of the public consciousness, should be made accessible, should be rendered as alive and real as nature with a language as clear as the one in which she unfolds the infinite riches of her essence in grand and harmonious simplicity. We believe it is nearly impossible to cultivate a really strong mental activity without natural science. No other branch of knowledge trains the mind to advance so firmly and steadily, to submit so readily to the truth, to work conscientiously and, what is more important, to accept conscientiously the *consequences that follow*. Beginning with natural science, we would cleanse the minds of the young of prejudices, enable them to grow up on healthy spiritual food and, when strengthened and fully equipped, show them the world of man and history from which the doors lead straight to action, to participation in the issues of the day. This idea certainly is not new. Rabelais who keenly understood the terrible harm that scholasticism wrought upon the development of the mind, based the education of Gargantua on natural science. Bacon sought to base the education of all mankind on natural science: *Instauratio magna* rests on the return of the mind to nature, to observation. By his exceptional preference for natural science Bacon sought to restore the function of thought suppressed by medieval metaphysics. He saw no other means of cleansing the contemporary minds of false notions and prejudices accrued for centuries than by directing them to nature with its immutable laws, with its recalcitrance to scholasticisms and

its readiness to reveal itself to logic. The scientific world, especially in Britain and France, well understood the challenge of Baron Verulam, the first of that continuous line of great men who have ploughed the broad fields of natural science in all directions.

But the fruits of their enquiry, the results of long and arduous labours have remained within the academic walls, have not brought the *orthopedic* cure to twisted understanding as might have been expected.* The education of the cultivated classes throughout Europe has touched little upon the natural sciences. It has continued to be influenced by a sort of rhetorical-philological schooling (in the strictest sense of the word); it has remained an education of the memory rather than of reason, an education of the learning of words and not of conceptions, a learning of style and not of thought, an education by authority and not by self-application; rhetorics and formalism continue to dislodge nature as of old. Such growth nearly always leads to mental arrogance, to contempt for everything natural and healthy, to preference for everything exaggerated and forced. Ideas and notions are as previously inoculated at a time of spiritual immaturity. Attaining to consciousness, man finds the scar on his arm, a sum of ready-made truths and setting on his way, simple-heartedly accepts the one and the other as an accomplished fact. There is no stronger remedy against this false, harmful and lop-sided education than the general spread of natural science at its present stage. But unfortunately the great truths, the great discoveries following rapidly in natural science do not penetrate the stream of circulating information. And if some part of them do come before the public they appear in such a scant and inaccurate form that people cram these predigested ideas into their minds as they did all other scholastic knowledge. The French have done more than anyone to popularize the natural sciences, but their efforts have been constantly wrecked on the thick crust of prejudice. There has been no complete success, incidentally, because the greater part of the experiments in popular expo-

* It is understood that practical applications are deliberately set aside.—*A.H.*

sition was marred by concessions, rhetorics, hollow phrases and poor language.

The prejudices with which we have grown up include our mode of expression and understanding. The very words insinuate notions which are not only inaccurate, but directly opposite to the meaning. Our imagination is so corrupted by and saturated with metaphysics that we have lost the ability to express in a simple and straightforward way the events of the physical world without unconsciously introducing false notions by our very mode of expression, confusing the metaphor with the thing it stands for, separating in words what is in reality joined. Science itself has adopted this false language: that is why everything it tells is so confused and difficult. Though not so harmful to science, this language does most of its harm to the public. The scientist accepts the glossary as a symbol under which he crowds an entire row of phenomena and problems, like a mathematician. Society, on the other hand, has a blind faith in words—evidence of its splendid confidence in speech—so that man implicitly trusts the word even when it is abused. No less implicit is his trust in science and he takes its word not as a lame hint, but as an expression which fully exhausts the facts. Let us recollect, for example, that science assumes any physical phenomenon, the cause of which is unknown, to be the manifestation of a special force and by scholastic dialectics endows it with identity so concretely that it is completely divorced from substance (such is the fashionable metabolic force or catalytic force). The mathematician here would have conscientiously set down an x so that everybody should know it as an unknown quantity. But the introduction of a new force suggests that it is a *known* quantity; to complete the confusion, these false expressions are added to false moral maxims which have been repeated through the ages without analysis, without criticism and which put everything in an utterly false light.

For the sake of clarity let me give an example. Linnaeus was a great man in the full sense of the word. But, influenced by his century like all men, great or small, he was carried away by two scholastic prejudices and committed two opposite errors. He defined man as a species of the genus of mon-

key and set the vampire alongside, the latter an unpardonable zoological error, the former an even less pardonable logical error. As we shall presently see, Linnaeus had no idea of humiliating man by relating him with the monkey. Under the influence of scholasticism he separated the man from the body to such an extent that he thought it possible to treat of his form and shape without scruples. Bracketing man's body with that of the bat, Linnaeus exclaimed: "How despicable man would be if he had not risen above *all that is human*!" Compare this with Epictetus: "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" Linnaeus's phrase, like all phrases when they are merely phrases, could have well been forgotten, overshadowed by his great services but unfortunately it dovetails perfectly with the scholastic-romantic view; it is obscure and soulful and precisely for that reason is passed on from generation to generation. Only last year, in fact, Flourens, one of the famous French professors, went into raptures over this outburst of Linnaeus and declared that this sentence alone was sufficient to stamp him as a genius. We must confess that in this sentence we have discerned only an uneasy conscience and the desire to atone for crass materialism with crass spiritualism. The two opposite delusions left unreconciled are far from constituting the truth. Man no doubt should reject everything *human* if everything human signifies nothing more than the distinctive features of a two-handed, tailless monkey called *homo*. But who indeed authorized Linnaeus to make an animal out of man for the sole reason that he possesses everything which the animal has. Having labelled him *sapiens*, why has he not separated man from the animal in the name of what man possesses and the animal does not? What childish logic! If man is to be what he ought to be by rejecting everything *human*, how much of the human will remain in the residue? There is either a mistake somewhere or there is sheer impossibility. What will be left is probably not human, but animal, and then how rise above oneself? It is something like lifting oneself to increase in stature.

That maxim by Linnaeus is taken at random from thousands of similar and worse. They have all made their way into scientific discourse and, seemingly repeated out of duty or cour-

tesy, are hampering a clear and straightforward understanding of history by their historical phantasmagoria. Such arguments and prejudices in aggregate constitute a complete theory for an absurd conception of nature and its phenomena. Instead of constantly exposing the absurdity of such conceptions, the usual attempts at popularization tend to humour them like illiterate nursemaids crooning baby talk to babies. But all this is drawing to a close. Like Pliny before him, Humboldt too gave the heading of *Kosmos*[77] to his last book and not without reason.

Even a superficial survey of the doings of natural science will astonishingly reveal a new spirit, distinct, profound and equally removed from absurd materialism and dreamy spiritualism. A popular exposition of this new view of life and nature is of exceptional importance and it is this that impels us to speak of the public lectures of Monsieur Rulye, to whom we now turn directly.

For his subject matter Monsieur Rulye has chosen *the life and habits of animals*, or as he himself had put it, the *psychology of animals*. Zoology at its highest stage is bound to pass into psychology. The main and distinctive feature essential to the animal kingdom is the development of psychic faculties, consciousness and will. There is no need to say how fascinating is the story of the sequence of various manifestations of the inner life from crude, indispensable instinct and obscure urges to seek food and the subconscious need for self-preservation up to reason at the lowest stage, the correlation of the means and the end, a certain degree of consciousness and enjoyment in itself. Throughout the story most interesting questions, observations, researches, profound truths of natural science and even of philosophy clamour for attention. The choice of subject testifies to the lecturer's vivid understanding and daring. New paths had to be discovered here, since animal psychology has received incomparably less attention from the naturalists than animal structure. Animal psychology must round out and consummate comparative anatomy and physiology. It must represent the prehuman phenomenology of evolving consciousness; and it terminates at the source of human psychology, into which it

flows like venous blood into the lungs, to be sublimated and course on as red blood through the arteries of history. The progress of the animal is the progress of its body, its history, a plastic development of organs from the polypus to the monkey; the progress of man is the progress of thought and not of body: the latter can progress no further. But it is barely possible to deliver a scientific exposition on the psychology of animals at the present state of natural science. All the more, therefore, should an attempt to do so be respected, especially if it is as successful as Monsieur Rulye's lectures.

Zoology has in the main been concerned with the systematization and distribution of animals; and classification, important as it may be, is not paramount. The great success of Linnaeus's botanical classification tempted zoology from its path and, in Cuvier's* apt words, checked its progress by concentrating all attention and all works upon artificial systems and descriptions of distinctions. It was against this dead and purely formal tendency that Buffon rebelled. He had an enormous advantage over a great part of his contemporary naturalists: he had no knowledge of the natural sciences at all. Having become the director of Jardin des Plantes, he first conceived a passion for nature and then began to study it in *his own way*, bringing into research deep reflection, a live manner of thinking quite independently of school prejudices and the deadening routine which lames success.[78] Buffon dreaded arrangement and classification to excess. His subject matter was animals in all manifestations, their anatomy and habits, their exterior and their cravings. For such a study of animals it was not enough to go to the museum to collate the forms, to view only the traces of life, to observe their points of difference and similarity. It was necessary to go to the zoo, to the stables, to the poultry farms, to the woods and to the fields, to become a fisherman; in short, it was necessary to do what Audubon had done for American ornithology. Buffon had no possibility to put his studies of nature into scientific form: there was insufficient material and the cast of his genius had no turn for methodology. For this reason probably, science did

G. Cuvier, *Histoire des Sciences Naturelles*, t. 1, p. 301.—*A.H.*

not travel his path, though it had set out in the direction he had indicated. When Buffon had put Daubenton on to the anatomy of animals, comparative anatomy absorbed all attention.

Ten years had not passed after Buffon's death when zoology parted with him and with Linnaeus. On the 21st of the Floreal in the third year of the Republic an unknown young naturalist attacked Linnaeus's system at a session of the institute. There was something powerful, firm, deliberate and sharp about his words. The idea of the four types* in the animal kingdom and the arrangement of animals not according to distinctions, but all-round consideration of all systems and all organs amazed his listeners. This man was destined considerably to advance zoology. He demanded anatomy, the collation of parts, the disclosure of their interrelation; his works were numerous, his perspicacity enormous. Every remark of his contributed a new idea, every collation of two analogues more and more disclosed the possibility of the general theory of "correct analysis" whereby it is possible, with definitely fixed *conditions of existence* (so Cuvier called the final causes), to arrive at the forms and their functions.** The first brilliant experiment calculated to realize these first principles in practice, enabled Cuvier to advance from the reconstruction of an animal from a single bone to the actual reconstruction of the fossil world. The resurrection of the antediluvian animals was the highest triumph of comparative anatomy. Camper's[79] dreams began to come true, comparative anatomy was becoming *science*. In his *Palaeontography* Cuvier declared (p. 90):

"An organic being is a whole, self-contained system whose parts necessarily correspond to each other and supplement one another in the achievement of a common end. From this it should be inferred that every part taken separately is representative of all the others. If the digestive tract is so constituted as to be intended exclusively to digest raw meat, the formation of the jaws must be peculiar to this function, as also the long claws with which to seize and rend the prey, the

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* Vertebrae, mollusks, jointed and star-shaped.—*A. H.*

** *Règne animal,* Introduction. —*A.H.*

fangs and the sinuous muscles for running, and the acute sense of smell and keen sight; even the brain must be developed in a definite way to furnish the creature with cunning," etc.*

What breadth of view and what a triumph of Bacon's induction!

Nevertheless, the exclusively anatomical tendency had its disadvantages which the genius of Cuvier set at nought, but which came to the surface in many of his followers. Anatomy accustoms us to regard the flowing current, the precipitous process of life as static; it teaches us to view not the living being, but its body and to regard it as something passive, as a finished result. But in the language of life the finished results mean *death*. Life is action, perpetual action, the whirlwind and the vortex, as Cuvier called it. Furthermore, an anatomical, i.e., descriptive study of an animal's body is nothing other than a more highly developed study of external marks. To say that the viscera of an animal are the *other side of its exterior* is no play of words. The animal's exterior, its outward side,** is a revelation of the interior; but all of its inner parts are in the same way a manifestation of something still more inner; and that innermost element is life itself, action itself, which all parts, both inside and outside, equally serve as organs. The fact is that neither a study of the exterior alone nor of anatomy alone gives a complete knowledge of an animal.[80] The great Goethe was the first to introduce the element of motion into comparative anatomy. He demonstrated the pos-

* Aristotle was preoccupied with comparative anatomy, though in a desultory manner. His researches, therefore, could yield no complete whole. The ancients, however, very well understood the relation between form and content in an organism. Xenophon says in his Ἀνεπομνημόνευματα (Book I, Chapter IV) what human achievement could derive from a bull inhabited by a human spirit and what accomplishment from a bull if it had human hands.—*A.H.*

** The physiognomy of an animal *(habitus)* is so sharply defined that a glance will suffice to identify the character and the degree of development of the genus to which it belongs: take the visage of a tiger or a camel, for example. The internal aspect is not so characteristic for this very reason: an animal's exterior is its label, as it were; nature seeks to manifest everything implicit in the soul and does so by medium of those parts which are exposed to the external world.—*A.H.*

sibility of tracing the architectonics of an organism in its origination and gradual development: the laws he discovered —on the transformation of the parts of a grain into seed-lobes, stalk, buds and leaves and the further modification of the leaves into all the parts of a flower—led directly to an attempt at the genetic development of the animal's parts. Goethe himself worked much on osteology. Occupied with this subject, he was strolling through an abandoned graveyard in Italy when he came upon a skull lying beside its vertebrae and he was struck with the idea, which afterwards took its rightful place in osteology, that the head is nothing but the result of some special development of several vertebrae. Goethe's conception, however, remained *morphology*: a discourse on the geometrical development of the forms, as it were. He gave no thought to the contents, the material developing and constantly varying with the variation of the forms.

If the scope of this article had permitted we should have dwelt on two great attempts that left a lasting mark. We are referring to Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Oken. The former's conception of the single type,[81] of embryology and teratology, and the latter's attempt at thorough classification brought zoology near to what it had been striving for, to the transition from morphology to physiology, the great sea gathering unto itself all the separate tributaries of the science of organic bodies in order to reduce them to chemistry, physics and mechanics, or to put it simply, to the physiology of the mineral world. "The palm of natural science," says Baer, "will go to him who will reduce all the phenomena of a nascent organism to the universal forces. But the tree of whose wood the cradle of this man will be made has yet to be grown.* We, on the contrary, believe that this tree has not only fully grown, but that the cradle stands ready. Vigorous activity is evident in all spheres of the natural sciences: Dumas,[82] Liebig, Raspail** on the one hand, and Valentin, Wagner, Magendie on

* K. E. Baer, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Tiere*, S. 22.—*A.H.*

** We were recently surprised to find a coarse vituperative article against Raspail in a St. Petersburg newspaper. It should not be supposed that the cause was of a personal nature. On the other hand, chemistry could not serve as an object of discord either: judging by the article the

the other, have given to natural science a new character, deeply realistic, distinct and with the correct approach to problems. Every magazine and pamphlet testifies to seething activity. Everything has been fragmentary and particularized so far, but all is being cemented by the unity of direction, the unity of spirit pervading all sound works of science. But if the task of physiology really consists in discovering within the organic process the highest development of chemism and with the latter the lowest stage of life, if it cannot descend from its chemical-physical basis, then it will pass through its top branches into a completely different world: the brain as an organ of the higher faculties, when considered in its functions, leads directly to a study of the relations between the moral and the physical aspects and thereby to psychology. At this point questions may arise which lie beyond the competence of physics and chemistry, questions which could be solved *only* by philosophic thought.

Perfectly aware that it is impossible to give a scientific exposition of animal psychology at the present state of science, Monsieur Rulye has chosen the Buffon manner of putting things. His account of instincts and reason, of the sagacity of animals and their habits was vivid, fresh and well supported by abundant facts at his disposal. The professor is well known at the Moscow University for his contributions to paleontology. In his words, in his constant defence of the animal, it was pleasant to see some restoration of the dignity of creatures insulted by man's pride even in theory. We beg leave to give our opinion on the theories and views of Monsieur Rulye in a later article.[84] Just now, we shall confine ourselves to the expression of a wish which occurred to us several times while listening to the absorbing report of the scientist. A general effect is lacking. This, in our opinion, results from the order chosen by the professor. If, instead of passing successively from one psychic aspect of animal life to another, he had unfolded the

author seemed quite innocent of a knowledge of chemistry. Raspail's services in organic chemistry, microscopic investigations, and physiology are well known to all educated people and are respected even by those who disagree with his hypotheses and theories.[83]—*A.H.*

psychic activity of the animal kingdom in genetic order—as it develops from the lowest classes to the mammals—there would have been more wholeness and the history of psychic progress would have been brought home to the listeners in its direct relation to the form. This, too, would have given the professor the occasion to acquaint his audience with these forms, these instruments of psychic life which, evolving constantly in all directions, strive nevertheless by thousands of ways towards one goal, ever preserving a correct proportion between a degree in the development of psychic activity, the organ and the environment.

FROM THE OTHER SHORE[85]

TO MY SON, ALEXANDER[86]

SASHA, MY DEAR BOY,

I dedicate this book to you because I have written nothing better and, in all likelihood, never shall; because I love this book as a testimonial of the struggle in which I have sacrificed much, but not the courage to know; because, finally, I am not in the least afraid to turn over into your adolescent hands this protest, in places impetuous, of an independent personality, against views that are obsolete, slavish and false, against preposterous idols which do not belong to our times but still linger among us, interfering with some and frightening others.

I do not want to deceive you: know the truth as I know it. Learn this truth without experiencing either the tormenting errors or the deadening disillusionments, but simply by the right of inheritance.

You, too, will have to face and to solve different conflicts. You will have your share of hardships, and of labour. You are fifteen years old and you have already felt the impact of terrible blows.

Do not search for any solutions in this book. You will not find them. Indeed, the period possesses none. That which has been decided is finished; while the coming revolution is only in its infancy.

We do not build, we destroy; we do not proclaim new discoveries but discard old falsehoods. The man of today, that unhappy *pontifex maximus*, only lays the bridge; some stranger, belonging to the future, will pass over it. You, perhaps, will see it. Don't stay behind on this *shore*. Better perish with the revolution than seek safety in the alms-house of reaction.

The religion of the revolution, of the great social reformation, is the only religion which I bequeath to you. It has no

other paradise or rewards but your sense of right, your own conscience.... When the time comes go back home, to our own people, to preach it. Once there was a time when they appreciated my speech and, perhaps, they will remember me.

I give you my blessing on this path in the name of human reason, personal freedom and fraternal love.

Your father

Twickenham, January 1, 1855

Vom andern Ufer is the first book which I published in the West. The series of articles which it contained were written in Russian in 1848 and 1849. I dictated them in German to the young writer Kapp.[87]

There is much in it that is no longer new today.* Five terrible years have taught something to the most stubborn of people, to the most impenitent sinners on *our* shore. At the beginning of 1850 my book made a great stir in Germany; it was praised and criticized fiercely. And while people like Julius Froebel, Jacobi and Fallmerayer[88] were more than flattering, others, both talented and conscientious, attacked it fiercely.

I was accused of preaching the gospel of despair, of ignorance of the people, of being *dépit amoureux* of the revolution, of *lack of respect* for democracy, for the masses, for Europe.

December 2[89] was a more telling answer than I could have given.

In 1852 I met in London Solger,[90] the wittiest of my opponents. He was hurriedly packing to go to America. There was nothing, he thought, for him *to do* in Europe. "Circumstances," I remarked, "seem to have convinced you that I was not altogether wrong." "I didn't need that much to realize that I had written a good deal of nonsense then," replied Solger laughing good-naturedly.

In spite of this comforting admission, the general consensus of opinion, the impression that prevailed, was rather against

* I have also included three articles printed in magazines and intended for the second edition suppressed by the German censors. These were: "Epilogue," "Omnia mea mecum porto" and "Donoso Cortés." I replaced them by a short article on Russia written for foreigners.—*A.H.*

me than otherwise. Does not this irritability betray the approach of danger, a fear of the future, a desire to conceal one's impotence and a capricious, fossilized old age?

Strange is the fate of the Russians, these "mutes" as Michelet[91] called them: they see further than their neighbours, see things in more sombre colours and voice their opinions more outspokenly.

One of our compatriots wrote the following long before I did: "Who has done more than we to glorify the superior advantages of the eighteenth century, the light of its philosophy, the refinement of its manners, the spread of the social spirit, the institution of the closest and friendliest ties between nations, a mild form of government? Although some black clouds still obscure the horizon of mankind, yet a bright ray of hope gilds its borders....

We held that the end of our century would see the last of the chief miseries of mankind and thought it would mark the union of theory and practice, of speculative thought and activity.... What has happened to this promising system today? It has completely collapsed; the eighteenth century is drawing to a close and the poor philanthropist measures off the two paces of his grave, with a disillusioned and broken heart, to close his eyes for ever!

"Who could have expected or foreseen it? Where are the people we once loved? Where are the fruits of science and wisdom? Age of enlightenment, I do not recognize you! In blood and flames, amidst murders and destruction, I do not recognize you!

"The misanthropes are triumphant. Here is the fruit of your enlightenment, they say. Here are the fruits of your science. Let philosophy perish! And the unfortunate man left without country, bereft of a home, a father, a son or a friend, repeats after him: let it perish!

"Bloodshed cannot last for ever. I am certain that the hand brandishing the sword will tire; that the sulphur and saltpetre in the earth will be exhausted, that the thunder will grow silent: peace will descend sooner or later, but what will it be like?—What if it is the silence of the grave, cold and gloomy?...

"The fall of science seems to me to be not only possible, but even inevitable, nay, imminent. When this magnificent building crumbles and its benificent lights are extinguished, what are we to expect? The prospect terrifies me and my heart trembles. Granted that some sparks will remain smouldering under the ashes; granted also that some people will find them and use them to light up their quiet, solitary retreats—yet what will happen to the world?

"I hide my face.

"Can it be that the human race has attained in our day the summit of enlightenment and must again be plunged in barbarity, only again, little by little, to rise out of it like the Sisyphean rock which, carried to the summit of the mountain, rolled down by its own weight, and had again to be carried up the mountain by the hand of the everlasting toiler! What a sad picture!

"Now it seems to me that the chronicles themselves bear out the plausibility of this opinion. We hardly know the names of ancient Asiatic peoples and kingdoms but, to judge from some historical fragments, we may assume that they were not barbarians. The kingdoms were destroyed, the people vanished, new tribes arose out of their dust, were born in darkness and passed their infancy in twilight, learned and won glory. Perhaps aeons were sunk in eternity, and many a time day glimmered in the minds of people, and night enveloped the souls as many times before Egypt arose.

"Egyptian civilization was linked with Greek. The Romans studied at this great school.

"What succeeded this brilliant epoch? The barbarism of many centuries!

"This thick pall slowly thinned and at last the sun of science shone; the kind and credulous humanists moved from success to success, descried the near goal of perfection and in joyous exaltation exclaimed: *the shore*! But suddenly the sky was veiled, and the fate of mankind was hidden behind black clouds! O, generations to come! What future awaits you?

"At times a feeling of unbearable sadness wrings my heart; I fall on my knees and stretch out my hands to the unseen.... There is no answer!—My head falls to my breast.

"The eternal circular movement, the eternal repetition, the eternal alternation from day to night and from night to day. A drop of joy in the sea of bitter tears. My friend! Why should you, I, or anybody else live? What did our forefathers live for? What will posterity live for?

"My spirits droop, I am weak and sad!"

These lines, engendered by suffering, full of fire and tears, were written at the end of the nineties by N. M. Karamzin.[92]

The introduction to the Russian manuscript contained a few words written to friends in Russia. I did not consider it necessary to republish them in the German edition. Here they are.

FAREWELL![93]

(Paris, March 1, 1849)

Our separation will continue for a long time, perhaps for ever. At the present moment I do not wish to return; and I do not know whether I will have a chance to do so later. You have been expecting me and I am in duty bound to explain the situation. If I owe anyone at all an explanation for my absence, or for my conduct, it is, of course, to you, my friends.

An insurmountable repugnance and a strong inner voice, a prophetic voice, forbids me from crossing the borders of Russia, particularly now when the monarchy, exasperated and frightened by all that is going on in Europe, redoubles its fury in suppressing every intellectual movement, and brutally curtains off sixty million people from mankind liberating itself, barring out with its black, iron hand, covered with Polish blood, the last ray of light faintly illuminating a small number of them. No, my friends, I cannot cross the boundary of this kingdom of darkness, arbitrariness, silent torpor, secret murders, gagged torture. I shall wait until the power, weary with fruitless efforts and enfeebled by the resistance it has provoked, recognizes *something* in the Russian individual worthy of respect.

Please, don't misunderstand me: it is not pleasure or diversion, nor even personal safety that I have found here. Indeed,

I do not know who could, today in Europe, find either pleasure or diversion; diversion during earthquakes, pleasure during a desperate struggle. You could sense the sorrow in every line of my letters; life here is very difficult. Venomous hatred is intermingled with love; gall with tears; a feverish agitation saps the whole organism. The time of illusions and hopes is over. There is nothing here in which I believe save a handful of people, a few ideas and the fact that the movement cannot be stopped. I see the inevitable downfall of the old Europe and regret nothing that exists, neither the heights attained by her education, nor her institutions. There is nothing in this world that I love more than that which it chastises, nothing that I respect more than that which it executes and yet I stay here only to suffer doubly—from my own grief and from its grief and to perish, perhaps, at its downfall and ruin towards which it is rushing headlong.

Why then do I stay here?

I stay because that struggle is going on *here*. Here, in spite of the blood and tears, social problems are being worked out; and painful and burning as the suffering here is, it is articulate. The struggle is open and above-board. No one hides. Woe betide the vanquished but at least they will have given battle. They are not gagged before they have had their say. The tyranny is great but the protest is thundering; the warriors are often sent to the galleys, chained hand and foot—but with head upraised and their right to free speech not denied them. Where the word has not been lost, the cause has not yet been lost. It is this open struggle, this free speech that keeps me here. For its sake I am willing to sacrifice everything. I give up you, my friends, part of my fortune and, perhaps, my very life to march in the ranks of the vigorous minority "persecuted, but invincible."

It is for this free word that I have broken, or rather, for a time, loosened my blood ties with the people in whom I found such rich response to all that is light and dark in my heart, whose tongue and songs are my tongue and songs, and I stay in a country where only the bitter cry of the proletariat and the desperate bravery of its friends arouse my deep sympathy.

This decision has cost me dear. You know me—and will believe me. I have stifled my heartache. My heart has been torn by the struggle, and I have made my decision not as a hot-headed youth but as a man who has long reflected over the step taken, weighing all that he loses. It took me many months of hesitation and deliberation to arrive at a decision and I have finally decided to sacrifice everything

To human dignity,
To free speech.

I cannot let myself be influenced by consideration of the consequences. They lie beyond my power. They depend rather on the power of autocratic caprice which goes to the lengths of its arbitrary compass which has traced not only our words, but our steps as well. It lay, however, within my power not to obey, and I did not.

To go against one's convictions when it can be avoided is immoral. Passive submission now becomes almost impossible. I have witnessed two revolutions. I have too long been a free man to suffer myself again to be enchained. I have lived through popular movements and have grown accustomed to free speech. Am I again to become a serf? Never, not even for the sake of suffering together with you! If it were necessary to prevail over myself for the sake of a common cause, I might have found the strength. But where is this common cause of ours at the moment? There, at home, you have no ground on which a free man can stand. So how can you call me back? To a struggle—I gladly agree! But to martyrdom, to futile silence, to submission—under no circumstances! Ask anything you like of me, but don't ask me to be double-faced; don't compel me to act the loyal subject. Respect in me the liberty of the individual.

Personal freedom is a magnificent thing; *by it and by it alone* can a nation achieve its true freedom. Man must respect and honour his freedom in himself no less than in his neighbour or in the people at large. If you are convinced of this then you will agree that it is my right and my duty to remain here; that it constitutes the only way in which an in-

dividual in our country can voice his protest; that it is the sacrifice he must make for the sake of human dignity. But if you will qualify my staying here as desertion, and forgive me only because you love me, that will mean that you have not yet completely liberated yourselves.

I am well aware what objection may be raised from the point of view of sentimental patriotism and civic affectation; but I cannot accept these superannuated views. I have outgrown them. I have extricated myself from them and it is precisely against them that I am fighting. This rehash of Roman and Christian reminiscences interfere most of all with the establishment of true conceptions of freedom—conceptions that are sound, clear and mature. Fortunately customs and long evolution in Europe compensate for some of the absurd theories and absurd laws. People here live on soil fertilized by two civilizations; the path, trodden by their ancestors in the course of two and a half thousand years, was not futile, and much that is human has sprung up in spite of externalities and the official system.

In the worst days of European history we find some respect for the individual and a certain recognition of his independence, certain rights conceded to talent, to genius. Vile as the German Government of those days was, Spinoza was not exiled. Lessing was not flogged nor forced into the army. In this respect shown not only to sheer physical force, but to moral force as well, in this involuntary recognition of the individual lies one of the greatest humanistic principles of life in Europe.

Europe never regarded its citizens residing abroad as criminals or anyone emigrating to America as a traitor.

Not so in our country. The individual at home ever oppressed and neglected has never made as much as an attempt to get a hearing. Free expression of opinion at home was always regarded as an insolence; independence as sedition. The individual was absorbed in the state; was dissolved in the commune. The revolution effected by Peter I replaced the antiquated landlord rule of Russia by the European bureaucratic system. Everything that could be transferred from the Swedish and German codes was; everything that could be trans-

planted from Holland, a land of free municipalities, to an autocratic government of rural communes was borrowed. But the unwritten, moral restraints on the government, the instinctive recognition of the rights of individuals, the right of thought, of truth, could not be transplanted and were not. Slavery in Russia increased with education; the state grew, improved, but the individual in no way profited by the process. Indeed, the stronger the state grew, the weaker did he become. The European forms of administration and of the judiciary, military and civil organization have developed into a monstrous, hopeless despotism. If Russia were not so vast and that borrowed system of government had not been built so haphazardly and amorphously, one could then say without exaggeration that not a soul with any sense of personal dignity could have remained in Russia.

Corrupted by the complete absence of resistance, power went on occasions to outrageous lengths, unparalleled in the history of any other country. You know the extent of it from stories about Emperor Paul, a poet of his craft. Discard the capricious, the fantastic in Paul and you will see that he is by no means original and the principles inspiring him are exactly those to be found not only in all the tsars but in every governor, police inspector or landlord. All fourteen ranks of the famous bureaucratic hierarchy are becoming ever more drunk with the certainty of their own immunity. Every act of power, every relation of a superior to a subordinate is a flagrant exhibition of gross insolence, of the humiliating certainty that the individual will stand for anything: the recruitment repeated for three times, the law on foreign passports, flogging in the school for engineers. Thus Little Russia accepted serfdom in the eighteenth century; thus all Russia, finally, believed that people could be sold and resold without a question, without even being asked by anybody on what legal grounds all this was done, not even by those who were being sold. The government at home is more self-assured and unrestrained than it is in Turkey or in Persia. There is nothing to restrict it, no traditions of the past: for it has disowned its own past, and has no concern for that of Europe. It has no respect for its people, knows

nothing of the general culture of mankind, and battles against the present. Hitherto, at least, the government was ashamed of its neighbours and looked up to them; now it sets itself up as an example to all oppressors and aspires to be their mentor.

We saw the worst possible period of the imperial regime. We grew up under terror, under the black wings of the secret police, and were mutilated by hopeless oppression. We have barely survived. But is that not too little? Has the time not come to loosen our hands and tongue for activity which would serve as an example? Has the time not come to awaken the slumbering consciousness of the peoples? And surely it is impossible to awaken it by whispering, or remote allusions, when shouting and blunt words are barely audible? Open, frank acts are required: December 14 made so violent an impression on young Russia precisely because it took place in St. Isaac's Square. But now not only the square, but the written word, or the lecturer's chair have all grown impossible in Russia. An individual working in secrecy or his protest from afar is all that is now left open to us.

I stay here not only because I find it repugnant to allow myself to be pinioned on crossing the borders, but also in order to work. I cannot live with folded arms anywhere; here I have no other work but that of *our cause*.

He who has, for more than twenty years, nurtured in his breast a single thought, suffered for it and lived for it; he who has wandered from prison to prison, from one place of exile to another, who owes to this thought the finest moments of his life, the most inspiring meetings, will not abandon it. Nor will he make it dependent on external factors and the degree of longitude and latitude. Quite the other way round. Here I am more useful. Here I am your uncensored speech, your free press, your chance representative.

All this seems new and unusual only to us; actually it has had many precedents. In all countries, faithful and active people used to emigrate at the beginning of a revolution, when thought was still feeble and the material power unbridled: their free words came from afar and this fact in itself lent their words weight and authority, for behind the words you could see the self-sacrificing deeds. The force of

their words grew with the distance, as does the impetus of a stone, dropped from a high tower. Emigration is the first symptom of the approaching revolution.

Besides, Russians abroad have one more task to fulfil. It is indeed time to acquaint Europe with Russia. Europe does not know us; she knows our government, our façade and nothing more; conditions are extremely propitious for accomplishing this. It would not become Europe to drape herself majestically in the robes of disdainful ignorance. *Das vornehme Ignorieren* of Russia would not become Europe now that she has felt the despotism of the petit bourgeoisie and the Algerian Cossacks,[94] now that she has been kept in a state of siege from the Danube to the Atlantic Ocean, and her prisons and galleys have been filled with people persecuted for their convictions. Let Europe become more closely acquainted with a nation whose youthful strength she felt in battles even though she eventually emerged the victor: let us tell Europe of this mighty and still enigmatic people which has so unobtrusively formed a country of sixty million and has grown so strong and tremendously large without departing from the principle of communal organization, and was the first to preserve it through the various stages of state development; about a people which, in some astonishing way, was able to come out intact from under the yoke of the Mongolian hordes and of German bureaucrats, from under the disciplinary stick of the corporal of the barracks and from under the degrading whip of the Tatars, a people which retained its fine character, clear mind and vigorous nature in spite of the oppression of serfdom, and which responded to the tsar's edict to promote education within a century with the genius of Pushkin. Let the Europeans become acquainted with their neighbour; they only fear him. It would be well for them to know what they fear.

Hitherto we have been unpardonably modest and conscious of our enslaved condition. We were apt to forget all that was good, full of hope and promise in the life of our people. We waited for a German in order to introduce ourselves to Europe.[95] Is that not a disgrace?

Will I have the time to accomplish something? I don't know—I hope so!

Farewell, my friends, for long—give me your hands and your help. I need both the one and the other. And then, who knows? So much has happened in recent times! Perhaps that day when we shall gather as of old in Moscow and clink our glasses unafraid "To Russia and blessed liberty," *is not so far off* as it seems.

My heart refuses to believe that that day will not come; it is wrung at the thought of eternal separation, at the thought that I shall not see those streets which I paced so often full of my youthful dreams, those houses which are so interwoven with my memories, our Russian villages, our peasants whom I missed so much at the southernmost part of Italy.... No, it cannot be. But what if it is so? Then I bequeath my toast to my children. Dying in an alien land, I shall preserve my faith in the future of the Russian people, and bless it from my place of voluntary exile!

I

BEFORE THE STORM

(Conversation on Board Ship)[96]

Ist's denn so grosses Geheimnis, was Gott
und der Mensch und die Welt sei?
Nein, doch niemand hört's gern, also bleibt
es geheim.

Goethe

"...I agree that your ideas are full of audacity, vigour, truth, and even humour; but I cannot accept them. Perhaps it can all be reduced to a question of temperament, of the nervous system. You will have no followers until you have learnt how to change the blood in the veins."

"Perhaps, however, my viewpoint is beginning to grow on you—you search for physiological excuses, appeal to man's nature."

"Certainly not in order to achieve serenity, to live without suffering and look indifferently on the troubled world from the

Olympic heights like Goethe, admiring the convulsions of this chaos struggling in vain for equilibrium."

"Your sarcasm is misplaced. If I groped about for an understanding of life, it was without any ulterior purpose. I simply wanted to learn something, to get deeper at the roots of things. All that I had heard and read neither satisfied me nor explained anything. On the contrary, it landed me in contradictions or absurdities. I sought neither consolation nor despair—for I was young. Now I greatly appreciate every fleeting consolation, every minute of joy: for they grow ever rarer.[97] Then I searched only for the truth, for something within my understanding. Have I learned or understood much? I don't know. I cannot say that my viewpoint is particularly consoling but I feel more at peace with the world and do not reproach life for not giving what it cannot give—that is all I have gained."

"I, for my part, want to overcome neither my suffering nor my anger. That is a human right which I would not think of renouncing. My indignation is my form of protest. I don't want to make peace."

"And indeed, with whom could you make it? You say that you do not wish your suffering to end. That means that you do not wish to accept the truth as it arises in your own mind. It might not demand that you should suffer. But you have already renounced logic, reserving for yourself the choice of accepting or rejecting the consequences. Do you remember that Englishman who, all his life, refused to recognize Napoleon as emperor? This did not, however, prevent the latter from being crowned twice! Far from consistent, this obstinate desire to remain aloof from the world is also extremely vain. Man is fond of effects, he loves to play a role, particularly a tragic one: suffering is fine, noble, and implies unhappiness. But that is not all—besides vanity, it requires a great deal of cowardice. Don't take amiss the use of the word: fear of the truth leads many to prefer suffering to analysis. Suffering distracts, occupies, consoles ... yes, indeed, it does console and what is most important, like every occupation, it keeps man form searching his soul and studying life. Pascal said that people play cards so as not to be left alone with themselves.

it is only the initial impulse. It is not enough to be merely indignant, spending a lifetime in regretting failures, in struggle and despair. Tell me frankly, how did you try to make sure that your demands were justified?"

"I have not invented them; they arose in my breast spontaneously. The more I thought of them later, the more apparent was their justice and their good sense. That is my proof. It cannot be an aberration or lunacy; thousands of others, indeed, our whole generation, suffer almost in the same way: some more, some less, depending on the circumstances and the level of development[98]—the higher the latter is, the greater is their suffering. An omnipresent sadness is the most salient trait of our time; a painful ennui has gripped the soul of the man of our day; the consciousness of his moral impotence troubles him; lack of confidence in everything ages him before his time. I regard you as an exception; moreover, your indifference seems suspicious to me: it smacks of frigid despair, of the indifference of a man who has lost not only hope but hopelessness as well; it is an unnatural calm. Nature, true in all its manifestations, as you have repeatedly said, must be equally true in this manifestation of sadness and dejection; its universality invests it with some right to existence. Admit that it is precisely your point of view that makes it rather difficult to assert the contrary."

"Why should I? I desire nothing better than to agree with you. The dejected state which you speak of is self-evident and, of course, is historically justified: it is justified in seeking a way out. Suffering and pain are a challenge, are the cry of alarm raised by life, signalizing danger. The world in which we live is dying; that is to say, that form in which life manifests itself; no remedies can help its decrepit body. If the heirs are to breathe freely, it must be buried; yet people insist on treating the patient and staving off death. You have, probably, had occasion to see the heart-rending grief, the poignant, distressing uncertainty felt in a house where someone is dying: despair is aggravated by hope, the nerves are strained to the breaking point; the healthy become ill, life practically comes to a standstill. The death of the patient relieves those who remained behind. Tears are shed but gone is that killing

expectancy: the irretrievable loss is a stark reality that has severed the past. Then life begins to recover, to heal its wounds and take a new turn.[99] We live in a great and agonizing epoch. That is reason enough for our despondency. Moreover, the preceding centuries particularly developed in us a feeling of melancholy, a morbid languor. For three centuries everything simple, sound, vital, has been crushed; thought hardly dared to raise its voice, and its position resembled that of the Jews in the Middle Ages who were forced to be sly, servile, and wary. This is what influenced our intellect which developed and matured in this unhealthy atmosphere. It naturally turned from Catholic mysticism to idealism[100] retaining fear of all that was natural, an uneasy conscience, and expectations of impossible blessings. It is still divorced from life, keeps its romantic sadness and has cultivated its anguish and disjointedness. How long is it since we, intimidated from childhood up, have ceased to renounce our most innocent desires? How long is it since we have ceased to tremble at the discovery that our heart is full of passionate yearnings not listed in the romantic catalogue? You said last time that those exigencies which tormented us developed naturally. That is so, and then again, it is not so—everything is natural: scrofula is most naturally the result of malnutrition and bad climatic conditions, yet we nonetheless regard it as something alien to the organism. Education treats us as Hamilcar his son, Hannibal: it binds us by an oath before we have reached the age of reason. It entangles us in a moral servitude which we regard as compulsory because of a false sense of delicacy, or the difficulty of rejecting what has been inculcated in us so early in life and, finally, because of sheer laziness to delve into the essence of the matter. Education snares us before we are able to understand things; it makes children believe in the impossible and cuts them off from a free and direct relation to the world. As we grow up we realize that everything is awry: both ideas and life; that what we were taught to look to for support is rotten and flimsy; while what we were warned to avoid like poison, is wholesome. Intimidated and mystified, trained to obedience and rules, we finally find ourselves at large, each groping for the truth as best he knows how. Tormented by the

desire to know, we eavesdrop behind doors and peep through cracks, or resort to subterfuges and shams. We regard truth as a vice and scorn for lies as insolence. Is it to be wondered then that we can set to rights neither our external nor internal life? That we exaggerate our demands and our sacrifices? That we disdain the possible and grow impatient when the impossible disdains us? We chafe against the natural conditions of life and yield to arbitrary nonsense. All our civilization is like that: it developed in the midst of civil strife. Escaped from schools and monasteries, it did not enter life, but passed through it, like Faust, to see, to reflect, and then to withdraw from the common herd to the drawing-room, to the academy, to the library. Two banners it carried: "Romanticism for the Soul" was inscribed on one of them, "Idealism for the Mind" on the other. That largely accounts for much of the disorder in our life. We do not like simplicity; we do not respect nature by tradition; we want to dispose of it, to heal it by means of incantations and then wonder why the patient does not improve. Physics outrages us by the independence of its spirit; what we long for is alchemy, magic; whereas life and nature unconcernedly pursue their own ends, yielding to man only in so far as he learns to apply nature's own means."

"You seem to take me for a German poet, and one from the previous epoch to boot, who, vexed because he possessed a body and was obliged to nourish it, sought for 'incorporeal virgins, a different nature, and another sun.' I desire neither magic nor mysteries; I merely want to shake off that state which you describe a dozen times more vividly than I—that moral impotence, those wretched ideas which cannot be adapted to life. What I want is to emerge out of that chaos where we have finally ceased to distinguish our enemies from our friends. It disgusts me to see, no matter where I look, either the tortured or the torturing. What magic words do we need to make people realize that they alone are to blame for their wretchedness—to explain to them, for example, that there is no need to rob the poor, that it is abominable to gorge within sight of starving people; that murder is just as outrageous when committed stealthily on the highway at night as when committed in broad daylight on the grand square to the

roll of drums, or that it is dastardly to say one thing and do another. . . . In a word, to explain to them all those new truths which have been uttered, repeated and printed ever since the days of the seven Greek sages, and then, I think, they were already hoary with age. Moralists and priests fulminate from the pulpits, hold forth on morality and on sins, preach the Gospel and Rousseau. No one raises any objections and no one will obey."

"Candidly, there is nothing in this to regret. All these doctrines and sermons are, for the most part, untrue, inapplicable and more confusing than simple, daily life. The trouble is that thought always races far ahead—the people cannot keep up with their teachers. Take our age: several persons brushed up against the revolution which neither they nor the people were in a position to accomplish. Those in the vanguard thought it was enough for them to say: 'Leave your people and follow us!' and the movement would get under way. They were mistaken—the people knew them as little as they knew the people; they did not believe them. Unaware that they had no following, these people went on commanding and advancing; when they finally awoke to the situation they began to shout at the laggards, waving their arms, calling them, and showering reproaches on them—but it was too late. They were too far away—their voices did not reach that far. And, indeed, the language they spoke was not the language used by the masses. It is painful to admit that we live in a world in its dotage, decrepit and wasted, which obviously lacks the power and deportment to rise to the level of its own thought. We are sorry for the old world; we have grown accustomed to it as to the parental home; we support it, trying to demolish it, and adjust its inept forms to our convictions without realizing that their first iota is its death sentence. We wear clothes cut for our forefathers; our brain was moulded by antecedent influences; it is in no condition to grasp much, and there is much it sees from a false angle. People have arrived at the present state at such great cost that it seems a haven after the madness of feudalism and the brutal oppression that followed; too happy for them not to fear a change. They have grown turgid in its forms; adapted themselves to them. Habit has taken the place

of devotion, the horizon has narrowed—the mind has ceased to soar, the will has grown feeble."

"What a forceful description! Add to this that cheek by jowl with the contented, those whom the present scheme of things satisfies, are, on the one hand, the poor—uncultivated, backward and hungry, struggling hopelessly against need, exhausted by work which cannot give them enough to eat—and, on the other, those like us, who have incautiously run on ahead, surveyors setting up the landmarks of a new world of which we shall never even see the foundation. If anything has been left of all the hopes, of life which has slipped through our fingers (it certainly has), then that is the faith in the future. Sometime, long after our death, the house for which we have cleared the site, will be built and in it life will be good and comfortable—for others."

"After all, there is no reason to assume that the new world will be built according to our plan."

The young man gave a discontented shake of his head and looked for a moment at the sea. The calm was still absolute; a low, heavy cloud passed so slowly overhead that the smoke of the vessel mingled with it as it rose. The sea was black, the air sultry.

"You treat me," he said after a silence, "as a highwayman treats his victim. You have robbed me of everything I own and still unsatisfied, you strip me of my last tatters which shield me from the cold and reach out for my very hair. You compelled me to doubt very much but I still had the future and now you have deprived me of that, too. You rob me of my hopes—like Macbeth you kill my visions."

"And I was under the impression that I was more like a surgeon who removes a fungus."

"Indeed, that is still more apt: the surgeon removes the sick part of the body, without replacing it with a healthy part."

"And, incidentally, saves a life, delivering the patient from a harrowing, chronic disease."

"I know only too well what this delivery of yours means. You fling open the doors of the dungeons and wish to turn out the captive into the steppes, assuring him that he is free; you

demolish the Bastille but put up nothing in its place—what is left is just bare ground."

"That would be wonderful if it were as you say. Unfortunately the remains and the rubble interfere at every step."

"But what do they interfere with? What is our true vocation, where is our banner? What do we believe in? What do we reject?"

"We believe in everything, but don't believe in ourselves. You seek to find a banner? I seek to lose it. You want a guidebook, while I think that on reaching a certain age one should be ashamed to use it. You have just said that we have set up the landmarks of a new world. . . ."

"And they are pulled up by the spirit of negation and analysis. You have a much more sombre view of the world than I, and the consolation you offer only serves to give more frightful expression to the present ordeal. If the future does not belong to us then our entire civilization is a fraud, the day-dream of a fifteen-year-old girl at which she herself will laugh when she is twenty-five. Our labour is in vain, our efforts ridiculous, our hopes resemble those of le paysan du Danube. But then, perhaps, that is what you mean: we should abandon our civilization and, rejecting it, turn back to those laggards?"

"No, it is impossible to renounce progress. What can be done to make me forget what I know? Our civilization is the finest flower of life today—how could one forego one's own progress? But what has that to do with the realization of our ideals; why must the future follow the programme worked out by us?"

"That means, then, that our thoughts have brought us to unrealizable hopes, to absurd expectations. With these hopes aboard, the last fruit of our labours, our ship is caught by the waves and is sinking. The future does not belong to us; we will have naught to do with the present and there is no harbour. We are on board this ship for better or for worse. All that remains to us is to watch, with folded arms, for the water to flood it. He whom this prospect bores and who has more courage, can throw himself into the sea.

"... Le monde fait naufrage,
Vieux bâtiment, usé par tous les flots,
*Il s'engloutit — sauvons-nous à la nage!"**

"I ask for nothing better, but there is a difference between drowning and swimming to safety. The destiny of the young people whom you mentioned in this song, is frightful, they are doubly the victims for they are martyrs without faith. Let their death be laid at the doors of the odious society in which they live; let their death shame it, stigmatize it. But who told you that death was the only way out of this world of senility and agony? You insult life. Leave the world you don't belong to if you really feel yourself a stranger there. We cannot save it—save yourself from the toppling ruins. By saving yourself, you save the future. What have you in common with this world? Perhaps its civilization? But, after all, this civilization now belongs to you, and not to the world which produced it, or out of which it was engendered. The world is not even guilty of understanding this civilization. Or perhaps it is its way of life?— You find it obnoxious and, to tell the truth, it is difficult to love anything so absurd. Is it, finally, your suffering? The world is quite unaware of it. Nor is it acquainted with your joys. You are young; it is old. Take a look and see how feeble it has grown in its worn, aristocratic livery; particularly after the thirties[102] when its face turned ashy. It is the *facies hypocratica*, by which the doctor knows that death has come. Sometimes the patient makes a last feeble effort to cling to life, once again to take possession of it, recover from his illness and enjoy himself—but he cannot and falls into a heavy, delirious somnolence. There is talk of phalansters, democracies, socialism; he listens and understands nothing, or sometimes smiles at such speeches, shaking his head and remembering dreams in which he once believed, but stopped believing when he grew up. That is why he regards, with senile indifference, Communists and Jesuits, pastors and Jacobins, the Rothschild brothers and the starving people; he looks

* Béranger: *Sur la mort d'Escousse et Lebras.*[101]—*A.H.*

vacantly at everything that passes before his eyes. He is ready to die for the few francs clutched in his fist, or even commit murder. Let the old man live out his days as he best knows how in the alms-house. There is nothing you can do for him."

"That's not so easy. It is, moreover, disgusting. But where can we fly to? Where is this new Pennsylvania, all ready?..."

"In order to build old buildings out of new bricks? William Penn carried the old world to implant it on the new soil. North America is a corrected edition of an older previous text, and nothing more. But the Christians in *Rome* ceased to be Romans—this inner exodus is more to the point."

"The idea to attain self-concentration, to cut the umbilical cord attaching us to our motherland, to our age, has been preached for a long time but was slowly realized. It arises in people's minds after every failure or loss of faith. It was the pillar that upheld the mystics and the Masons, philosophers and the Illuminati.[103] They all pointed to the inner exodus but nobody left. Rousseau? He, too, turned aside from the world. Enamoured of it he nonetheless sought to escape from the world but he could not live without it. His disciples carried on his life in the Convention, fought, suffered, executed others, laid their own heads down on the block but neither left France, nor withdrew from their seething activity."

"Their time did not resemble ours in any way. Their future scintillated with countless hopes. Rousseau and his disciples imagined that if their ideas of fraternity were not realized, it was because of physical obstacles—because the word was enchained or the action was unfree—and they, consistent to the end, assaulted all that thwarted their ideas. The task was formidable, enormous, but they were victorious. And once victorious, they thought, the time had at last arrived.... But this *at last* led them to the guillotine and that was absolutely the best that could have happened to them. Elated with battle and labour, their faith intact, they died, swept away by a stormy blast. They were certain that when the storm subsided, their ideal would be realized—without them, but still realized. At last this lull came. How fortunate that all these enthusiasts had long been in their graves! They did not have to face the fact that their cause had not advanced an inch; that their

ideals had remained ideals; that it was not enough to raze the Bastille to make free people of the prisoners. You compare us with them, forgetting that we know what has happened in the fifty years that have passed since their death, that we saw all the hopes of the theoretical minds derided, heard the daemon of history laugh at the expense of their science, ideas, theories. We saw the republic give way to Napoleon, and the Revolution of 1830 conquered by the stock exchange. Having witnessed all that has passed, we cannot harbour the hopes of our predecessors. Having made a deeper study of revolutionary questions we demand today what they demanded, but in a greater and wider degree, yet even their demands remain as inapplicable as before. So, on the one hand, there is the logical consistency of thought and its triumph; on the other hand, its absolute impotence against the world, both deaf and dumb, and inability to grasp the idea of salvation as it is expounded to it—either because this idea is badly expressed or else because it is of purely theoretical, bookish significance—as was, for example, Roman philosophy which never reached more than a small circle of educated people."

"But which do you think is right? Theoretical thought which arose and took shape historically, though consciously, or the fact of the present world which disowns thought but, likewise, constitutes the necessary sequence of the past?"

"Both are absolutely right. All this confusion is the outcome of the fact that life has its own embryogeny which is at variance with the dialectics of pure reason. Speaking of the antique world, here is an example: instead of realizing Plato's republic and the policy of Aristotle, it realized the Roman Republic and the policy of its conquerors; instead of the utopias of Cicero and Seneca, the counties of Lombardy and German law."

"Do you not prophesy that our civilization will fall as did that of Rome? A comforting thought and pleasant prospect. . . ."

"Neither pleasant nor unpleasant. What astonishes you in so commonplace a thought: everything in the world has its end? Yet civilization does not perish so long as there is no complete break in the continuity of the human race: people have a good

memory. Is not the Roman civilization alive for us? And it, exactly like our own, went far beyond the confines of its environment. That is exactly why, on the one hand, it flourished so luxuriantly and, on the other, could not realize itself in full. It made its contribution to its world, as it contributes much to us; but Rome's immediate future was to sprout on other pastures: in the catacombs, where the persecuted Christians took refuge and in the forests where the savage Germans roamed."

"But how is it that in nature everything is so well ordered while civilization, its supreme effort, the crown of an epoch, emerges out of it without aim, falls out of reality and finally withers, leaving behind vague recollections. In the meantime mankind retrogrades, or makes a detour and begins again to grow only to produce that same luxuriant flower—magnificent but sterile.... Your philosophy of history contains something that revolts the soul: what end does all this effort serve? The life of the people becomes a futile game. You build, grain by grain, stone by stone, and before you know it, it all again collapses and people come crawling out from under the ruins, and again set down to clearing the ground in order to build a hut out of moss, boards and fallen capitals, eventually arriving—through ages of arduous labour—to another downfall. Shakespeare had good reason for saying that history is a stupid tale related by a fool."

"All this follows from the gloomy outlook you have on life. You are like those monks who can find nothing better to say on meeting than their dismal *memento mori*, or like those sentimental people who cannot recall without tears 'that people are born only to die.' To look at the end, and not at the thing itself, is the gravest mistake. What need has the plant for its vivid, magnificent corolla? Or its delicious fragrance which will soon pass away? No need at all! But nature is by no means so niggardly and does not disdain the ephemeral present. In everything it attains the most it can and strives for the extremes of fragrance, of pleasure, of thought—so as to reach, at one and the same time, the highest point of development and death which checks and moderates its too extravagant poetic fantasy and its exuberant outbursts. Who will blame nature

Saturn to feed upon. Only now Rhea is scrupulous and does not replace the new-born by stones; it is not worth the trouble. Among them you will not find either Jupiter or Mars. What is the purpose of all this? You do not solve this problem, evading it. Is it worth while for children to be born only to be devoured by their father? And, on the whole, is the game worth the candle?"

"Most assuredly it is! Particularly, since it is not you who pay for it. What bothers you is that not all games are played to a finish but if they were, they would be insufferably dull. Goethe used to say that beauty is transient because only what is transient can be beautiful. People take offence at that. Man instinctively strives to preserve all that pleases him. Once he is born, he wants to live eternally; once he has fallen in love —he wants to love and be loved all his life, just as at the moment he declared this love. He blames life because at fifty there is no longer that same freshness of feeling, that same verve as at twenty. But such immobility is contrary to the spirit of life. Life does not provide for anything lasting in the personal sphere; it pours out all it has at the present moment and, bestowing on man the ability to enjoy himself, as best he can, neither ensures life nor enjoyment, nor their duration. It is in this unceasing movement of life, in these incessant changes that nature is renewed and goes on living. And that is what makes it eternally young. That is why every historic moment is complete in itself as every year is with its spring and summer, with winter and autumn, with storms and good weather. That is why every period is new, fresh, and filled with its own hopes. That is why it is pregnant with its own good and its own pains. The present belongs to it. But people demand more—they want the future, too, to belong to them."

"Man suffers because he cannot descry, even in the future, that harbour which he is trying to make. He gazes ahead, sadly disquieted, along the endless path, and sees that he is just as far from his aim after all his efforts as he was a thousand, nay, two thousand years before."

"And what is the aim of the singer's song? Sounds, nothing but sounds. Sounds that fade away the moment they escape the singer's lips. If, instead of enjoying these sounds, you

search for something else in them, wait for something else, you will find yourself at the end of the song with memories and regrets that, instead of listening, you stood waiting for something.... You are misled by categories which have a poor grasp on life. Consider it well: what is this goal—is it a programme, or a commandment? Who has given it? To whom has it been announced? Is it or is it not obligatory? If it is obligatory then what are we—puppets or people? Indeed, are we morally free beings or simply cogs in a wheel? I find it easier to view life and, consequently, history too, as the end rather than a means to the end."

"In other words, we are the goal of nature and history."

"Partly—*plus* the present of all that exists. That embraces everything: the heritage of all past efforts and the germs of all that is to be; the inspiration of the artist, and the energy of the citizen, and the enjoyment of the youth who, at this very moment, is making his way to the secluded arbour where his sweetheart is waiting for him, timid, and full of the moment, without a thought for the future, or of a goal, and the frisky fish splashing about in the moonlight, and the harmony of the whole solar system—in a word, I can make so bold as to round it off, like feudal titles, with the three etc., etc., etc."

"You are absolutely right in so far as nature is concerned, but it seems to me that you have forgotten that through all those changes and entanglements of history runs a red thread which joins them into one whole. This thread is progress—or, perhaps, you do not recognize progress either?"

"Progress is an inalienable attribute of conscious, uninterrupted development; it is the active record and the physiological perfection of people by social life."[105]

"Is it possible that you do not see the goal here?"

"On the contrary, here I see the consequence. If progress is the goal, then what is it we are working for? What is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, recedes instead of rewarding them; who, to console the exhausted and doomed crowds greeting him with *morituri te salutant*, can only reply with the ironic promise that after their death life on earth will be splendid. Can it be that you, too, doom the people of today to the sad destiny of the caryatids supporting the balcony on

which others will dance some day? Or assign them to the role of those unfortunate workers who, knee-deep in mud, are to drag along the bark with the mysterious golden fleece in her hold and the meek inscription "Future Progress" on her flags. The exhausted drop in their tracks, while others pick up the harness with renewed strength, yet the road, as you have said, remains as long as it was at the start, for there is no end to progress. This in itself should make people cautious: the aim, endlessly far, is not an aim but a snare. The goal must be nearer—at least wages or the enjoyment of labour. Every epoch, every generation, every life has had and will still have their plenitude. As it advances new demands arise, new ordeals, new means, and some faculties develop at the expense of others; finally, the cerebral matter itself improves.... Why do you smile? Yes, indeed, the cerebrum improves. Everything natural shocks and astonishes you, idealists, just as once knights were astounded to hear that villains also demanded human rights. When Goethe was in Italy he compared the skull of the ancient ox with that of one of our days and discovered that the contemporary ox had thinner bones, and a larger cavity for the cerebral hemispheres. The ancient ox was, evidently, stronger than ours; but the latter attained greater cerebral development during his peaceful submission to man. What makes you think that man is less capable of development than the ox? This growth of the species is not, as you suppose, the goal but an inherent attribute of a continuous line of generations.[106] The goal of every generation is the generation itself. So far from using the generation as a means for attaining a future result, nature is not, indeed, concerned about the future at all. It is prepared, like Cleopatra, to dissolve a pearl in wine if only for the momentary pleasure it gives. At heart nature is a bayadere and a bacchante."

"And the poor thing cannot find her vocation! A bacchante on an invalid's diet, a bayadere in mourning!... In our days, it is true, she is more like the penitent Magdalene. Or, perhaps, it is the brain that is to blame because it has developed in one direction?"

"Your desire to be sarcastic has led you to say something much more sensible than you realize. One-sided development

is always accompanied by the *avortement* of other neglected sides. Children, over-developed intellectually, are physically weak; ages of unnatural living conditions have developed in us idealism, artificiality, and upset our moral balance. We were big and strong, even happy in the isolation of our theoretical beatitude; now we have passed that stage and have found it insupportable; but in the meantime it has brought about a frightful rupture with practical spheres. Neither side can be blamed for that. Nature has done its utmost to let man pass the stage of the beast. Man, in his turn, took a step that put one of his legs completely out of the sphere of nature. And he did this because he was free. We speak so much about freedom; we are so proud of it and, at the same time, are vexed that nobody undertakes to lead us by the hand, that we stumble and pay for the consequences of our acts. I am ready to say, like you, that the brain developed in one direction, that is, away from the influence of idealism; people are now growing aware of this and are tending in this direction; they are being cured of idealism in the same way that they were cured of other historic maladies such as chivalry, Catholicism, Protestantism."

"But you must agree, at least, that the path of development through maladies and deviations is most singular."

"Yes, the path is not marked out. Nature has traced its designs very faintly, in the broadest outlines, leaving all the details to the inclination of people, circumstances, climate, to a thousand of accidental clashes.[107] Struggle, the interaction of natural forces and conscious power, the result of which it is impossible to know beforehand, lends each historic epoch absorbing interest. If mankind went straight to any particular goal, that would be not history but logic; mankind would stop ready for immediate *status quo*, like animals. All this, fortunately, is impossible, futile, and worse than what exists. The animal organism develops its instinct little by little. In man this development goes further—it attains reason, though slowly and with difficulty. Reason does not exist either in nature or outside of it; it has to be attained, to be somehow adjusted, for there exists no ready libretto to follow. And if it did, history would become dull, unnecessary, and ridiculous.

The grief of Tacitus and the enthusiasm of Columbus would become a farce, plain tomfoolery; great people would all descend to the level of the same footlights and become like theatrical heroes who, regardless of how good or bad their performance is, will invariably continue down to the end known beforehand. In history everything is unpremeditated, everything is free, everything is *ex tempore*. There are no limits ahead, no itineraries. There are merely the conditions, the fire of life, the sacred unrest, and the everlasting challenge to the combatants to test their strength, to take any road they please, wherever there is a road—and where none exists, genius will pave it."[108]

"But, if, unfortunately, there is no Columbus at hand?"

"Cortés will take his place. Men of genius are almost always to be found when the need for them arises. Incidentally, they are not indispensable. People will get there later, by taking a more difficult road. Genius is a poetic extravagance of nature, its *coup d'état*, its great leap, the triumph of its effort."

"That is all very well, but it seems to me that with things so vague, so amorphous, history may continue for ages or else come to an end tomorrow."

"Undoubtedly. People will not die of boredom if the human race lasts for a long time. It is likely, though, that people will come up against the limitations inherent in human nature, against those insurmountable physiological conditions which characterize man. Anyway, there will be no lack of work or occupations. Three-quarters of what we do is a repetition of what has been done by others before us. Thus you see that history can continue for millions of years. On the other hand I have no objection to history terminating tomorrow. Who can foretell the future? The Encke's comet may brush against the globe; geological cataclysms may convulse the surface and stand things up on end; some gaseous emanations may make breathing impossible for half an hour and there you have the end of history."

"Tut, tut, what a frightful picture you are drawing! You try to frighten me with a nightmare, but I assure you that that will not happen. Was it worth while developing for three thousand years to arrive at the pleasant prospect of asphyxiation by

some sulphurous gases! How can you be blind to anything so absurd?"

"It amazes me that you have not yet grown accustomed to the ways of life. In nature, as in the soul of man, there slumbers an infinite multitude of forces and possibilities; as soon as the conditions arise necessary to awaken them, they will develop and will continue to develop to the nth degree; they are ready to fill the world but they might stumble on the way, take a different direction or stop or even collapse. The death of a single person is no less an absurdity than the destruction of the entire human race. Who has guaranteed us that our planet will exist perpetually? It will be just as incapable of withstanding a revolution in the solar system as the genius of Socrates was incapable of withstanding the hemlock. But suppose it is not asked to drink of the hemlock? Perhaps—and that was my starting-point. Actually, it makes no difference to nature: it will not diminish; nothing can be detracted from it. Change nature as much as you like, yet everything will remain within it and, after burying the human race, it will most lovingly start anew with its monstrous ferns and lizards half a mile long, but with some improvements, taken from the new environment and from the new conditions."

"Well, that is far from being a matter of indifference to people. I think that the 'imperious Caesar' would not have derived the least pleasure from learning that he has turned to clay and might stop a hole—as Hamlet says."

"In so far as Alexander the Great is concerned, I can reassure you: he will never discover it. Of course, a person is by no means indifferent to whether he is alive or dead; consequently, we may conclude that one should profit by life, by the present. It is not for nothing that nature constantly calls on us, in all its languages, to enjoy life, and whispers in every ear its *vivero memento*."

"All for nothing. We remember that we are alive by the great pain, the grief that grips our heart, and the monotonous ticking of the hours.[109] . . . How can we enjoy ourselves, forget ourselves when we know that the world is tumbling about our ears and, consequently, will crush us, too. But that, in itself, is not so terrible. It is still worse to die of old age and see that

the dilapidated, tottering walls don't show the least signs of falling. I know no such stifling time in history: there were struggles and suffering before, too, but there was also some compensation: one could die, at least, for an idea. We have nothing to die for or—to live for. Could you find a better time to enjoy life?"

"And you think that life in decadent Rome was easier?"

"Certainly. Its decline was just as evident as the world which was arising in its place."[110]

"Evident to whom? Do you really think that the Romans saw their times through our eyes? Even Gibbon could not help feeling the spell which ancient Rome casts on every strong mind. Remember how many generations its agony lasted; for us this time is foreshortened by a dreary monotony of events and by a poverty of outstanding personalities. It is precisely such mute, colourless periods that are oppressive to contemporaries. Every year consisted exactly of those same 365 days; and then, too, there were people with ardent hearts, and they wasted away and were bewildered by the fall of collapsing walls. What heart-rending cries then escaped out of the breasts of mankind! Their groans now make us shudder!"

"They could have been baptized."

"The position of the Christians was then equally sad: they had hidden in the catacombs for four centuries. Success seemed impossible and the victims innumerable."

"But a fanatic faith maintained them and it was ultimately justified."

"And heresy appeared on the day following their triumph; the pagan world forced itself into the saintly quiet of their fraternity, and the Christians looked tearfully back to the days of their persecutions, blessing their memory and reading the martyrology."

"It seems that you offer me the consoling thought that it has always been as bad as it is now."

"No. I only wanted to remind you that our age has no monopoly on suffering and that you rate too cheaply the suffering of the past. Thought was impatient hitherto as well; it wants immediate results, and finds waiting repulsive, while life, dissatisfied with abstract ideas, procrastinates—for once

a step is taken, it is difficult to rectify it. Therein lies the tragedy of thinking people.... But to avoid another digression, let me ask you now what makes you think that the world around us is so stable and durable?..."

Heavy drops of rain had long been falling on us. The rumbling peals of thunder grew more and more distinct. The lightning became more dazzling and the rain turned into a downpour. Everybody made for their cabins. The ship creaked, pitched unsupportably, and the conversation came to an end.

Roma, Via del Corso
December 31, 1847

II

AFTER THE STORM[111]

TOGETHER we have lived through those frightful, ignoble June days. And it is to you I dedicate the first sobs which escaped my breast after those events. Yes, sobs! I am not ashamed of my tears! Do you remember Rachel singing the Marseillaise? The moment has now come when we can truly appreciate it. All Paris sang the Marseillaise—blind beggars and Grisi,[112] street urchins and soldiers. The Marseillaise, as a journalist has put it, became the Pater Noster since February 24. The sounds have only just died out—an *état de siège* is not a healthy time for them. After February 24[113] the Marseillaise was a cry of joy, of victory, of strength, a warning, a cry of power and triumph....

But Rachel's Marseillaise was frightening, and the crowd withdrew, crushed. Do you remember? That was the death toll rung during wedding festivities; that was a reproach, a sombre prophecy, a groan of despair rising amidst hope. Rachel's Marseillaise was a call to a feast of blood and revenge. Where flowers were being strewn, she flung down juniper branches. "This is not the exultant Marseillaise of forty-eight," good Frenchmen said, "it is the sombre chant of the reign of terror." They were mistaken: there was no such song in '93. It could be born in the breast of an artist only on the eve of the crime of June and after the treachery of February 24.

Do you remember her appearance on the stage? Slender, dressed in a white blouse, without a single jewel, her head supported on her hand, she walked on slowly, and, with a sombre look in her eyes, began to sing under her breath.... The poignant sorrow of these sounds verged on despair. It was a call to battle; but without the faith that it would rally anyone to its banners. It was a prayer; it was the voice of conscience. And, suddenly, from that weak breast burst forth a wail, a cry of rage and passion—

Aux armes, citoyens!...
Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons

she added in the implacable voice of the executioner. As if amazed by her own passion, she began the second stanza even more softly, more disheartened, and again came the call to battle, to bloodshed.... For a moment the woman in her became supreme—she dropped to her knees, the piercing call softening down to a prayer; love triumphed and she wept as she pressed the banner to her breast.... *Amour sacré de la patrie!...* Then she became ashamed of herself; she jumped up and ran out, waving the banner and crying: "*Aux armes, citoyens!...*" Not even once did the audience dare to re-call her.

This article, which I dedicate to you, is my Marseillaise. Farewell! Read these lines to our friends. Do not be unhappy! Farewell! I dare not call you by your name nor sign my own. In the country you are going to it is a crime to weep—and a sin to pity tears.

Paris, August 1, 1848

* * *

Pereat!

Women cry to ease their hearts; that consolation is denied us. For me writing must take the place of tears. I am writing not to describe or to explain the bloody events, but simply to speak of them, to give vent to words, thoughts—to my bitterness. What place is here for description, for a collection of facts, for judgement? I can still hear the sound of gunshots, the thud of cavalry galloping by, the hollow, dismal sounds of

the gun-carriages rolling along the deserted streets. Snatches of scenes flash through my mind: a wounded man on a stretcher presses a hand to his side, the blood trickling down it; omnibuses filled with dead bodies; prisoners with arms bound; cannons in the Place de la Bastille; the encampments at Porte St. Denis, on the Champs-Elysées and the mournful call of the night "*Sentinelle, prenez garde à vous....*" What talk can there be of description! The brain is too heated, the blood too bitter.

It is enough to kill you or drive you mad to have to sit in a room with arms folded, without being able to go outside and yet to hear everywhere, near and far, gunshots, cannonades, cries, the roll of drums, and to know that somewhere near by blood is being shed, that people are being knifed, bayoneted —dying. I did not die, but I have aged. I am recovering from those June days as if after a grave illness.

And how solemnly they began! On the twenty-third, about four o'clock, I was taking a walk before dinner-time, along the banks of the Seine, bound for the Hôtel de Ville. The shops were being shut up. Sinister-looking National Guards were walking in various directions. The sky was overcast and it was drizzling.... I stopped at Pont-Neuf. A flash of lightning burst out of the cloud; one peal of thunder followed another, and above them could be heard the regular, prolonged tolling of the bell of Saint-Sulpice's—the proletariat, again betrayed, was calling its brothers to arms. The cathedral and all the buildings along the embankment were strangely lit up by several rays of the sun which had pierced the clouds. The drum beats rolled in from all sides; the artillery was moving from the Place du Carrousel.[114]

I listened to the thunder and the tocsin and could not tear my eyes away from the panorama of Paris—I seemed to be taking leave of it. I passionately loved Paris at that moment; that was my last tribute to the great city: after the June days it became repugnant to me.

Barricades were being built in all the lanes and streets on the opposite bank of the river. Even now I can see the sombre faces of those who were carrying stones, children and women helping them. A young engineering student mounted one of

the barricades, evidently completed, planted the banner on it, and began to sing the Marseillaise softly in a voice full of sad solemnity. Everybody working there joined in, and this magnificent song, resounding from behind the barricade, wrung the heart.... The bell continued to toll. In the meantime the artillery rolled on to the bridge and General Bedeau[115] swept his field glasses over the *enemy* position.

There was still time then to prevent what followed; it was still possible to save the republic and the freedom of all Europe. It was still possible to make peace. The imbecile and blundering government was incapable of this; the Assembly did not desire it; the reactionaries called for revenge, for blood, for atonement for February 24, and the strong-boxes of the *National*[116] furnished them with the agents to do the work.

Now, what do you say, my dear Prince Radetzky[117] and you, your excellency, Count Paskevich-Erivansky?[118] You are unfit to serve under Cavaignac. Metternich and all the members of the Third Department in his chancellery are *bons enfants* compared to the assembly of enraged shopkeepers.

On the evening of June 26, after the victory of the *National* over Paris, we heard salvoes with brief, regular intervals between them.... We glanced at each other; everybody was green in the face. "These are executions," we said in unison and looked away. I pressed my forehead to the window-pane. Such moments kindle hatred for a dozen of years, call for life-long vengeance. *Woe betide those who forgive such moments!*

After the slaughter which lasted four days, quiet was restored. It was a truce during a stage of siege. The streets were still cordoned off and only very occasionally could you meet a carriage. Arrogant National Guards, with ferocious, bestial faces, guarded their shops, brandishing bayonets and butt-ends. Hilarious crowds of drunken militia marched up and down the boulevards, singing "*Mourir pour la patrie*,"[119] boys of sixteen and seventeen bragged of their brothers' blood, caked dry on their hands; middle-class tradeswomen, running out of their shops to hail the conquerors, pelted them with flowers. Cavaignac paraded in his carriage some scoundrel who had killed dozens of Frenchmen. The bourgeoisie were triumphant. And in the meantime the houses in the suburbs

of Saint-Antoine were still burning. The shelled walls collapsed and the exposed interior revealed stone wounds, broken furniture smouldering, glittering pieces of shattered mirrors.... But where were the owners, the tenants? No one gave them a thought. Sand had been sprinkled here and there, but the blood showed through all the same. The Pantheon, damaged by shells, was closed to the public. Tents had been pitched along the boulevards; horses nibbled the carefully tended trees of the Champs-Elysées; the Place de la Concorde was littered with hay, the cuirasses of the cavalry and saddles were lying about. Soldiers cooked soup near the railing of the Jardin des Tuileries. Paris saw nothing like it even in 1814.

A few more days passed and Paris began to assume its usual aspect: crowds of idlers again made their appearance on the boulevards; fashionably dressed women in carriages and cabriolets came *to have a look at* the scene of ruins and the signs of desperate battle. The frequent patrols and columns of prisoners alone called to mind those terrible days. Only then did the situation begin to clear up. You will find in Byron a description of a battle waged at night. Its details are veiled by the darkness. At dawn, long after the battle has ended, you can see what has been left behind: a sword here, a blood-soaked rag there. This was the dawn that invaded the soul; it threw light on the frightful havoc. Half of our hopes, half of our faith were done to death; ideas of renunciation, of despair passed through the mind and took root. Who could have thought that our soul, which had been so sorely tried by existing scepticism, still contained so much that was destructible?

No living man can remain the same after such a blow. He either turns more religious, clinging desperately to his creed and finding a kind of consolation in despair, and, struck by the thunderbolt, his heart yet again sends forth new shoots. Or else, manfully, though reluctantly, he parts with his last illusions, taking an even more sober view and loosening his grip on the last withered leaves being whirled away by the biting autumnal wind.

Which is preferable? It is hard to say.

One leads to the bliss of folly, the other to the misery of knowledge.

Make your own choice. One is extremely substantial because it leaves you nothing; the other guarantees nothing, but gives much. I prefer to know even if it deprives me of the last consolation. I shall make my way, a spiritual beggar, through the world, my childish hopes and adolescent aspirations uprooted. Let them all appear before the court of incorruptible reason.

Man houses a permanent, revolutionary tribunal within himself, an implacable Fouquier-Tinville,[120] and, even a guillotine. Sometimes judges fall asleep, the guillotine rusts, the false notions, outdated, romantic and feeble, come to life and make themselves at home when all of a sudden some terrific blow rouses the heedless judge and the dozing executioner, and then comes the savage retribution, for the slightest concession, the slightest mercy or pity shown leads back to the past and leaves the chains intact. There is no choice: either execute and go forward, or grant a reprieve and stop midway.

Who doesn't remember his own logical romance, who doesn't remember how the first seeds of doubt, of the audacious investigation entered his heart, and how there they grew riotously until they reached its innermost recesses? That is precisely what it means to stand before the terrible court of the mind. It is not as easy as it seems to execute one's convictions: it is hard to part company with thoughts which grew up with us, and became part of us, which cherished and consoled us; how ungrateful it would be to give them up! Yes, but there is no gratitude at that tribunal; nothing is held sacred, and if the revolution, like Saturn, devours its own children, then negation, like Nero, assassinates its own mother to disembarrass itself of the past. People are afraid of their logic and, having rashly summoned to court the church, the state, the family and morality, good and evil, they endeavour to save some scraps, fragments of the old. While rejecting Christianity, they retain immortality of the soul, idealism, providence. And so people who have marched together, here part ways: some go to the right, others to the left. And still others come to a standstill; like mileposts, they show how much ground has been

covered. But there are those who discard the last ballast of the past and march boldly forward. In passing from the old world to the new, one can take nothing along.

Reason, like the Convention, is inexorable and impartial. It recoils at nothing, and demands that the most supreme being should be placed on the prisoners' bench—the good king of theology is to have his January 21.[121] This trial is like the one over Louis XVI, the touchstone for Girondins. All that is weak and incomplete either flees or lies; either does not vote at all or else votes without conviction. Meanwhile those who pronounced the sentence believe that with the execution of the king there is nothing more to condemn; that from January 22 onwards they shall have a republic, all ready and perfect. As if atheism was enough in itself to do away with religion; as if the execution of Louis XVI was enough to do away with monarchy. There is an astounding similarity between the phenomenology of terror and logic. Terror began right after the execution of the king; following him on to the scaffold came the noble sons of the revolution: brilliant, eloquent, feeble. We pity them but there was no saving them, and their heads fell; after them rolled the leonine head of Danton and that of Camille Desmoulins, the pet of the revolution. Now, at long last, is it all over? No, now it is the turn of the incorruptible executioners; they will be executed because they believed in the possibility of democracy being established in France, because they put men to death in the name of equality; yes, they were executed like Anacharsis Cloots[122] who dreamed of the fraternity of peoples a few days before the Napoleonic epoch, and a few years before the Vienna Congress.[123]

There will be no liberty in the world until everything religious and political is transformed into something human, simple, subject to criticism and negation. Logic which has reached maturity finds canonized doctrines detestable; it unfrocks these saints and makes them human; it transforms sacred mysteries into plain truths; it holds nothing sacred and if the republic claims those rights that were held by the monarchy, it despises the republic as it did the monarchy. Nay, infinitely more! There is no sense in monarchy—it maintains

itself by violence; while the very name "republic" makes the heart beat faster. Monarchy is in itself a religion, while the republic has no mystic apologies, no divine rights, it is on our own level. It is not enough to hate the crown; one must equally lose one's veneration for the Phrygian cap; it is not enough to hold that *lèse-majesté* a crime. One must realize that *salus populi* is also a crime. It is time that man brought to the bar of justice the republic, legislation, representation, all concepts of the citizen and his relation to others and to the state.[124] There will be many executions: one must be ready to sacrifice what is near and dear. It doesn't require very much to sacrifice what we detest! What is hard is to sacrifice what we love once we are convinced that it is not the truth. Therein lies the real task. We are to be executors of the past. It is not for us to gather the fruit! To us is left the task of persecuting and identifying the past no matter what disguise it assumes and of executing it and laying it on the altar of the future. It triumphs in fact—let us, in the name of human thought, kill it in idea, in conviction. No concessions to anyone! The tricolour of concessions is no good, for it will take a long time before the blood of the June days comes off. And whom, indeed, shall we spare? All the elements of the crumbling world appear in all their wretched absurdity and repulsive folly. What is it you respect: surely not a government of the *people*? Whom is it you pity? Surely not Paris?

For three whole months people, elected by universal suffrage, elected by all of France, did absolutely nothing and suddenly rose to their feet in order to show the world an amazing spectacle—800 men acting as one huge monster. Blood flowed like water but not a word did they find of love or conciliation; everything human and generous was overshadowed by the clamour for revenge and fury. The voice of the dying Affre[125] could not move this many-tongued Caligula, this Bourbon changed into copper coins. They pressed to their heart the National Guards who shot down the unarmed. Sénard[126] blessed Cavaignac, and Cavaignac was moved to tears as he carried out all the crimes indicated by the judicial finger of the representatives. In the meantime the formidable minority went in hiding. The Mountain hid behind the clouds

content that it had not been executed or sent to rot in the dungeons. It silently suffered citizens to be disarmed and decrees on deportation to be passed; people to be imprisoned for anything in the world, and especially for refusing to shoot their own brothers.

Murder became, in these fearful days, a duty; he who did not stain his hands with the blood of the proletariat, became suspect to the middle class. The majority, at least, had the courage of their crimes. And those wretched friends of the people, those rhetoricians, those blank hearts? There was one courageous outcry, one great outburst of indignation, and that was uttered outside the Assembly Chamber. The terrible curse of old Lamennais[127] fell on the head of the heartless cannibals and showed up all the more plainly on the brow of the cowards who, in uttering the word "republic," were terrified by its meaning.

Paris! How long has this name been a lodestar to people! Who did not love and worship it? But its time has passed. Let it leave the stage. In the June days it engaged in a bitter contest which it cannot consummate. Paris has aged and its youthful dreams no longer become it. Rejuvenation calls for great shocks: massacres of Saint Bartholomew, the days of September. However, the horrors of June did not bring about recovery. Where will this decrepit vampire obtain more blood of the just, that blood which, on June 27, reflected the fire of the lampions lit by the exultant middle class? Paris adores playing soldiers. It made an emperor of a lucky soldier; it applauded a monstrosity named victory; it erected statues. After fifteen years it again placed the bourgeois figure of the little corporal on a pedestal; it reverentially brought back the ashes of the founder of slavery. Now, too, it hoped to find in soldiers the anchor of salvation against freedom and equality; it summoned the savage hordes of Africans to fight its brothers so as not to share the spoils with them, and cut and stabbed with the steady hand of the assassin. Let it, then, pay for its deeds and its errors.

Paris shot people without trial.... What will be the outcome of this bloodshed?—who knows? But whatever it is, it is enough that in this fury of madness, of revenge, of conflict

and retribution, the world which stands in the way of the new man, preventing him from living and establishing the future, will fall. And this is splendid! So, long live chaos and destruction!

Vive la mort!

And let the future come!

Paris, July 27, 1848

III

THE LVIIth YEAR OF THE REPUBLIC, THE ONE AND INDIVISIBLE[128]

> Ce n'est pas le socialisme, c'est la république!
>
> *Speech by Ledru-Rollin in Chalet October 22, 1848*

THE FIRST of Vendémiaire 1857 was celebrated some days ago. All the aristocrats of the democratic republic, the crimson of the Convention, gathered in Chalet at the Champs-Elysées. Towards the end of the dinner, Ledru-Rollin delivered a brilliant speech which, replete with *red* roses for the republic and thorns for the government, was a complete and well-deserved success. His speech ended with cries of "*Vive la République démocratique!*" All arose and sang the Marseillaise in unison, solemnly, and with heads bared. Ledru-Rollin's words, the sounds of the revered song of liberation and the wine animated all faces; eyes were shining, all the more so that not everything fermenting in the heads escaped from the lips. The drum of the camp at Champs-Elysées was a reminder that the enemy was near, that there was a state of siege, and that the military dictatorship was still rampant.

The greater part of the guests were people still in the prime of life, but who had more or less tried their mettle on the political arena. Conversation was lively and heated. How much energy, daring, and nobleness there is in the French who have not yet suppressed the good elements of their national character or have already escaped from the petty, sordid, philistine

environment which covers the whole of France like slime. What manly, determined faces, what precipitous readiness to translate words into action, to go into battle and under fire, to be executioner or executed! For a long time I watched them, and gradually an ineffable melancholy arose within me and overshadowed all my thoughts: I felt the deepest pity for this handful of men, so noble and devoted, intelligent and gifted, the flower of the generation. Do not think, however, that I pitied them because they might not live to see or because in a week they might perish on the barricades, in the galleys, in exile, or on the guillotine; or because they might be shot in the new fashion with their hands tied, in some corner of Place du Carrousel or at the outer fortifications. All this was very sad, of course, but that was not why I was sorry for them. The reason lay deeper.

I pitied their sincere delusion, their implicit faith in unattainable things, their ardent aspirations as pure and as chimerical as the knighthood of Don Quixote. I pitied them as a physician might his patient unsuspecting the fatal disease within him. How much moral suffering lies in store for them: they will fight like heroes, will labour until they die, and fall short of success. They will sacrifice their blood, their strength and, grown old, they will see that it has all been in vain, that they have not done what they should have done; and they will die assailed by bitter doubts in man, who is not at all to blame. Or still worse, they will lapse into childishness and will daily wait, as they are doing now, for a tremendous change: the advent of their republic—mistaking the agony of the dying for the throes of birth. The republic, *as they conceive it*, is an abstract and scarcely feasible idea, the fruit of theoretical conjectures, the apotheosis of the existing order, the transfiguration *of that which is*; their republic is the last dream, the poetic ravings of the old world. There is something prophetic in these ravings too, but this prophecy concerns the life beyond the grave, the life of the age to come. This is what they, the people of the past, who are bound to the old world for better or for worse, cannot understand for all their revolutionary spirit. They imagine that this senile decrepit world might become rejuvenated like Ulysses and are oblivious to the fact that the reali-

zation of a single point of *their* republic will instantly kill the old world. They do not know that there is no sharper contradiction than that between their ideal and the existing order, that the one must die so that the other may live. They cannot escape the old forms, they mistake them for eternal boundaries and therefore their idea bears only the name and colour of the future and belongs, at bottom, to the world of the past and by no means renounces it.

Why do they not know this?

Their fatal error consisted in that they were carried away by love for their fellow-man and freedom, by their impatience and indignation. They hastened to liberate the people before they were themselves liberated. They were strong enough to tear asunder the heavy iron chains, but they never noticed that the walls of the prison had remained intact. Indeed, they wanted to leave them so and only to put them to another use; as though prison walls could serve the free.

The senile Catholico-feudal world has produced all the modifications it is capable of; it has developed in all directions, achieving the highest degree of the beautiful and of the ugly to the point of revealing all the truth and all the falsehood that it contains. It has exhausted itself at last. It might still survive for long, but it cannot be regenerated. Social thought now at work is such that every step towards its realization constitutes an egress! And that is the difficulty! Where to? What lies beyond those walls? Fearful void, space, freedom.... How to go on without knowing where? How to lose without the hope of gain? If Columbus had reasoned this way he would never have set sail. What madness to rove the unchartered seas in search of lands the existence of which is dubious! Yet thanks to this madness he discovered the new world. Of course it would have been easier if people could have merely moved from one *hôtel garni* to another still more comfortable, but unfortunately there is no one to prepare the new apartments. The future is even more uncertain than the sea: there is nothing in sight and it will turn out to be such as people and circumstances will make it.

If you are satisfied with the old world, try to preserve it: it is in a bad state indeed and won't last long with such themors

as that of February 24. But if you cannot endure the constant discord of convictions and life, of thinking the one thing and doing another, then take the risk and step out of the whitewashed medieval vaults. Valorous daring is sometimes better than wisdom. I very well know that it is not easy: it is no trifle to part with everything man has grown accustomed to from the cradle, with everything familiar from childhood. The people in question are ready for terrible sacrifices, but not for those which the new life requires of them. Are they ready to sacrifice modern civilization, their way of life, their religion and moral conventions? Are they ready to be deprived of all the fruits grown so painstakingly, of which we have been so proud for three centuries and which are so dear to our hearts? Are they ready to be deprived of all the enjoyments and conveniences of life, to prefer raw youth to polished senility, untilled soil and impenetrable forests to exhausted fields and cultivated parks? Are they ready to pull down their hereditary castle from sheer enjoyment of participating in the laying of the foundation of a new edifice which will doubtlessly be finished long after we are gone? Many would say that this is the question of a madman. Yet this question was once raised by Christ, only in other words.

The liberals dallied and jested with the idea of revolution until they joked themselves into February 24. The popular hurricane carried them to the top of the belfry whence they could see where they were going and leading others. And the chasm they saw before them made them blanch for they saw that not only that which they had regarded as prejudice was tumbling but all the rest as well, the things they had regarded as true and eternal. So frightened were they that some of them clutched at the tumbling walls while others halted midway, remorsefully assuring all passers-by that this was not at all what they had wanted. And thus the very people who proclaimed the republic came to be the hangmen of freedom. That is why liberals whose names had been ringing in our ears for twenty years became retrograde deputies, traitors and inquisitors. They call for liberty and even a republic in their own literary and cultivated circles, but upon leaving them turn into conservatives. Thus the rationalists were fond of explaining

the mysteries of religion, of disclosing the significance and meaning of mythology; but where this would lead they never guessed. Little did they think that their researches which began with fear of God would end in atheism, that their criticism of the sacred rites would lead to the denial of religion.

From the time of the Restoration the liberals of all countries called upon the people to overthrow the monarchic feudal system for the sake of equality, the tears of the wretched, the suffering of the oppressed, and the starvation of the destitute. They demanded the impossible of the ministers and rejoiced in spurring them on until they collapsed; they rejoiced when one feudal mainstay fell after another. Their emotions ran away and carried them far beyond the limits of their own desires. They came to their senses only when amid the half-ruined walls they espied a proletarian—not a proletarian in books, in parliamentary twaddle, or in philanthropic harangues, but in stark reality, a workman with an axe in rude hands, tattered and starved. This unfortunate and disinherited brother of whom so much had been said and who had been so deeply pitied now demanded *his* share in the blessings, *his* freedom, *his* equality, and *his* fraternity. Aghast at his impertinence and ingratitude, the liberals took the streets of Paris by assault, strewed them with corpses and hid from their *brother* behind the bayonets of martial law, thereby preserving *civilization and order.*

They are right, but not consistent. Why had they previously undermined the monarchy? How could they have failed to realize that having destroyed monarchism, the revolution could not stop at ejecting one dynasty or another? They rejoiced like children over the fact that Louis Philippe had hardly gone as far as Saint-Cloud, when a new government arose at Hôtel de Ville and things took their natural course; yet the very facility of the *coup d'état* should have shown them how unsubstantial it was. The liberals were satisfied, but the people were not and raised their voices: they repeated the words and promises of the liberals who now like Peter thrice foreswore both words and promises and began killing as soon as they saw that matters took a serious turn. It was thus that Luther and Calvin drowned the Anabaptists, that the Protestants renounced

Hegel and that the Hegelians renounced Feuerbach. Such indeed is the lot of all *reformers*: they only build pontoon bridges for the people aroused by them to cross to the opposite shore. There is no medium which they prefer to the constitutional twilight of the indefinite neither here nor there. It was in this unchanged world of debates, discords and irreconcilable contradictions that these vain people wanted to realize their *pia desideria* of freedom, equality and fraternity.[129]

The forms of European civics, its civilization, its good and evil conform to a different essence. They have developed from different concepts and have been shaped to suit different needs. Those forms were modifiable to a certain degree, but only to a *certain degree*, as everything in life. The organism may be influenced and changed; it may deviate from its purpose and adjust itself to the environmental influences inasmuch as these deviations do not contradict its individual features which constitute its personality. As soon as the organism encounters these influences a conflict ensues in which the organism is either victorious or perishes. The phenomenon of death consists precisely in that the components of the organism acquire another purpose: they do not perish while its personality does—they enter into a different series of relations, of phenomena.[130]

By virtue of their inner conception the political forms of France and other European powers are not compatible with freedom, equality or fraternity: any realization of these ideas will constitute a denial of modern European life, will lead to its destruction. No constitution and no government can give true freedom and equality to the feudal monarchic states without razing everything that is feudal and monarchic. European life, Christian and aristocratic, has formed our civilization, our conceptions, our way of life. It cannot dispense with the Christian and aristocratic medium. In Catholic Rome, in sacrilegious Paris and in philosophizing Germany this medium was able to develop and preserve its essence in accordance with the spirit of the times and the degree of prevailing enlightenment; but further than this one cannot go without overstepping the boundaries. In some parts of Europe the people can be more free and equal than in others, but nowhere can

they be truly free and equal as long as *this* civic form, *this* civilization exists. All wise conservatives have been aware of this and therefore have done their utmost to support the old scheme of society. Do you really think that Metternich and Guizot did not see the injustice of the social order which surrounded them? But they also saw that these injustices were so intertwined with the entire organism that one had only to touch them to upset the entire structure. Having realized this, they became the guards and supporters of *status quo*. The liberals for their part have removed all checks upon democracy, but now desire to return to the old order of things. Who is more consistent, then?

It stands to reason that both are wrong at bottom. The Guizots and Metternichs and Cavaignacs: all of them committed real crimes for the sake of fictitious aims. They were oppressors, they spread ruin and shed blood to stave off death. Neither Metternich with his intelligence nor Cavaignac with his soldiers, nor the republicans with their short-sightedness could stem so strong a current. All they did was to litter the way with broken glass instead of making the passage easier. The people marching onward will find it more difficult. They will injure their feet, but will get through nonetheless. The power of social ideas is immense—especially since they have begun to be understood by the genuine enemy, the legitimate enemy of the existing civic order, by the proletarian who suffered all the bitterness of this civic order and enjoyed none of its fruits. We are still loath to part with the old order of things and who should be loath to part with it more than we? It was for us that this order was built. We have been brought up by it, we are its favourite children; we admit that it has to die, but we cannot repress our tears. But what about the masses downtrodden by work, exhausted by hunger, and dulled by ignorance—what will they have to weep about at its funeral? They are the uninvited guests at the feast of life, the very ones of whom Malthus spoke, their *oppression* being a prerequisite of our life.

Our entire education, our literary and scientific development, our love of beauty and our preoccupations presuppose a background constantly prepared and kept in order *by others. Some-*

one else's labour is necessary to secure us with leisure for mental development—that leisure, that active idleness which is conducive to the thinker's meditations, to the poet's reveries and to the epicurean enjoyments, to the exuberant, capricious, poetic development of our aristocratic personalities.

Who does not know what freshness is imparted to the spirit by carefree abundance? The poverty which produces a Gilbert[131] is an exception. As a rule, poverty distorts the soul of man no less than riches. Material cares alone tend to crush ability. But can abundance be available to all under the modern scheme of society? Our civilization is the civilization of a minority. It is possible only with a majority of navvies. I am neither a moralist nor a sentimental person. I do believe that if the minority really felt well and at ease, while the majority were silent, this form of life was justified in the past. I am not sorry for the twenty generations of Germans that went to produce Goethe. I am glad that the corvée near the town of Pskov permitted the education of Pushkin. Nature is inexorable: like a certain well-known shrub it is both mother and stepmother. It does not mind if two-thirds of what it produces goes to feed the one-third, providing the latter develops properly. When all cannot live well, let some live well, let one live at the expense of others, if only he obtains as much as he requires and can lead a happy and abundant life. Only from this point of view may aristocracy be understood. Aristocracy in general is a more or less civilized anthropophagy. A cannibal who eats his prisoner, a landlord who collects exorbitant rent, a factory owner who prospers at the expense of his workmen, are all but modifications of one and the same cannibalism. Incidentally, I am ready to defend the most primitive anthropophagy: if one man regards himself as a meal and the other is intent on eating him, let him do so. Both deserve what they get: one to eat and the other to be eaten.

As long as the educated minority consuming whole generations barely realized why its life was so easy and the majority working day and night did not quite realize that the whole advantage of the work accrued to others and both considered this the natural course of events—the world of anthropophagy could stand. People often take a prejudice, a

habit for the truth and then it does not trammel them, but once they have realized that their truth is nonsense, the thing is over. Then only by sheer force is it possible to make man do what he regards as absurd. Try to introduce fasting without religious faith. Impossible! Man will find it unendurable to fast, just as the believer will find it impossible to abstain from fasting.

The workman no longer wants to work for someone else and there you have the end of anthropophagy and the limit of aristocracy. If the course of events was delayed it was because the workers had miscalculated their strength and the peasants were backward. When the two join hands you will have to part with your leisure, with your luxuries and civilization. That will put an end to the consumption of the majority to provide an easy and luxurious existence for the minority. As an idea, the exploitation of man by man is ended, for nobody regards this relation as just.

Can this world withstand a social upheaval? In the name of what will it defend itself? Its religion is on the wane. The monarchic principle has lost its prestige and is buttressed by fear and violence, while the democratic principle is a cancer devouring this world from within.

Depression and weariness, ennui and revulsion with life have become widespread together with convulsive attempts to find a way out. Life has become intolerable to all; and this is a great sign.

Gone are the quiet musings in the solitude of the artistic and scholarly pursuits of the Germans! Gone is the whirl of wit, merriment, liberalism, fashion and songs which once swept Paris. All this is memory, a thing of the past. The last attempt to rescue the world by rejuvenation without altering its basic principles has failed.

Everything withers and dwindles to pigmy size on the exhausted soil: there are no talent, no creative work, no power of thought, no power of will. The world has outlived its heyday. The day of Schiller and Goethe is gone, like the day of Raphael and Buonarotti, of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Mirabeau and Danton. The brilliant industrial age has outlived its prime, just as the epoch of the nobility had done before. Every-

one is growing poor and no one richer. No credit is to be had and all have come to live from hand to mouth. Life has grown more coarse, less elegant and gracious. Everyone has grown penurious and apprehensive. All have come to live like small shopkeepers. The customs of the petty bourgeoisie have come to be generally accepted. No one is inclined to settle down permanently: everything is temporary, unstable and "for rent." These are hard times, resembling the third century, when even the vices of ancient Rome were gone, when even the Caesars were lethargic and the legions slothful. So depressed were the energetic and restless people that they hurled their sacks of gold on to the squares and rushed off in crowds somewhere to the Thebaid Desert, parting for ever with their native land and their gods of old. This time is coming again; our anguish is mounting.

Repent, gentlemen, repent! The day of judgement has come. You cannot save the world by martial law, by establishing a republic, by executions, by philanthropy, nor even by allotment of land. The fate of the world would perhaps not be so melancholy if it were not defended with such zeal and stubbornness, with such hopeless bigotry. No truce will avail in France nowadays, for the warring parties can neither express themselves nor understand each other. They have two different logics, two different minds. When things come to such a pass there is no way out but battle; only one of the two must survive—monarchy or socialism.

Consider, which has the better chance? I will wager for socialism. You think it difficult to conceive? But it was just as difficult to conceive of Christianity's triumph over Rome. I often imagine Tacitus and Pliny sagely discoursing with their friends about that ridiculous sect of Nazarenes, about those Pierre Leroux's,[132] come from Judaea with vigorous and half-mad speeches about the Proudhon of that day, who appeared in the streets of Rome to preach the end of the eternal city. The empire had towered proudly over these poor preachers but it crumbled away nonetheless.

Cannot you see that the new Christians are coming to build and the new barbarians to destroy? Both are ready to do their work and are seething like molten lava in the depths of a

volcano. When the hour strikes, Herculaneum and Pompeii shall vanish and the good and the evil, the right and the wrong shall perish side by side. This will be neither judgement nor slaughter, but an upheaval, a cataclysm. This sea of lava, the barbarians, the new world, the new Nazarenes approaching to destroy the obsolete and important and to clear the site for the new and the vigorous, are nearer than you think. It is they who are dying from hunger and cold; it is their murmurs that we hear overhead and below, in the garrets and the cellars; while we, all of us, *au premier*, toast each other in champagne—and talk socialism. This is nothing new of course; it has always been that way; but no one has ever noticed that it is *very stupid.*

"But why should the future come through barbaric darkness and not through progress, why should it be purchased at the cost of heavy losses? I am not sure, but it seems to me that the educated minority will be worse off if it lives to witness the debacle and is not seasoned and hardened in the atmosphere of new ideas. Though many may grow indignant over this, I find it consoling. To me it seems that the very inevitability of these losses is proof that every historic phase has its own, many-sided reality, its own individuality and that each such phase is an end and not merely the means to an end; each phase, therefore, contains its own good, its blessings peculiar to itself alone, and which must perish with it. Do you really believe that the Roman aristocrats gained much in life when they embraced Christianity? Did not the aristocrats of our time live better before the revolution than we do today?"

"That is all very true, but the idea of a sharp and violent change has something repulsive in it for many. Those who realized that the change is necessary would like it to take place by gradual stages. Even nature, they argue, as it evolved and grew richer and better arranged, ceased to resort to cataclysms to which the earth's crust bears witness in the form of its strata containing the bones of many successive species. The unperturbed, harmonious metamorphosis should be all the more probable in that stage of nature's evolution at which it has attained to consciousness."

"Yes, but it has attained consciousness only within a few heads of the elite. The rest are still striving towards it and are still subject to *Naturgewalt's*, to instincts, subconscious urges and passions. The fact that an idea is correct is not enough to convey this idea to another, sensible and clear though it may be to you. It is also necessary that the brain of this other should be developed to your level, that it should be free from prejudice. How are you going to convince the workman that he should suffer poverty and hunger while the present scheme of society is undergoing gradual change? How are you going to convince a proprietor, a usurer, a factory owner that he must relinquish his monopolies and privileges? It is hard to imagine such altruism. What could be done has been done; the growth of the middle classes, the constitutional system is nothing more than an intermediary link between the feudal-monarchic and socio-republican world. The bourgeois concept combines this semi-liberation, this audacious sally against the past with the desire to inherit its power. It has worked for its own benefit and rightly so. Man does things seriously, in all earnest, only when he does it for his own benefit. The bourgeoisie could by no means regard itself as an ugly intermediary link. It has regarded itself as an end in itself, but since its moral principles are petty and poorer than those of the past, whereas progress is constantly gaining in momentum, it is not surprising that the world of the bourgeoisie has soon come to be exhausted and contains no possibility of rejuvenation. And, finally, just imagine what gradual change might be like—perhaps, the division of property something after the pattern of the first revolution? The result will be that the entire world will become a wretched place to live in. The petty proprietor is the worst bourgeois of all and the forces latent in the suffering but mighty heart of the proletariat will be sapped. True enough, he will no longer be starving, but he will come to a standstill on his plot of land or on his bunk at the workers' barracks. Such is the prospect held out by peaceful organic change. If this should come to pass then the mainstream of history will carve another bed; it will not vanish in the sands like the Rhine. Mankind will not pur-

sue this narrow and miry path—it requires a broad thoroughfare and will spare nothing to clear the way.

"In nature conservatism is as strong as the revolutionary element. Nature permits the old and superfluous to survive as long as it can. Nonetheless, it did not spare the mammoth and the mastodon to make their readjustments on earth. The change which destroyed those great animals was by no means directed *against them.* Could they have saved themselves, they would have done so only to degenerate peacefully in an incongruous environment. The mammoths whose bones are found in the ice of Siberia probably did preserve themselves from the geological upheaval, but they were as out of place as Comnenus and Palaeologus would have been in the feudal world. Nature has as little to do with this as has history. We foist upon it our sentimental personifications and passions; we mistake the metaphors of our language for the essence, forgetting that they are only metaphors. Unaware of their absurdity, we introduce the petty rules of our household into world economy to which the life of generations, of nations and even of the planets is unimportant if compared with general developments. Unlike us, representatives of the subjective principle who are fond of the personal alone, nature regards the destruction of the particular as the same play of necessity which prompted its origination. Nor has nature to be rueful of this, for from its vast embraces there is nothing that is lost, no matter how changed."

October 1, 1848
Champs-Elysées

IV

VIXERUNT![133]

Mortem moriendo destruxit
Easter Sunday Matin

THE WEATHER was very bad on November 20,[134] 1848; the fierce winds, hoarfrost and first snow since summer predicted the winter which was expected by the people of Paris as a national disaster. The poor were again preparing to freeze

in their garrets with insufficient clothing and insufficient food. In these two icy months of frost and damp the death rate is mounting, and the workmen are worn and ridden with fever.

On this day it seemed that the dawn would never come. Sleet fell continuously and there was mist as well; the wind tore at hats and wildly clutched at the hundreds of tricolours flying from the masts near the Place de la Concorde. The square was packed with troops and the Peoples' Guards. At the gates of the Tuileries Gardens a memorial was set up, topped with a cross. All the way from the gardens to the obelisk the square, cordoned by the troops, lay empty. The streets converging upon it were filled with the regiments of the regulars, of the mobiles, of the uhlans, the dragoons and the artillery. A newcomer would never have guessed what was happening. Was another king to be executed? Or had the country been declared in danger? Nothing of the sort. This was not a January 21 for the king, but for the people, for the revolution: it was the funeral of February 24.

About nine in the morning a straggling group of elderly men made their way across the bridge; despondently they shuffled along with coat collars turned up and uncertainly sidestepping the puddles. There were two who walked at their head, one of them in an African water-proof nearly concealing his hard, austere features reminiscent of the medieval condottiere. His vulture-like face was not softened by anything human; his puny figure ominously suggested calamity and misfortune. The other, grey-haired, corpulent and elegant, walked in an evening suit with an air of studied arrogance. His face, once handsome, now expressed only conscious and sensuous complacency with the position he had won in life.

No one greeted them. Only the rifles obediently clattered as the soldiers presented arms. Meanwhile, another group was approaching from the other direction, from the Church of the Madeleine. These were looking still stranger in their medieval mitres and chasubles, surrounded by attendants with censers, rosaries and prayer-books; they were like the shadows of the long past centuries of feudalism.[135]

Why were the two parties approaching each other? The one side protected by a hundred thousand bayonets had come to

proclaim the *will of the people*—the code compiled under fire and debated in the state of siege—in the name of *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*; while the other had come to bless these fruits of philosophy and revolution in the name of the *Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*[136]

The people did not so much as glance at this parody. They milled about disconsolately near the common grave of their brothers who had fallen for their sake—near the June Column. Beyond the cordons of the troops and armed bourgeois guards one could see only a thin line of small shopkeepers, pedlars, concierges, waiters and our ilk, the foreign tourists. But even these bystanders listened with surprise to the speeches which could not be heard, gaped at the theatrical attire of the judges —red, black, with and without fur— and blinked at the driving snow, at the files of soldiery rendered more formidable by the salvos audible from the esplanade of the Hôtel des Invalides. The uniforms and the shooting brought back the days of June and made the heart ache. All faces were troubled as though conscious of guilt; some because they now felt like accomplices and others because they felt like abettors by their very tolerance of the crime. Thousands of heads turned at the slightest disturbance as though expecting to hear the whining of bullets, the cries of insurgents and the measured ringing of the tocsin. The blizzard continued. Soaked to the skin the soldiers were murmuring. At last the drums struck up, the crowds began to move and an endless procession filed away to the weak strain of "*Mourir pour la patrie*" which had been substituted for the great Marseillaise.

Approximately then the young man whose acquaintance we have already made[137] elbowed his way through the crowd towards a middle-aged man and joyously exclaimed: "What a pleasant surprise! I didn't know you were here."

"Why, hullo," said the other extending both hands. "Have you been here long?"

"Just a few days."

"Where from?"

"From Italy."

"Things are bad, aren't they?"

"Very bad.... Awful."

"Well, there you are, my dear dreamer and idealist. I knew you would not be able to resist the February temptation and would bring much suffering to yourself. Suffering always goes with hope. You have always complained about the stagnation, the sleepiness of Europe. Can you reproach her for that now?"

"Don't laugh. There are things one should not laugh at, no matter how sceptical we are. Is this the time to joke, when tears have run dry? To tell the truth, I'm afraid to look back, to recollect: no more than a year has passed since we parted last and it seems like a century ago. To see the finest aspirations, the most cherished hopes being fulfilled, to see the possibility of their realization and then to be so suddenly let down, to lose everything, and not in combat, not on the battlefield, but through our own impotence and incompetence. This is awful. I am ashamed to meet with the legitimists. They laugh at me quite openly and I feel they are right. What a schooling—not of education, but of dulling the faculties. I am very glad to have run into you. I finally felt that I simply had to see you. In my mind's eye I quarrelled with you and made up; I wrote a lengthy letter to you and now am very glad that I tore it up. It was full of daring hopes of my triumph over you. Now I would like to have you assure me once and for all that the world is coming to an end, that there is no way out, that it is fated to be overgrown with weeds, and fall into decay. I know this will not make me unhappy, because I do not expect consolation from a meeting with you. Listening to you, I feel worse and not better.... And I don't want to feel better.... Just convince me; and I'll take the first boat from Marseilles to America or to Egypt, anywhere away from Europe. I'm tired, can't stand it any longer. There is something wrong with me; it's in my breast, in my brain, I'll go mad if I stay."

"There are scarcely any diseases more stubborn than idealism. After what has happened I find you just as you were when we parted. You prefer to suffer rather than to understand. The idealists are spoilt and cowardly; I've already begged to be excused for saying this—you know that I don't mean personal courage; there is in fact too much of that. The idealists are cowards when faced with the truth. You turn it down, you are afraid of the reality at variance with your theories. You think

that there is no salvation for the world but in the ways you have discovered. You would like the world to dance to your tune in exchange for your devotion. And as soon as you notice that it has its own steps and rhythm you grow angry, despair and have not even the curiosity to watch the dancing."

"Call it cowardice or stupidity or whatever you like, but really, I am not at all curious to watch this dance macabre. I have no Roman predilection for scenes of horror, probably because I cannot appreciate the subtleties of the art of dying."

"The quality of curiosity is measured by the value of the scene at hand. The audience at the Colosseum was made up of the same idlers who thronged to the auto-da-fé or public executions, who today came to one place simply to fill the inner void and on another day to another to watch with equal zest the hanging of a hero. But there is another, a more praiseworthy sort of curiosity that springs from healthier soil; this curiosity leads to study and knowledge; it is concerned with discovering the unknown parts of the globe, the sort of curiosity which inspires a man to expose himself to an infection in order to study its properties."

"In short, the sort of curiosity which is useful. But what is the use of watching the dying when you know that it is too late to help them? That is merely the poetry of curiosity."

"To me this poetic curiosity, as you call it, seems very human. I respect Pliny who stayed in his boat to watch the eruption of Vesuvius, forgetful of the obvious personal danger. To go away would have been more prudent and at any rate more restful."

"I understand the hint, but the comparison is not quite fitting. At Pompeii there was nothing else a man could do but stay and watch or flee. Whether he would stay and watch or flee depended entirely on himself. But I want to flee not from danger but because I cannot stay any longer. To expose oneself to danger is easier than it seems from a distance. But to witness disaster with folded arms, conscious that one is useless, to know full well what could help, but be unable to explain or give directions; to watch idly while the people rush and stumble about crushing each other as though stricken with an epidemic of madness, while the whole of civilization vanishes

in a holocaust—all this is beyond man's power. There was nothing to be done about Vesuvius, but in the world of history man is at home: he is more than a spectator, he is a participant and has a voice of his own. And if he cannot act he must at least express his protest by absence."

"Man is, of course, at home in history, but from your words one could infer that he is only a guest of nature's, as though there were a stone wall between nature and history. It seems to me that he is at home in both, but not dominant in either. Man is not mortified by nature's disobedience because its self-sufficiency is obvious to him. We believe in its reality being independent of ourselves, but we do not believe in the reality of history, especially modern. In history man labours under the delusion that he is unhampered and free to do whatever he chooses. All this is the bitter trace of dualism which has long made us see double and waver between two optical illusions. Though dualism has long lost its crudeness, it lingers inconspicuously in our hearts. Our language, our fundamental conceptions, become natural out of habit and repetition, obstruct the truth. Had we not known, from the age of five, that history and nature are two different things, we would have no difficulty in understanding that the evolution of nature passes imperceptibly into the evolution of man, that these are two chapters of a single novel, two phases of a single process, far removed from one another at their perimeters, but very close at the centre. We would in that case not be surprised to find that a portion of all that happens in history is governed by physiological and obscure urges. Needless to say, the laws of historical evolution do not contradict the precepts of logic, but they do not coincide with the ways of thought, just as nothing in nature coincides with the abstract standards set up by pure reason. Were we aware of this, we would take eagerly to the study and discovery of these physiological influences. Have we done so? Has anyone ever seriously studied the physiology of social life, history, as a really objective science? No, no one: neither the conservatives nor the radicals, neither the philosophers nor the historians."

"But there has been a great deal of activity. Probably, because it is as natural for us to make history as for a bee to

make honey, because history is not the result of meditation, but of the inner urges of man's spirit."

'Of instinct, you mean? You are quite right: it is instinct which has guided and is still guiding the masses nowadays. But the situation has changed: we have lost that primitive keenness of instinct, our minds are so reflective that all the natural urges owing to which history struggles forward have been suppressed. We urban people are equally destitute of physical and moral intuition. The tiller of the soil and the seaman can foretell the weather and we cannot. All that is left of our instincts is the restless desire for activity and that is splendid. Conscious action, i. e., action which would completely satisfy us, is as yet impossible—we act by groping. We still try to force our thoughts and desires upon the environment, and these experiments, invariably unsuccessful, serve to educate us. You are annoyed because the people do not put into practice the ideas that are dear and perfectly clear to you, because they cannot save themselves by applying weapons you would offer them, and thereby cease to suffer. But what makes you think that it is precisely your idea that the people must effect and not their own, that it should be done at a time you think best and not at another? Are you sure that the measures you have thought up have no disadvantages? Are you really sure that the people understand them? Are you certain that there are no other means, no broader purposes. You may happen to divine what the people think, but that is a matter of luck and, likely as not, you will be mistaken. You and the masses belong to two different cultures. You are separated by centuries, by greater distances than the oceans crossed so easily nowadays. The masses are prompted by inner urges, by passionate impulses. In them thought is not separated from fantasy: it never remains mere theory as with us, but is immediately translated into action. It is difficult to inculcate an idea into them because to them this is no trifling matter. That is why they sometimes outdistance the boldest thinkers, carry them onward against their will, leave behind those whom they worshipped yesterday and fall behind others despite the obvious. They are capricious, clamourous and inconstant like children and women. Instead of studying this peeul-

iar physiology of mankind, instead of identifying ourselves with it and discovering its ways and laws, we criticize, teach grow irritated and indignant, as though people or nature can be held responsible for anything, as though they care anything at all as to whether we like or do not like their life which blindly impels them on towards vague aims and irresponsible actions. Hitherto this didactic and priestly attitude has had some justification, but now it has become ludicrous and puts us in the trite role of the disillusioned. You are offended by the developments in Europe, incensed by the obtuseness and brutality of triumphant reaction. So am I. But you who are loyal to romanticism, have no patience and would like to run away to avoid the truth. I agree that it is time to give up our artificial, conventional life, but not by fleeing to America.[138] What will you find there? The United States is the last de luxe edition of the same feudal-Christian text, and in the crude English version at that. A year ago there would have been nothing surprising about your departure—the events then dragged on interminably, but how can you go away at the crucial turn of events, when everything in Europe is in ferment, when the age-old walls are crumbling, when one idol after another comes crashing down, when they in Vienna have learned to build barricades. . . ."

"And in Paris they have learned to smash them with cannon fire, together with the idols. And the idols (which, incidentally, are set up again on the next day) bring down with them what is best in Europe, the things it has taken centuries of arduous labour to create. I have seen the trials, the executions and death, but I do not see resurrection or mercy. This part of the world is finished. Its strength is gone. The people here have reached the end of their destiny; they have begun to grow dull and backward.[139] The mainstream of history must have found another bed and that is where I shall go. You yourself argued similarly last year, remember? Aboard a steamer from Genoa to Civitavecchia."

"Yes, I remember, but that was *before the storm.* At that time, you objected, but now you agree with me much too fully. It is not life or experience that brought you to the new view and that is why there is something frantic about it. You have

arrived at this view *par dépit*, through momentary despair with which you naively and unintentionally blanketed your former hopes. If this view of yours were not just the caprice of an annoyed lover, but simply a sober appraisal of the events, you would express yourself differently and regard things in a different way; you would give up that personal rancour; you would forget yourself, moved as you are and filled with horror at the tragedy before your eyes. But the idealists are so chary of self-surrender, they are so egotistic, just like those monks who, suffering all deprivations, never lose sight of their personalities and ultimate reward. Why are you afraid to stay? Do you leave the theatre at the beginning of the fifth act of every tragedy, afraid to upset your nerves? The fate of Oedipus will not be in the least mitigated just because you have left your box. He will perish just the same. It is better to see it out to the end: a spectator oppressed by the misfortunes of Hamlet may yet meet young Fortinbras full of life and hope. And then, there is something great and edifying in the very sight of death... The clouds brooding over Europe and stifling the air have burst into rain, into streaks of lightning; the earth is shaken by thunder and you want to run away because Radetzky has taken Milan and Cavaignac Paris. This is what comes of not recognizing the objectivity of history. I hate humbleness, but here humbleness means understanding. Here humbleness before history and its recognition are quite in place. And besides, history is doing better than might be expected. Why should you be annoyed? We were about to waste away, to wither in the unhealthy and tiresome atmosphere of gradual senility and instead Europe has come down with typhus and not with marasmus. It is collapsing, fading away and delirious—and in its convulsions both parties are wandering in mind and recognize neither themselves nor their enemies. The fifth act of the tragedy began on February 24. The tremulous spirit is quite natural—no serious person would be cheerful under the circumstances—but this is far from that despair and those views of yours. You imagine that you are despairing because you are a revolutionary, but you are mistaken: you are despairing because you are a conservative."

"Thank you, much obliged. So according to you I can be lumped together with Radetzky and Windischgrätz."[140]

"No, you are much worse. What sort of a conservative is Radetzky! Crushing everything in his way, he very nearly blew up the Milan Cathedral. Do you really imagine that it is conservatism which makes the barbarous Croats assault Austrian cities and raze them to the ground? Neither they nor their general realize what they are doing, but it is certain that they *conserve* nothing. You are too apt to judge by the banners: those colours are the emperor's and therefore conservative, while the others are the republic's and therefore revolutionary. But nowadays you will find monarchy and conservatism on both sides. The most pernicious sort of conservatism is to be found on the side of the republic, the sort you are preaching."

"But it would be good if you would explain just what I am trying to conserve and in what my *revolutionary conservatism consists.*"

"Aren't you annoyed because the constitution proclaimed today is so stupid?"

"Of course."

"Aren't you angry because the movement in Germany has vanished in the sink of Frankfurt, because Charles Albert[141] could not preserve the independence of Italy, because Pius IX has turned out to be as bad as can be?"

"What of it? I don't deny that."

"But this exactly is conservatism. If your wishes had been fulfilled, the old world would have been solemnly vindicated.[142] Everything would have been vindicated but the revolution."[143]

"So we should be happy that the Austrians have conquered Lombardy?"

"Why be happy? Neither be happy nor surprised; Lombardy could not free itself by demonstrations in Milan and the help of Charles Albert."

"It's all very well to be discussing this *sub specie aeternitatis* here... But then, I know how to distinguish between a person and his dialectics. I'm sure you would forget all your

theories at the sight of the heaps of corpses, of the plundered cities, violated women and the savages in white uniforms."

"Instead of answering, you appeal to compassion which is always successful. Everyone has a heart unless he is a spiritual monster. It is as easy to evoke pity with the fate of Milan as with the fate of the Princess of Lamballe. To pity is human. Never believe Lucretius who said that there is nothing more delightful than watching a sinking ship from the shore. That is poetic calumny. The accidental victims of savagery always outrage our sense of morality. I have not seen Radetzky in Milan, but I've seen the plague in Alexandria. I know that such scourges are a humiliation and insult to man, but to do nothing more than lament is puny and futile. In the soul indignation is accompanied by the irrepressible desire to react, to struggle, to make enquiries, to find ways and means and delve into the causes. Sensitivity alone will not solve these problems. The physicians will confer over a serious case not at all in the same way in which the patient is lamented by his fond relatives: inwardly they may weep with compassion, but to fight the disease they must display knowledge and not shed tears. And finally, however much the physician is attached to the patient, he must not be flustered and lose his head in the face of death, though he knew it to be inevitable. On the whole, of course, you are right to pity the people who died in the upheaval and the debacle. To be insensible to suffering one must be brought up to be callous. Those who have no compassion for their neighbours—the generals, the ministers, judges, hangmen—have all their lives deliberately estranged themselves from mankind. Had they not done so, they would have got nowhere. Your sorrow is justified and I offer no consolation but of a qualitative nature. Remember that everything that happened from the rebellion in Palermo to the fall of Vienna has not cost Europe even a third of the men who fell at Eylau, for instance. Our notions are so confused that we do not count the dead who fell in the ranks to which they had not been brought by their convictions or the desire to fight, but by the *civil plague* called enlistment. Those who died at the barricades at least knew what they were dying for. As for the others, if they could have but heard the beginning of the parley between the two emperors amidstream, they

would have blushed for their courage on the battle-field. 'Why are we fighting?' asked Napoleon. 'It is only a misunderstanding.' 'There is really no reason to fight,' agreed Alexander and the two kissed. Scores of thousands of soldiers had laid down their lives and taken the lives of others with astonishing courage because of a *misunderstanding*. No matter how great their number, they deserve pity, deep pity. But it seems to me that you are grieving not only for the people, but over something else."

"Among other things, I grieve for the revolution of February 24, which began so gloriously and died so inconspicuously. The republic was a possibility, I saw it myself, I breathed its air. It was not a day-dream, but reality. And what has become of it? I am sorry for it, as I am sorry for Italy which was awakened only to be vanquished on the next day, as I am sorry for Germany which rose to full stature only to collapse at the feet of its thirty landed princes. I am sorry because mankind has retreated by an entire generation, that the movement has again been halted and crushed.

"As for the movement, it can't be stopped. Today, more than ever, the motto is *semper in motu*. You see, I was right when I reproached you of conservatism; it verges on inconsistency in you. Wasn't it you who, about a year ago, complained of the moral degradation of the educated classes of France? And now you have suddenly come to believe that they may turn republicans overnight just because the people had thrown out the stubborn old man and permitted the weak-willed theophilanthropist[144] surrounded by petty journalists to take the place of the persevering Quaker[145] surrounded by petty diplomats."

"It is easy to be so discerning after the events."

"It was not difficult at that time either: February 26 defined the character of February 24. All the non-conservatives well understood that the republic was only a play of words: Blanqui and Proudhon, Raspail[146] and Pierre Leroux. It was not the gift of prophecy, but the habit of conscientious study, the power of observation that was necessary—that is why I recommend that the mind be trained and disciplined by natural science. The naturalist is accustomed to observe and to wait, without introducing anything of his own for the time being.

He will never overlook a single sign of change. He seeks the truth disinterestedly without admixing either love or hatred. Remember that the most discerning publicist of the first revolution was a veterinary[147] and that it was a chemist* who on February 27, in his magazine burned by the students in Quartier Latin, wrote the things now apparent to all and not to be undone. It was unpardonable to expect anything from the political surprise of February 24 but a state of unrest. It was on that day that the unrest began and that in itself is its great result. It is impossible to deny the state of unrest, the thing that drives France and the whole of Europe from tremor to tremor. Did you expect or desire this? Of course not; you anticipated that the *prudent* republic would stand on the rickety legs of Lamartine's eulogy, wrapped in Ledru-Rollin's bulletins. That would have been a world-wide catastrophe. Such a republic would have served as a most efficient brake upon the wheels of history. The republic of the Provisional Government based on the old monarchical principles would be more pernicious than any monarchy. It would appear not as absurd tyranny, but as a voluntary agreement, not as an historical disaster, but as something just and rational with its blind majority of votes and falsehood on its banners. The word 'republic' would then have enjoyed such moral prestige as no throne enjoys any longer. Using its name for deception it would have bolstered the crumbling state system. The reaction has saved the movement; it has thrown off its mask and thereby saved the revolution. The people who would otherwise have been drugged by Lamartine's laudanum have been sobered by the three months' state of siege. They now know what the suppression of discontent means according to the concepts of the republic of *this* kind. The things which were understood only by a few have become clear to all: everybody knows that it is not Cavaignac who is to blame for everything, that it is stupid to put the blame on the executioner, that he is more abominable than guilty. It was the reactionaries themselves who cut down the last of the idols behind which the old system had been lurking as behind an altar. The people no longer

* Raspail.—*A.H.*

believe in the republic and so much the better: it is time to cease to believe in any cure-all creed. The creed of the republic was appropriate in '93. At that time it was grand, colossal and produced that chain of great events which concluded the long era of political upheavals.[148] A purely formal republic appeared after the June days. At present, the incompatibility of fraternity and equality with those traps known as the assizes, of liberty with those slaughters sanctioned by court-martial is becoming evident. No one now believes the packed juries which decide the fate of people in a game of blind-man's-buff allowing no appeal. Nobody believes in a civic system which defends property alone and exiles people as a measure of public safety, and maintains at least a hundred regulars who stand ready unquestioningly to press the trigger at the word of command. And that is why the reaction is useful. Doubt has been unleashed; it fills the mind and makes people think. And this was a point not easily reached, especially by the French who, for all their keenness, are very dull in comprehending what is new. The same has happened in Germany; Berlin and Vienna succeeded at first. They were about to rejoice over their Diets,[149] over their charters for which they had been timorously sighing for thirty-five years. Now that they have seen the reaction and have learned by experience what all those Diets and Chambers are, they will no longer be satisfied with any charter granted or seized. To the Germans such things have become what a toy, about which he has dreamed as a child, becomes to the grown man. Thanks to the reaction, Europe has realized that a representative system is a clever device to sublimate public needs, and urge for action into words and interminable debates. Instead of being glad of this, you are angry. You are wrought up because, moved by cowardice, the National Assembly, consisting of reactionaries and invested with absurd power, voted for an absurdity. And in my opinion this is the best proof that there is no need either for those universal councils of legislature or for the representatives resembling high priests, and that now it is impossible to vote for a sound constitution. Is it not ridiculous to write out a code for the generations to come when the decrepit world has hardly time somehow to make its

spiritual will for the future. You do not applaud all these failures just because you are a conservative, because, consciously or not, you belong to this world. Though angry and indignant over it last year, you did not want to let it go, and for this you were punished by disillusion on February 24. You had come to believe that the world could be saved by household recipes, such as propaganda, reforms, etc., that it could be rejuvenated without alteration. You believed that it *could* reform and you still do. Should there be a riot on some street, or should the French proclaim Ledru-Rollin president, you will again go into raptures. This is pardonable while you are young, but I do not advise you to keep it up long; you will grow ridiculous. You have a live, receptive nature—so climb over the last barrier, shake the last dust from your boots and you will be convinced that little revolutions, little republics and small changes are not enough: their scope is too narrow and they soon lose all interest. Don't surrender to them. They are all tainted with conservatism. I give them their due, of course. They have their good sides. In Rome, under Pius IX, life has become better than under the drunken and vicious Gregory XVI. In some respects the republic of February 26 affords a better medium for new ideas than the monarchy. Yet, all these palliatives are as harmful as they are useful—the momentary relief they bring make one forget one's illness. And then, when you get a closer view of those improvements, when you see with what wry, displeased faces the improvements are made and that every concession looks like a humiliating charity grudgingly given, you lose all desire to set a high value on these favours. I cannot choose between modes of slavery, as I cannot choose between religions. My senses have been blunted; I can no longer distinguish between the subtleties. I cannot say just which sort of slavery is worse and which is better; which religion is nearer to salvation and which is further from it; which is more oppressive: the *honest* republic or the *honest* monarchy, the revolutionary conservatism of Radetzky, or the conservative revolutionism of Cavaignac; who are the more vulgar: the Quakers or the Jesuits; or which is worse: the whip or the *crapaudine*.[150] There is slavery on both sides. On the one side it is subtle, disguised as free-

dom and consequently dangerous; on the other, it is savage, brutal and consequently conspicuous. Fortunately, the two do not discern how similar they are, and are ever ready to engage in battle. Let them fight as they will, form coalitions, claw and drive each other to the grave. Whichever wins, the false or the brutal, it shall at the outset be no victory of ours; but then it will be no victory of theirs either. The winners will only manage to celebrate boisterously for a day or two."

"With us looking on, as always, as the eternal spectators, the pitiful jurymen whose verdict is ignored, the witnesses whose evidence nobody needs? I am surprised at you; but I don't know whether to envy you or not. With such an active mind as yours, you—how shall I put it—you show so much restraint."

"What shall I do? I won't do anything against my inclination. Sincerity and independence are my idols. I won't rally to either banner. Both parties are so well on the way to the graveyard that my help is superfluous. There are precedents too. What part could the early Christians have taken in the struggle of the Roman pretenders to the throne? They were called cowards, but they just smiled and carried on, praying and preaching."

"They preached because they were strong of faith and in the unity of their creed. Where is our Gospel, the new life to which we summon, the holy message which we are destined to herald to the world?"

"Preach the message of death, show the people every fresh wound on the bosom of the old world, every success of destruction. Point to the impotency of its enterprise, the pettiness of its aspirations. Show that it cannot recover, that it has neither support nor belief in itself, that nobody truly loves it, that it continues to exist owing to misunderstanding. Show that every one of its victories is but a blow to itself. Preach *death* as the holy message of impending redemption."

"Perhaps better pray than preach? To whom are you going to preach when the victims are being mowed down on both sides. It was only an Archbishop of Paris[151] who did not know that in times of combat no one will listen. Let us wait a while yet: no one will hinder us in the immense graveyard when all

the fighters will lie stretched side by side. And who can listen to the eulogy to death more readily than the dead? If things continue as they do, the world will present a queer sight: the future that is coming will perish together with the senile past, the abortive democracy will die clawing the cold and emaciated breast of the monarchy."

"A future which dies is no future. Democracy, in the main, is the present. It is the struggle, the renunciation of the hierarchy, of social injustices accumulated in the past; it is the purifying flame which will scorch away the obsolete forms and which will, of course, be extinguished when the combustibles are consumed. Democracy can create nothing; nor is it supposed to. It itself will be an absurdity after the death of its last enemy. The democrats *know* (to use Cromwell's words) *what they do not want, but what they do want, they do not know.*"

"The knowledge of what we do not want conceals the anticipation of what we do want. This is the basis of an idea so often repeated that I feel embarrassed to quote it, the idea that every destruction is a kind of creation. Man cannot be content with destruction alone. It is against his creative nature. To preach death, we must have faith in resurrection. The Christians could readily proclaim the end of the ancient world; its funeral coincided with a birth and a christening."

"We have not the anticipation alone, but something more. Only we are not as easily satisfied as the early Christians. Their one criterion was faith, and they, of course, found relief in unwavering certainty that the church would triumph and the world would be baptized. But it never occurred to them that the newly christened child might turn out different than its godparents expected. Christianity has remained a pious hope. Now, on the eve of death, it is still consoled, as in the first century, by the promise of heaven and paradise—without heaven it is lost. The propagation of the idea of a new life is incomparably more difficult in our times. We have no heaven, no divine city. Our city is human and has to be built on the same soil on which all things real exist. We cannot revert to the temptations of the devil, or God's intercession, or the afterlife. Nor does democracy go so far. It itself stands on Chris-

tian shores and has an infinite quantity of ascetic romanticism and liberal idealism. It possesses a terrific power for destruction, but no sooner does it take to creating than it is lost in puerile trials and political studies. Of course, destruction too is creative: it clears the site and this already is creation. It rejects a number of lies, and this already is the truth. But there is no real creative power in democracy and, therefore, it is not the future. The future stands outside of politics. It is hovering over the chaos of all the political and social trends and will use their shreds to weave a new cloth to serve as a shroud for the old and swaddling clothes for the new. It is socialism that corresponds to the teachings of the Nazarene in the days of the Roman Empire."

"If you recollect what you have just said about Christianity and sustain the comparison, the future of socialism will be far from enviable: it will remain a hope everlasting."

"And while doing so, it will on its way unfold the brilliant period of history under its aegis. The Gospel has not come true—and there was no need for this—while what has come true are the Middle Ages, the era of restoration, the era of revolution. But Christianity has penetrated into all these phenomena; it has taken part in them, instructed and guided them. The fulfilment of socialism will also constitute an unexpected combination of abstract teachings and existing facts. Life puts only that aspect of thought into effect which finds a fitting soil. And the soil does not remain a passive medium, but contributes its fluids and introduces its own elements. The new which arises out of the struggle of utopias and conservatism, emerges into life quite different than the one or the other side expected. It stands transfigured, is made up of memories and hopes, of what exists and what will exist, of traditions and fresh enterprise, of beliefs and knowledge, of the Romans who have ceased to live and the Germans who have yet to live, and who are linked by a single church alien to both. Ideals and schemes never come true as we imagine them."

"Then how and why do they enter our minds? What irony!"

"And why do you demand that the mind of man should be cut to his needs and nothing more? Why should we so prosaically reduce everything to the strictly necessary, to the rigor-

ously useful, to the inevitably applicable? Let us remember old Lear's reaction when his daughter diminished the number of servants, assuring him that he need no more: 'Allow not nature more than nature needs, man's life is as cheap as beast's.' Man's fantasy and thought is incomparably freer than generally supposed. There are worlds of poetry and thought, to some extent independent of the environment, which lie dormant in the soul of every man. Stirred by an impulse, they awake with their visions, theories and projects. Resorting to the facts, thought strives towards realization of universal values and tries to escape into logical spheres from transient and accidental definitions. But it is a far cry from the logical to the practical spheres."

"Hearing your words, I can't help wondering why there is so much objective justice in you? And I have found the reason: you are out of the stream; you haven't been caught up in the current. An outsider is always a sounder judge of family affairs than the members of the family themselves. But if, like many, like Barbès[152] or Mazzini, you had worked all your life because of the inner voice of your conscience which commanded such work, and which you could not silence because it spoke from the very depths of the heart hurt by oppression and contracting at the sight of cruelty—and if that inner voice had penetrated not only to the mind and consciousness, but to your very blood and nerves to hurl you against the authorities and compel you to waste a part of your life in chains, or to wander the earth as an exile; and then, you would at last see the dawn you had been awaiting half your life—then you, too, like Mazzini, would rise to speak in the Italian language in a square in Milan, to speak of independence and fraternity, acclaimed by the crowds and unafraid of the white uniforms and yellow moustaches. And if like Barbès you, after ten years in prison, were carried shoulder-high by the exulting crowds on to the square of the very same city where one hangman's helpmate had pronounced your death sentence and another had graciously commuted it to a lifetime in chains; and would have seen your idea realized and the vast crowds, 200,000 strong, acclaiming you, a martyr, with cries of '*Vive la République*!'—and then would have seen Radetzky in Milan and Cavaignac

in Paris; and would have again become an exile or a convict—imagine, besides, that you would not have had even the consolation of setting this down to crass, brute force, but, on the contrary, had seen that the people had betrayed their cause and the knives of the selfsame crowds were now at the service of your enemies—you would give up your wise and prudent talk about the extent to which thought is decisive and where the limits of the will are to be found. No, you would curse those human cattle and your love would turn to hatred, or worse yet, into contempt. For all your atheism, you would be ready to enter a monastery."

"That merely would prove that I am a weak man and that all people are weak, that thought, far from unavoidable in the world, is not unavoidable even in the individual. But please excuse me. I cannot permit you to reduce our conversation to a discussion of our personalities. As for myself, I'll say only this: it is true, I am a spectator, but that is neither my role nor in my nature; it is merely my present position, which I am fortunate enough to understand. Some other time, we may talk about my personality, but just now I should not like to be diverted. As you were saying, I would have cursed the people perhaps, but that would have been very stupid. The masses are elemental forces, their ways are the ways of nature: they are its closest heirs. They are impelled by obscure instincts and unconscious passions. They stubbornly cling to what they have acquired, even if it is bad. And when set in motion, they irresistibly draw everything with them or trample everything underfoot, even if it is good. Like the Indian idol, they move implacably on; everyone in the way must hurl himself under Juggernaut; and those who are the first to be crushed are his most zealous believers. It is absurd to reproach the people. They are right, because they are always consistent with the circumstances of their past. They are responsible for neither good nor evil; they are mere facts, like good crops or bad, like an oak or an ear of wheat. The responsibility rather lies with the minority which represents the conscious thought of its time though it too is not responsible. Indeed, the legal point of view is good for nothing anywhere except in court, and for that very reason all the courts of the world are good for nothing anywhere. To un-

derstand and yet accuse, is almost as ridiculous as not to understand and to put to death. Is the minority to blame if the entire evolution of history, the whole of preceding civilization has worked for its benefit, if its mind is developed at the cost of the blood and brain of others, and, if, in consequence, it has by far outdistanced the masses, savage, primitive and crushed by heavy labour as they are? This is no fault of theirs, but merely a tragic, fateful aspect of history. Neither the rich are responsible for the riches which came to them in the cradle, nor the poor for the poverty to which they were born. Both have suffered pre-ordained injustice. If we are somewhat justified in demanding that the people, suffering, starved, grief-stricken, oppressed and humiliated, should pardon us for our unjust acquisitions, our superiority, our culture, because we cannot be held responsible for these, because we are consciously working to rectify this unconscious wrong—what right have we to scorn and curse people who have remained the same Kaspar Hauser[153] so that we could read Dante and listen to Beethoven? To be contemptuous of them just because they are not intelligent enough to understand us, who have monopolized intelligence, is ugly and vicious. Recollect the whole story: the educated minority who, in its exclusive position, long enjoyed life in its aristocratic, literary, artistic and official circles, was pricked by compunctions at last: it remembered the forgotten brother, and ideas of equality and the injustice of the social system leapt from mind to mind like electric sparks in the past century. It was bookishly and abstractedly that these people understood the injustice, and bookishly and abstractedly they desired to make amends. These belated compunctions were named liberalism. Sincerely desirous of remunerating the people for millenniums of suffering, they proclaimed the sovereignty of the people and demanded that every rustic should suddenly become a politician, should understand the involved issues of semi-free and semi-slaveowning legislature, should give up his work, i.e., his crust of bread, and, a new Cincinnatus, should devote himself to social affairs. Liberalism gave little thought to his daily crust of bread: it was too romantic to care about such gross necessities; it was easier for liberalism to invent people than to study them. The liberals told as many lies about the people

out of love as others out of hatred. They invented their own *a priori* conception of the people in the pattern of reminiscences from books, and clothed them in something between a Roman toga and the pastoral sheepskin. As for the real people, these concerned them but little. These lived, worked and suffered on all sides and if anyone knew them at all, it was their enemies, the priests and the legitimists. Their fate was unchanged, as in days of old; while the invented people became the idol of the new political creed—the ointment with which kings had been anointed was lavishly poured on their sunburnt brow, wrinkled and glistening with sweat. Without troubling to loosen the bonds on the people's hands and mind, the liberals ensconced it on the throne, and, bowing low before it, at the same time sought to secure power for themselves. The people behaved like one of their representatives, Sancho Panza: they renounced the imaginary throne by refusing to take seat upon it at all. And so we begin to comprehend the falsehood on both sides, which means we are approaching the right path to which we should direct everyone, instead of turning back and scolding. Far from blaming the people, I do not blame the liberals either. Most of them loved the people in their own way and sacrificed a good deal for their beliefs. This is always praiseworthy, but they were on a false track. They may be compared with the one-time naturalists who began and finished their studies of nature in the natural history museum: their knowledge of life was confined to carcasses, to dead forms, to traces of life. Glory to those who were wise enough to take up their stick and bundle and wander away to the mountains or cross the oceans in order to see life and nature in full reality! But why should their glory and successes overshadow those of their predecessors? The liberals have always been the denizens of big cities and small circles. They are the people who live in literary magazines, books and clubs. Knowing nothing about the people, they have been studying them with a profound air in historical sources and excavations, but never at the village fair. All of us are more or less guilty of this and that is what leads to misunderstandings, disappointments, reproaches, and, finally, to despair. Were you acquainted with the inner life of France, you would not be surprised that the people want to

vote for a Bonaparte. You would know that the French people have not the least idea about freedom or about republics, but instead have infinite national pride. They love the Bonaparte, and hate the Bourbons. The Bourbons are associated with the corvée, the Bastille and the nobility; the Bonapartes, with the stories told by old men, with Béranger's songs, the victories, and, at last, the memories of how one's neighbour, a peasant, too, returned a colonel or a general wearing the Legion of Honour... And the neighbour's son hastens to vote for the *Nephew*."

"That is true, of course, but it is strange that having so good a memory, they should forget the despotism of Napoleon, his conscriptions, his arbitrary prefects?"

"Simple enough. To the people despotism is not characteristic of the empire. Until now, all governments have seemed despotic to them. They, for instance, learned to know the republic proclaimed for the pleasure of *Réforme* and the benefit of *National*,[154] by the forty-five centime tax,[155] by the deportations and by the fact that poor workmen were not granted passes to Paris. The people indeed are poor philologists: the word 'republic' neither appeals to them nor makes things easier for them. On the other hand, the words empire and Napoleon electrify them. And that is as far as they can go."

"If one looks at things that way, I begin to think that one will not only stop growing uneasy and acting, but even stop wanting to act."

"It seems to me that I have already told you that to understand means already to act, to put to practice. Do you really think that should one understand what is going on, one must lose the desire to act? That means that you wanted to do that which it was not necessary to do. In that case, look for some other employment: if you do not find it outside, you will find it within. It is a strange man who, having something to do, does nothing, but just as strange is the one who has nothing to do and does something. Work is not a ball of thread for a kitten to play with: it is shaped not only by the desire, but by the demands made upon it."

"I have never doubted that one should always think, and have never confused forced inaction with deliberate idle-

ness of thought. Incidentally, I foresaw the consoling conclusion to which you have come: to remain in thinking inaction, suppressing heart by mind and love of mankind by criticism."

"I repeat, desire and love of mankind are not enough to take an active part in the world that surrounds us. These are merely vague will-o'-the-wisps. What is love of mankind? What is mankind itself? To me, this smacks of the old Christian virtues rehashed in a philosophical oven. People love their countrymen. This is natural. But the love which embraces everything that has ceased to be a monkey, from Eskimo and Hottentot to Dalai Lama and the Pope, is something I cannot understand—it is too broad. If it is the love with which we love nature, the planets and the universe, I do not believe it can be especially active. It is either the instinct or an understanding of the environment which leads to activity. You have lost your instinct. Now lose your abstract knowledge and manfully face the truth. Understand it, and you will see what sort of activity is needed and what sort is not. Do you desire political activity in the present scheme of society? Then become a Marrast or an Odilon Barrot and you will have it. You do not want this? You feel that every decent man should be a complete stranger to all political issues and must not seriously worry as to whether the republic needs a president or not, or whether the Assembly may or may not sentence people to hard labour without trial; or, better still—should he vote for Cavaignac or for Louis Bonaparte. Which of the two is the better? You may think for a month, for a year: and you will not be able to decide because, as children are fond of answering: "both are worse." All that is left to a man who respects himself is not to vote at all. Have a good look at the other questions *à l'ordre du jour*—they are quite the same: they are ready to give up the ghost and past praying for. What does a priest do when summoned to the bed of a dying man? He neither cures him nor attempts to cope with his ravings, but gives absolution. Grant absolution, pronounce the death sentence which must be carried out not in a matter of days but of hours. Convince yourself once and for all that not a single one of the doomed will escape the hangman: neither the *autocracy* of the Tsar in St. Petersburg nor the *freedom* of the philistine republic; and pity neither the one nor the other.

Better try to convince the superficial, light-minded people who applaud the fall of the Austrian Empire and pale over the destiny of the semi-republic, that the fall of the latter is as great a step towards the liberation of the people and of thought as the fall of the Austrian dynasty, that no exception and no mercy is needed, that the time of compassion has not yet come. Say it in the words of the reactionary liberals: "amnesty belongs to the future." And instead of love of mankind demand hatred for everything that impedes its progress. It is time to bind all enemies of freedom and progress with one rope, as *they* bind their convicts, and to lead them through the streets for everyone to see that the French Code and the Russian Ukase, Radetzky and Cavaignac, are equally responsible. That would be a great lesson. He who will not be sobered after these shattering world events, never will be, and will die a Knight Toggenburg of liberalism, like Lafayette. The terror beheaded the people, but our task is easier: we are called upon to execute institutions, to destroy beliefs, to deprive the people of old hopes, to break down prejudices, to lay hands upon everything sacred, without mercy or reservations. We should smile upon and welcome only that which is rising, the dawn alone. And if we are unable to hasten its hour, we at least can indicate its nearness to those who cannot see."

"Just like the old man on the Place de Vendôme, who in the evenings offers his telescope to the passers-by so that they can admire the stars?"

"Your comparison is apt; that's just what you must do: show every man who passes how the rising waves of retribution are approaching nearer and nearer. Show him, too, the white sail of the ark barely visible on the horizon. Here is your work. When everything has gone down, when all that is superfluous has been dissolved in the brine, when the tide subsides and the ark of salvation comes safely to earth, then people will have something else to do, a great deal to do. But not now!"

Paris, December 1, 1848

V

CONSOLATIO[156]

> Der Mensch ist nicht geboren frei zu sein.
>
> *Goethe, "Tasso"*

OF THE ENVIRONS of Paris I like Montmorency the best. There is nothing conspicuous in this suburb, neither carefully trimmed gardens, like those of Saint-Cloud, nor arbours of trees, like in Trianon. And yet it is a place one would rather not leave. Nature in Montmorency is extraordinarily plain; it is like those women's faces which do not arrest immediate attention, but appeal by their sweet and trusting expression, and the effect is all the more powerful because you are won over unknown to yourself. There is something touching and soothing in such scenery and such faces; and the soul of modern man, constantly shaken, rent and agitated, is grateful for this tranquillity, for this drop of water to Lazarus. I found solace in Montmorency on several occasions and for this I am thankful. There I found a deep grove, situated rather high and with that quiet not to be had anywhere else in the suburbs of Paris. I cannot say why, but this wood reminds me of our Russian forests.... You walk along and feel that any moment you will get a whiff of familiar barns and a glimpse of the village.... On the other side, no doubt, you will come upon the manor, as the path is broadening and leads straight on. And, would you believe it, I was saddened to think that in a few minutes I would see not Zvenigorod, but Paris, not the small window of the Zemsky's or the priest's house, but the window through which Jean Jacques Rousseau had stared so sadly and so long....

It was this house that two persons, apparently tourists, were approaching as they emerged from the wood: a lady of about five and twenty, dressed in black, and a middle-aged man, prematurely grey. Their faces expressed calmness, even tranquillity. It is only the long habit of profound meditation and a life replete with thought and events, which impart such noble serenity to the features. This is not an innate calm, but the quiet which follows the storm, struggle, and victory.

"This is Rousseau's house," said the man, pointing to the cottage with three windows.

They stopped to look at one of the windows which was partly open, its curtain stirring in the breeze.

"The movement of that curtain is somehow frightening," observed the young woman. "I can almost see it moved aside by the suspicious, angry man wanting to know what we are doing here. To look at this little house in its greenery, one would never think it was the rock of Prometheus which held fast a great man whose only fault was that he loved people too well and believed in them too much, wishing them more good than they wished themselves. His contemporaries could not forgive him expressing the secret pangs of their conscience; and they compensated for it with the affected laughter and scorn which really hurt him. They regarded the poet of brotherhood and freedom as a man bereft of reason. They were afraid to admit that there was reason in him because this would have meant admitting their own stupidity, which made him weep for them. For a lifetime of devotion, for the fervent desire to help, to love and be loved, to liberate, he was repaid with casual greetings and permanent coldness, narrow-minded arrogance, persecution and slander! Delicate and painfully sensitive by nature, he was not impervious to these trifles and wasted away ill and poor, deserted by all. His only reward for all his love and sympathy was Thérèse[157] and he transferred all his warmth, his heart to her—to Thérèse who could not even tell the time by the clock, an ignorant creature full of prejudices, who tried to press Rousseau's life into the narrow rut of suspicion and philistine quibbling, and ended by estranging him from his last friends. Probably, he spent many a bitter hour with his elbows on that window-sill, feeding the birds and wondering with what evil they would repay his kindness. Nature was all that was left to the poor old man. He loved it dearly, but closed his eyes, weary of life and heavy with fears. It is said that he hastened the hour of final rest. Then it was Socrates who condemned himself for the sin of knowledge, for the crime of genius. To look seriously at what is going on is enough to make living horrible. Everything is so mean, and stupid, too. People are so busy, never find a moment's rest, and accomplish noth-

ing but nonsense; others would like to bring them to their senses, to stop them, to save them—and these are nailed to the cross or persecuted—and all this in a kind of delirium, without the slightest effort to understand them. The waves roll on, tumble over one another without aim or need.... At one place they burst madly over the rocks, at another they wash at the shore and we, in the midst of the vortex, do not know where to turn. I know, doctor, you hold a different view. Life does not make you angry because you are interested in it as a physiologist and demand little from it. You are a great optimist. Sometimes I agree with you; especially when you put me off with your dialectics. But as soon as my heart interferes, as soon as I descend from the universal spheres, where everything is solved and smoothed over, and touch upon the live issues and look at people, I revolt; my irritation, momentarily soothed, wakes up again and I regret but one thing: that I cannot hate enough, that I cannot sufficiently scorn the people for their lazy callousness, for their lack of desire to grow greater, more noble. If one could only turn away from them and let them do what they will in their polyp colonies, let them carry on today as they did yesterday by rote and custom, taking for granted what they should and should not do; while, at the same time, betraying their moral standards, their own catechism at every step."

"I don't think you are very just. Are the people to blame because you trust them so, because you hold ideal notions of their moral standards?"

"I don't know what you mean. I have just told you something quite different. It doesn't seem to me a mark of trust to say that the people have nothing to offer but a crown of thorns to every prophet and futile regrets after his death; that they are ready to hurl themselves like beasts upon everyone who dares to personify their conscience and call their deeds by name, who takes all sins upon himself and strives to wake their consciousness."

"Yes, but you forget the source of your indignation. You are angry with the people for much that they have not done, because you think they possess all those fine qualities which you have cultivated yourself or which your upbringing has culti-

vated in you, because they, for the most part, have had no such upbringing. I am not angry with them and I don't expect them to do anything but what they are doing. I see no reason or justification to demand anything from them but what they can offer. And they can offer only what they give. To demand more and to reproach them is a mistake, a coercion. We are fair to the lunatics and the arrant fools alone: we do not reproach them, at least, for the faulty work of their brain; we forgive them their natural defects; but upon the rest we make intolerant spiritual demands. I don't see why we should expect exemplary virtue and extraordinary acumen from every passer-by. Perhaps this is due to the habit of idealizing everything, of judging everything from on-high—just as life is usually judged by the dead letter of theory; or passion by the moral code; or personality by the generic conception. I take a different view of things. My view is that of the physician, quite opposite to that of the judge. A physician lives in nature, in the world of facts and phenomena. He does not teach, but learns; he does not seek to avenge, but to alleviate. Confronted with suffering and defects, he searches for the cause, for the connections, and seeks the remedy in the same world of facts. If there is none, he resignedly shrugs his shoulders, annoyed at his own ignorance, but he never thinks of punishment, retribution, or reproach. The view of the judge is simpler. He really needs no views at all. It is with good reason that Themis is blindfolded: the less she can see of life, the more just she is. We physicians, on the contrary, would wish to have eyes on every finger. I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist. I look into things and examine them without ready-made conceptions, or preconceived ideals, and am not in a hurry to diagnose—please excuse me, but I am simply more modest than you."

"I'm not sure I have understood you correctly, but from your words I infer that you find it very natural that Rousseau's contemporaries should have harassed him with petty persecutions, made his life bitter, heaped him with slander. You absolve all this. Very condescending of you! But how just or moral I cannot say!"

"In order to absolve, one must first accuse, which I do not do. But all the same, I am willing to accept your choice of word.

I do absolve the evil they have done, just as you absolve from all blame the cold weather from which your baby caught cold the other day. Can one grow indignant at events beyond the will and consciousness of anyone? Hard though they are to bear at times, accusation will not help, but only confuse things. At the bedside of your little girl, when she was so ill that I too was alarmed, I was pained for you and her—you suffered so much in those hours. But instead of cursing the bad composition of the blood and of hating the laws of organic chemistry, I thought about something altogether different: how the possibility of understanding, feeling, loving and affection necessarily entails the opposite potentiality of adversity, suffering, privation, moral humiliation, and bitterness. The more delicately the inner life is developed, the more cruelly and perniciously is it affected by the capricious play of chance in no way responsible for its blows."

"I did not blame the illness. Your comparison is not quite fitting: nature has no consciousness at all."

"And I think you cannot blame the semi-conscious masses either. Put yourself in their position of struggle between anticipation of light and their habit of dwelling in darkness. Your criterion is the cherished and exemplary hot-house flower which required so much care to be reared; and you are annoyed with its counterpart in the fields because it is not nearly as handsome. This is not only unjust, but cruel to the extreme. Do you suppose that people would live as they do now if their consciousness were but a little brighter? They harm not only others, but themselves as well; and this is what excuses them. They are in the grip of customs and are dying of thirst at the edge of the well, never suspecting that it contains water, because their fathers did not tell them so. People have always been that way; and it is time to stop wondering and growing indignant about it. There has been time enough to get used to this since Adam. It is the very same romanticism which once made the poets grow angry simply because they had bodies and felt hunger. Be as angry as you like, but you cannot reform the world according to your plan: it goes its own way and nobody will lead it from its path. Learn this way, and you will discard the moralizing standpoint and grow stronger. A

moralizing appraisal of events and upbraiding the people belong to the most elementary stage of consciousness. It flatters one's pride to lavish Montyon prizes and lecture the culprits, accepting oneself as a criterion, but it is useless. There were some who tried to introduce this view into nature and ascribed good and bad reputations to the various animals. Seeing a hare fleeing from unavoidable danger, they called it a coward; or seeing that a lion, twenty times larger than a hare, did not flee from man, but sometimes devoured him, they declared him brave. Seeing that a satiated lion did not attack anyone, they concluded that this was magnanimity. Now a hare is just as cowardly as a lion is generous, or an ass, stupid. It is time to go beyond Aesop's fables: one must look at nature and people in a simpler, calmer and clearer way. You were just speaking of Rousseau's suffering. It is true, he was unhappy; but it is also true that suffering always accompanies extraordinary growth—genius may at times avoid suffering by retiring into itself, into science or art, but this is absolutely impossible in the practical spheres. The explanation is simple: entering into the relations of common people, such natures inevitably upset equilibrium. They find the environment too narrow, unbearable. They are constrained by the relations cut to fit other statures, other shoulders. All the trifles that trouble the ordinary man, that random small talk that usually dominates him, turn into agony in the breast of a strong man, grow into formidable protest, into open enmity, into a challenge. Hence the inevitable clash with his contemporaries: the crowd, of course, observes his contempt for everything they cherish; and they retaliate by throwing stones or mud at the genius, until they realize that he was right after all. Can we blame a genius for being superior to the crowd, or blame the crowd for not understanding him?"

"And you find that this state of the people, and the majority at that, is natural? You think that this moral degradation, this stupidity is normal? You must be joking."

"But how could it be otherwise? No one compels the people to act as they do; it is their childish will. People are more honest in practical life than in words. The best proof of their simpleness of heart is their sincere readiness to repent as soon as they realize that they are guilty. When they had cru-

cified Christ they realized what they had done and prostrated themselves before the cross. And I cannot understand what you mean by moral degradation, *si toutefois* you are not referring to the original sin. From what were they to degrade? The further you look back, the more you see of savagery, ignorance and other trends which have almost no bearing on our life: some dead civilizations, Chinese customs. It is prolonged living in society that develops the brain; the process is slow and hard. And now, instead of recognizing this, the people are scolded because they do not resemble the ideal of the sage invented by the Stoics, or the ideal of the saint invented by the Christians. Entire generations laid down their lives to inhabit and cultivate some plot of land; centuries have passed in struggle; oceans of blood have been shed; entire peoples have perished in suffering, in futile effort, in arduous labour, scarcely able to procure a slender living and a little rest and only five or six minds were able to decipher the initials of social progress and lead the masses on to their destiny. One should rather be surprised that the peoples, under these oppressive conditions, could have arrived at the moral standards of today, at self-denying patience and a peaceful existence. One should be surprised that people do so little evil rather than reproach them because not every one of them is Aristides or St. Simeon Stylites."

"Are you trying to convince me, doctor, that people are destined to be rascals?"

"You may be sure that people are not destined to be anything."

"But why then do they live?"

"Because they do. They were born and so they live. Why does anything live? That is where all questions must terminate: life is means and purpose, cause and effect. It is the eternal unrest of active, tense substance, which finds equilibrium only to lose it again; it is eternal motion, *ultima ratio*, beyond which one cannot go. Once upon a time everyone sought the solution of the mystery in the clouds and in the depths; they soared high or delved low, but found nothing because that which is chiefly essential is to be found directly at hand, on the surface. Life is pursuing no aims, but is achieving the realization of everything possible and continuing that which has been realized. It is ever

ready to step further in order to live more fully and vigorously if it can. And it has no other aim. We are apt to mistake the sequent phases of one and the same process, to which we have grown accustomed, for aims. We are apt to think that the aim of a child is maturity, because its eventual maturity is inevitable; while the real aim of a child is to play, to enjoy being a child. Should one look for the limits, for the final aim, one will find only death."[158]

"You forget, doctor, that there is another aim pursued by people, which survives them and is passed on from generation to generation and grows from century to century; it is precisely in this life of mankind, not of the individual representing mankind, that the constant goals are revealed towards which man is striving, towards which he aspires and the realization of which he will some time attain."

"I quite agree. I have just said that the brain is being developed: the sum total of the ideas and their volume is mounting in conscious life and is being handed on from generation to generation. But your last words arouse my doubts. Neither the striving towards a goal nor faithfulness to it can guarantee its realization. Let us consider the most persistent striving in all peoples of all times—the striving for well-being, so deeply rooted in all that is endowed with perception, the development of the elementary instinct of self-preservation, the inborn urge to flee from everything that inflicts pain and to seek everything that affords enjoyment, the naive desire for the better and not for the worse. And for all that, despite millenniums of effort, man has not yet attained even the well-being of animals. It seems to me that, proportionately, the serfs in Russia suffer more and the Irish starve more than any animals. How, then, can you argue that other urges, more vague and felt only by a minority, can be easily gratified."

"But, if you please, the urge for freedom, for independence is worth no less than the fear of starvation; it is not weak and not vague at all."

"This is not borne out by history. It is true that certain strata of society, developed under especially favourable circumstances, have some hankerings for freedom, although not very strong, judging by the millenniums of slavery and considering

the modern social system. I am of course not referring to exceptional personalities to whom slavery is unbearable, but to the majority who are constantly giving *démenti* to these martyrs; this incidentally prompted the incensed Rousseau's famous nonsense: "Man is born to be free—and is everywhere in chains."

"Can you repeat with irony this cry of indignation wrung from a free man?"

"To me it is a coercion of history, contempt for the facts, and I find it unbearable: I am hurt by the arbitrariness of it. Added to this, there is the obnoxious method of deciding in advance just what the crux of the matter is. What would you say to a man who, shaking his head, would make the melancholy observation that fish are born to fly and yet are constantly under water?"

"I would ask him why he believed that fish were born to fly."

"You are becoming more exacting. But a true friend of *fishkind* would find a ready answer. In the first place he would tell you that the skeletons of fish incontrovertibly show the tendency of limbs to develop into legs or wings; he will point to an array of quite superfluous bones which suggest the rudimentary bones of feet and wings; finally, he will cite the flying fish which demonstrate in practice that *fishkind* not only strives to fly, but sometimes actually does so. Having made this requisite reply, he will be justified to ask why you do not demand an explanation from Rousseau who says that man is born to be free on the grounds that he is constantly in chains. Why do all things exist as they should exist, while man alone does not?"

"You, doctor, are a formidable Sophist and if I did not know you better, I would regard you as the most immoral of men. I can't say which bones are superfluous in fish, though I'm sure they have plenty of bones; but I do know that people possess a deep-rooted desire for independence, for every kind of freedom—and of this I am convinced. They stifle the inner voice with the trivialities of life; and I am angry with them for that reason. There is, perhaps, more grace in the way I attack people than in the way you defend them."

"I have known all along that after a few words the tables would be turned, or that you would rather circumvent me and attack me from the rear. You would like indignantly to get away from the people because they cannot attain to moral heights, to independence and to your ideals; and at the same time, you regard them as spoilt children who, you are sure, will cease to be naughty one day and grow sensible. But I know that people progress very slowly and I trust neither their own capabilities nor those aspirations invented for their benefit; and I stay with them, as I stay with these trees and these animals; I study them and even love them. You have an *a priori* view, and perhaps you are right from the standpoint of reason, saying that man should strive for independence; but I regard things as a pathologist and can clearly see that until now slavery has been a constant prerequisite of social development. Thus, it is either a necessity or, at any rate, does not arouse the disgust it seems to arouse."

"Tell me, why do we, who both analyze history very conscientiously, see it in altogether different ways?"

"Because we mean different things. Speaking of history and people, you mean the flying fish; while I mean fish in general. You refer to the world of ideas divorced from the facts, to the list of public figures, of thinkers who constitute the acme of consciousness in every epoch, and to those intense moments when the entire population of a country suddenly rises and embraces a host of ideas to assimilate them in the centuries of quiet that follow. You accept these cataclysms incidental to the growth of a people and these exceptional personalities as routine occurrences; while, actually, they are occurrences of a higher order, the outermost boundaries. The advanced minority which soars onwards over the heads of the others and throughout the ages transmits its thoughts and aspirations, to which the masses swarming beneath are utterly indifferent, brilliantly testifies to the heights to which man's nature can attain and the tremendous resources of strength which can be mustered in extraordinary circumstances—but all this has nothing to do with the masses, with ordinary people. The beauty of an Arab horse, a breed reared in twenty generations, by no means warrants similar expectations from horses in general. The ideal-

ists must needs have their own way whatever the cost. Physical beauty among human beings is as rare as exceptional ugliness. Just look at the petit bourgeois crowding the Champs-Elysées on Sundays and you will clearly see that human nature is not beautiful at all."

"I know that very well and am not at all surprised by the stupid mouths, the bulging foreheads, the noses perkily upturned or foolishly drooping; they simply disgust me."

"And how you would laugh if someone said that he was grief-stricken because donkeys are not as beautiful as reindeer. Rousseau could not endure the absurd social system of his day. The small group that surrounded him and developed to the point where they lacked only the initiative of his genius, the ability to call the evil that oppressed them by its name, responded to his challenge. These schismatics,[159] these apostates were true to their ideals and came to constitute the Mountain in '92. They perished almost to a man, working with might and main for the French people whose demands were unduly modest and who permitted their execution without regret. I would not even call this ingratitude: what they had done was not really done exclusively for the sake of the people: it is *ourselves* whom we wish to liberate; it is *we* who are pained to see the oppression of the masses; it is *we* who are humiliated by its slavery; it is *we* who suffer for it and would like to put an end to this suffering. Why should we expect gratitude? How could the people, in the middle of the eighteenth century, desire freedom, and *Contrat social*, when even now, a century after Rousseau, and a half century after the Convention, they are *indifferent* to it; when even now they feel quite in their own element within the narrow tenets of the most vulgar civic order."

"But the unrest all over Europe ill accords with your views."

"The blind unrest of the people comes from hunger.[160] If the proletarian were a bit better off, he would not think of communism. The middle class are well fed, their property is well guarded and so they have ceased to worry about freedom and independence. They, on the contrary, desire a strong hand; they smile when told with indignation that such-and-such a periodical has been suppressed, that so-and-so has been clapped into jail for his convictions. All this can annoy, infuriate only

a small group of eccentric people. The remainder pass by indifferently; they are too preoccupied with trade and family life. From this it by no means follows that we are not justified to demand complete freedom; but there is no reason to be angry with the people because they are indifferent to our sorrows."

"All that is so, perhaps, but I think you put too much trust in arithmetic. It is not the sheer numbers that matter, but the moral power, the *majority* in terms of dignity."*

"As regards the quantitative advantage, I cede it entirely to the strong personalities. In my opinion Aristotle represented not only the concentrated power of his epoch, but something far greater. People had to have a topsyturvy understanding of him for two thousand years in order to grasp his meaning finally. You remember that Aristotle calls Anaxagoras the first sober man among the inebriate Greeks. Now, Aristotle was the last one. Put Socrates between them, and you will have the complete list of sober minds until Bacon. It is difficult to gauge the masses by such exceptional standards."

"Science has always been the field of the few. This abstract field has been entered by the severe and exceptional minds alone. And if you fail to find much sobriety in the masses, you will find instead divine inebriety full of sympathy for the truth. The masses did not understand Seneca or Cicero, but see how they responded to the twelve apostles."

"But if it comes to that, I must say that, pity them as we might, they have suffered a complete fiasco."

"Yes, they have merely baptized half the world."

"But this took four centuries of struggle and another six of complete barbarism—and after ten centuries of effort we find the world baptized in such a way that nothing is left of the Gospel. The message of delivery was turned into oppressive Catholicism, the religion of love and brotherhood, into a church of bloodshed and war. Sapped of its life's blood, the ancient world was wasting away and Christianity came to its deathbed as a physician and consoler, but while tending its patient it

* It was Augustine who used the expression *prioritas dignitatis.*—*A.H*

was itself infected, and grew Roman, barbaric, anything you like, but not Evangelic. What power there is in clannish communion, in the masses and circumstances! People think that it is sufficient to demonstrate the truth as a mathematical theory for it to be accepted, that it is sufficient to believe for the others to believe also. Actually, things turn out differently: while some say one thing, the others understand quite another because their development has been quite different. What did the first Christians preach and how did their listeners respond? They accepted everything that was occult, absurd and mystical; everything clear and simple was inaccessible to them; they accepted everything that shackled the conscience, but not a thing that would deliver man. Thus, they later came to understand revolution as bloodshed, the guillotine and vengeance alone. What was the bitter necessity of history turned into the cry of malicious triumph. They coupled the word 'death' with the word 'fraternity'; '*fraternité ou la mort!*' became the '*la bourse ou la vie!*' of the terrorists. We have lived and seen much; and our forefathers have lived and seen no less and so it is unpardonable of us to be light-minded and think that it is enough to proclaim the Gospel to the Roman world to convert it into a democratic and social republic, as the *red* apostles used to think; or, that it is enough to publish a double-column illustrated edition of *des Droits de l'homme*, for mankind to be delivered."

"Please tell me, why are you so eager to show up only the evil side of man's nature?"

"You began by anathemizing and now you defend the people. You have just accused me of optimism and now I may return the compliment. I have no system, no concern whatever except the truth; and I express it as it appears to me. I do not consider it necessary to think up all sorts of virtues and merits out of courtesy to mankind. I hate the phrases to which we have been accustomed like the Christians to their dogma. No matter how good and moral they may seem on the face of it, they fetter thought and subjugate it. We take them for granted and go on, leaving these false beacons behind—and go astray. So accustomed are we to them that we lose the faculty of doubting them and are too conscience-stricken to lay hands upon these

holy of holies. Did you ever think what the words, 'man is born to be free,' mean? I shall interpret them for you. They mean 'man is born a beast'—no more. Take a drove of wild horses—complete freedom and equal rights, the most complete communism; but development is impossible. Slavery is the first step to civilization. For development it is incumbent that some shall be far better off and others far worse. It is then that the former can advance at the expense of the latter. Nature spares nothing for development. To her man is an animal with an extraordinarily well-developed brain: herein lies his power. Man did not feel in himself the agility of the tiger or the strength of the lion. He was remarkable neither for his muscles nor for especially keen senses; but he evinced a world of cunning, a host of humble qualities which, coupled with his natural tendency to dwell in communities, brought him to the initial step of social life. Bear in mind that man is fond of obeying; he always seeks something to lean upon, or to hide behind. He lacks the proud self-sufficiency of the beast of prey. He grows up subjugated by the family and the tribe. The more involved and tight the knot of social life became, the deeper people sank into slavery. They were oppressed by religion, which played on their fears, and by the tribal chiefs who played on tradition. There is not an animal, but one from the 'kind corrupted by man,' as Byron called domestic animals, that would be able to stand the strain of human relations. The wolf devours the lamb because it is hungry and because the lamb is weaker; but the wolf does not demand slavery from the lamb, nor does the lamb submit to him. It protests by bleating and running away. Into the wildly independent and self-sufficient world of the animals man has introduced an element of personal loyalty, the element of Caliban and it is owing to this that a Prospero could appear. And here we find the same relentless economy of nature, conservation of means: should it indulge in some excess at one point, it will curtail itself in another: when it chose to enormously extend the neck and forefeet of the giraffe, it at the same time shortened its hind legs."

"Doctor, I see that you are an arrant aristocrat."

"I am a naturalist and, besides, if you want to know: I'm no coward. I'm neither afraid to know nor to express the truth."

"I won't argue. And then, in theory everyone tells the truth inasmuch as he understands it—that requires little courage."

"Do you think so? What a prejudice! I beg to differ: not one philosopher in a hundred is sincere. It would be better if a philosopher made mistakes, talked nonsense, but with complete sincerity. Some seek to deceive others on moral grounds and others deceive themselves—for the sake of peace. Are there many like Spinoza or Hume who shrank from no conclusion? All those great liberators of the human mind behaved like Luther and Calvin: and from a practical point of view they were right perhaps. They liberated themselves and others up to the point of some sort of new slavery, they halted at some mystical or religious books and found in themselves sufficient moderation and restraint to go no further. As a rule the followers continue in the tracks of their teachers. Some appear who are bolder and dare to guess that something is wrong, but they take care to hold their tongue out of piety, and prevaricate out of respect for their subject. Just as the attorneys prevaricate daily when they say that they have no doubts whatever as to the integrity of the judge, themselves aware that he is a rascal, and not in the least inclined to trust him. This courtesy is quite slavish, but we have grown used to it. To know the truth is not easy, but it is easier than to express it when it fails to coincide with universal opinion. How much coquetry and rhetorics, how many embellishments and circumlocutions were used by the best minds, by Bacon and Hegel, to avoid speaking plainly in fear of obtuse indignation and vulgar hootings. That is why it is difficult to understand philosophy—one has to divine the falsely expressed truth. Now consider: are there many who have the leisure and the inclination to delve into the inner core of thought, to remove the trash with which our teachers dimmed their poor lights, to cast away the false gems and the coloured bits of glass?"

"You are again broaching your aristocratic idea that the truth is for the few and falsehood for the rest and. . . ."

"Excuse me, but this is the second time you have called me an aristocrat. I cannot help recalling Robespierre's expression *'l'athéisme est aristocrate.'*[161] If by that he had meant to imply that atheism is accessible to the few, just as calculus or phys-

ics, he would have been right. But by saying that atheism is aristocratic, he inferred that it was a lie. To me this is outrageous, sheer demagogy, the subjugation of the mind to the absurd majority vote. The unbending logician of the revolution knuckled under; and, by proclaiming this *democratic* untruth of popular religion, did not bolster but curtailed his strength, indicated the boundary beyond which he was no longer revolutionary. And to do such a thing in a time of upheaval and flux meant that the time of personalities had passed. And indeed, after the *Féte de l'Être Suprême,* Robespierre grew gloomy, brooding and restless. He was eaten up by misgivings; he was no longer firm of faith; he could not regain that bold composure with which he formerly trod over blood which failed to cling to him, when he knew no bounds, when the future was lost in the infinite. Now he was up against a wall and felt that he had to grow conservative; and the head of the atheist Cloots, sacrificed to prejudice, now lay at his feet, a mute accuser. And this he could not overstep. We are older than our eldest brothers. Let us not be children then, let us not be afraid either of realities or logic, or of renouncing the consequences, for these appear independently of our will. Let us not invent God if he is not. He will not appear because of that. I told you that the truth belongs to the minority, but weren't you aware of this yourself? Why did you think it odd? Perhaps because I did not embellish it with some rhetorical phrase? But really I cannot be held responsible either for the good or the harm that comes from this. I merely state the fact. In the present as in the past I find knowledge, the truth, moral strength, desire for independence, love of the beautiful confined in a small group of people lost amidst hostility. On the other hand I see the hard and slow development in the other strata of society, the narrow conceptions based on tradition, the narrow requirements, the feeble urges to do good and the equally feeble impulses to do evil."

"And besides, the remarkably true instinct of their urges."

"You are right. The general sympathies of the masses are almost always correct, just as the instinct of animals is correct. And do you know why? Because the puny self-sufficiency of a personality is effaced in the mass. The masses are valid only as something impersonal; and the development of an independ-

ent personality constitutes the whole charm in which everything free, talented and strong crystallizes."

"Yes, as long as there will be masses. But mind that the past and the present do not warrant your conclusion that in the future these relations will not be changed. Everything tends towards the destruction of the decrepit pillars of society. You have deeply realized and have a vivid conception of the split, the duality of life; and you rest content with this. Like a prosecutor, you indict and try to prove the crime, leaving the decision to the court. But others go further; they should like to efface this crime; all the strong personalities of the minority, to whom you have been referring, have been constantly striving to fill the chasm separating them from the masses. They hated to think that this was an inevitable and fateful fact; they had in them too much love to endure it in their exclusive heights. They would rather self-denyingly have precipitated themselves into the chasm separating them from the people than saunter at its edge as you do. And this link with the masses is not a whim or rhetorics, but a deep feeling of affinity, the consciousness that they had themselves emerged from the masses, that without this chorus they would have had no role, that they represent their aspirations and have achieved just what they are striving to achieve."

"Unquestionably, every flower of talent is connected with its plant by thousands of fibres and would never have come to exist without its stalk. And yet, it is neither stalk nor leaf, but a flower; and its life, though connected with the other parts, is somehow different. One cold morning the flower may perish, but the stalk will remain. The flower, if you like, is the goal of the plant and the consummation of its life; and yet, the corolla is not all a plant. Every epoch, so to speak, carries out on its crest the best and completest types, if these only find the chance to evolve; not only do they come from the crowd, but *have* come out of it. Take Goethe: he represents the intensified, concentrated, purified, *sublimated* essence of Germany. He had emerged from it and could not have found existence without the history of his people. But so far had he risen above his compatriots that they could not understand him clearly and that, finally, he in his turn could not understand them clearly. He embodied every-

thing that stirred the heart of the Protestant world and so broadly unfolded his wings that he hovered over the world of his time, like the spirit of God over the waters. Beneath him lay the chaos, confusion, scholastics, and blind attempts at understanding. And he was the bright consciousness and the serene thought which by far outdistanced his contemporaries."

"Goethe brilliantly represents your thought: he keeps aloof and is content with his own grandeur; and in this respect he is an exception. Were Schiller and Fichte that way too, and Rousseau and Byron and all those people who tormented themselves to bring the masses to their own level? To me their torments, acute, hopeless, sometimes accompanying them to the grave, and sometimes to the scaffold, or to the lunatic asylum, seem better than the serenity of Goethe."

"They suffered much, but don't think they found any consolation. They had much love and even more faith. They believed in the mankind invented by them; and believing in the future, they revelled in their despair; and this faith healed and heartened them."

"Why have you no faith?"

"The answer to that was given by Byron long ago. To the lady who would convert him to Christianity, he said: 'What shall I do to begin to believe?' Nowadays, it is possible either to believe without thinking or to think without believing. To you, doubt seems something tranquil and easy; but do you know how much a man will give for faith in a moment of agony, weakness or exhaustion? But where should one find it? You were saying that it was better to suffer; and yet you advise faith. But do the really religious people suffer? I'll tell you about something that once happened to me in Germany. A lady newly arrived at the hotel sent for me one day. Her children were suddenly taken ill. And when I came I found that they had come down with a violent case of scarlet fever. Now medicine has made such progress that we have realized that we do not know a single disease or a single cure; and that is a great step forward. I could see that their condition was very grave, prescribed a few innocuous things to console the mother, and gave various detailed orders to keep her busy, while I sat down to wait and

see what forces the organisms could muster to combat the disease. The eldest boy became quite still. 'I think he has gone to sleep,' the mother said, but I hushed her with my finger. The boy was passing away. I could clearly see that the disease would take the same course in his sister; it was impossible to save her. The mother, a high-strung woman, was in a frenzy, constantly praying, but the child died. While human nature claimed its own in the first days, she lay in a fever, near death. But gradually she recovered and grew composed. Then she began to talk Swedenborg, and at her departure she took me by the hand and said with serene triumph: 'I have had a hard time.... It was a terrible ordeal, but I have found them a good abode: they have returned pure—not a speck of dust, not a breath of evil came near them.... They will be happy. It is for their sake that I must submit.' "

"What a difference between this fanaticism and man's faith in people, in the possibility of a better scheme of society, in freedom. This faith is an idea, a conviction, a consciousness, and not a prejudice."

"Yes, this is not a crass religion *des Jenseits*, which places the children in a boarding-house of the other world, but the religion *des Diesseits*, the religion of science, of the universal, of the generic, of the transcendental mind, of idealism. Please tell me why it is ridiculous to believe in God and not ridiculous to believe in mankind, why it is absurd to believe in the kingdom of heaven, but wise to believe in the mundane utopias? Having discarded practical religion as such, we have nonetheless retained the habits of religion and, having lost the paradise in heaven, we believe in the coming of a paradise on earth and boast of this. The belief in the after-life was a great source of strength to the ancient martyrs, but the same kind of faith supported the martyrs of the revolution. Both the one and the other strode to the scaffold with head high and joyous, because they had implicit faith in the success of their ideas, in the triumph of Christianity or the republic. Both were mistaken. The martyrs were not resurrected and the republic did not come. We, who have lived after them, have witnessed this. I deny neither the greatness nor the benefit of faith, the great source of movement, of development, of passion in history. But man's belief

is either a particular phenomenon or an epidemic. You cannot retrieve it, especially if you have allowed of analysis and doubt, if you have questioned life and have made vivisections in a fever of excitement, if you have peeped behind the scenes more than you should have. The thing is done and you cannot believe anew. Could you, for example, convince me that man's spirit continues alive after death, when it is so easy to realize the absurdity of this division of body and spirit? Could you convince me that social fraternity will be established tomorrow or within a year, when I see that the peoples understand fraternity in the way that Cain and Abel did."

"You, doctor, are left with a very modest part in this drama, futile criticism and idleness to the end of your days."

"That's probable, very probable, in fact. Though I would not call spiritual work idleness, I do believe that you have correctly guessed my destiny. Do you remember the Roman philosophers in the early centuries of Christianity? Their position has much in common with ours. The present and the future slipped from their hands, and to the past they were hostile. Convinced that they knew the truth clearer and better than others, they deplored both the decaying world and the world to come. They felt more right, but weaker than either. Their circle grew more and more exclusive. They had nothing in common with heathenism except habits and ways of life. The innovations of Julian the Apostate and his work of restoration were just as ludicrous as the restoration of Louis XVIII and Charles X; on the other hand, their worldly wisdom was flouted by the Christian doctrine: they could not accept its language, the very earth seemed to be slipping from under their feet; sympathy for them was on the wane, but they knew how to wait proudly and in dignity until carried away in the debacle. Seeking no redemption in death and without pretensions of saving themselves or the world, they perished coolly, without self-pity. And if spared by death, they knew how to fold themselves in their togas and silently watch what would become of Rome and its people. The only good that was left to these aliens of their age was a pure conscience, the consolation that they had not shrunk from the truth, but, having comprehended it, had found sufficient strength to carry its burden and to remain true to it."

"And that was all?"

"Wasn't that enough? Oh yes, I have forgotten: they had still another blessing—their personal relations, the certainty that there were people as discerning as they and in sympathy with them, their faith in profound ties unaffected by any events. To this add a little sunshine, the sea and the mountains in the distance, the rustling greenery and the gentle climate.... What more could one wish?"

"Unfortunately you will not find so snug and warm a corner anywhere in Europe."

"I shall go to America."

"It is very dull there."

"True enough."

Paris, March 1, 1849

VI

THE 1849 EPILOGUE

Opfer fallen hier,
Weder Lamm noch Stier,
Aber Menschenopfer—unerhört

Goethe, "Braut von Korinth"

Accursed may you be, year of bloodshed and madness, year of vulgarity triumphant, of brutishness and stupidity! Accursed may you be!

From the first to the last day you were nothing but a prolonged disaster: not a single happy minute, not a single tranquil hour. Everything in that year was criminal, vicious and gory; everything bore the mark of Cain—from the restoration of the guillotine in Paris, from the Bourges trial to the gallows of Cephalonia erected by the British for children, from the shootings of the citizens of Baden by the Prussian King's brother,[162] from Rome which fell before those who betrayed mankind,[163] to Hungary sold to the enemy by a leader who betrayed his country.[164] And all this was only the first step, the beginning, the prelude. The years to follow will be even more ignoble, more vicious, more coarse. What a time of tears and despair we have

lived to see! One grows dizzy and the heart aches: it is just as terrible to know what is being done as it is terrible not to know what other outrages have taken place. Frenzied malice incites to hatred and scorn; humiliation rankles.... And one would like to flee, to get away ... to rest, to efface oneself completely, to forget oneself.

The last hope which warmed and supported us—the hope for revenge is vanishing; it is the hope for blind revenge, wild and unnecessary, but one which could prove that there is a heart in the contemporary man; the soul is shorn of the last leaf of green; all is bare... all is quiet... the darkness and cold are spreading... only the falling axe of the executioner is to be heard, and now and then the whistle of an executioner's bullet seeking the noble breast of some youth because he believed in humanity.

And are they not to be avenged?

Had they no friends, no brothers? Was there not anyone who shared their faith? There was indeed, yet there will be no revenge!

Their ashes have brought forth not a Marius, but an entire literature of dinner speeches, demagogic harangues—mine included—and a spate of prosaic verses.

But *they* will know nothing of this. What luck that they are gone and that there is no life beyond the grave. *They*, after all, believed in people, believed that there was something to die for, and they died splendidly, as martyrs redeeming an emasculated generation. We scarcely know their names.—The murder of Robert Blum[165] horrified and amazed us; but then we got over it.[166]

I blush for our generation; we seem to be soulless speech-makers: our blood is cold; it is only our ink which flows hot. Our thoughts run to anonymous irritation, and our tongues to impassioned words that cannot affect the issues. When it is needful to strike, we meditate; and when we ought to be carried away by emotion, we deliberate. We are obnoxiously prudent, we look down on everything and can swallow anything, preoccupied as we are with the *universal*, with the *idea*, with *mankind*.

We have enfeebled our souls in the abstract and universal

spheres; just as the monks emaciated theirs in the world of prayer and contemplation. We have lost the appetite for reality and have risen above it just as far as the philistines sank below it.

And what were you doing, you revolutionaries afraid of revolution? You, political pranksters, clowns of freedom, you were playing at republic, playing at terror, at government, playing the fool in your clubs, chattering in your chambers. Masquerading with pistols and sabres, you virtuously rejoiced when avowed scoundrels praised your mercy, surprised that they were still alive. You foresaw nothing and forestalled nothing. And those who were the *best among you* paid for your insanity at the price of their heads. Now learn from your enemies, from those who vanquished you because they were wiser. See if they are afraid of reaction, of going too far, of staining their hands in blood. They are wallowing in it elbow-deep, up to the chin. Wait a little: they will execute you all. You are not out of their grasp. Put you to death? Oh no, they may just have the lot of you publicly flogged.

Modern man simply horrifies me. What insensitivity and narrow-mindedness, what lack of passion and indignation, what feebleness of mind! How soon his ardour is cooled! How quickly his energy and faith in his own cause is spent. And where and on what? When did these people manage to waste away their lives and fritter away their strength? They were corrupted at school where they were stupefied; they indulged in dissipation at pubs and student orgies; their petty, dirty debauchery emasculated them. Born and reared in a hospital atmosphere, they developed little strength and withered away before they flowered. They exhausted themselves not in passion, but in passionate dreams. As men of literature, idealists, and theoreticians, they grasped debauchery in theory alone and read about passion in books. One is really annoyed sometimes that man cannot be reclassed with some other species.... To be an ass, a frog or a dog must of course be more pleasant, honest and noble than to be a man of the nineteenth century.

But there is no one to blame. It is neither their fault nor ours. It is a misfortune to be born when the entire world is perishing.

There is only one consolation: it is very probable that the generations to come will degenerate still more, will become even shallower and poorer of heart and mind. Even our deeds and our thoughts will be inaccessible to them. Like the royal dynasties, the people grow dull-witted before their fall. Their intelligence is obscured and they go out of their minds like the Merovingians begotten in debauchery and incest, and perishing in stupor without ever recovering their senses. Like aristocrats who have degenerated to sickly cretins, shallow Europe will eke out its poor days in the twilight of intelligence, in feeble emotions, without conviction, without art, without sublime poetry. The enfeebled, sickly, stupid generations will straggle along somehow, until some eruption, some lava will encrust them with stone and commit them to the obscurity of the chronicles.

And then?

And then spring will come and young life will sprout from their tombstones, the barbarity of childhood, full of rampant but robust forces, will replace the barbarity of senility. Fresh, wild power will burst forth in the youth of new peoples, and we shall have the beginning of a new cycle of events and the third volume of world history.

We can divine its leit-motif—social ideas. Socialism will develop in all its phases to the extreme consequences, to absurdities; and then a shout of protest will break forth from the titanic breast of the revolutionary minority and a deadly struggle will begin anew, in which socialism will take the place of present-day conservatism and be vanquished by a future revolution unknown to us.

The eternal play of life is as relentless as death and as inevitable as birth, *corsi e ricorsi* of history, *perpetuum mobile* of the pendulum. By the end of the eighteenth century the European Sisyphus had rolled his heavy stone, composed of the ruins and fragments of three heterogeneous worlds, to the very top of the hill. Lurching to one side and then to the other, the stone seemed at last to be settling, but alas, it swung too far and began its downward roll. It might have been checked and brought to a standstill by certain obstacles, by certain

brakes, such as a representative assembly or constitutional monarchy, and have stood to be eroded through the centuries, accepting every change for perfection and every new combination for development—like the European China called Britain, or the antediluvian state within the antediluvian hills called Switzerland. But for that to have happened, no wind should have blown and there should have been no jolt or quake. But the wind did blow and there was a jolt. The tempest of February ploughed up the whole of the ancient soil. The tempest of June set the entire Roman-feudal crust in motion; it rushed downwards with increasing velocity, crushing everything in its way and dashing itself to pieces. And poor Sisyphus stands watching, unable to believe his eyes. His face is haggard. His perspiration of fatigue has turned into perspiration of horror, and his eyes are filled with tears of despair, shame, impotence and anger. He had so ardently believed in self-perfection and mankind. He had so wisely, philosophically and scientifically set his hopes on modern man, but was deceived.

The French revolution and German learning are the two pillars of Hercules of the European world. Beyond them lies an ocean and a new world, some other and not merely a rehashed edition of old Europe. The two had promised the world delivery from the oppression of the church, from civil slavery, from moral subjugation. But while sincerely proclaiming the freedom of thought and life, the people of the great change failed to realize the incompatibility of this freedom with the Catholic system of Europe. Renounce it as yet they could not. In order to advance they had first to furl their banners, to betray them, to make concessions.

Rousseau and Hegel turned Christian; Robespierre and Saint-Just turned monarchist.

German learning is a speculative religion, the republic of the Convention—pentarchical absolutism and at the same time a church. The scriptures were replaced by the civil dogmas. The assembly and government administered at the mysteries of popular liberation. A legislator became a priest and oracle, complacently and without irony, uttering the eternal infallible verdicts on behalf of popular sovereignty.

And, of course, the people remained the "laity," the *governed.* Nothing had changed for them and attending the political liturgies they were no wiser than at the religious liturgies.

But the terrible name of *freedom* penetrated into the world of habit, custom and authority. It became lodged in the heart, rang in the ears and could not remain passive. It fermented and corroded the pillars of the public edifice. Its difficulty was just to gain a foothold, to decompose the first drop of the old blood. The rest followed of itself. With this poison in the veins it was impossible to preserve the decrepit body. The realization of imminent danger was especially pronounced after the mad era of the empire. All the profound minds of that age were expecting a cataclysm and were afraid of it. The legitimist Chateaubriand and Lamennais, who was only an abbot at that time, pointed to it. The sanguinary terrorist of Catholicism de Maistre [167] was apprehensive of it and extended one hand to the Pope and the other to the executioner. Afraid to sail too far and be caught in the squalls, Hegel was furling the sails of his philosophy which had so freely and proudly forged ahead on the seas of logic. Harassed by the same prophecy, Niebuhr[168] died when he saw 1830 and the July Revolution. An entire school[169] was formed in Germany which dreamed about holding off the future with the past, of blocking the door to the nursery with the corpse of the parent.—*Vanitas vanitatum!*

Two giants came at last to solemnly conclude the historical phase.

The aged figure of Goethe, who took no share in the activities seething about him and kept aloof from his environment, stood tranquil at the entrance of our epoch, the completing link of the distant and the recent past. Still commanding the attention of our contemporaries, he at the same time reconciled them with the past. The old savant was still living when the only poet of the nineteenth century appeared and disappeared, the poet of doubt and wrath, confessor, executioner and victim all in one. Hurriedly, he sceptically absolved the dying world and himself died at the age of thirty-seven in regenerating Greece to which he had fled to avoid seeing his native shores.

His departure was followed by a great silence. No one heeded the sterility of the age, the total lack of creative endeavour. At

first it was illuminated by the after-glow of the eighteenth century; it could still shine in its glory and take pride in its men. But as the stars of this so different sky went down, the dusk descended on all things. There was only impotence, mediocrity, pettiness, and a scarcely noticeable greying in the East, a hint of the distant morn to be preceded by many a storm.

Prophets appeared who at last proclaimed impending disaster and distant redemption. They were regarded as possessed; their new language aroused indignation, and the words they uttered were set down as ravings. The mob does not want to be awakened. It demands but one thing, to be left alone with its wretched way of life and its vulgar habits; like Frederick II, it wants to die without changing its linen. There is nothing in the world that can gratify this modest desire more completely than a philistine monarchy.

But disintegration had taken its course; the surreptitious mole, the "worthy pioneer" was hard at work. The authorities and institutions were being consumed by a malignant cancer. On February 24, 1848, the chronic disease assumed an acute form. The trumpet calls of the Last Judgement proclaimed the advent of the French Republic. The impotence and decrepitude of the old social system grew ever more conspicuous. Everything was getting out of hand and coming loose. Everything had been mixed up and continued to exist owing to this confusion alone. The revolutionaries had turned into conservatives, the conservatives into anarchists. The republic had killed the last of the free institutions which survived under the kings. Voltaire's native land had suddenly grown ostentatiously pious. All and everything is conquered, but there is no victor.

To the many who entertained hopes we said: this is not the flush of recovery, but merely the fever of consumption. Daring in thought and sharp of tongue, we were neither afraid to investigate the evil nor to expose it. But now we have broken into a cold sweat. And I am the first to pale before the deepening dusk; I tremble at the thought that our prophecies are coming true so soon and that they are unavoidable.

Farewell to the departing world, to Europe!

And we? What will become of us?

We are the last links between the two worlds and belong to neither; we are people estranged from our kin, divorced from our environment, left entirely to ourselves; we are superfluous because we have nothing in common either with the senility of one world or the infancy of the other. No place has been set for us at either table; we are people who have renounced the past and invent abstract schemes for the future; we have no stakes in either one world or the other and this testifies both to our strength and superfluity.

If we could only escape ... and by our example begin a liberation, a protest, a new life.... But are we indeed so utterly free of the old ways? Are not our virtues and our vices, our passions and especially our habits a part of the old world from which we have deviated only in our convictions?

What are we going to do in the virgin forest, we who cannot spend a morning without reading five periodicals, we whose only poetry lies in the struggle with the old world? What can we do? Let us be honest and admit that we are inadequate Robinson Crusoes.

Have not those who went to America carried the old England there with them?

And will we not hear the groans from afar? Can one turn away from this, close one's eyes, stop one's ears, refuse to know and be stubbornly silent, i.e., admit that we have been defeated? Impossible! Let our enemies know that there are independent people who will not surrender the right to free speech at any cost—not until the axe has fallen upon their necks, not until the hangman's noose has been thrown over their heads.

And so let us make ourselves heard!

... Whom shall we address? And what shall we say?—I really do not know, but I feel that I must....

Zurich, December 21, 1849

VII

OMNIA MEA MECUM PORTO[170]

Ce n'est pas Catilina qui est à vos portes—c'est la mort!

Proudhon, "Voix du Peuple"

Komm her, wir setzen uns zu Tisch!
Wen sollte solche Narrheit rühren?
Die Welt geht auseinander wie ain fauler Fisch,
Wir wollen sie nicht balsamieren.

Goethe, "Xenien"

THE OLD, the official Europe that we see is not asleep; it is dying.

The feeble vestiges of former life are barely sufficient to hold together for a time its body's elements disintegrating and striving for new contiguities and the development of other forms.

On the surface of it, there is much that still stands firm and is proceeding as usual; the judges continue to dispense justice, the churches are open, the stock exchanges are seething with business, the troops are manoeuvring, and the palaces are ablaze with light; but the spirit of life has departed; everyone is ill at ease: death is near and actually everything is at a standstill. In reality there is neither church, nor troops, nor court nor government. Everything has been absorbed by the police. And it is the police which is maintaining and conserving Europe; it is under its aegis and shelter that the thrones and altars continue to stand. This indeed is the galvanic current which animates the old body in order to gain time. But the consuming fire of disease has not been extinguished; it has only been driven inward, out of sight. All those blackened walls and ramparts which by their age alone seem as permanent as the rocks, are not reliable; they are like the stumps which have long outlived the fallen forest and which seem indestructible until toppled by the foot of a passer-by.

Many cannot recognize death when they see it, only because they associate death with annihilation. Death, however, does

not annihilate the components, but only disengages them from their *former* unity, delivering them for existence under different conditions. A continent, of course, cannot vanish from the earth. It will continue to exist just as Rome continued into the Middle Ages; it will dissolve in the Europe to come, will lose its present-day character, and while submitting to what is new, will yet influence it. What the son inherits from his father, in the physiological and the civic sense, continues to exist after the latter's death. But for all that, the two are separated by *death*, just as the Rome of Julius Caesar and the Rome of Gregory VII.*

The demise of the modern civic forms should rather gladden than depress the heart. What is truly depressing is that the departing world leaves behind not an heir, but a widow with child. Much water will pass under the bridges and there will be a long night of chaos and desolation between the death of the old world and the birth of its offspring.

We shall not see what Simeon** lived to see. However cruel this truth, we shall have to face it, to resign ourselves to it, for it cannot be altered.

We studied the sickly organism of Europe for a long time, and everywhere, in all strata, we saw the finger of death, and only rarely heard the prophecies. At first we harboured faith and hoped, or at least tried to do so: but the agonies of death so quickly distorted its features that we could doubt no longer. Life was flickering, like the last candle in the window at dawn. We were crushed and frightened. With clasped hands we stood watching the ravages of death. What have we learned from the February Revolution? Suffice it to say: two years ago we were young, but now we are old.

The nearer we approached the people and the parties, the more desolate the surrounding desert became, and the deeper our loneliness. How could we have shared the madness of some

* On the other hand, it was not death, but evolution, change, and growth which lay between the Europes of Gregory VII, of Martin Luther, the Convention, and Napoleon. And that is why the endeavours of the reaction of antiquity (Brancaleone, Rienzi[171]) were unsuccessful, while the monarchist restorations in modern Europe are so easy.—*A.H.*

** *Simeon Bogopriimets*—A saint in the Orthodox Church.—*Tr.*

and the callousness of others? Here there were sloth and apathy, and there lies and narrow-mindedness; but of strength there was none anywhere except perhaps in the few martyrs who died for the people without benefiting them, and in some sufferers who were crucified for the masses and were prepared to sacrifice their blood, their lives, but were forced to conserve both, realizing, as they did, that the people have no need for such gifts.

Idle and lost in this world tumbling about our ears, and deafened by the fatuous debates and daily insults, we surrendered ourselves to grief and despair and longed only for one thing: a place to rest our weary heads without troubling about dreams.

But life has come into its own and, instead of despairing and longing for extinction, I desire to live.[172] I no longer want to admit that I am so dependent on the world. I do not want to remain an eternal mourner at the bier.[173]

Is it possible that there is nothing at all within us, that we have been only a particle of this world, and that now, when it is perishing through its own immanent laws, we have nothing to do but sit amid its ruins and serve as tombstones?

Enough of mourning! We have given the world its due. We have grudged nothing; we have given it the best years of our lives, years filled with heartfelt sympathy; we have suffered with it more than it has suffered itself. Now let us dry our tears and face life manfully. What it has in store for us can and *must* be borne. We have come through the worst, and the adversity of the past is an adversity that is ended. We have had time to acquaint ourselves with our situation and therefore hope for nothing and expect nothing; or rather we expect everything—which amounts to the same. There is much that can humiliate us, break us down, and kill us, but nothing can *surprise* us unless all that we have thought and said has been idle chatter.

The ship is sinking. It was the minute of doubt that was terrible, when fear was mingled with hope. Now the situation is clear. The ship cannot be saved and what is left to us is either to perish with it or save ourselves. Away from the wreck! Take to the boats and the rafts! Let every man take his own chance, test his own strength. The *point d'honneur* of the sailors ill becomes us.

Away from the stuffy rooms where our long and tempestuous lives are drawing to an end! Into the open, away from the polluted and suffocating atmosphere! Let us leave the hospital wards and make for the fields! There will be plenty of adepts at embalming the corpse, and even more worms to fatten on its decomposition. Let us leave them to the corpse, not because they are better or worse than we, but because they want this, whereas we do not, because this is life to us and suffering to them. Let us step aside freely and disinterestedly, because we know full well that there will be no legacy for us; nor do we need a legacy.

In years gone by you would have termed such a break with contemporary affairs *a desertion*: the inveterate romanticists would call it so even now, after the long chain of events they have witnessed.

But a free man cannot really desert, because he is guided by his convictions alone and is entitled to stay or go. Here it is not a question as to whether he chooses to desert, but as to whether he is free or not.

Moreover, the word desertion becomes utterly ludicrous if applied to those who had the ill luck to see and advance further than others and now do not choose to return. *À la* Coriolanus, they could say to the people: it is not we who have advanced, but you who have fallen behind. But this would be just as ridiculous. We do our work—and the others do theirs. Personalities and the masses develop in such ways that neither can be held fully responsible for the consequences. But a certain degree of development, no matter in whom and by what means, imposes obligations. To renounce one's development means to renounce oneself.

Man is freer than he is commonly thought to be. He is greatly dependent upon his environment, but not to the degree of being subjugated to it. The greater part of our destiny lies in our own hands—provided we understand this and do not let it go. Comprehending this, people however permit the environment to coerce and drag them on against their will. They renounce their self-sufficiency and, never relying on themselves, but on the environment alone, strengthen the ties linking them with it more and more. They expect that all the good and the evil of life will

come from it, and depend least of all upon themselves. With such childish obedience, the fateful power of the external becomes irresistible. To engage in struggle with it seems insanity. But this formidable power dwindles from the moment when man's soul, instead of yielding to despair and self-effacement, fear and obedience, gives rise to the simple question: "Is man really so fettered to his environment for better or for worse, that he has no possibility to free himself from it even when he has really departed from it, when he no longer needs it and is indifferent to its gifts?"[174]

I do not imply that this protest in the name of the emancipation and originality of the personality comes easily. It is indeed dearly bought. Before it escapes from the breast of man, it is preceded either by prolonged trial and hardship, or by those harrowing epochs when the degree of man's isolation from the world is measured by his comprehension of it, when all the ties binding him to the external turn into chains, when he feels that he is right, though in opposition to the events and the masses, when he realizes that he is an alien, a rival to, and not a fellow-member of the family to which he belongs.

Everything about us is in flux, unsteady; we stand at the edge of a precipice and feel that it is crumbling underfoot; twilight is descending and there is not a lodestar above. We shall find no haven but within ourselves, in the consciousness of our infinite freedom, of our autocratic independence. Saving ourselves in this way, we stand on that brave, vast soil upon which the development of free life in society is alone feasible—if feasible at all.

Were people to desire to save themselves instead of the world, to deliver themselves instead of mankind, how much they could do for the salvation of the world and the emancipation of mankind.

The fact of man's dependence upon his environment and epoch is undeniable. And it is all the stronger since half of the ties have been surreptitiously fastened behind the back of the consciousness; here one may find the physiological bond against which the mind and the will can rarely contend; here, too, there is the hereditary element, the thing we have brought with us from birth, like the features, the quality linking the last

generation with the line of its predecessors; here, too, there is a morally physiological element: upbringing and education which inculcate history and place us abreast of the times; and finally, there is the conscious element. The environment in which man was born and the epoch in which he lives impel him to take part in the events about him and to continue what was begun by his forefathers. It is but natural for him to grow attached to that which surrounds him—he cannot help but reflect his own times and environment in his own person.

But it is in the very way of his reflection that his originality tells. The reaction produced within an individual by his environment is his response to the influence of the environment. This response may be one of sympathy or one of opposition. Man's moral independence is as irrefutable a fact as his dependence on environment, with the only difference that they stand in inverse ratio: the higher the consciousness, the greater his independence; the lower the consciousness, the closer his bonds with the environment and the more his personality is absorbed by it. Thus, instinct without consciousness cannot attain real independence which in this case manifests itself either in wild, animal freedom, or in the shape of crimes, those rare, frenzied and inconsistent protests against some aspect of social conditions.

To be conscious of independence is not tantamount to being at odds with one's environment, with society. The environment does not always stand in the same relation to society and for that reason not always provokes opposition from the individual.

There are periods when man is free in *a common cause*, when the activities to which every energetic person is drawn coincide with the trend of society at large. In such periods, which are rather rare, everything is caught up in the whirl of events, lives and suffers within it, exalts and perishes within it. Some natures, uniquely great, like that of Goethe, keep aloof, while others, drab and vulgar, are merely indifferent. And even those who battle against the tide derive excitement and gratification from the fight itself. The émigrées were as much absorbed by the revolution as the Jacobins. At such times there is no need to hold forth on self-sacrifice and devotion. These come of themselves. There are no apostates, for all are true believ-

ers; there are no victims really, for those who seem to be victims to the bystander are merely people who fulfil their will and conduct themselves accordingly.

There are other times, which are more common—the times of peace, and even of slothfulness, when the relations between the personality and the environment *continue* as they were posited by the last upheaval. They are not so tautly stretched as to break, not sufficiently harassing to be unbearable, and, finally, not so outstanding and persistent as to prevent life from rectifying the main defects and smoothing the chief irregularities. In such a time the problem of man's relation to society is not so acute. There may be some particular clashes, some tragedies which involve and destroy several persons; one may hear the groans of a chained titan, but all that is lost in the established order, and the acknowledged relations remain unshaken, resting as they do on habit, carefree slothfulness, and the absence of daemonic irony and criticism. People are absorbed by their private concerns, their family life, studies, or work. They exchange words and opinions, imagining that they are doing something serious; they work hard to provide for their children; the latter, in their turn, provide for their own children, so that the present and the existing personalities seem to efface themselves and, as it were, regard themselves as something merely intermediary. This period still continues in China and, to some extent, in England.

But there is a third sort of epoch, the rarest of all, and most tragic.

That is an epoch when the social scheme has outlived itself, and is laboriously dying. It is an exceptional civilization which not only attains the topmost peak, but even oversteps the bounds of all possibilities afforded by its historic mode of life, so that it apparently belongs to the future, while actually it is removed both from the past, which it scorns, and from the future, which unfolds according to quite different laws. And that is when the personality clashes with society. The past arises in the form of frenzied reaction. Violence, falsehood, brutality, avaricious servility, narrow-mindedness, and loss of all human dignity come to be the general rule among the majority. All that was virtuous in the past is gone. The senile world no longer believes

in itself and defends itself desperately out of fear alone, forgets its own gods owing to its instinct of self-preservation, tramples upon the laws which were its mainstay, renounces honour and enlightenment, grows brutish, prosecutes and executes, does anything to retain authority. And it is obeyed not out of cowardice alone, but also because everything is unsteady, undecided and unprepared; and it is the people in particular who are unprepared. In the other quarter of the horizon an unfamiliar, cloudy future is arising, a future which flouts all human logic. The destiny of the Roman world was determined by Christianity, a religion with which a free man in dying Rome had as little in common as with polytheism. To advance from the narrow confines of Roman law, mankind had to recede into Teutonic barbarism.

Those of the Romans who, worried, fearful and weary with life, embraced Christianity were saved; but were those to blame who suffered no less, but were firmer of mind and character and would not seek deliverance from one absurdity by accepting another? Could they fight for the old gods on the side of Julian the Apostate, or for the new one on the side of Constantine? Could they take part in contemporary issues, knowing as they did where the spirit of the times was leading? In such a period, a free man would rather run wild in his isolation than travel with his fellow-men, would rather take his life than sacrifice it. Is man any less in the right because no one agrees with him? Does the mind require any other judgement but that of the mind? And why should a universal madness nullify one's own convictions?

The wisest of the Romans left the scene entirely, and they did well to do so. They were scattered over the shores of the Mediterranean and were lost to the world in the mute grandeur of grief. But they were not lost to themselves. And fifteen centuries later we are compelled to admit that they were really the victors. They, indeed, were the only free and mighty representatives of man's emancipated personality and dignity. They were men. They could not be counted by the head; they were not of the herd and would not tell lies; they were alien to the herd and moved aside.

And what have we in common with the world that surrounds us? A handful of people linked with us by common convictions, the three remaining virtuous men of Sodom and Gomorrah, are in the same position as we: they constitute a protesting minority, strong in thought, but weak in action. With their exception, we have no more contact with the world than with China (I am here omitting the physiological affinity and force of habit). So true is this that when people do happen to pronounce the same words as we, they mean different things. Do you desire the *freedom* of the Montagnards, the *order* of the Constituent Assembly, the Egyptian labour methods of the Communists?[175] The game now proceeds with open cards and the rules have been extremely simplified. There is no room for error: every plot of ground in Europe is the arena of the same struggle, the same two camps. You are distinctly aware against which of them you militate. But are you as clearly aware of your affinity with the one camp as you are of your hatred and revulsion for the other?

It is time to be outspoken; free people deceive neither themselves nor others; every concession leads to something false and twisted.

To make a worthy end and round out the measure of its moral torments and humiliations, the last year has offered us a terrible sight: *the duel between the free man and the liberators of mankind*.[176] Proudhon's bold words, his biting scepticism, relentless denial, and merciless irony outraged the avowed revolutionaries no less than the conservatives. They fell upon him viciously, and, afraid of his atheism and anarchy, defended their creeds with the inflexibility of the legitimists. They refused to understand how one can be free without a state, without democratic rule; they were surprised to hear his immoral assertion that the republic is meant for the individual and not the individual for the republic. And when they ran out of logic and eloquence, they declared Proudhon to be suspect, called down upon his head the anathema of the revolution, and excommunicated him from their Orthodox fold. His talent and the brutality of the police saved Proudhon from slander. The abominable accusation of treachery was already being bandied about by the democratic mob when he

hurled his famous pamphlets at the president[177] who, stunned by the blow, could find no better answer than to increase the torments of his prisoner incarcerated for words and convictions. In view of this the crowd was placated.

And there you have the crusaders for freedom, the privileged liberators of mankind! Freedom is the very thing they dread: they must have a master to keep them in hand, they must have authority because they do not trust themselves. Is there any wonder that the handful of people who went to America with Cabet had scarcely settled in their log cabins when all the disadvantages of European civic life appeared in their midst.

They, nevertheless, are more modern and useful than we, because they are closer to action. They will receive more sympathy from the masses who need them more than they need us. The masses desire to arrest the hand encroaching upon their daily bread. This is their chief concern. They are indifferent to personal freedom, to independence of opinion. They respect authority and are still abashed by the glitter of overweening power. The man who stands by himself alone is still an annoyance to them. By equality they mean equal oppression. Afraid of monopolies and privileges, they frown upon talent and do not allow anyone to do other than themselves. The masses desire a social government which would rule on behalf of and not against themselves, as the present one does. It never occurs to them to be ruled by themselves. That is the reason why the *liberators* are much nearer to the contemporary upheavals than any *free man*. The latter is probably quite superfluous, but from this it does not follow that he should act against his convictions.

You might object, however, that one ought to have a sense of moderation. But I doubt if anything will come of this. A man is not very effectual even when he completely devotes himself to a cause. How effectual, therefore, can he be expected to be if, in addition, he will deprive himself of half of his powers and faculties. Appoint Proudhon Minister of Finance or President, and he will turn into another Louis Bonaparte in the opposite extreme. The present one is in a perpetual quandary because he is crazed with his visions of the empire.

Proudhon too would be in a state of constant doubt, because the existent republic is as repulsive to him as it is to Louis Bonaparte; while a social republic is now even less feasible than an empire.

But then, let him who is aware of inner discord and yet would or could take part in party strife, let him who has no desire to travel his own path, though he realizes that the path of the others must lead elsewhere, let him who does not think it better to lose his way and perish entirely rather than abandon his faith—let him act jointly with the others. He will even do well, for lack of something better to do; and the liberators of mankind will drag the old forms of monarchic Europe over the precipice with them. I equally recognize the prerogative of those who desire to act and of those who desire to keep aloof. Let each do as he chooses. We take no exception to this.[178]

I am very glad to have touched upon this hazy issue, this stoutest of the chains by which man is fettered—the stoutest because he is either unaware of it or, worse yet, he admits that it is absolutely just. But let us see if it is not rust-eaten.

The subjection of a personality to society, to mankind, or to an idea is a continuation of man's offering, the slaughter of the lamb to conciliate Jehovah, the crucifixion of the innocent for the sake of the guilty. Then morals of all religions are based on obedience, i.e., on voluntary slavery,[179] and that is why every religion has always been more pernicious than any political system. The latter is marked by violence, the former, by the corruption of the will. Obedience implies the transfer of all one's self to general, impersonal spheres, independent of the personality. Christianity, the religion of contradictions, recognized the infinite dignity of the person, as if only to nullify it all the more ceremoniously in the face of redemption, the holy church and the divine father. Its outlook has permeated the whole of life and evolved into a system of moral slavery, into a kind of perverted dialectics extremely consistent. Growing increasingly worldly, or rather noticing that it remained at bottom as mundane as ever, society has mixed its own element with the Christian doctrine, without changing its basis. The personality, this real and true monad of society, has always

been sacrificed to some social conception, to some collective name, to one banner or another. While relinquishing his own freedom as an individual, no one has ever paused to question for whose benefit he was labouring, making sacrifices, or who profited by this and who was to be set free. Everybody sacrificed themselves (or at least claimed to do so) and each other.

This is not the place to deliberate to what degree the backwardness of the peoples warranted such measures of upbringing. Probably they were natural and necessary; we find them everywhere, but we make so bold as to say that if they did lead to great results, they must have correspondingly retarded progress by distorting the minds with false conceptions. In general, I have little faith in the benefit of falsehood, especially when it is no longer believed. All this Machiavellianism and all these rhetorics seem mostly to serve as an aristocratic diversion for the preachers and the moralists.

The universal outlook upon which the moral slavery of man and his "mortification" so firmly stand rests almost entirely on dualism which has permeated all our conceptions.

Dualism is nothing more or less than Christianity elevated to logic, Christianity freed of tradition and mysticism. Its chief method consists in dividing into fictitious opposites that which is actually indivisible, for instance, the body and the spirit, in antagonizing these abstractions and artificially reconciling that which belongs to an inseparable whole. Such is the Evangelic myth of God and man reconciled by Christ translated into philosophical terms.

Just as Christ mortified the flesh in redeeming mankind, so does dualism side with the one shadow against the other, giving priority to spirit over substance, to genus over species, and thereby sacrificing the individual to the state and the state to mankind.

Now, imagine what chaos exists in the minds of the people who have heard nothing but this creed from childhood. Dualism has distorted the simplest conceptions to such a degree that they must exert great effort to assimilate the truths which are as plain as the light of day. Our language is the language of dualism, our imagination has no other images, no other metaphors. For fifteen centuries, all who taught

preached, wrote and wrought were permeated with dualism; and by the end of the eighteenth century there were only very few capable of doubt; and these, though doubting, continued, out of propriety and partly out of fear, to speak its language.

It stands to reason that the whole of our morality has sprung from the same source. This morality has required constant sacrifice, constant feats and self-denial. And precisely for this its rules have been mostly ignored. Life is by far more stubborn than theories; it proceeds independently of them and vanquishes them silently. There can be no fuller refutation of the accepted morals than this negation in practice, but people live in this contradiction unperturbed; they have been accustomed to it for centuries. By dividing man into ideal and brute, Christianity has confused his conceptions. Finding no way out of the struggle between consciousness and desire, he has grown so accustomed to hypocrisy, often quite outspoken, that a discrepancy between word and deed fails to outrage him. When he pleaded his weak, villainous nature, the church hastened to give him an easy means to conciliate his terrified conscience through indulgences and confession, lest his despair lead him to some other way of thinking which might not so easily be allayed by prayer and absolution. These frolics have grown so deeply rooted that they have survived the church itself. Constrained piety was replaced by the constrained civic virtues, and this gave rise to theatrical animation in the Roman manner and the style of the Christian martyrs and feudal knights.

In the meantime practical life goes on as usual, caring not at all for the heroic morals.

But no one dares to refute them and they keep their hold owing, on the one hand, to a secret agreement of mercy and respect, like the Republic of San Marino, and, on the other hand, to our cowardice, weak will, false pride and moral slavery. We dread the accusation of immorality and this keeps us in check. We repeat the moral ravings we have learned, without attaching any sense to them, yet without objecting to them, just as the naturalists, when writing their prefaces, *out of propriety* mention the creator and are politely surprised by

his wisdom. The respect inculcated in us by our fear of the hootings of the crowd becomes habitual to such a degree that we are surprised and indignant to witness the audacity of a free and outspoken man who dares to doubt the truth of conventional rhetorics. This doubt is as infuriating to us as a disrespectful remark about the king must be to his subjects. Ours is the pride of livery, the arrogance of the slave.

It is thus that conventional morals and conventional language have been established. And it is by their means that we transfer our faith in the false gods to our children and deceive them as our parents deceived us, and as our children will in turn deceive their children until some upheaval puts an end to the world of falsehood and pretence.

Finally, I cannot endure indifferently those eternal patriotic and philanthropic rhetorics which do not affect life in any way. Are there many to be found who are ready to sacrifice their lives for anything whatever? Not many, of course, yet more than such who have the daring to say that *Mourir pour la patrie* is not really the acme of human happiness and that it would be still better if both man and his native land survived together.

What children we are, and what slaves as yet; and how completely our will and morals are pivoted on external factors.

It is a lie not only pernicious but humiliating as well; it hurts one's dignity and corrupts one's conduct. One must have the strength of character to speak and act the same; and so people should frankly admit in words that which they have already admitted by their daily existence. This sentimental chatter might have been of some use perhaps in times more savage than these, as well as the external niceties. But nowadays it weakens us, lulls us to sleep and breeds confusion. We have been bullied long enough with the recitation of all those rhetorical exercises cooked up of rehashed Christianity adulterated with the muddy water of rationalism and the treacle of philanthropy. It is time, finally, to analyze those sibylline books, and to demand an account from our teachers.

What is the meaning of those harangues against egotism, individualism? What is egotism? What is *brotherhood?* What is individualism? And what is love of mankind?

People are egotists, of course, because they are personalities. How can man be himself without an acute consciousness of his personality? To deprive him of this consciousness means to break him down completely, to destroy his backbone, to make him insipid, stereotype, amorphous. We are egotists and for that reason struggle for independence and prosperity, for recognition of our rights. And for that very reason we crave love, seek activity and, therefore, cannot deny the same to others without falling into hopeless contradiction.

The sermon of individualism a century ago roused the people from the heavy slumber into which they had sunk from the drug of Catholicism. It led to emancipation as surely as humbleness must lead to servitude. The writings of the egotist Voltaire did more for emancipation than the writings of man-loving Rousseau could do for men's brotherhood.

The moralists speak of egoism as if it were a bad habit, without questioning whether a man can remain a man if he has lost a keen awareness of his personality, without saying what compensation awaits him in "brotherhood" and "love of mankind," without even explaining why he should be on a fraternal footing with everybody, and why he should love everyone on earth. We see no reason either for loving or hating anything just because it exists. Leave man unbiased in his sympathies and he will find whom he should love and whom he should regard as a brother. For this he needs neither a behest nor a command. Should he fail to do so, it will be his own concern and his own misfortune.

Christianity at any rate did not halt at such trifles, but boldly demanded that one love not only everyone, but preferably one's enemies. People have been greatly moved by this idea for eighteen centuries. It is time to confess at last that it is an empty rule. Why should one love one's enemies? And if they are so lovable, why should one be at enmity with them?

The thing is that egotism and collectivism (just as fraternity and love) are neither virtues nor vices, but the principal elements at work in human life, elements without which there would have been neither history nor progress, but instead the disjointed existence of wild beasts or herds of tamed troglodytes. Destroy the social instinct in man and you will have a

fierce orangoutan; destroy the egotism in him and you will have an innocuous jocko. It is the slave who has the least egotism. The word in itself is not self-explicit. There is an egotism which is narrow, bestial and unclean, just as there is love which is unclean, bestial and narrow. What is important is not to destroy egotism in words and eulogize fraternity—the latter will not overcome the former—but to combine these two inalienable principles of human life freely and harmoniously.

As a social being, man strives to love and he needs no command to do so. There is no need to hate oneself at all. The moralists regard every moral action as something so hostile to man's nature that they attribute supreme virtue to every good deed and make brotherly love of man obligatory, like fasting or the mortification of the flesh. The final form of religion is based on the division of society and the individual, and their imaginary antagonism. As long as there is the Archangel-Brotherhood on the one hand and Lucifer-Egotism on the other, the state must endure in order to conciliate and restrain, and there will be judges to pronounce judgement, executioners to perform hangings, churches to plead with God for forgiveness and to spread the fear of God, and police commissioners to convey their victims to prison.

The harmony between the individual and society is not established once and for all: it *becomes* with every period, in every country, and is changed by circumstances as are all things in life. There can be no universal solution, no common standards. We have shown that in some epochs man can easily surrender to the environment, while in others he can but *preserve* his link with it only when he has removed himself from it, departed from it, *carrying away with him everything that is his own.* Unfortunately, it is not within our power to change the historical relation between individual and society. Nor is this within the power of society itself. But it is within our power to be abreast of the times, to be in accord with our development, in short, *to shape* our conduct according to the circumstances.

A free man does indeed *shape* his morals. This is what the Stoics meant by their maxim, "there is no law for the wise." What was excellent conduct yesterday may be atrocious to-

day. There are no unshakable, eternal morals as there are no eternal rewards and punishments. What is permanent in morality reduces itself to such generalizations that everything of the particular is lost in them, for instance, the premise that every action contrary to our convictions must be wrong, or, as Kant put it, every action is immoral which cannot be generalized and classified under some rule or other.

At the beginning of this article we advised against falling into contradiction with oneself no matter what the price, and to terminate an intercourse which is insincere and is prolonged out of false pride and superfluous self-sacrifice (as in *Adolphe* by Benjamin Constant).

Whether or not the circumstances today are as I presented them is a moot question. And if you can prove the opposite, I shall gratefully clasp your hand: I shall regard you as my benefactor. Perhaps I have been carried away and have lost the ability to see the bright side of things, owing to the tormenting study of the horrors surrounding me. I am anxious to listen and eager to agree. But if the circumstances are such as I described them, there can be no argument.

And so, you might ask, should one surrender to petulant inaction, estrange oneself from all, fume and grumble uselessly like an old man, leave the scene of seething activity and eke out one's days useless to others and a burden to oneself?

I do not advise you to quibble with the world, but to launch an original and independent life, which in itself could constitute salvation even if the whole of the surrounding world should end in destruction. I advise you to look more closely to see if the masses are really going in the direction we believe them to be going, and then to go with them or away from them; but only after their path is known to you. I advise you to abandon all the bookish opinions that have been inculcated in us from childhood and which represent the people differently from what they are. I am anxious to put an end to "futile fumings and foolish tantrums." I am anxious to reconcile such as you with the people at large, by convincing you that they cannot be better than they are, and that it is not their fault that they are what they are.

I do not know whether there will be external activity of one kind or another. And, after all, that is not important. If you are strong, if you have something in you which is not only useful, but capable of urging others, it will not be in vain. For such is the economy of nature that your strength will ferment and stir up everything that comes within its reach, and your words, ideas, deeds will come into their own without much ado. But if you have no such strength, or that strength alone which cannot influence a contemporary man, no harm will be done to you or the others. What eternal comedians we are and how we love to dwell in public. We should live not for the purpose of entertaining others, but for ourselves. The majority of the people, who have a practical turn of mind, have never cared about the lack of *historical* activity.

Instead of convincing people that they crave precisely what we want, we would do better to deliberate as to whether at this moment they want anything at all. And if they turn out to be wanting something different from what we want, we would do better to concentrate within ourselves, to leave the noisy thoroughfare of life without coercing others and frittering away our energies.

This negative action will, *perhaps*, usher in a new life. It will at least prove a conscientious action.

Paris, Hôtel Mirabeau
April 3, 1850

VIII

DONOSO CORTÉS, MARQUIS DE VALDEGAMAS, AND JULIAN, EMPEROR OF ROME[180]

THE CONSERVATIVES have eyes but they cannot see. More sceptical than Apostle Thomas, they touch the very wound but believe not.

"There," they say, "are the ravages of the social gangrene, the spirit of denial and putrefaction, the demon of revolution which shakes the last pillars of the centuries-old edifice of state.... As you see, our world is crumbling, perishing and dragging down with it enlightenment, the institutions, every-

thing that it has itself established.... One can plainly see that it has one foot in the grave."

And then they conclude: "Redouble the armed forces of the government, return the people to the old faith they have lost: the salvation of the whole world is at stake."

To save the world by reminiscences and violence! The world is saved "by the holy message" and not by a rehashed creed; it can be saved only by the *word* containing the embryo of a new world, and not by resurrecting the old one.

Perhaps it is stubbornness or lack of understanding, or fear of the desolate future that confuses them so, that they can see only what is perishing, are attached only to the past, and lean only on the ruins and tottering walls. What confusion, what lack of consistency reigns in the mind of modern man.

In the past there was, at least, some consistency in this madness which was epidemic and scarcely perceptible because all the world was labouring under one delusion. There were the general facts, mostly absurd but universally accepted. In our day, things are quite different: the prejudices of the Roman world linger side by side with the prejudices of the Middle Ages. The Gospel goes hand in hand with political economy, like Loyola with Voltaire, idealism in words with materialism in deed, abstract rhetorical morals with the conduct quite contrary to them. This heterogeneous mass of conceptions is lodged in our minds haphazardly. On reaching maturity we are too busy, too lazy, and probably too cowardly to put our moral precepts to the severe test and so the matter rests in a haze.

This confusion of conceptions is nowhere more evident than in France. The French, in general, are devoid of philosophical schooling. They shrewdly grasp the conclusions, but in a lopsided manner. And for that reason their conclusions are disjointed, have no unity, not even a common denominator. And this is the cause of contradictions at every step and the necessity, while speaking to them, to return to principles long known and to repeat the truths laid down by Spinoza and Bacon.

Since they reach their conclusions without going to the root of the matter, they have acquired nothing that is positive

or complete—either in science or in life—in the sense that the four rules of arithmetic are complete, or certain scientific principles in Germany, or certain legal principles in Britain. This partially accounts for that facility of change and transition from one extreme to the other, which is so astonishing to us. The generation of revolutionaries abruptly turns absolutist. After a series of revolutions the question again arises whether the rights of man should be recognized, whether man may be tried out of court, and whether the freedom of the press should be tolerated. It is evident from these questions which recur after every upheaval that nothing, really, is thoroughly discussed and resolved upon.

Cousin arranged this confusion into a sort of system named eclecticism (a little of all good things). This doctrine is conveniently in place both among the radicals and the legitimists, and especially among the *moderate*, i.e., the people who know neither *what* they want nor what they do *not* want.

The speech of Donoso Cortés delivered at the session of the Cortes held in Madrid is still a source of rapture to the royalist and Catholic newspapers. The speech is indeed remarkable in many respects. Donoso Cortés has accurately appraised the dreadful position in which the states of Europe find themselves today. He has realized that they are heading for disaster, that they are on the eve of an inevitable cataclysm. The picture he drew is fearful in its truthfulness. The Europe that he describes has lost its bearings, is being rapidly drawn towards perdition, and is dying from derangement, with the Slavonic world standing by ready to descend upon the Romano-Teutonic world. This is what he says: "Do not think that the catastrophe will end in this manner. To the West the Slavs are not at all what the Teutons were to ancient Rome.... The Slavs have long been in contact with the revolution.... In the midst of a Europe subjugated and grovelling in the dust Russia will greedily and with every pore imbibe the poison with which she has already regaled herself and which will prove fatal. She will undergo the same process of decay. I do not know what cure God has in store for this universal disintegration."

And do you know what our gloomy prophet has to offer, the man who, anticipating a divine cure, so vividly and fearfully forecast the coming of the end? We are ashamed to repeat it. According to him, Europe could be saved by the Pope, the monarchic power and its troops if England would but return to Catholicism. He desires to fend off the menace of the future by receding into the impossible past.

The diagnosis of Marquis de Valdegamas seems somewhat suspicious to us. Either the danger is too great or the cure is too weak. Monarchy has been reinstated everywhere and its troops are victorious. According to Donoso Cortés and his friend Montalembert the church is triumphant. Thiers has turned Catholic and, in short, it is difficult to conceive of more oppression, persecution and reaction. And yet, salvation has not been achieved. Can England's shameful state of schism be the reason?

The Socialists are every day accused of being strong only in criticism, their exposure of evil and their spirit of negation. Now, what would you say about our anti-social enemies?

To complete the absurdity, the editors of an extremely *white* magazine published in the same issue both hyperbolical eulogies of Donoso Cortés's[181] speech and excerpts from a short historical compilation of a rather inferior sort which treats of the early centuries of Christianity and Julian the Apostate and which annihilates the discourse of our Marquis.

Donoso Cortés takes the same viewpoint as the Roman conservatives of their time. He realizes, as did they, that the social system is disintegrating. He is filled with horror, which is quite natural: he desires, as did they, to save the system at any cost, and can find no other means of doing so but by obstructing the future and averting it, as if it were not a natural consequence of the present.

Like the Romans he proceeds from a quite erroneous general, unwarranted hypothesis, from an arbitrary opinion. He is confident that the present forms of social life alone are possible as they evolved under the influence of Roman, Teutonic and Christian elements; as if the ancient world and the modern East have not brought forth societies based on quite different elements, possibly inferior but extremely durable.

Donoso Cortés assumes, furthermore, that education cannot develop otherwise than in modern European forms. It is easy to repeat with Donoso Cortés that the ancient world had culture and not civilization (*"le monde ancien a été cultivé et non civilisé"*). Such subtleties are effective only in theological disputes. Roman and Greek civilization produced a high standard of education, though only for a minority, as in Europe. The actual difference in numbers is of no significance—and at the same time, their life lacked the most fundamental element, Catholicism! With his back constantly turned to the future Donoso Cortés can see only disintegration, decomposition, then the invasion of the Russians, to be followed by barbarity. Horrified by this prospect, he is searching for some means of salvation, for something to lean upon, for something durable, something sound in this kingdom of death, and he finds nothing. He turns to moral and physical death, to the priest and the soldier.

But what sort of a social system requires salvation by such means? And whatever it may be, is it worth being redeemed at such a price?

We concur with Donoso Cortés that Europe, in its present form, is decaying. The Socialists have constantly reiterated this from the moment they appeared. Nobody can deny this. The chief difference between them and the political revolutionaries consists in that the latter are intent on correcting and reforming what exists without altering its basis; while socialism completely denies the whole of the old order with its law and representative system, with its church and court, with its civil and criminal code. All these are as completely renounced by the Socialists as the Roman world was renounced by the early Christians.

Such a denial is not the mere caprice of a disordered imagination, not the solitary cry of a man injured by society, but a sentence of death pronounced on the latter, the anticipation of the end, the full realization of the nature of the illness which is carrying the decrepit world to destruction, and which must lead to its resurrection in new and different forms. The modern civic state will fall under the onslaught of socialism. Its strength is exhausted. It has already yielded all that it

could offer, and, consuming its own flesh and blood, is able neither to develop any further itself nor check the course of progress. It has no longer anything to say or do. And its activity is reduced to conservatism and the struggle to retain its place, to delay the fulfilment of destiny.

It is possible to delay the fulfilment of destiny for a time: history does not adhere to the strict and unwavering course propounded by the Catholics and the philosophers. The formula of its development contains many variables and, first and foremost, individual *will* and *power*.

An individual can lead an entire generation astray, blind it, drive it mad, guide it to a false goal. This has been proved by Napoleon.

The reactionaries have not even this means at their disposal. Donoso Cortés has found nothing better than the Catholic church and the royal army barracks. Since despotism exercises no power over *belief or non-belief*, all that it can resort to is violence, fear, persecution and executions.

... Much may be forgiven in the name of progress and development. And yet, when terror was unleashed in the name of victory and freedom, everyone was justly horrified. Now, it is by means of this that the reactionaries intend to buttress the existing order, the senility and disintegration of which are so emphatically testified by our orator, Donoso Cortés. They clamour for terror not in order to advance, but to retreat. They would kill an infant to feed a dying old man and for an instant restore his strength.

Much bloodshed is needed to return to the good old days of the Edict of Nantes and the Spanish Inquisition. We do not believe it impossible to impede the march of mankind for a time; but it is impossible without the Saint Bartholomew massacres. It is necessary to destroy, to crush, to exile, and imprison all that is vigorous, thinking and active in our generation, to make the people sink more deeply into ignorance, and to drive the whole of their forces into the army; it is necessary spiritually to slaughter the innocents of an entire generation, and all this only to preserve an exhausted social order which can satisfy *neither you nor us*.

What then is the difference between Russian barbarity and Catholic civilization?

To sacrifice thousands of people and the development of an entire epoch to the Moloch of a state system, as if the preservation of the latter were the sole aim of our existence.... Does that ever occur to you, you benevolent Christians? To sacrifice others, to be selfless at the expense of others is too easy to be a virtue. It happens, of course, that in the midst of popular storms the long pent-up passions break loose, bloody and merciless, vindictive and irrepressible. Resigned yet horrified, we realize this, but we do not make it the general rule, do not point to such things as the means to an end.

And is it not precisely such means which are implied in the panegyrics of Donoso Cortés to the blindly obedient soldiery upon whose bayonets he pins half of his hopes?

He claims that "the priest and the soldier stand closer than is generally realized." Thus he brings closer together the killer, condemned to be such by a society, and the priest, the living corpse. A terrible confession! The two extremes of the perishing world join hands like the two enemies in Byron's *Darkness*. To preserve the declining world, the last representative of spiritual slavery meets the last representative of physical slavery amid its ruins.

The church made peace with the soldiery as soon as it became the church of the state, but it has never dared to admit such treason. It has always realized how much falsehood and hypocrisy this union entails. That was one of a thousand of the concessions which it made to the temporal world it allegedly scorned. We will not reproach the church for this. It had to accept much that was contrary to its doctrine. Christian morals have always been a noble dream never realized.

But Marquis de Valdegamas officiously sets the soldier next to the priest, the guardsman beside the altar; he lumps the Gospel which absolves sin with the military regulations which provide for summary shootings.

It is time "to sing the eternal memory" or, if you prefer, a mass for the dead. This is both the end of a church and the end of an army.

The masks have fallen at last and the masqueraders can now recognize one another. The priest and the soldier are most certainly brothers, for both are children of moral darkness and of frantic dualism in the grip of which mankind is writhing to the point of exhaustion. He who says love your neighbour and obey the authorities is essentially saying "obey the authorities and fire upon your neighbour."

The Christian's mortification of the flesh is as revolting to nature as the laceration of the flesh of others by military order. The fundamental conceptions, called the conscience, have to be thoroughly corrupted and confused before the people can be assured that murder may be a sacred duty—even without enmity, without cause, without conviction. All this rests on the very same basis, the very same corner-stone of error which has cost mankind so many tears and so much bloodshed: all this emanates from scorn for what is earthly and temporal, from obeisance to the heavens and the eternal, from disrespect of individuals and veneration of the state, from all such maxims as *Salus populi suprema lex, pereat mundus et fiat justitia*, things which strongly smell of burnt flesh, of blood, of the inquisition, of torture and of *the triumph of order* in general.

Why, then, does Donoso Cortés forget the third brother, the third guardian angel of the collapsing state, the *executioner*? Is it perhaps because the latter is being increasingly identified with the soldier owing to the role the latter is compelled to play?

All the virtues extolled by Donoso Cortés are neatly combined in the executioner to the highest degree: obedience to the authorities, blind performance of duty, and infinite self-effacement. He needs neither the faith of a priest nor the mettle of a warrior. He kills in cold blood, safely and surely, in the name of the law, of society, of order. He vies with every murderous villain and invariably emerges victorious, because his hand is supported by the entire state. He has neither the pride of a priest nor the ambition of a soldier. He expects no reward from God or people. He needs neither fame nor honour on earth, nor the paradise promised in heaven. He sacrifices everything: his name, his honour and dignity. He conceals

himself from the public eye, and all to solemnly punish the enemies of society.

Let us give the man of public vindication his proper due and paraphrase our orator Donoso Cortés: the executioner is closer to the soldier than is generally realized.

The executioner plays a great part whenever it is necessary to crucify "the new man" or to behead the old crowned ghosts. Maistre did not forget this when speaking of the Pope.

In connection with Golgotha I am reminded of an excerpt about the persecution of the early Christians. Read it, or better yet, look through the writings of the early fathers, of Tertullian or one of the Roman conservatives. What similarity with the present-day struggle—the same passions, the same forces on the one side and the same retaliation on the other. Even the expressions are the same.

While reading the accusations levelled against the Christians by Celsus and Julian, accusations of immorality and the fabrication of mad utopias, the accusation of slaughtering children and corrupting adults, of disrupting the state, religion and family, one gets the impression that this is the *premier-Paris* of *Constitutionnel* or *Assemblée nationale* more cleverly written.

If the friends of law and order in Rome did not preach the massacre of the Nazarenes, it was because the pagan world was more humane, less spiritual, and more tolerant than the Catholic philistines. The ancient world did not know those potent means invented by the Western church and so successfully effected in the massacre of the Albigenses, the Saint Bartholomew's massacre, glorified to the present day in the Vatican's frescoes, depicting the streets of Paris being piously purged of Huguenots, those same streets which the philistines so zealously cleansed of the Socialists a year ago. Be it as it may, the spirit is the same, the difference being only of circumstances and personalities. Incidentally, this difference does us credit: by comparing the report of Bochart with the report of Pliny the Younger,[182] the magnanimity of Caesar Trajan who harboured a revulsion for those who informed against the Christians and the meanness of Caesar Cavaignac who did not share this prejudice with regard to the Socialists, we

infer that the dying system has come to a pass when it can find neither such advocates as Trajan nor such enquiry committee secretaries as Pliny.

The general police measures too are similar. The Christian clubs were closed by soldiery as soon as they became known to the authorities. The Christians were sentenced without consideration of their pleas. They were molested for trifles and external signs and were denied the right to expound their teachings. This aroused the indignation of Tertullian, just as it arouses the indignation of all of us today. And this was what prompted his apologetic letters to the Roman senate. The Christians were fed to the wild beasts who played the role of the police soldiers of today. But Christian propaganda grew stronger for all that. Humiliating retribution failed to humiliate, but on the contrary turned the doomed into heroes, like the Bourges convicts.*

Realizing the futility of all these measures, Diocletian, the greatest champion of law and order, of religion and state, resolved to deliver a mortal blow to the rebellious doctrine: he descended upon the Christians with fire and sword.

And what was the result? What did the conservatives accomplish with their civilization (or culture?), with their legions, with their laws, their lictors, their henchmen, their wild animals, murders and all other horrors?

They only showed to what lengths the brutality and savagery of conservatism can go, what a terrible weapon a soldiery, which blindly obeys the judge and thereby turns executioner, can be, and, at the same time, they more clearly demonstrated the inadequacy of all these measures against the *word* when its time has come.

We may even grant that the ancient world was at times quite right in its issue against Christianity which undermined it in the name of its utopian and impossible doctrine. Perhaps, our conservatives, too, were sometimes right in their attacks upon certain social teachings.... But of what use to them was the fact that they were in the right? The time of Rome was passing; the time of the Gospel was approaching!

* Blanqui, Raspail, Barbès and others. The trial of May 15, 1848.—*A.H.*

All those horrors, all that bloodshed, slaughter and persecution could but lead to the well-known cry of despair from Julian the Apostate, that cleverest of all revolutionaries: "Thou hast conquered, Galilean!"*

Voix du Peuple.
15 Mars 1850

* The speech delivered by Donoso Cortés, the Spanish Ambassador to Berlin and then to Paris, was published in an innumerable number of copies at the expense of the society of Poitiers Street, notorious for its nonentity and nonsensical expenditures. At that time I lived in Paris and was closely connected with Proudhon's magazine. The editors suggested that I should write a reply. Proudhon was pleased with it, but *Patrie*,[183] of course, waxed wroth and, having repeated everything I said about the third champion of society, in its evening issue demanded of the Prosecutor of the *Republic* whether he would not prosecute an article in which a soldier is identified with a hangman, the latter being called just a hangman (*bourreau*) and not an executioner of the supreme power (*executeur des hautes oeuvres*), etc. The denunciation of the newspaper had its effect: within two days not a single copy remained of the usual 40,000 edition of *Voix du Peuple.—A.H.*

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND SOCIALISM

LETTER TO J. MICHELET[184]

Dear Sir,

You are held in such high esteem by all thinking men, and every word which comes from your noble pen is received by European democracy with such complete and merited confidence that I cannot remain silent in a matter that concerns my deepest convictions. I cannot leave unanswered the description of the Russian people which you have given in your legend of Kosciuszko.*

I deem this answer necessary also for another reason. The time has come to show Europe that they cannot speak about Russia as of something mute, absent, and defenceless.

We, who have left Russia for the sole purpose of bringing free Russian speech to the ears of Europe at last, are on the spot and consider it our duty to raise our voice when a man with so great and deserved an authority affirms that "Russia does not exist, that Russians are not human, that they lack any moral sense."

If by this you mean to disparage official Russia, the tsardom façade, the Byzantine-German Government, you are welcome to do so. We agree beforehand with everything you tell us—we do not feel called upon to take up arms in its defence. The Russian Government has so many agents in the press that it will never lack eloquent apologies for its actions.

But it is not official society alone that is treated in your work; you go deeper into the question: you speak of the people itself.

Poor Russian people! There is no one to raise a voice in its

* It appeared in a feuilleton of the journal *l'Evénement*, 1851, and was later on included in a volume entitled *Democratic Legends.—A.H.*

defence! Judge whether I can under the circumstances remain silent.

The Russian people, my dear sir, exists, strong, vigorous, and not old—indeed, very young. Men happen to die even in their youth, but it is not the usual thing.

The past of the Russian people is obscure, its present is frightful, but it has claims on the future. It does not *believe* in the immutability of its present state. It has the boldness to expect much from the future, having received so little in the past.

The period which has been the hardest for the Russian people is drawing to its close. A terrible conflict awaits them; their enemies are making ready.

The great question, "to be or not to be," will soon be decided for Russia. But we have no right to despair of success before the fight has begun.

The Russian question is assuming enormous and disquieting proportions; it becomes a matter of grave concern to all parties; I think, however, that too much attention is being paid to imperial Russia, to official Russia, and too little to the voiceless Russia of the people.

Even considering Russia solely from the point of view of the government, do you not think it worth while to become better acquainted with such a troublesome neighbour who makes himself felt in every corner of Europe, in one place with bayonets, in another with spies? The Russian Government has spread out to the Mediterranean by protecting the Ottoman Empire, to the Rhine by protecting its German uncles and relatives-in-law, and to the Atlantic by maintaining *order* in France.

It would not be amiss, I repeat, to appraise this universal protector at its true value, to enquire whether this strange state is destined to play no other part than that assumed by the Petersburg Government, the ignoble part of a barrier continually blocking the path of human progress.

Europe is approaching a terrible cataclysm. The medieval world is crumbling into ruins. The end of the feudal world is drawing near. Political and religious revolutions are flagging under the weight of their own impotence; they have accomplished great things, but have not proved equal to their

tasks. They have stripped the throne and the altar of their prestige, but have not realized the ideal of freedom; they have kindled in men's hearts desires which they are incapable of satisfying. Parliamentarism, Protestantism, are but stopgaps, temporary harbours, untenable bulwarks against death and resurrection. Their day is over. Since 1849, it has become evident that neither Roman law, nor subtle casuistry, nor threadbare philosophic deism, nor sterile religious rationalism can retard the fulfilment of social destiny.

The storm is approaching, there is no denying it. Revolutionaries and reactionaries are at one about that. Everyone's mind is perturbed; the difficult, vital question oppresses the hearts of all. With growing uneasiness people ask themselves whether old Europe, that decrepit Proteus, that decaying organism, still has a chance to survive. The answer is awaited with misgivings and the suspense is terrible.

It is, indeed, a fearful question! Will old Europe have the strength to infuse new blood into its veins and fling itself headlong into the boundless future, to which it is being precipitously borne by an irresistible force over the ruins of its ancestral home, the fragments of past civilizations, and the trampled treasures of modern culture?

The full gravity of the moment has been fully appreciated by both sides; Europe is plunged in that stifling gloom which precedes the decisive conflict. It is not life, but an oppressive, agonizing suspense. There is no regard for law, no justice, not a ghost of freedom; everywhere the sway of the secular inquisition is supreme; instead of legality, there is a state of siege, all are governed by a single feeling—fear, and there is plenty of it. Every question is overshadowed by the interests of reaction. Governments, apparently most hostile, are united into a single world-wide police. The Russian Emperor rewards the Prefect of the Paris police without concealing his hatred for the French; the King of Naples bestows a decoration on the President of the Republic. The Prussian King dons the Russian uniform and hastens to Warsaw to embrace his foe, the Emperor of Austria, with the benediction of Nikolai; while the latter, that schismatic of the one church of salvation, proffers his aid to the Pope of Rome. In the midst of these satur-

nalia, this Sabbath of reaction, nothing can safeguard freedom from the caprices of tyranny. Even the guarantees which exist in the less developed societies—in China or Persia, for instance, are no longer respected in the capitals of the so-called civilized world.

One can hardly believe one's eyes. Can this be the Europe which we once knew and loved?

Indeed, if it were not for free and proud England, "this precious stone set in the silver sea," if Switzerland were to renounce its principles like Peter, in fear of Caesar, and if, finally Piedmont, that only free branch still left of Italy, the last refuge of freedom hounded beyond the Alps and unable to cross the Apennines, were to be led astray by the example of her neighbours and infected by the deleterious spirit being blown from Paris and Vienna, the conservatives might be thought to have succeeded in bringing the old world to its final disintegration and the days of barbarism to have returned to France and Germany.

In the midst of this chaos, of these agonies of death and throes of birth, in the midst of a world falling into dust at the foot of the cradle of the future, men's eyes involuntarily turn to the East.

Yonder a hostile, menacing empire looms up through the mists like a dark mountain; at times it seems as though it is advancing on Europe like an avalanche, and that like an impatient heir it is ready to hasten her tardy death.

This empire, absolutely unknown two hundred years ago, has suddenly made its appearance, and, uninvited, uncalled-for, has peremptorily raised its voice in the council of European powers, demanding a share in the booty won without its assistance.

No one has dared to contest its claims to interference in the affairs of Europe. Once Charles XII tried to do so, but his sword, hitherto invincible, was broken: Frederick II attempted to resist the claims of the Petersburg Court; Königsberg and Berlin became the prey of his northern foe. Napoleon who at the head of an army half a million strong, penetrated to the very heart of the giant, had to flee alone in the first peasant sledge he came upon. Europe gazed with astonishment at

Napoleon's flight, at the swarms of Cossacks racing in pursuit of him, at the Russian troops marching on to Paris, incidentally presenting the Germans with their national independence on their way there. Vampire-like, Russia has since been lying in wait to catch the mistakes of the people and the kings. Yesterday she almost crushed Austria assisting her against Hungary; tomorrow she will proclaim Brandenburg a Russian province to conciliate the Prussian King.

Is it credible that on the very eve of the great conflict nothing should be known of this combatant? There he stands fully armed and menacing, prepared to cross the frontier at the first summons of reaction, yet people scarcely know his weapons, or the colour of his flag, and are satisfied with his official speeches and the vague, contradictory tales that are told of him.

Some tell us only of the omnipotence of the Tsar, the insolence of his arbitrary government, and the slavishness of his subjects; others assert that, on the contrary, the imperialism of Petersburg has nothing in common with the people, which, oppressed by the double despotism of the government and the landowners, is not resigned to the yoke it bears and is not crushed, but only unfortunate. They also declare that this very people cements the colossus of tsardom which crushes it. Some add that the Russian people is a *rabble of knaves and drunkards*, while others maintain that Russia is inhabited by an industrious and richly gifted race. It seems to me that there is something tragic in the senile heedlessness with which the old world mixes up the different accounts it hears of its antagonist. This medley of contradictory opinions contains so much senseless repetition, distressing superficiality, and tenacious prejudice, that a comparison with the days of the fall of Rome invariably suggests itself.

Then, too, on the eve of the Christian revolution and the victory of the barbarians, people loudly proclaimed the eternity of Rome, the impotent folly of the Nazarenes, and the insignificance of the movement that was arising in the midst of barbarians.

You have performed a great service: you were the first in France to speak of the people of Russia, and you have, un-

awares, touched on the very heart, the very source of life. The truth would have stood revealed to you immediately, if you had not, in a moment of anger, pulled back your outstretched hand, and turned away from the source because its waters were troubled.

It hurt and saddened me to read your bitter words. It is in vain that I tried to discover in them the historian, the philosopher, and, above all, the tender-hearted man whom we all know and love. I hasten to add that I fully realize the cause of your indignation: sympathy for unhappy Poland prompted your words. We, too, feel deeply with our Polish brothers, and our feeling is not merely one of compassion, but of shame and remorse. Love for Poland! We all love her—but must one absolutely combine that feeling with hatred for another people equally unhappy, a people forced to aid with its fettered hands the crimes of its atrocious government? Let us be just! Let us not forget that the nation benefited by all the trophies of the recent revolution has acquiesced in the establishment of *order* in Rome. And today? Take a look and see what is going on around you. Yet we do not say that the French *have ceased to be human*, do we?

It is time to forget this unhappy conflict between brethren. Neither side was victorious. Poland and Russia have succumbed to a common foe. Even the victims and the martyrs turn their backs upon the past, which is equally sorrowful for them as it is for us. Let me cite, as you do, your friend, the great poet Mickiewicz.

Do not say of the Polish bard's opinions that they are "due to mercifulness, to a sacred delusion." No; they are the fruits of long and conscientious meditation and a profound understanding of the destinies of the Slav world. It is beautiful to forgive one's enemies but there is something even more beautiful and humane: to understand one's enemies, for understanding is at one and the same time forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation.

The Slav world is striving towards unity. That tendency became apparent immediately after the Napoleonic period. The idea of Slavonic federation had already taken shape in the

revolutionary plans of Pestel and Muravyov.[185] Many Poles had a hand in the Russian conspiracy of December 1825.

When the Revolution of 1830 broke out in Warsaw, the Russian people displayed not the slightest animosity against the rebellious subjects of their Tsar. The sympathy of our youth was most heartfelt. I remember with what impatience we awaited tidings from Warsaw; we cried like children at the news of the memorial services[186] held in the capital of Poland for our Petersburg martyrs. Sympathy for the Poles exposed us to the risk of cruel punishment so that we were forced to conceal it in our hearts and remain silent.

I admit that during the war of 1830 a feeling of exclusive nationalism and quite natural hostility probably prevailed in Poland. But since those days the influence of Mickiewicz, the historical and philological studies of many Slav scholars, a closer knowledge of other European nations, purchased at the hard price of exile, has given a very different turn to Polish thought. The Poles have come to realize that the real issue lies not between the Russian people and themselves; they have learned that henceforth the only way to fight is to fight *for their freedom and ours* as the inscription on their revolutionary banner reads.

Konarski,[187] who was tortured and shot by Nicholas at Vilna, called upon Russians and Poles, regardless of their nationality, to rise in revolt. Russia showed her gratitude by one of those tragedies which hardly ever come to light and by which every heroic action of ours ends under the German jackboot.

Karavayev, an army officer, resolved to save Konarski. His turn to be on duty was not far off and everything was prepared for the escape, but the treachery of one of the Polish martyr's comrades brought his plans to nought. The young man was arrested and sent to Siberia, and nothing has been heard of him since.

I spent five years in exile in the remote provinces of the empire. There I met many Polish exiles. Almost in every uyezd town there is either a whole group, or at least one of the luckless champions of independence. I would gladly appeal to their evidence; certainly they cannot complain of lack of sym-

pathy on the part of the people around them. Of course, I do not include the police or members of the higher military hierarchy among them. They are nowhere conspicuous for their love of freedom, and least of all in Russia. I might appeal to the Polish students sent annually to Russian universities to remove them from the influence of their native land; let them describe the way they were received by their Russian comrades. They parted from us with tears in their eyes.

You remember that when in 1847 the Polish emigrants in Paris celebrated the anniversary of their revolution, a Russian mounted the platform to plead for their friendship, and ask forgiveness for the past. That was our unhappy friend Bakunin. But not to quote my fellow-countrymen, I will, for evidence on this subject, choose one of those who are counted among our enemies, a man whom you have yourself mentioned in your legend of Kosciuszko. I mean one of the veterans of the Polish democracy, Biernacki,[188] a minister of revolutionary Poland. I boldly appeal to him, though long years of grief might well have embittered him against everything Russian. I am convinced that he will confirm all that I have said.

There is no denying the solidarity binding Russia and Poland to each other and to the whole Slav world—it is so obvious. There is, indeed, no future for the Slav world apart from Russia. Without Russia it will not develop, it will fall to pieces and be absorbed by the German element; it will become Austrian and lose its independence. But that in our opinion is not what it is destined for.

Following the gradual development of your idea, I must confess that I cannot agree with your view of Europe as a single individual in which every nationality plays the part of an essential organ.

It seems to me that all the German-Latin nationalities are essential to the European world because they exist in it by virtue of some necessity. Aristotle long ago drew a distinction between pre-existent necessity and subsequent necessity; nature accepts the inevitability of the accomplished fact, though the range of various possibilities is very great. By the same

token the Slav world can lay its claim to unity, especially since it is composed of one race.

Centralization is alien to the Slav spirit—federation is far more natural to it. Only when grouped in a league of free and independent peoples will the Slav world at last enter upon its genuine historical existence. Its past can be regarded as a mere period of growth, of preparation and purification. The political forms in which the Slavs have lived do not correspond to their national aspirations, though vague and instinctive, yet displaying an extraordinary vitality and rich promise. Throughout their history the Slavs have always displayed a strange unconcern for their destiny, an amazing pliability. Thus Russia passed over from paganism to Christianity without a shock or revolt, simply in passive obedience to the Grand Duke Vladimir,[189] and in imitation of Kiev. Without regret the Slavs flung their old idols into the Volkhov and accepted the new god as a new idol.

Eight hundred years later, part of Russia accepted a civilization imported from abroad in precisely the same way.

The Slav world is like a woman who has never loved, and for this very reason apparently takes no interest in what is going on about her. She is unwanted and a stranger to everybody. However, there is no telling: she is still young, and already a strange yearning has taken possession of her heart and sets it beating faster.

As for the richness of the national spirit, we need only point to the Poles, the only Slavonic nation which was once both free and powerful.

The Slav world is not essentially made up of nationalities so different in kind. Its people are physiologically and ethnographically identical whether they live under the outer crust of chivalrous, liberal and Catholic Poland, or of imperial enslaved Byzantine Russia, or under the democratic rule of the Serbian Voivod, or under the bureaucratic yoke with which Austria oppresses Illyria, Dalmatia, and the Banat, or under the patriarchal authority of the Osmanli and with the blessing of the Archbishop of Montenegro.

The greater number of the Slav nations have never been enslaved by conquest. The dependence in which they so of-

ten found themselves for the most part consisted only in the recognition of a foreign potentate and the payment of tribute. Such, for instance, was the character of the Mongol rule in Russia. Thus the Slavs have through long centuries preserved their nationality, their customs and their language.

Are we then not entitled to look upon Russia as the centre of this crystallization, the centre towards which the Slav world is gravitating in its striving toward unity, especially as Russia is so far the only nation of the great race organized into a powerful and independent state?

The answer to this question would be perfectly clear if the Petersburg Government had the faintest idea of its national destiny, if that dull-witted, deadly despotism could reconcile itself to any human idea. But things being as they are, what honest man will bring himself to suggest to the Western Slavs a union between them and an empire which is in a perpetual state of siege, and where the sceptre has been turned into a bludgeon that beats men to death?

The imperial Pan-Slavism, eulogized from time to time by men who have been suborned, or who are labouring under some delusion, has, of course, nothing in common with a union resting on the principles of freedom.

At this point logic inevitably confronts us with a question of primary importance. Assuming that the Slav world can hope for a fuller development in the future, which of the elements now in an embryonic state warrants such a hope? If the Slavs believe that their time has come, this element must be in harmony with the revolutionary idea in Europe.

You indicated that element—you mentioned it, in passing, but it escaped you, because a generous feeling of compassion for Poland diverted your attention away from it.

You say that "the fundamental basis of the life of the Russian people is *communism*," and maintain that "their strength lies in their agrarian law, in the perpetual redivision of the land."

What a terrible *mene tekel* has dropped from your lips! ... Communism is the fundamental basis! Strength depending on redivision of the land! Weren't you horrified at your own words?

Ought we not to pause here, to reflect, to look more deeply into the question, and not to drop it before making certain whether it is the truth or a mere illusion?

Is there in the nineteenth century an interest of any importance which does not involve the question of communism, the question of the redivision of the land?

Carried away by your indignation you go on: "They (the Russians) lack the true attribute of humanity: a moral sense, the sense of good and evil. Truth and justice have no meaning for them; if you speak of those things—they answer nothing, they smile and know not what the words signify." Who may those Russians be to whom you have spoken? What conceptions of *truth* and *justice* were beyond their comprehension? This is not a superfluous question. In our profoundly revolutionary age the words "truth and justice" have lost their absolute meaning, identical for all men.

The *truth* and *justice* of old Europe are *falsehood* and *injustice* to the nascent Europe. Nations are products of nature, history is the progressive continuation of animal development. Applying our moral standards to nature will not get us very far. She cares nought for our censure or our praise. Our verdicts and the Montyon prizes for virtue do not exist for her. The ethical categories created by our individual caprice are not applicable to her. I think that a nation cannot be called either bad or good. The life of a people is always true to its type and cannot be false. Nature produces only what is feasible under the given conditions: all that exists is drawn onwards by her creative ferment, her insatiable thirst for self-realization, that thirst common to all living things.

There are peoples who lived a prehistoric life, others are living a life outside the pale of history; but once they enter the broad stream of history, one and indivisible, they belong to *humanity*, and, on the other hand, all the past of humanity belongs to them. In history—that is, in the life of the active and progressive part of humanity—the aristocracy of facial angle, of complexion, and other distinctions is gradually effaced. That which has not become human cannot be history; on the other hand, no nation which has become part of history can be

reckoned a herd of beasts, just as there is no nation which deserves to be called an assembly of the elect.

There is no man bold enough, or ungrateful enough, to deny the importance of France in the destinies of the European world; but you must allow me the frank confession that I cannot share your view that the participation of France is the *sine qua non* of historical progress.

Nature never stakes all her fortune on one card. Rome, the eternal city, which had no less right to the hegemony of the world, tottered, fell into ruins, and vanished, while pitiless humanity strode on over its grave.

On the other hand, unless one regards nature as madness incarnate, it is hard to label as an outcast race, as a vast deception, as a casual rabble, human only through its vices, a people that has grown and spread out for ten centuries, has obstinately preserved its nationality, formed itself into an immense empire, and has intervened in history far more perhaps than it should have.

What makes such a view all the more difficult to accept is the fact that this people, even according to its enemies, is far from being in a stagnant condition. It is not a race that has attained social forms approximately corresponding to its desires and has sunk into slumber in them, like the Chinese; still less is it a people that has outlived its prime and is wasting away in senile impotence, like the people of India. On the contrary, Russia is quite a new state—an unfinished structure in which everything smells of fresh plaster, in which everything is at work and being worked out, in which nothing has yet attained its object, and in which everything is changing, often for the worse, but changing nonetheless. In brief, this is the people whose fundamental principle, to quote your opinion, is communism, and whose strength lies in the redivision of the land....

With what crime, after all, do you charge the Russian people? What does your accusation rest on?

"The Russian," you say, "is a liar and a thief; he is perpetually stealing, lying—quite innocently, too, because this is in his nature."

Disregarding the sweeping character of your verdict, let me ask you a simple question: who is it that the Russian deceives, from whom does he steal? Obviously the landowner, the government official, the steward, the police officer, in fact the sworn foes of the peasant, whom he looks upon as ungodly strangers, as apostates, as half-Germans? Deprived of every means of defence, the peasant resorts to cunning in dealing with his oppressors; he deceives them, and he is perfectly justified in doing so.

Cunning, dear sir, is, in the words of the great thinker,* the irony of brute force.

Through his aversion for private landowning so correctly noted by you, through his heedless and indolent temperament, the Russian peasant has gradually and imperceptibly been enmeshed by German bureaucracy and the landowners' power. He has submitted to this degrading yoke with a passivity born of despair, but he never recognized the rights of the landlords, or of the law-courts, or the equity of the executive power. For nearly two hundred years the peasant has lived in mute opposition to the existing scheme of things. He submits to coercion, and suffers in silence, but evinces no concern for anything that goes on outside the village commune.

The name of the Tsar stirs a superstitious feeling in the people. It is not, however, to Tsar Nicholas that the peasant does homage, but to the abstract idea, the myth: in the popular imagination the Tsar stands for a menacing avenger, an incarnation of truth, an earthly providence.

Only the clergy could, after the Tsar, possibly have an influence on Orthodox Russia. They alone represent old Russia in governing spheres; the clergy do not shave their beards, and by observing that ancient custom have remained true to the people. Common people believe in the monks. But the monks and the higher clergy, preoccupied solely with the after-life, care nought for the people, while the village priests have lost all their influence through their greed, drunkenness, and close relations with the police. In their case, too, the peasants respect the idea but not the person.

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* Hegel, in his posthumous works.—*A.H.*

As for the dissenters, they hate both person and idea, both Tsar and priest.

Apart from the Tsar and the clergy every element of government and society is utterly alien and essentially antagonistic to the people. The peasant is literally an outlaw. The law-court affords him no protection and his share in the existing order of things is entirely confined to the twofold tribute that lies heavy upon him, and is paid in his toil and his blood. A veritable outcast, he has instinctively realized that the whole system is built up not for his benefit, but to his detriment, and that the aim of the government and the landowners is to wring out of him as much labour, money, and recruits as possible. Since he understands this and is gifted with a flexible and resourceful mind, he deceives them wherever and whenever he can. It could not be otherwise; if he spoke the truth he would thereby be recognizing their authority over him; if he did not steal from them (mark you that to conceal part of the produce of his own labour is considered theft in a peasant) he would thereby be recognizing the lawfulness of their demands, the rights of the landowners and the justice of the law-courts.

To fully appreciate the Russian peasant's position, you should see him in the law-courts; look at his hopeless face, his frightened, searching glance, and you will understand that he is a prisoner of war before the court-martial, a traveller facing a gang of brigands. A single glance shows plainly that the victim has not the slightest faith in the hostile, pitiless, insatiable robbers who are questioning him, tormenting him and fleecing him. He knows that if he has money he will be acquitted; if not, he will be found guilty.

The Russian people speak their own old language, the judges and the attorneys write in a new bureaucratic jargon hideous and barely intelligible; they fill whole folios with forensic mummery, and gabble it off to the peasant. Let him understand it if he can and find his way out of the muddle if he knows how. The peasant sees through them and is on his guard. He will not say one word too much, and stands silent, concealing his uneasiness and pretending to be a fool.

The peasant who has been acquitted by the court trudges home, no more elated than if he had been condemned. In either case the decision seems to him arbitrary or accidental.

In the same way, when summoned as a witness he stubbornly pleads ignorance, even if confronted with incontestable evidence. Being found guilty by a law-court does not disgrace a man in the eyes of the Russian peasant. He regards exiles and convicts as merely *unfortunate* people. The life of the Russian peasantry has hitherto been confined to the village commune. It is only in relation to the commune and its members that the peasant recognizes that he has rights and duties. Outside the commune everything seems to him based upon violence. What is fatal is his submission to that violence, and not his refusal in his own way to recognize it and his attempt to protect himself by guile. Lying to a judge set over him by unlawful authority is far more straightforward than a hypocritical show of respect for the verdict of a jury tampered with by a corrupt prefect. The peasant respects only those institutions which coincide with his innate conception of law and right.

There is a fact which no one who has been in close contact with the Russian peasantry can doubt. The peasants rarely cheat each other. Their trust in each other is almost boundless; they know nothing of contracts and written agreements.

The problems connected with the surveying of their fields are necessarily complicated owing to the perpetual redivision of the land in accordance with the number of taxpayers in the family; yet the work is carried through without complaint or resort to the law-courts. The landowners and the government eagerly seek an opportunity for interference, but in vain. Petty disputes are submitted to the judgement of the elders of the commune on the commune assembly, and the decision is unconditionally accepted by all. The same is true of the *artels*. The *artels* are often made up of several hundred workmen, who form a cooperative for a definite period—for instance, for a year. At the expiration of the year the workmen divide their earnings by common agreement, in accordance with the work done by each. The police never get the satisfaction of

meddling in their accounts. As a rule, the *artel* makes itself responsible for every one of its members.

The bonds between the peasants of the commune are even closer when the peasants are not orthodox but dissenters. From time to time the government makes a savage raid on some dissenting village. Peasants are put into prison and sent into exile, all of which is done without rhyme or reason, without any need or provocation, solely to satisfy the clergy and keep the police busy. It is during these hunts for heretics that the character of the Russian peasants, the solidarity existing among them, is displayed. At such times it is worth seeing them tricking the police, saving their comrades and concealing their holy books and vessels; they endure the most awful tortures without uttering a word. I challenge any one to bring forward a single case in which a dissenting commune has been betrayed by a peasant, even by an orthodox one.

The peculiarity of the Russian character makes police enquiries exceedingly difficult. I can only heartily rejoice at the fact. The Russian peasant has no morality except that which naturally, instinctively derives from his communism. This morality is deeply rooted in the people; the little they know of the Gospel supports it; the flagrant injustice of the landowner binds the peasant still more closely to his principles and to the communal system.*

* A peasant commune belonging to Prince Kozlovsky bought its freedom. The land was divided among the peasants in proportion to the sum contributed by each to the redemption money. This agreement was apparently most just and natural. The peasants, however, thought it so inconvenient and inconsistent with their customs that they decided to regard the purchase money as a debt incurred by the commune at large and to divide the land according to their accepted custom. This fact is vouched for by Baron von Haxthausen, who has visited the village in question.

In a book recently published in Paris by Mr. Tengoborsky[190] and dedicated to Emperor Nicholas, the writer says that this system of the division of land seems to be unfavourable to the development of agriculture (as though the object of it were the advance of agriculture!); he adds, however: "It is difficult to avoid these disadvantages, because this system of land division is bound up with the organization of our communes, which it would be *dangerous to change*; it is established on

The commune has saved the Russian people from Mongol barbarism and imperial civilization, from the Europeanized landlords and the German bureaucracy. The communal system, though shattered, has withstood the interference of the authorities; it has successfully survived *to see the development of socialism in Europe.*

This circumstance is of infinite importance to Russia.

The Russian autocracy is now entering upon a new phase. Engendered as it was by an anti-national revolution, it has accomplished its mission. It has created an immense empire, a formidable army, and a centralized government. Without real roots, without tradition, it is doomed to stagnation. True, it undertook a new task—that of introducing Western civilization into Russia, and was to some extent successful in doing that while it played the part of an enlightened government.

That part it has now abandoned.

The government, which parted ways with the people in the name of civilization, has lost no time in renouncing enlightenment in the name of absolutism.

the fundamental idea of the unity of the commune, and the right of every member to his share in the communal property in proportion to his possibilities and so it supports the communal spirit, that trusty prop of the social order. At the same time this system is the best safeguard against the increase of the proletariat and the diffusion of communistic ideas." (We may well believe that for a people in actual fact possessing their property in common, communistic ideas present no danger.) "The good sense with which the peasants avoid the inevitable inconveniences of the system is highly remarkable; so is the readiness with which they come to terms regarding the compensation for inequalities arising from differences of soil, or the confidence with which everyone accepts the decisions of the elders of the commune. It might be expected that the continual redivision would give rise to continual disputes, and yet they have recourse to the intervention of the higher authorities only on very rare occasions. This fact, *very strange in itself*, can only be accounted for by the fact that the system is so interwoven with the customs and conceptions of the peasants that for all its drawbacks it is taken for granted."

"The idea of the commune," says the same author, "is as natural to the Russian peasant, and as deeply rooted in all the aspects of his life, as the corporate municipal spirit that permeates the life of the Western petty bourgeois is alien to his nature." (Tengoborsky, *Russia's Production Forces*, V. I.)—*A.H.*

It did so as soon as it found the tricoloured phantom of liberalism showing through its tendencies. Then it tried to veer round to the nation at large, to the people. That was impossible—the people and the government had no longer anything in common: the former had grown away from the latter, while the government seemed to discern a new still more terrible ghost lurking deep in the masses—the Red Cock.* Liberalism was certainly less dangerous than a new Pugachovism, but the terror and aversion for new ideas had grown so strong that the government was no longer capable of reconciling itself to civilization.

Since then the sole aim of tsarism has been tsarism. It rules in order to rule, its immense powers are employed to destroy each other and thus preserve an artificial peace. But autocracy for autocracy's sake finally becomes impossible: it is too absurd and too sterile.

It has realized this and has turned to look for some occupation in Europe. The activities of Russian diplomacy are inexhaustible: notes, threats, promises, counsels are showered everywhere, its spies and agents are to be found everywhere.

The Russian Emperor regards himself as the natural protector of the German Princes; he meddles in all the petty intrigues of the petty German courts; he settles all their disputes, scolding one, rewarding another with the hand of a Grand Duchess. But this is not a sufficient outlet for his energy. The mainstay of every reaction, every persecution, he undertakes the duty of chief gendarme of the universe. He aspires to represent the monarchical principle in Europe and assumes the airs and graces of the aristocracy, as though he were a Bourbon, or a Plantagenet and his courtiers Gloucesters and Montmorencys.

Unfortunately, feudal monarchism with its fixed moral principle, its past, and its social and religious ideas, has nothing in common with the Napoleonic despotism of the Petersburg Tsar with no moral principle whatever behind it;

* To "let fly the Red Cock" is the popular Russian phrase for arson, especially during peasant uprisings.—*Tr.*

indeed, nothing but a deplorable historic necessity, a transitory usefulness.

The Winter Palace, like a mountain summit in later autumn, is more and more thickly covered with snow and ice. The vital sap artificially raised to these governmental heights is gradually freezing; sheer material power remains, and the hardness of the rock which can still stand up against the battering waves of revolution.

Surrounded by his generals, his ministers, and his bureaucrats, Nicholas tries to forget his isolation, but grows gloomier, more morose and uneasy with every passing hour. He sees that he is not loved; the silence that reigns near him seems all the more deadly because of the distant murmur of the impending tempest. The Tsar seeks to forget himself, and has openly proclaimed that his aim is the aggrandizement of the imperial power.

That avowal is nothing new: for the last twenty years he has been steadily labouring for that sole object. It is for the sake of it that he has neither pitied the tears nor spared the blood of his subjects.

He has succeeded in everything: he has crushed national aspirations in Poland and suppressed liberalism in Russia.

What more does he want? Why is he so gloomy?

The Emperor feels that Poland is not yet dead. In place of the liberalism which he persecuted with such savagery—which was quite superfluous, for that exotic flower cannot take root in Russian soil—another problem, as menacing as a thundercloud, is looming up.

The peasantry is beginning to chafe against the yoke of the landowners; local insurrections keep breaking out—you yourself quote a terrible instance of this.

The party of progress demands the emancipation of the peasants; it is ready to sacrifice its own privileges. The Tsar hesitates—he desires emancipation yet holds it back. He realizes that freeing the peasants involves freeing the land; that this, in turn, means the beginning of a social revolution, the proclamation of rural communism. To evade the question of emancipation is impossible. To defer its solution to the next reign is, of course, easier, but it is a faint-hearted resource. It is

merely a respite—like a few hours' wait for horses at a wretched posting station.

From all this you can appreciate how fortunate it is for Russia that the village commune has not perished and personal ownership has not split up the property of the commune; how fortunate it is for the Russian people to have remained outside all political movements, outside European civilization, which would undoubtedly have undermined the commune, and which has today reached in socialism the negation of itself.

Europe, as I have said in another place,[191] has not solved the antinomy between the individual and the state, though she has set herself that task. Russia has not found the solution either. This is what we have in common.

At the first step towards social revolution Europe encounters a people which offers a system, though half-savage and unorganized, but still a system—of perpetual redivision of the land among its tillers. Note that this great example is set not by educated Russia, but by the people at large, by the actual everyday life of the people. We Russians who have been schooled by European civilization are no more than a means, a leaven, mediators between the Russian people and revolutionary Europe. In Russia the future belongs to the peasant, just as in France it belongs to the workman.

But if this is so, has not the Russian people some claim on your indulgence, sir?

Poor peasants! Every possible injustice is hurled at them: the Emperor decimates their ranks by recruiting, the landowner robs them of their labour, the official mulcts them out of their last ruble. The peasant endures everything in silence but does not despair: he still has his commune. If a member is wrested away from it, the commune reacts by serrying its ranks. The peasant's lot should have aroused compassion, yet it touches no one. Instead of defending him, people upbraid him.

You do not leave him even the last refuge, in which he can still feel himself human, in which he can love and be free from fear. "His commune is not a commune," you say. "His family is not a family, his wife is not a wife; she belongs to the land-

owner rather than to him; his children are not his children —who knows who is their father?"

So you expose this luckless people not to analysis but to the contempt of other nations, who read your legends so trustingly.

I regard myself in duty bound to say a few words on this subject.

Family life among all the Slavs is very highly developed; it may be, indeed, the one conservative element of their character, the point at which their destructive negativism stops.

The peasants are very reluctant to split up the family; not uncommonly three or four generations go on living under the same roof centred around the grandfather, who enjoys a patriarchal authority. The woman, commonly oppressed, as is always the case in the agricultural class, is treated with respect and consideration when she is the widow of the eldest son and the whole family is often ruled by a grey-haired grandmother. Can it be said that the family does not exist in Russia?

Let us pass to the landowner's relation to the family of his serf. For the sake of clearness, we will distinguish the lawful practice from its abuses, in other words, what is done legally from what is done in violation of the law.

Jus primae noctis has never existed in Russia.

The landowner cannot legally demand a breach of conjugal fidelity. If the law were carried out in Russia, the violation of a serf-woman would be punished exactly as though she were free, namely, by penal servitude or exile to Siberia with deprivation of all civil rights. Such is the law. Now let us turn to the facts.

I do not pretend to deny that, with the power given by the government to the landowners, it is very easy for them to violate the wives and daughters of their serfs. By means of hardships and punishment the landowner can always bring his serfs to a pass in which some will offer him their wives and daughters, just like that worthy French nobleman who, in the eighteenth century, asked as a special favour that his daughter should be installed in the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

It is no wonder that honourabe fathers and husbands can find no redress against the landowners thanks to the excellent judicial system of Russia. For the most part, they find themselves in the position of Monsieur Tiercelin, whose daughter of eleven was stolen by Berryer, at the instigation of Louis XV. All these filthy abuses are possible; one has but to think of the coarse and depraved manners of a section of the Russian nobility to be certain of it. But as far as the peasants are concerned they by no means endure their masters' debauchery patiently.

Allow me to give you a proof of it.

Half of the landowners murdered by their serfs (the statistics give the number as sixty to seventy a year) lose their lives for their amorous misdemeanours. Legal proceedings on such grounds are rare: the peasant knows that the judges would show little respect for his complaints. He has, however, his axe; he is a master hand at it, and knows that he is.

I will say no more about the peasants, but beg you to listen to a few more words about educated Russia.

Your view of the intellectual movement in Russia is no more indulgent than your opinion of the popular character; with one stroke of the pen you strike off all the work hitherto done by our fettered hands!

One of Shakespeare's characters, wishing to show his utmost contempt for a despised opponent, says to him: "I even doubt of your existence!" You have gone further, for it is not a matter of doubt to you that Russian literature does not exist. I shall quote your own words:

"We are not going to attach importance to the attempts of those few clever people who have taken to exercising themselves in the Russian language and amusing Europe with a pale phantom of an allegedly Russian literature. If it were not for my deep respect for Mickiewicz and his saintly aberrations, I should really censure him for the indulgence, one might even say charity, with which he speaks of this trifling."

I search in vain, sir, for the grounds for the contempt with which you regard the first cry of anguish uttered by a people that has awakened in its prison-house, that groan stifled by the gaoler.

Why did you refuse to listen to the haunting notes of our mournful poetry, to our chants throbbing with sobs? What has made you blind to our mirthless laughter and perpetual irony behind which the deeply tortured heart seeks refuge, and which is, after all, the confession of our helplessness? I wish I could make for you a worthy translation of some poems of Pushkin and Lermontov, some songs of Koltsov! Then you would hold out to us a friendly hand at once, and be the first to beg us to forget your words!

Next to the communism of the peasants, nothing is so deeply characteristic of Russia, nothing is such an earnest of her great future, as her literary movement.

Between the peasantry and literature towers the monster of official Russia—"Russia the deception, Russia the pestilence," as you call it. This Russia begins with the Emperor and extends from gendarme to gendarme, from official to official, down to the lowest policeman in the remotest corner of the Empire. With every step, the ladder, as *bolgia* in Dante, gains a new power for evil, a new degree of corruption and tyranny. This living pyramid of crimes, abuses, and bribery, of police scoundrels, heartless German officials who are ever greedy, ignorant judges who are ever drunk, aristocrats who are ever base: all this is held together by a community of interest in plunder and gain, and rests on six hundred thousand animated machines with bayonets. The peasant is never defiled by contact with this cynical world of government; he endures its existence—and that is all he is to blame for.

The camp hostile to official Russia consists of a handful of men, ready to face anything, who protest against it, fight against it, denounce and undermine it. These isolated champions are from time to time thrown into dungeons, tortured and sent to Siberia, but their place is not long vacant—fresh champions arise. It is our tradition, our inalienable inheritance. The terrible consequences of the human word in Russia inevitably lend it a peculiar force. The voice of freedom is listened to with love and reverence, because only those who have something to say raise it. One does not so easily put one's thoughts into print when every page seems to conjure

up a vision of a gendarme, a troika, and some Tobolsk or Irkutsk in immediate prospect.

In my last pamphlet* I have said enough about Russian literature. Here I will confine myself to a few general observations.

Melancholy, scepticism, irony, those are the three chief strings of the Russian lyre.

Pushkin begins one of his finest poems[192] with these terrible words:

All say—there is no justice upon earth—
But there is no justice up above us either!
To me that is as clear as a piano scale,—

Do they not grip your heart, do you not divine, under the mask of composure, the broken life of a man who has long suffered? Lermontov, profoundly disgusted with the society surrounding him, turns in 1838 to his contemporaries with his terrible

With mournful heart I watch our generation,
Tragic or trivial must its future be.

I only know one contemporary poet who can stir the sombre strings of man's soul with the same power. He, too, was a poet born in slavery and died before the revival of his country; I mean the singer of death, the celebrated Leopardi,[193] to whom the world appeared as a vast league of criminals ruthlessly persecuting a handful of righteous madmen.

Russia has only one painter who has won general recognition, Bryullov.[194] What is the subject of his finest work which won him fame in Italy?

Glance at this strange painting.

Groups of terrified figures are crowded in confusion on an immense canvas. They seek in vain for safety. They will be buried by an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, by a veritable tempest of cataclysms. They will be overwhelmed by savage, senseless, ruthless force, to which all resistance is futile. Such are the images inspired by the Petersburg atmosphere.

* *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie.—A.H.*

The Russian novel is constantly concerned with the sphere of pathology, with the evil that is consuming us; an evil that is relentless, pitiless, and so peculiar to us. You will not hear voices from heaven, promising Faust forgiveness for sinful Margaret—here the only voices raised are those of doubt and damnation. Yet if there is salvation for Russia, it lies only in this profound awareness of our position, in the truthfulness with which she lays bare her plight before the sight of all. He who boldly recognizes his failings feels that there is in him something that has been kept intact in the midst of downfalls and failures; he knows that he can expiate his past, and not only lift up his head, but change from "Sardanapalus the profligate into Sardanapalus the hero."

"The Russian peasantry does not read." But, as you know, Voltaire and Dante were not read by villagers either, but by the nobility and a section of the middle class. In Russia the educated section of the middle class forms part of the nobility, which consists of all that has ceased to be the common people. There is even a proletarian nobility which merges into the common people, and free peasants who rise up to the nobility. This fluctuation, this continual renewal, imparts to the Russian nobility a character which you do not find in the privileged classes of the backward countries of Europe. In brief, the whole history of Russia, from the time of Peter the Great, is merely the history of the nobility and of the influence of enlightenment upon it. I will add that the Russian nobility numerically equals the electorate of France under the law of the 31st of May.[195]

In the course of the eighteenth century, the new Russian literature fashioned that rich, sonorous language which we now possess: supple and powerful, it is capable of expressing both the most abstract ideas of German metaphysics and the light sparkling play of French wit. This literature, called into being by the genius of Peter the Great, bore, it is true, the impress of the government—but in those days the banner of the government was progress, almost revolution.

Up to 1789 the imperial throne complacently draped itself in the majestic vestments of enlightenment and philosophy. Catherine II deserved to be deceived with cardboard villages and

palaces of painted boards....[196] No one could dazzle spectators by a gorgeous stage effect as she could. In the Hermitage there was continual talk about Voltaire, Montesquieu, Beccaria.[197] You, sir, know the reverse side of the medal.

Yet in the midst of the triumphal chorus of the courtiers' songs of praise, a strange, unexpected note was already sounding. That was the sceptical, fiercely satirical strain, which soon silenced all the other artificial chants.

The true character of Russian thought, poetical and speculative, developed in its full force after the accession of Nicholas to the throne. Its distinguishing feature was a tragic emancipation of conscience, a pitiless negation, a bitter irony, an agonizing self-analysis. Sometimes these were broken by fits of laughter, but there was no gaiety in it.

Cast into oppressive surroundings, and endowed with a clear eye and incorruptible logic, the Russian has quickly freed himself from the faith and ways of his fathers.

The thinking Russian is the most independent man in the world. What is there to stop him? Respect for the past? But what serves as a starting-point of the modern history of Russia, if not the denial of nationality and tradition?

Or can it be the tradition of the Petersburg period? That tradition lays no obligation on us; on the contrary, that "fifth act of the bloody drama staged in a brothel"* completely frees us from all obligation.

On the other hand, the past of the Western European peoples serves us as a subject of study and nothing more; we do not regard ourselves as the executors of their historic testaments.

We share your doubts, but your faith does not cheer us. We share your hatred, but we do not understand your devotion to what your forefathers have bequeathed you. We are too downtrodden, too unhappy, to be satisfied with half-freedom. You are restrained by moral considerations or held back by afterthoughts. We have neither afterthoughts nor moral considerations; all we lack is strength. This is the source of

* To borrow the excellent expression of one of the contributors of *Il Progresso* in an article on Russia, August 1, 1851.—*A.H.*

our irony, of the anguish which gnaws us, makes us frantic and urges us on till we reach Siberia, exile, hardships, premature death. We sacrifice ourselves with no hope—from sheer spite, or boredom. There is, indeed, something erratic in our lives, but there is nothing commonplace, nothing stagnant, nothing philistine.

Do not accuse us of immorality because we do not respect the same things you do. Can you reproach a foundling for not respecting his parents? We are independent because we are starting life anew. We have no law but our nature, our national character; it is our essence, our flesh and blood, but by no means a binding authority. We are independent because we possess nothing. We have hardly anything to love. All our memories are filled with bitterness and resentment. Education, learning, were inculcated in us with the knout.

What do we care for your sacred duties, we younger brothers robbed of our heritage? And can we be honestly content with your threadbare morality, unchristian and inhuman, existing only in rhetorical exercises and speeches for the prosecution? What respect can be inspired in us by your Roman-barbaric law, that hollow clumsy edifice without light or air, repaired in the Middle Ages and whitewashed by the newly enfranchised middle classes? I admit that the daily brigandage in the Russian law-courts is even worse, but it does not follow from that that your laws or your courts are just.

The distinction between your laws and our imperial decrees is confined to the formula with which they begin. Our imperial decrees begin with a crushing truth: "The Tsar has been pleased to command"; your laws begin with a revolting falsehood, the ironical abuse of the name of the French people, and the words Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The code of Nicholas is drawn up for the benefit of the autocracy and to the detriment of his subjects. The Napoleonic code has absolutely the same character. We are fettered with too many chains to fasten fresh ones about us of our own free will. In this respect we stand precisely on a level with our peasants. We submit to brute force. We are slaves because we have no possibility of being free; but we accept nothing from our enemies.

Russia will never be a Protestant country.

Russia will never be *juste-milieu.*

Russia will never make a revolution with the object of getting rid of Tsar Nicholas, and replacing him by other tsars—parliamentary representatives, judges, and police officials. We perhaps ask for too much and shall get nothing. That may be so, but yet we do not despair; before the year 1848 Russia could not, and should not, have entered the arena of revolution: she had to learn her lesson. Now she has learnt it. The Tsar himself has realized it, and is ferociously brutal in his opposition to universities, to ideas, to knowledge;[198] he is trying to cut Russia off from Europe, and to destroy culture. He is doing his job.

Will he succeed in it?

I have already tried to answer this.

We should have no blind faith in the future; every seed has its claim to growth, but not every one actually grows up. The future of Russia does not depend on her alone, it is bound up with the future of Europe. Who can foretell the fate of the Slav world, if reaction and absolutism finally suppress the revolution in Europe?

Perhaps it will perish.

But in that case Europe too will perish.

And history will pass over to continue in America.

After writing the above I received the last two instalments of your legend. My first impulse on reading them was to throw what I had written in the fire. Your warm and generous heart has not waited for some one else to raise a voice on behalf of the wronged Russian people. You are too magnanimous to play the part you had assumed of relentless judge and avenger of the Polish people. You have been drawn into inconsistency, but it is the inconsistency of a noble mind.

I thought, however, on reading over my letter that you might find in it some new views on Russia and the Slav world, and I made up my mind to send it to you. I do hope that you will forgive the passages in which I have been carried away by my Scythian impetuosity. Alas, the blood of the

barbarians flows in my veins! I so longed to change your opinion of the Russian people—it caused me such grief to find you hostile to us that I could not conceal my bitterness and let my pen run away with me. But now I see that you do not despair of us; under the coarse *armyak* of the Russian peasant you discern a human being. I can see this and, in my turn, confess that I fully understand the impression the very name of Russia must produce on every free man. We ourselves often curse our unhappy land. You know it—you say that everything you have written of the moral worthlessness of Russia is feeble compared with what Russians say themselves.

But the time for funeral orations on Russia is past for us too, and we say with you: "that thought conceals the spark of life." You have divined that spark by the power of your love; we see it, too. That spark will not be quenched by streams of blood, or the snows of Siberia, or the suffocating atmosphere of mines and prisons. May it go on smouldering under the ashes! Or else, the cold, deadly breath which blows from Europe may extinguish it.

For us the hour of action has not come; France may still be justly proud of her foremost position. That arduous task is hers until 1852. Europe will doubtless reach the grave or the new life before us. The day of action is perhaps still far away from us; but the day of the mature consciousness of free thought and speech has already come. We have lived long enough in sleep and silence; the time is ripe for us to describe the fabric of our dreams, and the conclusions we have reached.

And indeed whose fault is it that we have had to wait until 1847 for a German (Haxthausen) to *discover*, as you express it, the Russia of common people, which was as unknown before his time as America before Columbus?

Of course, it is we who are to blame for it, we poor dumb creatures with our faint-heartedness, our faltering speech, our terrified imagination. Even when abroad we are afraid to confess the hatred with which we look upon our fetters. Convicts from our birth up, doomed all our lives to drag the cannon ball fastened to our shackles, we are offended when we are spoken of as though we were voluntary slaves, frozen Negroes, and yet we do not protest openly.

Ought we to submit meekly to these denunciations, or resolve to check them, raising our voice on behalf of Russian free speech? It is better for us to die suspected of human dignity than to live with the shameful brand of slavery on our brow, and hear the reproach that we are slaves by choice.

Unhappily, free speech arouses terror and amazement in Russia. I have just tried to lift a corner of the heavy curtain that hides us from Europe, I have indicated merely the theoretical tendencies, the remote hopes, the organic elements of our future development; and yet my book[199] of which you speak in such flattering terms has made an unfavourable impression in Russia. Voices of friends whom I respect condemn it. In it they see a condemnation of Russia. A condemnation! Of what? of our sufferings, our hardships, our desire to break away from this hateful position.... Poor dear friends, forgive me this crime, I am afraid, I am committing it again.

Heavy and dreadful is the yoke of years of slavery with no struggle, no hope at all! In the end it crushes even the noblest, the strongest heart. Where is the hero who is not overcome at last by weariness, who does not prefer peace in old age to the everlasting fret of vain struggle?

No, I will not be silent! My word shall avenge those unhappy lives crushed by the Russian autocracy which prostrates men morally, kills them spiritually.

We are in duty bound to speak, else no one will know how much that is fine and lofty is sealed for ever in the martyrs' breasts and perishes with them in the snows of Siberia, where their *criminal* name is not even traced upon their tombstones, but is only cherished in the hearts of friends who dare not utter it aloud.

Scarcely have we opened our mouth and murmured two or three words of our desires and hopes, when they try to silence us, to stifle free speech in its cradle!

But they will not succeed. A time comes when thought reaches its maturity and can no longer be kept in fetters by the censorship, or by prudence. Propaganda becomes a passion. And then can one be content with a whisper when the sleep is so deep that it can scarcely be broken by a tocsin? Since the

mutiny of the Streltsi* and up to the conspiracy of December 14, there was no political movement of consequence in Russia. The cause is obvious: there was no clearly defined yearning for independence in the people. In many things they were at one with the government, in many things the government was in advance of the people. The peasants alone, who had no share in the imperial benefits and were more oppressed than ever, tried to revolt. Russia, from the Urals to Penza and Kazan, was, for three months, in the power of Pugachov. The imperial army was defeated and put to flight by the rebellious Cossacks. General Bibikov,[200] sent from Petersburg to take command of the army, wrote, if I am not mistaken, from Nizhni Novgorod: "Things are in a very bad way; what is most to be feared is not the armed hordes of the rebels, but the spirit of the peasants, which is dangerous, very dangerous." The insurrection was at last crushed with incredible difficulty. The people turned dumb, silent, submissive.

Meanwhile the nobility had developed, education had begun to enrich their minds, and like a living proof of that political maturity, of that moral development which must inevitably find expression in action, there appeared remarkable figures, those heroes, as you justly call them, who "alone in the very jaws of the dragon dared the bold stroke of December 14."

Their defeat and the terror of the present reign crushed every idea of success, every premature attempt. Other questions arose; no one cared to risk his life again in the hope of a constitution; it became too clear that a charter won in Petersburg would be cancelled by the treachery of the Tsar; the fate of the Polish Constitution served as an example.[201]

For ten years no intellectual activity could betray itself by a single word, and the oppressive misery reached the point when men "would give their life for the happiness of being free for one moment" and giving voice to some of their thoughts.

Some, with the recklessness which is only met with in us and in the Poles, renounced their possessions and went abroad

* An old Russian army which rebelled against Peter I and was disbanded by him.—*Tr.*

to seek distraction; others, unable to endure the stifling atmosphere of Petersburg, sought seclusion in the country. The young people went in for Pan-Slavism, or German philosophy, or history or political economy. In short, not one of those Russians whose natural vocation was intellectual activity could or would submit to the stagnation.

The case of Petrashevsky[202] and his friends, condemned to penal servitude for life, and exiled in 1849, for forming political societies not two steps away from the Winter Palace, certainly proved, by the insane recklessness of the attempt and the obvious impossibility of success, that the time for rational reflection had passed, that feeling had overpowered good sense, and certain death seemed easier to face than dumb, agonizing submission to the Petersburg discipline.

A fairy-tale very widely known in Russia tells how a Tsar, suspecting his wife of infidelity, put her and her son in a barrel, and then had the barrel sealed up and thrown into the sea.

For many years the barrel floated on the sea.

Meanwhile, the Tsarevich grew not by days but by hours, and his feet and his head began to press against the ends of the barrel. Every day he felt more and more cramped. At last he said to his mother: "Queen Mother, let me stretch myself out and feel freedom."

"My darling Tsarevich," answered the mother, "don't do that—the barrel will burst and you will drown in the salt water."

The Tsarevich thought awhile in silence, and then said: "I will, Mother—I'd rather stretch out just once, feel freedom and then die."

That fable, sir, tells our whole history.

Woe to Russia if bold men, risking everything to stretch out for freedom for just once are no more to be found.

But there is no fear of that.

These words involuntarily bring to my mind Bakunin who has given Europe the sample of a free Russian. I was deeply touched by your fine reference to him. Unhappily, those words will not reach him.

An international crime has already been committed: Saxony has handed over the victim to Austria, Austria to Nicholas.

He is in the Schlüsselburg, that fortress of evil memory where once Ivan, the grandson of the Tsar Alexei, was kept caged like a wild beast. He was finally killed by Catherine II,[203] who, not yet stained by her husband's blood, first ordered the captive's murder, and then executed the luckless officer who carried out her command.

In that damp dungeon by the icy waters of Lake Ladoga there is no place for dreams or hopes!

May he sleep his last sleep in peace, that martyr betrayed by two governments, stained with his blood.

Glory to his name! And revenge! But where is the avenger?— We too, like him, shall perish with our work half done; then lift up your stern and majestic voice, and tell once more our children that they have a debt to pay....

I will close with this memory of Bakunin, and warmly press your hand for him and for myself.

Nice, September 22, 1851

LETTER TO A. A. CHUMIKOV[204]

Nice, 9 Août 1851

YOUR LETTER of the fifth reached me yesterday. I have already sent to Frank[205] for the papers, but am apprehensive of the post on your account and because of the proper names in your papers. I cannot be compromised: I belong openly to that group of people against whom the world police are crusading and therefore you may send whatever you like to my address from Paris, Berlin or Russia, but bear in mind that unless you post them in Switzerland, England or Piedmont the letters will be opened. I will stay in Nice to the end of May, unless deported a second time[206] (I believe it will not happen: they got it hot the first time thanks to the vigorous interpellation of Valerio[207] in the Chamber) and will look forward to your messages with impatience.

You ask about hopes, about democracy. You know my opinion of "European democracy"; have another look at my articles "*Omnia mea mecum porto*" and "Lebe wohl,"[208] published in Kolaček's[209] magazine last autumn, in October and December, I believe. The whole of democracy rests on old monarchist and Christian grounds; like the Bourbons during the revolution it learned nothing from the two grim years following 1848. In the meantime the peoples' sympathy for it is changing more and more to apathy. In the June days of 1848 they called upon it to come out into the streets, but it hid itself. And when it did come out on the 13th of June, '49,[210] the people did not. The people are no longer with it. They have learned a great deal: like women, the masses are not taught in schools, but in adversity and learn the concrete truth by a kind of instinct and meditation. When I say "the people" I, of course, mean only one people in Europe, the *French*. The

proletariat and even the peasantry are as great as the educated sections of France are corrupt, villainous and hopeless; and this in itself is the most important gain since 1848. Formerly, the French peasant was conservative, but now everything is astir—of course, not on political, but on social issues. He who is not a Socialist is a legitimist (to be a legitimist is stupid but not base; besides, the legitimists are far from power). Reactionary conservatism begins with urban civilization; all cities are infected with it, except those inhabited by many workmen; Orleanism is the most ignoble ulcer and the most pernicious one too, but it is a power. The civilized class includes a minority, officially revolutionary; and it is this minority which stands still, left behind by both, reactionary and popular thought. This critical situation awaits its Cervantes: the Don Quixote of the revolutionary circles is worthy of his knightly predecessor. Were the reaction not so stupid and ignorant, it would long ago have morally suppressed this quasi-literary, quasi-political party with its half-truths and half measures, with its "right to work and right to insurrection." The workman with his purely critical intuition scoffs at this "right to work" and does not believe in the right to insurrection unless he feels strong enough and when he does, he has no need of this right.

To me it seemed very necessary to part with the literary liberals, with the parliamentary habits of the members in the opposition, and with the incorrigible political republicans. I reiterated this until the respectable people were incensed and turned against me. But I am convinced that with them the revolution can only perish. A new wine requires fresh flasks.

A few words more about the French people. They are generally praised too much—owing to revolutionary jargon. The French people are not at all prepared either for socialism or freedom, but they are prepared for revolution. The consciousness of social injustice, its rage and amazing unity constitute its strength. The French people are an army, not an army of democracy, as the Montagnards imagine, but an army of communism.

But an army is essential in struggle and that is why the French are in the vanguard as before. Individualism and re-

To the desolate Lear, Kent said: "You have that in your countenance which I would fain call master." I can see this ointment on our brow. Yes, the audacity to think so is either patent Chinese complacency or a great hope. But we, at least, are not Chinese.

But *future* there is none: it is created by the people and if we go on decaying in our backwoods, Russia indeed might turn out to be *avortement*. Herein lies our life's work, our vocation. What could we do? Every word of a devoted man is tantamount to a deed. I, who have remained on the western shore out of necessity, desire nothing more than to become your uncensored voice. Incidentally, I did not do my best to return in order to acquaint Europe with Russia and to be her unhampered mouthpiece. The emigrants are very useful just now, but there are few capable Russians among them. I can name only a certain Sazonov,[213] a highly gifted man and one who has influence in the European movement. Wait until we see what May 1852 will bring and then come to join us (incidentally, Russians who make the decision to stay in Europe never take any steps to retrieve their property. This is noble, but immature). If we are victorious we shall work together. Meanwhile, write, speak and send me the materials. In what way? You will find a way: either through the book agents or through the banks.

Good-bye, and let me shake your hand. Thanks for your letter and sympathy. I shall always write to you if only it is safe for you.

Have you read the latest book by Proudhon and his *Confession* in the third edition?[214] For the great merits of his latest essays he deserves to be forgiven his abusive tone regarding Rousseau and the Revolution of 1793. That was partly the result of embitterment in prison and partly represents the dark side of his great talent. How far he has left all Frenchmen behind in his essay, "Justice," for example!

YOUNG MOSCOW[215]

(FROM *THOUGHTS* ON THE PAST)

Dissonance. A New Circle. Desperate Hegelianism. V. Belinsky, M. Bakunin, and others. A Quarrel with Belinsky and Reconciliation. Argument with a Lady at Novgorod. Stankevich's Circle

EARLY IN 1840 we left Vladimir with its narrow Klyazma. With anxiety and an aching heart I abandoned the little town where we were married. I felt that the simple, deeply spiritual life had been left behind for ever, and that we had to furl some of our sails.

Our long, solitary rambles in the country, where, lost in the meadows, we felt so keenly that spring in nature and spring in our hearts would never return.

Nor would the winter evenings when, sitting side by side, we closed our book and listened to the crunch of sledge-runners and the jingle of bells that brought to mind March 3, 1838 or our journey of May 9.[216]

They would never return!

In how many keys and for how many ages man has known and repeated that "the May of life blossoms once and never again," and yet the June of mature age with its arduous toil and its stony roads, catches him unawares. Youth, all unheeding, rushes along to a sort of algebra of ideas, feelings, and yearnings: it is little interested in the concrete, or affected by it. Then comes love, the *unknown quantity* found; all is reduced to one person, through whose medium everything passes, the universal becomes precious and the artistic beautiful. Then the external has no power either, the young are devoted to each other, and as to the rest, let even the grass stop growing!*

* A Russian idiom expressing complete indifference.—*Tr.*

Yet it does grow, together with the nettles and the thistles, and sooner or later they begin to sting or stick.

We knew that we could not take Vladimir with us, but still we thought that our May was not yet over. I even fancied that in going back to Moscow I was going back to my student days. Everything helped to sustain the illusion. The same house, the same furniture—here was the room where Ogaryov and I, shut in together, used to conspire two paces away from the Senator and my father,[217] and here was my father himself, grown older and more stooped, but just as ready to scold me for coming home late. "Who is lecturing tomorrow? Where is the class? I am going from the university to Ogaryov's. . . ." It was *1833* all over again!

Ogaryov was actually in town.

He had been allowed to come to Moscow a few months before. Again his house became a centre where friends, old and new, met. And although the old unity no longer existed, everyone around was sympathetic.

Ogaryov, as I have had occasion to observe already, was endowed with a peculiar magnetism, a kind of feminine attraction. For no apparent reason others are drawn to such a person and cling to him; he warms, unites, and soothes them, he is like an *open table* at which you can sit down, rest and restore your strength, grow calmer and more cheerful, and go away a friend.

His acquaintances took up a great deal of his time; he suffered at times from this, but still received everyone, and met every guest with his gentle smile. Many people thought it a great weakness in him. Yes, he wasted a lot of time, yet he won not only the love of intimate friends, but of outsiders, of the weak. That is certainly worth as much as reading or any other pursuit.

I could never understand how people like Ogaryov can be accused of idleness. The standards of the factory and the work-house do not apply in their case. I remember that in our student days Vadim[218] and I were once sitting over a glass of wine. He became more and more gloomy, and all at once quoted, with tears in his eyes, the words of Don Carlos (who quoted them from Julius Caesar): "Twenty-three and nothing

done for immortality!" This upset him so that he banged his hand down upon the green wineglass and cut it badly. Well, but neither Caesar nor Don Carlos and Posa, nor Vadim and I explained why on earth we must do something for *immortality*. There is work and it has to be done, but what does it mean to work for work's sake or *for the sake of being remembered* by mankind?

That is not quite clear. And then what is work?

Work, business....* Officials recognize as such only civil and legal affairs, the merchant regards nothing but commerce as work, military men call it their work to strut about like cranes armed from head to foot in times of peace. I do think that to serve as the link, as the centre of a whole circle of people, is to do great work, especially so if the society is both disunited and fettered. No one has reproached me for idleness, and many people have liked some of the things I have done. I wonder if they know how much of all that I have done has been the reflection of our talks, our arguments, the nights we spent idly strolling about the streets and fields, or still more *idly* sitting over a glass of wine.

... But soon a cool breeze reminding us that spring was over reached these parts, too. When the joy of meeting had subsided and festivities were over, when we had said most of what we had to say, and had to go on our way again, we realized that the carefree, happy life which we sought in memories was no longer to be found in our set, and especially not in Ogaryov's house. Friends were still vivacious, arguments lively, sometimes wine flowed, but we did not enjoy it—not as we used to in the old days. Everyone seemed to keep something back, left something unsaid; there was a feeling of strain: Ogaryov looked melancholy and Ketcher[219] raised his eyebrows fiercely. A strange note made a jangling discord in our harmony, and all the warmth, all the friendliness of Ogaryov could not drown it.

What I had dreaded a year before had come to pass, and it turned out to be even worse than I had expected.

Ogaryov had lost his father in 1838, and married not long

* English in the original.—*Tr.*

before his father's death. The news of his marriage frightened me, it had all happened so quickly and unexpectedly. What I heard about his wife was not altogether in her favour, yet his letters were full of enthusiasm and he seemed to be happy; I believed him more than anybody, but still I was uneasy.

Early in 1839 they had come for a few days to Vladimir. It was our first meeting since the auditor Oransky read us our sentence.[220] I was in no mood to be critical. I only remember that for the first few minutes her voice jarred on me and my heart sank; but that momentary impression was blotted out by the radiance of our joy. Yes, those were the days of bliss and spiritual plenitude, when a man all unsuspecting reaches the acme, the utmost boundary of personal happiness. Not a shade of gloomy memory, or the faintest presentiment—it was all youth, friendship, love, exuberant strength, energy, health, and an endless road lay ahead. Even our mood of mysticism, which still lingered then, imparted a festive solemnity to our meeting, as might chiming bells, choristers, and burning incense.

There was an iron crucifix, not very large, on a table in my room. "On your knees!" said Ogaryov, "and let us give thanks that we are all four here together." We knelt down beside him and embraced, wiping away our tears.

One of the four, however, scarcely needed to wipe them away. Ogaryov's wife looked at the scene with some astonishment. I thought at the time that this was *retenue*, but she told me herself afterwards that this scene had struck her as affected and childish. Of course it might strike so an outsider, but why was she looking on at it as an outsider? Why was she so sober at that moment of exaltation, so middle-aged in the midst of our youthfulness?

Ogaryov went back to his estate. She went to Petersburg to try and obtain permission for him to return to Moscow.

A month later she visited Vladimir on her way back again, this time alone. Petersburg and two or three aristocratic drawing-rooms had turned her head. She longed for ostentatious splendour, wealth flattered her vanity. Would she get over it, I wondered. Such opposite tastes may lead to much trouble. As wealth was something new to her and so were drawing-

rooms and Petersburg, it would not, perhaps, be a lasting infatuation; she was intelligent and she loved Ogaryov—so I still hoped.

In Moscow they feared she would not get over it so easily. Artistic and literary circles rather flattered her vanity and she would not have minded having some artists and scholars in her drawing-room, but her chief interests lay elsewhere. She forcibly drew Ogaryov into frivolous society in which he was bored to death. His more intimate friends began to notice it, and Ketcher, who had long been scowling at it, angrily proclaimed his *veto*. Hot-tempered, vain, and unaccustomed to self-restraint, she wounded a vanity as sensitive as her own. Her abrupt, rather frigid manners and sarcasms, uttered in the voice which at our first meeting had so strangely jarred on me, provoked a violent opposition. After wrangling for two months with Ketcher who, though right *au fond*, was continually in the wrong in *la forme*, and incensing several persons too susceptible perhaps owing to their material position, she found herself brought face to face with me.

She was afraid of me. She wanted to measure swords with me and discover once and for all which was to take the upper hand, *friendship or love*, as though one or the other must needs take the upper hand. There was more in this than the desire to have her way in a capricious quarrel, there was a consciousness that I opposed her aims more strongly than any of them; there was acute jealousy and feminine love of power in it too. With Ketcher she argued till she cried, she quarrelled with him every day as angry children do, but without exasperation; she could not look at me without turning pale and trembling with hatred. She reproached me for destroying her happiness because of my revolting pride and conceited claims to Ogaryov's exclusive friendship. I felt this was unjust and turned cruel and merciless, too. She herself confessed to me five years later that she had had thoughts of poisoning me—so far had she gone in her hatred. She broke off all relations with Natalie[221] because of my wife's love for me and the affection all our friends had for her.

Ogaryov suffered. No one spared him, neither she nor I, nor the others. We chose his heart (as he himself expressed it in a

letter) "for our field of battle," and did not pause to think that whichever gained the day he suffered equally. He besought us to make peace, he tried to smooth things over and we were reconciled; but wounded vanity rankled unbearably and smouldering resentment flared into warfare at a word. Ogaryov saw with horror that everything he prized was falling to pieces, that the things he held sacred were not sacred to the woman he loved, that she was a stranger—but he could not help loving her. We were not strangers—but he saw with grief that even we did not spare him one drop of the cup of bitterness fate forced upon him. He could not roughly sunder the ties of *Naturgewalt* that bound him to her, nor the strong ties of sympathy that bound him to us; in either case his heart would have been broken, and, conscious of that, he tried to keep both her and us—gripping convulsively her hands and ours—while we savagely strained apart, torturing him like executioners!

Man is cruel and only prolonged suffering softens him; the child is cruel in its ignorance, the young man in the pride of his purity, the priest in the pride of his holiness, and the doctrinaire in the pride of his learning! We are all merciless, and especially so when we are in the right. The heart usually melts and grows soft after severe wounds, after the wings have been singed, after acknowledged downfalls, after that panic which makes a man grow cold all over, when alone, without witnesses, he begins to suspect what a weak and worthless creature he is. Then his heart grows gentler; and as he wipes away the sweat of shame and horror, he seeks excuses for *himself* and finds them for *others*. From that moment the role of judge, of executioner, excites his loathing.

How far I was removed from that in those days!

On and off, the feud continued. The exasperated woman, pursued by our intolerance, got further and further entangled so that she could not go forward, struggled and fell—yet did not change. Aware that she could not be victorious, she suffered from vexation and *dépit*, from jealousy without love. Her confused ideas, taken haphazardly from George Sand's novels and from our conversations, and never clearly thought out, led her from one absurdity to another—to eccentricities, which she took for originality and independence, to that kind of feminine

emancipation when women reject *at will* what they dislike in the existing and accepted order, while obstinately clinging to everything else.

A rupture seemed inevitable, but he went on for a long time being sorry for her, and tried and hoped to save her. And whenever for a moment some tender feeling was awakened or poetic chord was touched in her, he was ready to forget the past for ever and begin a new life of harmony, peace, and love; but she could not restrain herself, lost her balance and every time sank lower. One tie after another uniting them was painfully broken, till the last thread wore out and snapped without a sound—and they parted for ever.

One question, however, arises that is not quite easily answered. How was it that the strong, sympathetic influence that Ogaryov exercised on all around him, which drew outsiders into higher spheres, into general interests, just glided over that woman's heart without leaving any beneficial mark upon it? He loved her so passionately and put more soul and effort into saving her than into anything else; and she loved him, too, at first—there can be no question of that.

I have thought a great deal about this. At first, of course, I put the blame on one side only, but then I realized that this strange, monstrous fact has an explanation and that there is really no contradiction in it. To have an influence on a sympathetic set of people is far easier than to have an influence on just *one* woman. To preach from the pulpit, to sway men's minds from the platform, or to teach from the lecturer's chair, is far easier than to educate just *one* child. In the lecture-room, in the church, or in the club, similarity of interests and aspirations takes the foremost place; it is for the sake of them that men meet there, and all that is needed is to develop them further.

Ogaryov's circle consisted of his old university comrades, young artists, authors and scientists. They were united by a common belief, a common language, and still more by a common hatred. Those for whom this belief was not really a vital question gradually dropped off, while *others* came to fill their places, and the circle itself as well as its ideas were all the

stronger for this free play of selective affinity and common convictions.

Intimacy with a woman is a purely personal matter, resting on some different mysterious physiological affinity, unaccountable and passionate. We are first intimate, and then acquainted. Among people whose life is not dominated by one plan, one idea, equilibrium is easily established; everything with them is casual, they meet each other half-way, and if they do not, it does not matter very much. Now, a man devoted to his idea discovers with horror that she is alien to what is so near to him. In haste he sets to work to awaken her, but as a rule only frightens or confuses her. Torn away from the traditions which still hold her, and flung across a gulf with nothing to fill it, she believes that she is free—she rejects the old arrogantly, resentfully, and haphazardly and accepts the new indiscriminately. There is disorder and chaos in her head and in her heart ... the reins are flung down, egoism is unbridled ... while we imagine that we have accomplished something and preach to her as in the lecture-room.

The gift for education, the gift of patient love, of complete, persevering devotion is more rarely met with than any other. No mother's passionate love nor dialectical skill can replace it.

Perhaps this is the reason why people torment children and sometimes grown-up people too—it is hard to educate them and so easy to flog them. Perhaps when we punish, we are revenging ourselves for our own incapacity?

Ogaryov saw that even then; that was why all (and I among them) reproached him for being too gentle.

The circle of young people that gathered round Ogaryov was different from what it had been. Only two of his old friends, besides us, were in it. Its tone, interests, pursuits had all changed. Stankevich's friends were in the forefront; Bakunin and Belinsky stood at their head, each with a volume of Hegel's philosophy in his hand, and each filled with the youthful intolerance inseparable from deep and passionate convictions.

German philosophy had been grafted on to the Moscow University by M. G. Pavlov. The Chair of Philosophy had been abolished in 1826. Pavlov gave us an introduction to philos-

ophy in lieu of physics and agricultural science. To learn physics at his lectures was hard and to learn agricultural science impossible, but they were extremely useful. Pavlov stood at the door of the section of Physics and Mathematics and stopped the student with the question: "Do you want to acquire knowledge of nature? But what is nature? What is knowledge?"

That is extremely important: our young students enter the university without any philosophical preparation; only the divinity students have some conception of philosophy, and that is an utterly distorted one.

By way of answer to these questions, Pavlov expounded the doctrines of Schelling and of Oken with a graphic clarity such as no teacher of natural philosophy had shown before. If he did not attain complete lucidity, that was due rather to the obscurity of Schelling's philosophy and not to his exposition. If at all, Pavlov should be blamed for stopping short at this Mahabharata of philosophy and not running the severe gauntlet of Hegelian logic. But even in his science he went no further than the introduction and general outline, or at any rate he led others no further. Such a premature halt, such incompleteness, houses without roofs, or foundations without houses, and splendid vestibules leading to humble dwellings, are quite in keeping with the spirit of the Russian people. Perhaps we remain content with vestibules because our history is still knocking at the gate?

What Pavlov did not do was done by one of his pupils—Stankevich.

Stankevich, also one of the *idle* people who *accomplished nothing*, was Hegel's first disciple in the Moscow circle. He had made a thorough and deeply aesthetic study of German philosophy; endowed with exceptional abilities, he drew a large circle of friends into that favourite pursuit of his. This circle was remarkable, and produced a regular legion of savants, writers and professors, such as Belinsky, Bakunin and Granovsky.

There had been no great sympathy between our circle and Stankevich's before the days of our exile. They disliked our almost exclusively political tendency, while we disliked theirs,

which was almost exclusively theoretical. They considered us frondeurs and French, while we thought them sentimentalists and German. Granovsky was the first man to be acknowledged by both sides. He made us join hands, and by his warm love for both and his conciliating character removed the last traces of mutual misunderstanding. But when I arrived in Moscow he was still in Berlin, while poor twenty-seven-year-old Stankevich was dying on the shore of the Lago di Como.

Sickly in constitution and gentle in character, a poet and a dreamer, Stankevich was naturally bound to prefer contemplation and abstract thought to vital and purely practical matters; his aristocratic idealism suited him, like laurels would his pale, youthful brow that bore the imprint of death. The others had too much vitality and too little poetical feeling to remain long absorbed in speculative thought without coming down to earth. Exclusive preoccupation with theory runs counter to the Russian temperament, and we shall soon see how the *Russian spirit* transformed Hegel's philosophy and how *our* own live nature asserted itself in spite of all its attempts to wear the tonsure of a philosophic monk. But at the beginning of 1840 the young people who surrounded Ogaryov had as yet no thought of rebelling against the letter on behalf of the spirit and against the abstract on behalf of life.

My new acquaintances received me as people usually receive exiles and old champions, people who come out of prison or return out of captivity or exile, that is, with respectful indulgence, willing to admit us to their company, though at the same time refusing to yield a single point, implying that they were "*today*" while we were already "*yesterday*," and exacting the unconditional acceptance of Hegel's phenomenology and logic, with their intepretation of it, to boot.

And they did interpret them incessantly so that there was not a paragraph in the three parts of the *Logic*, in the two of the *Aesthetic*, the *Encyclopaedia*, etc., which had not been the subject of furious battles for several nights on end. Devoted friends parted for weeks at a time because they disagreed about the definition of "all-embracing spirit," or had taken as a personal insult a different opinion on "the absolute personality and its in-itself-being." Every insignificant treatise pub-

lished in Berlin or other provincial or district towns of German philosophy if it contained a mere mention of Hegel's name, was ordered, and was read until, after a few days, nothing but a collection of soiled, loose pages remained. Just as Francoeur in Paris wept with delight when he heard that in Russia he was taken for a great mathematician and that the young generation made use of the same letters as he did when they solved equations of various degrees—so, too, tears of delight might have been shed by all those forgotten Werders, Marheinekes, Michelets, Ottos, Vatkes, Schallers, Rosenkranzes, and even Arnold Ruge, whom Heine so aptly dubbed "the gatekeeper of Hegelian philosophy," if they had known what pitched battles were fought in their name in Moscow between Maroseika[222] and Mokhovaya, how thoroughly they were being read, and how eagerly they were being *bought.*

Pavlov's great value lay precisely in the extraordinary clarity of his exposition which, however, did not in the least sacrifice the depth of German thought; the young philosophers on the contrary, had adopted a conventional language; they did not translate into Russian, but transferred everything as it stood, and even, to make things easier, left all the Latin words *in crudo*, giving them, however, our good old terminations and the endings of the seven Russian cases.

I have the right to say this because, carried away by the trend of the times, I myself wrote exactly in the same way, and was genuinely surprised when Perevoshchikov, the well-known astronomer, described this language as a bird's tongue. No one in those days would have hesitated to put down the following: "The concretion of abstract ideas in the sphere of plastics presents that phase of the self-seeking spirit in which, defining itself for itself, it potentiates from natural immanence into the harmonious sphere of imaginative consciousness in beauty." It is remarkable that here Russian words, as at the celebrated dinner of the generals of which Yermolov spoke, sound even more foreign than Latin ones.[223]

German learning—and it is its chief defect—has become accustomed to an artificial, heavy, scholastic language, just because it has been brought up in academies, those monasteries of idealism. It is the language of the priests of learning,

a language for the *faithful*, and no one of the uninitiated understood it. A key was needed to it, just as for a cipher letter. Now that the key is no longer a mystery, people are surprised to find that very sensible and very simple things are said in this strange jargon. Feuerbach was the first to use a more human language.

The mechanical copying of this German ecclesiastico-scientific jargon was the more unpardonable as the leading characteristic of our language is precisely the extreme ease with which everything is expressed in it—abstract ideas, the innermost lyrical moods, "life's mouse-like petty cares,"[224] the cry of indignation, sparkling mischief, and overwhelming passion.

Another mistake, far graver, crept in along with this distortion of language. Our young philosophers distorted not merely their phrases but their understanding as well; their attitude to life, to reality, became scholastic, bookish; it was that same learned conception of simple things which Goethe derides with such brilliance in the conversation of Mephistopheles with the student. Every genuine spontaneous and simple feeling was actually lifted into abstract categories and returned drained of all living blood, an algebraic shadow. In all this there was a naïveté of a sort, because it was all perfectly sincere. The man who went for a walk in Sokolniki[225] Park did it in order to abandon himself to the pantheistic feeling of his unity with the cosmos; and if on the way he happened upon a drunken soldier or a peasant woman who got into conversation with him, the philosopher did not simply talk to them, but defined the essential substance of the people in its immediate and phenomenal manifestation. The very tear glistening on the eyelash was strictly referred to its proper classification, to *Gemüt* or "to the tragic in the heart."

It was the same thing with art. To have a knowledge of Goethe, especially of the second part of *Faust* (either because it was inferior to the first or because it was more difficult), was as obligatory as the wearing of clothes. The philosophy of music moved to the foreground. Of course, no one ever spoke of Rossini; Mozart was treated with more indulgence, though he was thought to be childish and poor. On the other hand, every bar of Beethoven was analyzed philosophically at great

length and Schubert was greatly respected, not so much, I think, for his superb melodies as for the fact that he chose philosophical themes for them, such as "The Divine Omnipotence" and "Atlas." French literature, indeed, all things French, and, by the same token, everything political, was regarded with the same disfavour as Italian music.

From the above, it is easy to see on what field we were bound to meet and do battle. So long as the issue was the fact that Goethe was objective but that his objectivity was subjective, while Schiller as a poet was subjective but that his subjectivity was objective, and vice versa, everything went peaceably. However, questions that aroused more passion were not slow to arise.

What with old age and satisfaction with his position and the respect he enjoyed, Hegel, while Professor in Berlin, purposely worked up his philosophy high above the earthly level and kept himself in that sphere looking down from which all contemporary interests and passions seemed rather insignificant, like buildings and villages seen from a balloon; he did not like to get entangled on these accursed practical questions which are so difficult to deal with and which must receive a positive answer. It is quite clear that this artificial and disingenuous dualism was simply glaring in a doctrine for which the elimination of dualism is a point of departure. The real Hegel was the modest Professor at Jena and Hölderlin's friend, who managed to save his *Phenomenology* when Napoleon entered the town. At that time his philosophy did not lead to Indian quietism nor to the justification of the existing forms of society, nor to Prussian Christianity; then he did not deliver his lectures on the philosophy of religion, but had written brilliant things, such as the essay "The Executioner and the Death Penalty," printed in Rosenkranz's biography.

Hegel confined himself to the sphere of abstractions in order to avoid the necessity of touching upon empirical deductions and practical applications; for them he selected, very adroitly, the calm, untroubled lake of aesthetics. Otherwise he rarely ventured abroad, and, when he did, it was for a minute and he was wrapped up like an invalid—and even then he left behind in the dialectic maze just those questions most interesting to

the modern man. The extremely feeble intellects (Eduard Gans[226] is the only exception) who surrounded him accepted the letter for the thing itself, greatly pleased by the empty play of dialectics. Probably the old man felt at times sore and ashamed to see the short-sightedness of his excessively complacent pupils. If the dialectic method is not the development of reality itself, if it is not the elevation, so to speak, of reality to thought, it becomes an exercise in logical gymnastics, a purely external means for making all sorts of things run the gauntlet of categories, as was the case with the Greek Sophists and the medieval scholastics after Abélard.[227]

"All that is real is rational," the philosophical phrase which did the greatest harm, and which the German conservatives strove to use as a basis for the reconciliation of philosophy with the political regime of Germany, was the *principle of sufficient reason* and the correspondence of logic and fact, only differently expressed. Hegel's phrase, wrongly understood, became what the words of the Christian Girondist Paul were at one time: "There is no power but from God." But if the existing social order is justified by reason, the struggle against it, since it exists, is also justified. These two sentences accepted in their formal meaning are pure tautology; but whether tautology or not, Hegel's phrase led straight to the recognition of the existing authorities, led to a man's contemplation with folded arms, and that was just what the Berlin Buddhists wanted. Alien though such a view was to the Russian spirit, our Moscow Hegelians, genuinely misled, accepted it.

Belinsky, the most active, impulsive, dialectically passionate, militant nature, was at that time preaching an Indian repose of contemplation and theoretical study instead of struggle. He believed in that theory and did not flinch before any of its consequences, nor was he held back by considerations of moral propriety or the opinion of others, dreaded by the weak and those who lack independence. He was free from timidity for he was strong and sincere, and his conscience was clear.

"Do you know that from your standpoint," I said to him, thinking to impress him with my revolutionary ultimatum, "you can prove that the monstrous autocracy under which we live is rational and ought to exist?"

"There is no doubt about it," answered Belinsky, and proceeded to recite to me Pushkin's *Anniversary of Borodino*.[223]

That was more than I could stand and a desperate battle flared up between us. Our disagreement affected the others, and the circle split into two camps. Bakunin tried to reconcile us, to explain, to *talk everything away*, but there was no real peace. Belinsky, irritated and dissatisfied, went off to Petersburg, and from there fired off his last furious broadside in his article entitled "The Anniversary of Borodino."

Then I broke off all relations with him. Though Bakunin argued hotly, he began to reconsider things—his revolutionary tact impelled him in another direction. Belinsky reproached him for weakness, for concessions, and went to such lengths in this that he frightened his own friends and admirers. The chorus was in unison with Belinsky, and they all looked down upon us, haughtily shrugged their shoulders and considered us behind the times.

In the midst of this feud I saw the necessity *ex ipsa fonte bibere* and took to studying Hegel in earnest. I even think that a man who has not *gone through* Hegel's *Phenomenology* and Proudhon's *Contradictions of Political Economy*, who has not been in the crucible of the one and has not been tempered by the other, is not complete, not modern.

When I had grown used to Hegel's language and mastered his method, I gradually realized that Hegel was much nearer to our standpoint than to that of his followers; he was so in his early works, he was so everywhere where his genius dashed forward, unchecked, forgetful of the Brandenburg Gates. The philosophy of Hegel is the algebra of revolution, it emancipates man to an extraordinary degree and leaves not a stone standing of the Christian world, of the world of outlived tradition. But, perhaps intentionally, it is badly formulated. Just as in mathematics—only there with more justification—one does not go back to the definition of space, movement, force, but proceeds with the dialectical development of their laws and qualities—so, too, in the formal understanding of philosophy, after once becoming accustomed to the first principles, people go on merely drawing deductions. Any one new to the subject, who has not stupefied himself by the method

being turned into a habit, is pulled up just by these traditions, by these dogmas assumed for thoughts. To people who have long been studying the subject and are consequently not unbiased, it seems astonishing that others could not understand things that are "so obvious." How can any one fail to understand such a simple idea as, for instance, "that the soul is immortal and that what perishes is only the personality," a thought so successfully developed by the Michelet of Berlin; or the still more simple truth that the absolute spirit is a personality, conscious of itself through the world, and at the same time having its own self-cognition?

All these things seemed so easy to our friends, they smiled at "French" objections in such a way that I was for some time crushed by them and kept working steadily to reach an exact understanding of their philosophic jargon.

Fortunately I am as little inclined to scholasticism as to mysticism, and I stretched its bow until the string snapped and the spell was broken. Strangely enough, it was an argument with a lady that led me to it.

The year before I had become acquainted with a general at Novgorod. I made his acquaintance just because he could have been taken for anybody but a general.

It was obvious that death had visited his house and the tears and painful memories still lingered. His hair was prematurely grey and his kindly, mournful smile bespoke suffering, even more than did his wrinkles. He was about fifty. The traces of a fate that had cut off living branches was still more clearly imprinted on the pale, thin face of his wife. It was too quiet in their house. The general studied mechanics, while his wife spent her mornings giving French lessons to some poor girls; when they left she would take up a book. The only thing that suggested a different, bright, fragrant life were the flowers—they had an abundance of flowers—and the playthings in a cupboard—but no one ever played with them.

They had had three children: two years before I knew them an exceptionally gifted boy of nine had died; a few months later another child died of scarlet fever; the mother hastened to the country to save the last child by change of air and came

back a few days later with a little coffin in the carriage with her.

Their life had lost its meaning, it was ended, and dragged on without need or object. Their existence was maintained by the compassion of each for the other; the one comfort left them was the deep conviction that they needed each other to bear the cross as best they could. I have seen few more harmonious marriages, though, indeed, it was hardly a marriage at all, for it was not love that bound them together but a deep comradeship in misfortune; their fate held them tight together with the little cold hands of those three, and the hopeless emptiness around them and ahead of them.

The bereaved mother was completely given up to mysticism; she found relief from her misery in the world of mysterious reconciliations. For her, mysticism was no light thing, it was no day-dreaming, it meant her children, and she was defending them by defending her religion. But, as she had an extremely active intelligence, she challenged discussion and knew her strength. I have met, both before and since, many mystics of various kinds, from Vitberg[229] and the followers of Towianski,[230] who acknowledged Napoleon as the military incarnation of God and took off their caps when they passed the Vendôme Column, down to the now-forgotten "Ma-pah,"[231] who told me himself of his interview with God which took place on the high road between Montmorency and Paris. They were all high-strung people who worked on the nerves, impressed the fancy, or the heart, mixed up philosophical conceptions with an arbitrary symbolism, and did not care to come out into the open field of logic.

But it was upon that field that L. D.[232] took a firm and fearless stand. Where and how she had succeeded in obtaining such artistic skill in argument I do not know. Women's development generally is a mystery; first there is just dresses and dances, mischievous backbiting and novel reading, making eyes and shedding tears—and here is, all at once, titanic will, mature thought, enormous intelligence. The young girl carried away by her passions vanishes, and here you see Théroigne de Méricourt, the beauty of the tribune, swaying multitudes of the people, or the eighteen-year-old Princess Dashkova,

sword in hand, on horseback, in the midst of a mutinous crowd of soldiers.

In L. D. everything was complete, she knew no doubts, no wavering, no theoretical weakness; even the Jesuits or the Calvinists can hardly have been so harmoniously consistent in their doctrine as she was.

Deprived of her little ones, she had come to hating life instead of hating death. And so, away with everything living and realistic, with enjoyment, health, gaiety, with the free joy of existence. L. D. had gone to the length of disliking both Goethe and Pushkin.

Her attacks on my philosophy were original. She used to declare mockingly that all our dialectical dramatics and subtleties were just the beating of the drum, the noise with which cowards try to drown the terrors of their conscience.

"You and your philosophy will never," she used to say, "arrive at a personal god, nor at the immortality of the soul, and none of you has the courage to be an atheist and reject the life beyond the grave. You are too human not to be horrified by those conclusions, so you invent your logical miracles to throw dust in the eyes and to arrive at what is given by religion in a simple and childlike way."

I objected, I argued, but I was inwardly conscious that I had no complete proofs and that she had a firmer footing than I.

To increase my discomfiture, an inspector of the Medical Board must needs turn up to support me; he was a good-natured man, but one of the most ridiculous Germans I have ever met. A devoted worshipper of Oken and K. Carus, he argued by means of quotations, had a ready-made answer for everything, never had doubts about anything, and imagined that he was completely in accord with me.

The doctor lost his temper, grew furious particularly since he could not hold his own by other means, said that L. D.'s views were just feminine caprice, took refuge in Schelling's lectures on the academic doctrine, and read extracts from Burdach's *Physiology* to prove that there is an eternal and spiritual element in man, and that some personal *Geist* is concealed in nature.

L. D., who had long ago left behind this "ABC of pantheism," kept confusing him, and, smiling, glanced from him to me. She was, of course, more in the right than he, and I was vexed and kept racking my brains, while the good doctor laughed triumphantly. These arguments interested me so much that I set to work upon Hegel with new zest. The agony of suspense, however, did not last long, the truth flashed before my eyes and began to grow more and more distinct; I inclined to my opponent's side, but not in the way she wanted me to.

"You are perfectly right," I said to her, "and I am ashamed of having argued with you. Of course there is no personal spirit, nor immortality of the soul, and that is why it has been so hard to prove that there is. Just think how simple and natural it all becomes without those gratuitous assumptions."

She was put out by my words but quickly recovered herself. "I am sorry for you," she said, "but perhaps it is for the best. You will not long continue to go in that direction, it is too empty and depressing. Now, our doctor is incurable," she added, smiling, "he has no fears, he is enveloped in such a fog that he does not see one step before him."

Her face was paler than usual, however.

Two or three months later, Ogaryov passed through Novgorod. He brought me Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christenthums*; after reading the first pages I leapt up with joy. Away with the trappings of masquerade, no more ambiguities and equivocations! We are free men and not the slaves of Xanthus; there is no need for us to wrap the truth in myth.

In the heat of my philosophic ardour I began my series of articles on "Dilettantism in Science," in which, among other things, I took my revenge on the doctor.

Now let us return to Belinsky.

A few months after his departure for Petersburg in 1840 we too arrived there. I did not go to see him. Ogaryov took my quarrel with Belinsky very much to heart; he knew that Belinsky's absurd theory was a passing weakness, and, indeed, I knew it too. But Ogaryov was kinder. At last by his letters he managed to bring about a meeting. Our interview was at first cold, unpleasant, and strained, but neither Belinsky nor I were much of diplomats and as we exchanged some trivial

remarks I mentioned his article on "The Anniversary of Borodino." Belinsky jumped up from his seat and, flushing crimson, said with inimitable simplicity, "Well, thank God, that's come up at last. Because of my stupid temper I did not know how to begin.... You've won the day—three or four months in Petersburg have done more to convince me than all arguments could. Let us forget that nonsense. It is enough to say that the other day I was dining at a friend's and there was an officer of the Engineers there; my friend asked him if he would like to make my acquaintance. 'Is that the author of the article on "The Anniversary of Borodino"?' the officer whispered in his ear. 'Yes.' 'No, thank you very much,' he answered dryly. I heard it all and could not restrain myself. I pressed the officer's hand warmly and said to him: 'You're an honourable man, I respect you.' What more would you have?"

From that moment up to Belinsky's death we went hand in hand. Belinsky, as was to be expected, turned back upon his former theory with all the stinging vehemence of his language and all his tremendous energy. The position of many of his friends was not very enviable. *Plus royalistes que le roi*, they tried, with the courage of despair, to defend their theories, not averse, however, to an honourable truce.

All those who had enough sense and vitality went over to Belinsky's side; only the obstinate formalists and pedants kept aloof. Some of them came to German suicide through dead and scholastic learning so that they lost all living interest and themselves vanished without a trace. Others became Orthodox Slavophils. Strange as the combination of Hegel and Stefan Yavorsky[233] may appear, it is more likely than might be supposed; the Bysantine theology is just as much superficial casuistry and play with logical formulas as Hegel's dialectics, formally understood. Some of the articles in the *Moskvityanin* are a magnificent instance of the lengths to which a man of talent can bring the perverse union of philosophy and religion.

Belinsky by no means abandoned Hegel's philosophy when he renounced his one-sided interpretation of it. Quite the contrary, it is from this time that his living, apt, original combination of philosophical with revolutionary ideas begins. I regard

Belinsky as one of the most remarkable figures of Nicholas's time. After the liberalism which had somehow survived 1825 in Polevoy, after the lugubrious article of Chaadayev,[234] Belinsky appeared on the scene with his caustic criticism, engendered by suffering, and his passionate interest in every question. In a series of critical articles he touched, in season and out of season, upon everything, everywhere true to his hatred of authority and often rising to poetic inspiration. The book he reviewed usually served him as a starting-point—he abandoned it half-way and grappled hold of some other problem. The line "That's what kindred are" in *Onegin* was enough for him to summon family life before the judgement seat and to pick family relations to pieces down to the last shred. Who does not remember his articles on *The Tarantass*, Turgenev's *Parasha,* Derzhavin, Mochalov, and *Hamlet*? How true he remains to his principles, what intrepid consistency he shows! How adroit he is in steering clear of the sandbanks of the censorship, and what boldness he displays in his attacks on the aristocracy of literature, on the writers of the upper three grades, these high officials of literature who are always ready to defeat an opponent if not by fair means then by foul, if not by debate then by informing the police. Belinsky scourged them mercilessly, goading the petty vanity of the stilted mediocre authors of eclogues, promoters of learning, benevolence, and sentimentality; he derided their most cherished ideas, the poetical dreams fostered by their flaccid brains, their naïveté, hidden under a St. Anna ribbon.

How they hated him for it!

The Slavophils date their official existence from the war upon Belinsky. It was he who taunted them into wearing the *murmolka* and the *zipun.* It will be recalled that Belinsky had formerly written in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, while Kireyevsky entitled his excellent journal *Yevropeyets*; these titles prove best of all that at first there were merely shades of opinion and not differences of parties.

Belinsky's essays were awaited with feverish impatience by the younger generation of Petersburg and Moscow beginning with the 25th of every month. Half a dozen times the students would drop in at the coffee-house to ask whether the *Otechest-*

venniye Zapiski had been received; the heavy volume was snatched from hand to hand. "Is there an article by Belinsky?" And if there was, it was devoured with feverish interest, with laughter, with disputes ... and three or four cults or *reputations* were no more.

Skobelev, the governor of the Fortress of Peter and Paul, might well say in jest to Belinsky when he met him in Nevsky Prospect: "When are you coming to us? I have a nice warm little cell all ready reserved for you."

I have spoken in another book of Belinsky's development and of his literary activity; here I will only say a few words about the man himself.

Belinsky was very shy and quite lost his head in an unfamiliar or very large company; he knew this and did the most absurd things to try and conceal it. K.[235] once persuaded him to go to visit a lady; as they approached her house Belinsky became more and more depressed, kept asking whether they could not go some other day, and pleaded having a headache. K., who knew him, would accept no excuse. As soon as they got out of the sledge on their arrival, Belinsky tried to run off, but K. caught him by the overcoat and led him to be introduced to the lady.

He sometimes put in an appearance at Prince Odoyevsky's literary and diplomatic evenings. At these there were crowds of people who had nothing in common except a certain apprehension of and aversion for each other: officials from the Embassies and Sakharov,[236] the archaeologist, painters and A. Meyendorf, the economist, several councillors of the cultured sort, Ioakinf Bichurin from Pekin, people who were half-gendarmes and half-literary men, others who were wholly gendarmes and not at all literary men. A. K.[237] was so conspicuous for his silence there that generals took him for an authority. The hostess was secretly distressed by her husband's vulgar tastes,[238] and yielded to them as much as Louis Philippe at the beginning of his reign indulged the tastes of his electors by inviting to the balls at the Tuileries whole *rez-de-chaussée* of bracemakers, grocers, shopkeepers, shoemakers, and other worthy citizens.

Belinsky was utterly lost at these parties, between some Saxon ambassador who did not understand a word of Russian and some officer of the Third Department[238(a)] who understood even words that were not uttered. Belinsky usually felt out of sorts for two or three days afterwards and cursed the man who had persuaded him to go.

One Saturday, on New Year's Eve, Odoyevsky took it into his head to mix punch *en petit comité* after the principal guests had left. Belinsky would certainly have gone away, but he was prevented by a barricade of furniture; he had somehow got stuck in a corner, and there was a little table before him with wine and glasses on it; Zhukovsky in white gold-braided trousers sat in front of him, off to one side. Belinsky suffered patiently for a long time, but, seeing no chance of escape, he began pushing the table quietly; it yielded at first, then lurched over and fell with a bang on the floor, while the bottle of Bordeaux very deliberately emptied its contents over Zhukovsky. He jumped up with the red wine trickling down his trousers; there was a great to-do, a servant rushed up with a napkin to rub the wine over the other parts of the trousers, and another to pick up the broken wineglasses.... While this bustle was going on Belinsky disappeared and ran home more dead than alive.

Dear Belinsky! How long he remained upset by such incidents, with what horror he used to recall them, walking up and down the room and shaking his head.

But that shy man, that frail body contained a mighty spirit, the spirit of a gladiator! Yes, he was a powerful fighter! He could not preach or lecture, what he needed was argument. If he was not contradicted, if he was not stirred to irritation, he did not speak well; but when he was touched to the quick, when his cherished convictions were challenged, when the muscles of his cheeks began to quiver and his voice trembled, then he was worth seeing; he pounced upon his opponent like a panther, he tore him to pieces, made him look ridiculous and pitiful, and incidentally developed his own thought, with extraordinary force, with extraordinary poetry. The discussion would often end in blood coming from the sick man's throat; pale, gasping, his eyes fixed on the man with whom he was

speaking, he would lift his handkerchief to his mouth with shaking hand, and stop, deeply mortified, crushed by his physical weakness. How I loved and pitied him at those moments!

Worried financially by unscrupulous literary agents, morally fettered by the censorship, surrounded in Petersburg by people little sympathetic to him, and consumed by a disease to which the Baltic climate was fatal, he became more and more irritable. He shunned outsiders, was savagely shy, and sometimes spent weeks together in gloomy inactivity. Then the publishers sent note after note demanding copy, and the enslaved writer, grinding his teeth, took up his pen and wrote those biting articles throbbing with indignation, those indictments which so impressed their readers.

Often, utterly exhausted, he would come to us to rest, and lie on the floor playing with our two-year-old child for hours together. While we were only the three of us things went swimmingly, but if there came a ring at the door, his face began working all over and he would look about him uneasily, searching for his hat; though he often remained out of Slavic weakness. Then a word, an observation that went against his grain would lead to the most curious scenes and disputes....

Once on Passion Week he went to dine with a writer and Lenten dishes were served. "Is it long," he asked, "since you have grown so devout?" "We eat Lenten fare," answered the writer, "simply for the sake of the servants." "*For the sake of the servants*?" said Belinsky, and he turned pale. "For the sake of the servants?" he repeated and rose. "Where are your servants? I'll tell them that they are deceived, any open vice is better and more *humane* than this contempt for the weak and uneducated, this hypocrisy in support of ignorance. And do you imagine that you are free people? You are to be bracketed with all the tsars and priests and slaveowners. Good-bye, I don't eat Lenten fare for the edification of others, I have no *servants*!"

Among the Russians who had become inveterate Germans, there was one instructor of our university who had lately arrived from Berlin; he was a good-natured man in blue spectacles, stiff and decorous; he had deranged and enfeebled his brains with philosophy and philology, and there he stopped for

ever. A doctrinaire and to some extent a pedant, he was fond of holding forth in edifying style. Once at a literary evening in the house of that novelist who observed the lent for the sake of his servants, this gentleman was preaching some sort of twaddle, *honnête et modérée*. Belinsky was lying on a couch in the corner and as I passed him he took me by the flap of my coat and said: "Do you hear the rubbish that monster is talking? My tongue has been itching to answer him, but my chest hurts and there are such a lot of people. Be a father to me, make a fool of him somehow, squash him, crush him with a gibe, you can do it better—come, there's a good soul."

I laughed and told Belinsky that he was setting me on him like he might a bulldog on a rat. I scarcely knew the man and had hardly heard what he had said.

Towards the end of the evening, the gentleman in blue spectacles, after abusing Koltsov for having abandoned the national costume, suddenly began talking of Chaadayev's famous letter and concluded his commonplace remarks, uttered in that academic tone which of itself provokes derision, with the following words: "Anyway, I consider his action mean, contemptible. I have no respect for such a man."

There was in the room only one man closely associated with Chaadayev, and that was I. I shall have a great deal to say about Chaadayev later on; I always liked and respected him and was liked by him; I thought it was unseemly to let this outrageous remark pass unchallenged. I asked him dryly whether he supposed that Chaadayev had written his letter insincerely or from ulterior motives.

"Not at all," answered the gentleman.

An unpleasant conversation followed; I mentioned that the epithets "mean and contemptible" *were* mean and contemptible when applied to a man who had boldly expressed his opinion and had suffered for it. He talked to me of integrity of the nation, of the unity of the fatherland, of the crime of destroying that unity, of sacred things that must not be touched.

All at once Belinsky interfered. He leapt up from his sofa, came up to me as white as a sheet and, slapping me on the shoulder, said: "Here you have them, they have spoken out—the inquisitors, the censors—keeping thought in leading-

strings ..." and so on and so forth. He was in a towering rage and interspersed grave words with deadly sarcasms: "Why are we so sensitive, pray? People are flogged, yet we don't resent it, sent to Siberia, yet we don't resent it, but here Chaadayev, you see, has insulted the national honour—how dared he?—to talk is impudence, a flunkey must never speak! Why is it that in more civilized countries where one would expect national susceptibilities to be more developed than in Kostroma and Kaluga words are not resented?"

"In civilized countries," replied the gentleman in blue spectacles with inimitable self-complacency, "there are prisons in which they confine the insane creatures who insult what the whole people respect—and a good thing too."

Belinsky seemed to tower above us—he was terrible, great at that moment. Folding his arms over his sick chest, and looking straight at his opponent, he answered in a hollow voice: "And in still more civilized countries there is a guillotine for those who think that a good thing."

Saying this, he sank exhausted in an easy chair and ceased speaking. At the word guillotine our host turned pale, the guests were uneasy and silence fell. The learned gentleman was annihilated, but it is just at such moments that human vanity goes out of hand. Turgenev advises that, when a man has gone to such lengths in argument that he is himself frightened, he should move his tongue ten times round the inside of his mouth before uttering another word.

Our opponent, unaware of this homely advice, feebly continued talking through his hat, addressing the rest of the company rather than Belinsky. "In spite of your intolerance," he said at last, "I am certain that you would agree with me...."

"No," answered Belinsky, "whatever you might say I shall never agree with anything!"

Everyone laughed and went in to supper. The learned gentleman picked up his hat and left.

Suffering and privation soon completely undermined Belinsky's sickly constitution. His face, particularly the muscles about his lips, and the gloomily fixed look in his eyes testified equally to the intense working of his spirit and the rapid dissolution of his body.

I saw him for the last time in Paris in the autumn of 1847; he was in a very bad way, afraid of speaking aloud, and only occasionally his old energy revived and its ebbing fires glowed brightly. It was at such a moment that he wrote his letter to Gogol.

The news of the revolution of February found him still alive; he died taking its glow for the flush of the rising dawn.[239]

* * *

That is how this chapter ended in 1854; much has changed since then. But I have been brought much nearer to that period and further removed from the people here thanks to the arrival of Ogaryov and two books, Annenkov's *Biography of Stankevich* and the first two parts of Belinsky's complete works. Through the windows, suddenly flung open, the fresh air of the fields, the young breath of spring has been wafted into the hospital wards.

The publication of Stankevich's correspondence attracted no notice. It appeared at the wrong moment. At the end of 1857 Russia had not yet recovered after the funeral of Nicholas, she was expectant and hopeful; that is the worst possible moment for the writing of reminiscences.... But the book will not have been written in vain. It will remain one of the rare monuments from which any man who can read, can find out what was buried untolled for in the wretched graveyard of *those days*. The period from 1825 to 1855 will soon pass into oblivion; the human tracks will be obliterated and more than once generations to come will halt in bewilderment before the dead level waste, seeking the lost channels of thought which were *in fact* never interrupted. The main current was apparently checked as Nicholas tied up the artery—but the blood flowed along side channels. And it is just these capillaries which were reflected in Belinsky's works and Stankevich's correspondence.

Thirty years ago, the Russia of the *future* existed exclusively among a few boys, hardly more than children, so small and inconspicuous that there was room for them under the heels of the jackboots of the autocracy—yet in them lay the heritage

of December 14, the heritage of a purely national Russia, as well as of the learning of all humanity. This new life struggled on like the grass sprouting at the mouth of the still smouldering crater.

In the very maw of the monster these children, so unlike other children, grew, developed and began to live a different life. Weak, insignificant, unsupported, and, persecuted by everybody, they might have easily perished, leaving no trace, but they *survived*, or, if they died on their way, all did not die with them. They were the rudimentary cells, the embryos of history, barely perceptible and barely existing—like all embryos.

Little by little, groups of them were formed. Those elements which had traits in common gathered round their centres; then the groups repelled one another. This splitting up gave them breadth of vision and many-sidedness in their development; after developing to the end, that is, to the extreme, the branches united again by whatever names they may be called—Stankevich's circle, the Slavophils, or our own circle.

The leading characteristic of them all was a profound feeling of aversion for official Russia, for their environment, and at the same time the urge to escape out of it—and, in some of them, a vehement desire to change the contemporary state of affairs.

The objection that these circles, unnoticed both from above and from below, formed an exceptional, a casual, a disconnected phenomenon, that the education of the young people was for the most part exotic, alien, and that they rather express the translation of French and German ideas into Russian than anything of their own, seems to us quite groundless.

Possibly about the turn of the last century there was in the aristocracy a sprinkling of Russian foreigners who had sundered all ties with the national life; but they had neither practical interests, nor environment sharing their convictions, nor a literature of their own. They died out barren. Victims of the divorce from the people brought about by Tsar Peter, they remained eccentric and whimsical, not merely superfluous but undeserving of pity. The war of 1812 put an end to them—the

old generation lived on, but none of the younger developed in that direction. To bracket with them men of the stamp of Chaadayev would be the greatest mistake.

Protest, denunciation, hatred for one's country, has a completely different significance from indifferent aloofness. Byron, lashing at English life, fleeing from England as from the plague, remained a typical Englishman. Heine, trying, out of exasperation at the loathsome political state of Germany, to become French, remained a genuine German. The highest protest against Judaism—Christianity—is permeated with the spirit of Judaism. The separation of the states of North America from England could lead to war and hatred, but it could not make the Americans un-English.

As a rule, it is with great difficulty that people can get rid of their physiological memories and the mould in which they are cast by heredity. To achieve that one must either be peculiarly trite and apathetic or else be absorbed in abstract pursuits. The impersonality of mathematics or the non-human objectivity of nature do not call forth this faculty of the mind, do not awaken it; but as soon as we touch upon questions of life, of art, of morals, in which a man is not only an observer and investigator, but also a participant, then we find a physiological limit—which the inherited blood and brains make it very hard to overstep unless one could erase from them all traces of the cradle songs of the home fields and hills, of the customs and the whole setting of the past.

The poet or the artist is always national in his truest work. Whatever he does, whatever aim and thought may be contained in his work, he expresses, whether he wishes it or not, some elemental forces at work in the national character, and expresses them more deeply and more clearly than the very history of the people. Even when renouncing everything national, the artist does not lose the chief traits which reveal *his origin*. Both in the Greek *Iphigenia* and in the Oriental *Divan* Goethe was a German. Poets really are, as the Romans called them, prophets; only they do not foretell what is not and will be by chance, but give expression to *what exists, though still unknown*, in the dim consciousness of the masses, what is still slumbering in them.

Everything that has existed from time immemoral in the soul of the Anglo-Saxon peoples is linked together as in a chain by one personality—and every fibre, every hint, every urge, fermenting from generation to generation and *unconscious* of itself, has received at his hands form and language.

No one is likely to suppose that the England of the Elizabethan times—the majority of the people anyway—had a clear understanding of Shakespeare; nor have they such now—but for that matter they have no distinct understanding of themselves either. Yet I do not doubt that when an Englishman goes to the theatre he does understand Shakespeare—instinctively, through sympathy. At the moment when he is listening to the play, something becomes clearer and more familiar to him. One would think that a people so quick-witted as the French might understand Shakespeare too. The character of Hamlet, for instance, is so universally human, especially in the stage of doubts and hesitation, of the realization of some black deeds being perpetrated, some betrayal of what is great for the sake of what is mean and trivial, that it is hard to imagine that anybody could fail to understand him, but in spite of every trial and effort, Hamlet remains alien to the Frenchman.

If the aristocrats of the past century, who consistently ignored everything Russian, remained in reality incredibly more Russian than the house-serfs remained peasants, it is even more impossible that the younger generation could have lost their Russian character because they studied science and philosophy in French and German books. A section of our Moscow Slavs reached the point of ultra-Slavism with Hegel in their hands.

The very circles of which I am speaking sprang into existence in natural response to a deep inner need of the Russian life of that period.

We have spoken many times of the stagnation that followed the crisis of 1825. The moral level of society sank, development was interrupted, everything progressive and energetic was effaced. Those who remained—frightened, weak, distracted—were petty and shallow; the worthless generation of

Alexander occupied the foremost place. As time went on they changed into cringing officials, lost the savage poetry of revelry and aristocratic ways together with every shadow of independent dignity; they served assiduously, they made the grade, but they never became high dignitaries in the full sense of the word. Their day was over.

Under this great world of society, the great world of the people maintained an indifferent silence; nothing was changed for them—their plight was bad, indeed, but not worse than before—the new blows were not intended for their scourged backs. *Their time had not yet come.* It was between this roof and this foundation that our children were the first to raise their heads—perhaps because they did not suspect how dangerous it was; anyway, by means of these children, Russia, stunned and stupefied, began to come to life again.

What impressed them was the complete contradiction of the *words* they were taught with the *realities* of life around them. Their teachers, their books, their university spoke one language which was intelligible to heart and mind. Their father and mother, their relations, and all their surroundings spoke other things with which neither mind nor heart was in agreement, but with which the powers that be and pecuniary interests were in accord. Nowhere did this contradiction between education and real life reach such proportions as among the nobility of Russia. The uncouth German student with his round cap covering a seventh part of his head, with his world-shaking sallies, is far nearer to the German *Spiessbürger* than is supposed, while the French *collégien*, thin with vanity and emulation is already *en herbe l'homme raisonnable, qui exploite sa position.*

The number of educated people amongst us has always been extremely small; but those who were educated have always received an education, not perhaps very thorough, but fairly general and humane: it humanized them all. But a *human* being was just what the beaurocratic hierarchy or the successful maintenance of the landowning regime did not require. The young man had either to dehumanize himself—and the greater number did so—or to stop short and ask himself: "But is it absolutely essential to go into the service? Is it really a good

thing to be a landowner?" After that for some, the weaker and more impatient, there followed the idle existence of a cornet on the retired list, the sloth of the country, the dressing-gown, eccentricities, cards, wine, etc.; for others a time of ordeal and inner travail. They could not live in complete moral disharmony, nor could they be satisfied with a negative attitude of withdrawal; awakened thought demanded an outlet. The various solutions of these questions, all equally harassing for the young generation, determined their distribution into various circles.

Thus, for instance, our little circle was formed in the university and found Sungurov's circle[240] already in existence. His, like ours, was concerned rather with politics than with learning. Stankevich's circle, which came into existence at the same time, was equally near and equally remote from both. It followed another path, and its interests were purely theoretical.

Between 1830 and 1840 our convictions were too youthful, too ardent and passionate, not to be exclusive. We could feel a cold respect for Stankevich's circle, but we could not come into closer contact with it. They traced philosophical systems, were absorbed in self-analysis, and found peace in a luxurious pantheism from which Christianity was not excluded. The stuff of our dreams was woven out of ways of organizing a new league in Russia on the pattern of the Decembrists and we looked upon knowledge as merely a means. The government did its best to strengthen us in our revolutionary tendencies.

In 1834 the whole of Sungurov's circle was sent into exile and—vanished.

In 1835 we were exiled. Five years later we came back, hardened by our experience. The dreams of youth had become the irrevocable determination of maturity. That was the heyday of Stankevich's circle. Stankevich himself I did not find in Moscow—he was in Germany; but it was just at that moment that Belinsky's articles were beginning to attract universal attention.

On our return we measured our strength with them. The battle was an unequal one for both sides; origins, weapons,

and language—all were different. After fruitless skirmishes we saw that it was our turn now to undertake serious study and we too set to work upon Hegel and the German philosophy. When we had made a sufficient study of it, it became evident that there was no ground for dispute between us and Stankevich's circle.

The latter was inevitably bound to break up. It had done its bit—and had done it most brilliantly; its influence on the whole of literature and academic teaching was immense—one need but recall the names of Belinsky and Granovsky; Koltsov[241] was formed in it; Botkin, Katkov, and others belonged to it. But it could not remain an exclusive circle without lapsing into German doctrinairism—men who were alive and Russian had no leanings that way.

In addition to Stankevich's circle, there was another one, formed during our exile, and, like us, it was at swords' points with Stankevich's circle; its members were afterwards called Slavophils. The Slavophils approached the vital questions which occupied us from the opposite side, and were far more absorbed in practical work and real conflict than Stankevich's circle.

It was natural that Stankevich's society should split up between them and us. The Aksakovs and Samarin joined the Slavophils, that is, Khomyakov and the Kireyevskys. Belinsky and Bakunin went over to us. Stankevich's closest friend, one most kindred to his spirit, Granovsky, was one of us from the day he came back from Germany.

If Stankevich had lived, his circle would nonetheless have broken up. He would himself have gone over to Khomyakov or to us.

By 1842 the sifting in accordance with natural affinity had long been over, and our camp stood in battle array face to face with the Slavophils. Of that conflict we will speak elsewhere.

In conclusion I will add a few words concerning those elements of which Stankevich's circle was composed; that will throw some light on the strange underground currents which were silently undermining the strong crust of the Russo-German regime.

Stankevich was the son of a wealthy Voronezh landowner, and was at first brought up in all the ease and freedom of a landowner's life in the country; then he was sent to the Ostrogozhsk[242] school (and that was something quite original). For fine natures a wealthy and even aristocratic education is very good. Comfort gives unbound freedom and scope for growth and development of every sort, it saves the young mind from premature anxiety and apprehension of the future, and provides complete freedom to pursue the subjects to which it is drawn.

Stankevich's development was broad and harmonious; his artistic, musical, and at the same time reflective and contemplative nature showed itself from the very beginning of his university career. It was to his artistic temperament that Stankevich owed his special faculty, not only of deep and warm understanding, but also of reconciling, or as the Germans say "transcending" contradictions. The craving for harmony, proportion, and enjoyment makes Germans indulgent as to the means; to avoid seeing the well they cover it over with canvas. The canvas will not withstand any pressure, but the yawning gulf does not trouble the eye. In this way the Germans reached pantheistic quietism and there they rested tranquilly. But such a gifted Russian as Stankevich could not have remained "tranquil" for long.

This is evident from the first question which involuntarily troubled Stankevich immediately after he left the university.

His university studies were finished, he was left to himself, he was no longer led by others; *he did not know what he was to do.* There was nothing to go on with, there was no one and nothing around that could appeal to a live mind. A youth, taking stock of his surroundings and having had time to look about him after school, found himself in the Russia of those days as a lonely traveller might awakening in the steppe; you may go where you will—there are tracks to follow, there are bones of those who had perished, there are wild beasts and the emptiness on all sides with its dull menace of danger—it is easy to perish and impossible to struggle. The only thing one can do honestly and enjoy doing it is study.

And so Stankevich persevered in the pursuit of learning. He imagined that it was his vocation to be an historian, and he took to Herodotus; as was to be expected nothing came of that.

He would have liked to be in Petersburg in which there was so much of *new* activity and to which he was attracted by the theatre and its nearness to Europe; he would have liked also to be an honorary superintendent of the school at Ostrogozhsk. He resolved to be of use in that "modest office"—but that proved to be even less of a success than his study of Herodotus. He was in reality drawn to Moscow, to Germany, to his own university circle, to his own interests. He could not exist without kindred spirits around him (another proof that there were at hand no interests congenial to him). The craving for sympathy was so strong in Stankevich that he sometimes invented intellectual sympathy and talents and saw and admired in people qualities which they completely lacked.*

But—and in this lay his personal power—he did not often need to have recourse to such fictions—at every step he did meet people worthy of admiration, he *knew how* to meet them, and every one to whom he opened his heart remained his passionate friend for life; to everyone Stankevich's influence meant either an immense benefit or an alleviation of his burden.

In Voronezh, Stankevich occasionally went to a local library for books. There he met a poor young man of humble station, modest and melancholy. It turned out that he was the son of a cattle dealer who had business dealings with Stankevich's father over sales. Stankevich befriended the young man; the cattle dealer's son was a great reader and fond of talking of books. Stankevich got to know him well. Shyly and timidly the young man confessed that he had himself tried his hand at writing verses and, blushing, ventured to show them. Stankevich was amazed at the immense talent, neither conscious nor confident of itself. After that he did not let him go until

* Klyushnikov[243] vividly expressed this in the following remark: "Stankevich is a silver ruble that envies the size of a copper piece."—Annenkov, *Biography of Stankevich*, p. 133.—*A.H.*

all Russia was enthusiastically reading Koltsov's songs. It is quite likely that the poor cattle dealer, oppressed by his relations, unwarmed by sympathy or recognition, might have wasted his songs on the empty steppe beyond the Volga over which he drove his herds, and Russia would never have heard those marvellous, deeply national songs, if Stankevich had not crossed his path.

When Bakunin finished his studies at the school of artillery, he received a commission as an officer in the Guards. It is said that his father was angry with him and himself asked that he should be transferred into the regular army. Stranded in some Godforsaken village of White Russia with his battery, he grew morose and unsociable, neglected his duties, and would lie for days together wrapped in a sheepskin. The commander of his battery was sorry for him; he had, however, no alternative but to remind him that he must either perform his duties or go on the retired list. Bakunin had no suspicion that he had a right to take the latter course and at once asked to be relieved of his commission. On receiving his discharge he came to Moscow, and from that date (about 1836) life began in earnest for him. He had studied nothing before, had read nothing, and his knowledge of German was very poor indeed. With a gift for dialectics, for constant, persistent thinking, he had strayed without map or compass in a world of fantastic conceptions and auto-didactic efforts. Stankevich perceived his talents and set him down to study philosophy. Bakunin learnt German reading Kant and Fichte and then set to work on Hegel, whose method and logic he mastered to perfection, and preached it afterwards to us and to Belinsky, to his female friends and to Proudhon.

However Belinsky drew as much from the same source; Stankevich's views on art, on poetry and its relation to life, grew in Belinsky's articles into that powerful modern criticism, into that new outlook upon the world and upon life which impressed all thinking Russia and made all the pedants and doctrinaires draw back from Belinsky with horror. It was Stankevich who had to curb Belinsky, for the passionate, merciless, fiercely intolerant talent that carried Belinsky beyond all

bounds wounded the aesthetically harmonious temperament of Stankevich.

And at the same time it was Stankevich who encouraged the gentle, loving, dreamy Granovsky, who was then plunged in melancholy. Stankevich was a support and an elder brother to him. His letters to Granovsky are full of charm and beauty —and Granovsky, too, loved him dearly!

"I have not yet recovered from the first shock," wrote Granovsky soon after Stankevich's death, "real grief has not touched me yet; I think of it with fear. Now I am still unable to believe that my loss is possible—only at times I feel a stab at my heart. He has taken with him something essential to my life. To no one in the world was I so much indebted. His influence over us was always unbounded and beneficial."

And how many could say or, perhaps, have said it!

In Stankevich's circle only he and Botkin were well-to-do and completely independent financially. The others made up a very mixed proletariat. Bakunin's relations gave him nothing; Belinsky, the son of a petty official of Chembary, expelled from Moscow University for "lack of ability," lived on the scanty pay he got for his articles. Krasov, on taking his degree, found a situation with a landowner in some province, but life with this patriarchal slaveowner so terrified him that he came back on foot to Moscow with *a wallet on his back*, in the winter, together with some peasants in charge of a train of wagons. Probably a father or mother of each one of them when giving them their blessing had said—and who dare reproach them for it—"Mind you work hard at your studies; and when you've finished them you'll have to strike out on your own, there is nobody to leave you anything, we've nothing to give you either; you'll have to take care of yourself and then of us too." Now, Stankevich had probably been told that he could take a prominent position in society, that he was called by wealth and birth to play a great part—just as in Botkin's household every one, from his old father down to the clerks, urged upon him by word and example the necessity of making money and piling it up more and more.

What inspiration touched these men? What was it that recreated them? They had no thought, no care for their social

position, or for their personal gain or for their security; their whole life, all their efforts were devoted to the public weal regardless of all personal interests; some forgot their wealth, others their poverty, and went forth, without looking back, to the solution of theoretical questions. The interests of truth, the interests of learning, the interests of art, *humanitas*, absorbed everything else.

And the renunciation of this world was not confined to the time at the university and two or three years of youth. The best men of Stankevich's circle are dead; the others have remained what they were to this day. Belinsky, worn out by work and suffering, fell a fighter and a beggar. Granovsky, delivering his message of learning and humanity, died as he mounted his platform. Botkin did not, in fact, become a merchant; indeed, none of them *distinguished* themselves in the government service.

It was just the same in the two other circles, the Slavophils and ours. Where, in what corner of the Western world today, do you find such groups of devotees of thought, such zealots of learning, such fanatics of conviction—whose hair turns grey but whose enthusiasm is for ever young?

Where? Point them out. I boldly challenge you—I only except for the moment one country, Italy—and demarcate the field for the contest, i.e., I stipulate that my opponent should not escape from the domain of statistics into that of history.

We know how great was the interest in theory and the passion for truth and religion in the days of such martyrs for science and reason as Bruno, Galileo, and the rest; we know, too, what the France of the Encyclopaedists was in the second half of the eighteenth century; but later? Later *sta, viator*!

In the Europe of today there is no youth and there are no young men. The most brilliant representative of the France of the last years of the Restoration and of the July dynasty, Victor Hugo, has taken exception to my saying this. Properly speaking he refers to the young France of the twenties, and I am ready to admit that I have been too sweeping*—but

* Victor Hugo, after reading *Thoughts on the Past* in the French translation, wrote me a letter in defence of the younger generation of France at the period of the Restoration.—*A.H.*

beyond that I will not yield one iota to him. I have their own admissions. Take *Confession d'un enfant du siècle*, and the poems of Alfred de Musset, recall the France depicted in George Sand's letters, in the contemporary drama and novels, and in the cases in the law-courts.

But what does all that prove? A great deal; and in the first place that the Chinese shoes of German make in which Russia has hobbled for a hundred and fifty years, though they have caused many painful corns, have evidently not crippled her bones, since whenever she has had a chance of stretching her limbs, the result has been the exuberance of fresh young energies. That does not guarantee the future, but it does make it extremely *possible*.

LETTERS TO AN OPPONENT[24]

LETTER ONE

THIS IS the first tranquil morning since we had our talks. I have mentally retraced everything you said, and tried, to the best of my ability, to coolly weigh and classify it. We resemble, after a fashion, General Lee and General Grant, both of us representing *two separate parts of a single whole.* We, like them, concede nothing and, regardless of how we shift our positions, remain enemies. It seems to me that we risk facing what is likely to happen to them, that is to say, that others will conclude a peace behind our backs, while we continue waging the old war.

In taking up my pen I neither expect to defeat you, nor do I anticipate being defeated by you. But I suppose that even if we do not, after all, arrive at a common understanding, it will, nonetheless, be useful to express our views more definitely. In the last two years all ideas and values, all people and convictions, have changed so greatly in Russia that it will not be superfluous to remind our friends and our foes exactly who *we are.* Let those who praise us and those who censure us know whom it is they are patting on the head and whom they are attacking.

I heard you out scrupulously and conscientiously yet was not convinced and that was not because of my personal obstinacy or partisan zeal. Objective truth still remains just as sacred and precious to me as it was during the days of our youthful discussions and our disputes at the university. I needed no external stimulus to declare in the fifties how wrong I was in our arguments with the Slavophils; nor was I particularly frightened by the judgements passed by men of note in the West—I exposed and denounced their revolutionary inconsistency as I saw it in 1848.

I categorically reject your justification of what is taking place in Russia. A cry of protest and indignation rises from the bottom of my heart and conscience against the executions in Poland, against the terror in Russia, against the fallen being harassed and finished off and, naturally, even more against any attempt at justifying this. Those who defend the savagery of the government in the name of "supreme state interest," assume a terrible responsibility for the corruption of a whole generation. To justify what is going on in Russia, that is, not to explain the reasons behind it, but to show sympathy and solidarity, is to destroy all simple, direct human understanding, all morality, and is all the more objectionable since it is absolutely uncalled for. Brute force has obtained the upper hand and that is all there is to it. What justification is required by the violence of elements, or anthrax, or floods?

This is what I must declare at the very outset. I am prepared to discuss all the other points with you. But here I shall not make the least concession, nor have I the right to do so. I have not enough religion in me to be able to step over a corpse with a cold smile and follow the martyrs of ideas and belief on their way to the gallows and prisons admonishingly and reproachfully.

Furthermore, I would like, at the very start, also to state on what we both agree. If we had nothing in common, there would be nothing for us to discuss. We would then have labelled each other as hopeless and gone our separate ways.

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine two persons more different than the two of us in so far as our entire moral essence and cast of mind are concerned; in all that we hold most sacred, all our ideas, aspirations and convictions. We belong to different worlds, different centuries; yet both you and I *serve the same cause*, are sincerely devoted to it and admit this as true for both of us.

Taking different paths, we yet arrived at that *one point* on which we agree. I know that you will not admit that it is possible to arrive at the truth by different paths but facts are against you. *Historically* almost all truths were discovered in

an accidental, tortuous, fantastic manner. But once it has been recognized, truth disengages itself from the haphazard, embryogenic ways; it is not only recognized without them but acquires a method—abandoning the private, relatively accidental track, it creates its logical, broad highway.

The question that interests us is neither one of theory, nor of method; we are concerned with the practical aspect of the question, the possibility of applying it. What concerns us is not the point of departure, nor the personal process, nor the dialectical *drama* by which we search for the truth, but whether the *truth* is that truth which is flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood, the moral foundation of all our life and activity, and whether the paths we have chosen to reach it are the right ones. We know from experience that the word "*drama*" or "*novel*" suit the process of the development of living doctrines. Recall the struggle waged by the Slavophils against us in the forties and compare it with what is going on at the present time. Two opposing camps, like two warriors, have changed positions and arms in the course of the lengthy conflict. The Slavophils have become Western terrorists, defenders of German state ideas while some of the Westernists (we, among them), renounced *salus populi* and sanguinary progress and support the self-government of every region, the village community, and the right to land. In this volte-face, in this change of sides and arms, the pivotal point remained unchanged. My views are, in part, known to you; I think that I know yours, and that is why the *point* in question is not difficult to determine. The dominant axis around which our lives have revolved is *our attitude to the Russian people, our faith in them and love for them* (which I, no more than *Den*,[245] confuse with the virtue of patriotism which I am finding increasingly odious) *and the desire to take an active part in fashioning their destinies.*

Our love is not only the physiological feeling of belonging to the same race, a thing that depends solely on the accident of the place of birth; it is, moreover, closely connected with our aspirations and ideals, it is justified by faith, intelligence and that is why it is natural for us and is in accord with the activity of all our lives.

For you the Russian people are above all an *Orthodox* nation, that is to say, the most Christian, the closest to the *divine city*. For us, the Russian people are primarily a *socialist* people, that is to say, one closest to realizing one aspect of that economic order, that *worldly city*, which all socialist doctrines are aspiring to bring about.

We have not attributed our ideals to the Russian people to then marvel at them as at a sudden discovery, in the way of ardent natures. The people and we simply met each other. The events of recent years and the problems raised by the peasant question have opened the eyes of the blind and ears of the deaf. Like an enormous Northern avalanche, Russia has since been moving from one social problem to another, regardless of what is being done in the country—even if this is of a most contradictory nature.

I did not become a socialist overnight. Thirty years ago the title of socialist was bestowed on me by Tsar Nicholas—*cela commence à compter*.[246] Twenty years later I reminded his son of this in the letter[247] with which you are familiar and, after ten more years, I tell you that I see no other way out of the general impasse in which the civilized world finds itself, except by the onset of death from old age, or by a social revolution; and whether this revolution is gradual or sudden, whether it comes from within the people or is introduced by theoretical thought—is immaterial. This question cannot be evaded; it can neither grow outdated nor become less urgent. It may be pushed into the background, be overshadowed by another, but it is there, like a latent malady, and if it does not knock at the door when least expected, then death will knock at the door.

The political revolution which modifies the forms of the state without affecting the forms of life has gone as far as it possibly can. It is incapable of solving the contradictions between those legal and economic modes of life which belong absolutely to different epochs and views. But as long as it retains these contradictions, there can be no question of solving the antinomies which, though existing hitherto, only today became visible, such as the absolute right to property, on the one hand, and the inalienable right to life, on the other, of legal idleness

and incessant labour. Life in the West, so compliant in the acceptance of all amenities and improvements so long as they do not affect the pillars of social structure, displays a most rigid conservatism when its foundations are concerned. Its feudal-municipal regime is firmly established and now imposes itself not because it is reasonable or justified, but because it exists and is usual. Entrenched behind its city ramparts, it is not afraid of the rural misery or of the ignorance of the surrounding villages. The army, the court, and the police protect it against those deprived of their land, against the nomads of civilization fighting death from starvation. Down below is Gothism, Catholicism, pietism and an infantile mentality; up above there is abstract thought, the pure arithmetics of revolution which seeks to reconcile the insanity of the existing order with the wisdom of a contemplated scheme of society by means of a compromise between Gothism and socialism. It is this *half and half** that constitutes the *philistine state.*

When in Moscow I disputed with the Slavophils (between the years 1842-1846), my views were fundamentally the same. But then I did not know the West, that is to say, I had a bookish, theoretical knowledge of it and I loved it because I hated the despotism of Nicholas and the Petersburg regime. When I saw how courageously France raised the social question I assumed that France would solve it, at least in part, and that is why I was then what was termed a *Westernist.* A year of Paris sobered me, for that year was 1848. I began to attack the West in the name of those same principles which I upheld in my disputes with the Slavophils.

When I openly declared what I thought of the revolution it did not necessarily mean that I was obliged to go over to the side of her enemies—the downfall of the February Republic could not drive me either into the arms of Catholicism or conservatism: it again led me back *home.*

Finding myself in the camp of the defeated, I called their attention to a people whose way of life incorporated more conditions favourable to an economic revolution than did that of

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* English in the original.—*Tr.*

the Western peoples which had already set in rigid forms. I called attention to a people which did not have to contend with moral obstacles on which every new social idea was shattered in Europe but, on the contrary, stood *firmly on the land* and believed this land to be *its property.*

I have been preaching this for the past fifteen years. My words roused laughter and indignation, but I did not swerve. Then came the Crimean War and the laughter turned into hootings and slander. But still I pursued my own way. By a strange irony of fate I had to preach in the West, on the ruins of the French Republic, some of the ideas which Khomyakov and the Kireyevskys had preached in the forties and which, at the time, I disputed.

A year ago a fellow-traveller on a ship plying between Naples and Livorno happened to be a Russian who was reading the latest edition of Khomyakov's works. As he was dozing off I borrowed the book and read a good part of it. In translating its apocalyptic language into plain Russian and casting the light of day on what Khomyakov illuminated with a church candle, it became plain to me that we regarded the Western question in very much the same way, in spite of the differences in explanations and deductions. Khomyakov's diagnosis is true but this does not mean that I agree with his theory or with his explanation of evil. The same holds true of his appraisal of the specific elements of Russian life underlying our development. Thus, for example, Khomyakov assumes that the entire history of the West, i. e., almost the entire history of the fifteen hundred years was a failure because the Germano-Latin races accepted the Catholic Church rather than the Orthodox Greek Church and hints that their salvation depends solely on the condition on which a German princess is accepted at our court: on her adoption of one Christian faith instead of another. It is my opinion that this chronic illness can hardly be cured by such simple, *sympathetic* (as they used to say in the good old days) treatment, nor by the homeopathic way of eliminating one evil by another. On the whole, I cannot understand now, nor could I ever before, why Christianity outside the walls of the Eastern Church became *non-Christian* and why Russia represents the doctrine

of liberty (certainly, not in practice) whereas the West represents the doctrine based on necessity. That becomes even more obscure when you read all the pleasant things the Catholics have to say in regard to schismatics....

... This is what I had written when your letter arrived.... It changes the temperature. Your letter and its passionate tone shows me that I was absolutely right in "waving aside" the theological-metaphysical controversy. I knew that it would lead to no good and would not kindle that fire which warms and illuminates, but would rather fan the flames in which heretics and infidels were burned.

The division of people into lambs and goats is neither a difficult approach nor a new one. It is easy to classify all religious people, and primarily Orthodox ones, into one category and all the rest of humanity, primarily the materialists, into another. Unfortunately, however, this division has a very grave defect—it proves to be absolutely fallacious in practice. Like all idealists and theologists, you hold this to be of no importance. You construct your world *a priori*, you know what it *should be like*, by revelation—all the worse for this world if it doesn't fit the pattern! If you were a mere observer, you would be held back by facts contradictory to your views. They would force you to turn back and re-examine your fundamental principles and decide whether it was history and life that was absurd or whether your doctrine was fallacious. But certain of the infallibility of the doctrine, you proceed, unabashed, further. What concern is it of yours that side by side with the martyrology of Christianity stands that of the revolution? History shows you how pagans and Christians, people who did not believe in life after death and those who did, died for their convictions, for what they judged to be good, true, or simply loved.... And yet you assert that the man who considers himself to be a combination of atoms, cannot sacrifice himself while he who regards his body as an elegant though despicable sheath for the soul, is expected to sacrifice himself, although history offers no proof whatever that the materialists of 1793 were particular cowards or that the professional believers—priests, monks—(except in Poland) had a special

relish for self-abnegation and heroism. The fact is that all these *primary motives* and metaphysical views have by no means such decisive and sharp influence on character and activity as you suppose. It is very lucky for man that hunger and thirst make themselves felt before he decides whether it is worth nourishing his insignificant atoms or whether it is worth while giving the despicable sheath a drink. The habit is formed, and eating and drinking takes its proper course, on the one hand, while transcendental psychology takes its own, on the other. The mother needs neither religion nor atheism to love her child. Man, indeed, needs neither revelations nor mysteries to become attached to his family, to his tribe and, if it so happens, to fight for them, and sometimes sacrifice his life, and whether the latter consists of wretched atoms or of the pure nothing of the spirit, is immaterial.

One could say a great deal about all these things, known long ago, without saying a single word on the Russian question which interests me far more than these hopeless parallels in which one could flounder to the end of one's life without making the least headway and without any prospect of reaching shore.

You hold, for example, that it is illogical for a man who does not believe in the after-life to take a stand in defence of the mundane life of his fellow creature. But it is my opinion that he alone is capable of valuing his own *temporary* life or that of any other. For he knows that the living man can expect nothing better than this life and sympathizes with everybody's attempt at self-preservation. From the theological point of view death is not so terrible a calamity; religious people needed the commandment "thou shalt not kill" lest they set about delivering people from their sinful bodies: death, actually, is a kindness done to man, hastening his eternal life. The sin of murder by no means lies in the act of taking a life, but in the arbitrary elevation of sufferers to a superior rank. Our military general-hangmen can be easily justified from the religious point of view: they send the condemned to the supreme arbitration; there their victims can be acquitted, and the more innocent they are the better will be their fate. You are surprised that, though materialists (I repeat this word for your

sake—it does not express the actual state of affairs and is naively bookish), we yet make such a fuss over bloodshed; from this I may infer that you would, from your point of view, be perfectly justified in showing your compassion for the victims—then why don't you? Why did I not find in your words, in your letter, a single expression of sympathy and compassion for those condemned to death or sentenced to penal servitude? Why do you assume that all of them are guilty? Could there be thousands of guilty? Cannot there be among the condemned those who are completely devoted to their cause? And finally, even if they were all guilty, why should you be condemned for their guilt with an indifference to their fate? What is it, in general, that keeps you more preoccupied with determining the *charges* and the punishments, than with the justification of the accused?

You even ask me to name those moral punishments by which I would replace corporal punishment, and whether prison, exile, etc., were not included among the latter. As if I ever undertook, like Prince Cherkassky,[248] to discover the rod or its equivalent to be used specially for children or old men, laymen or clergy. I said it was ridiculous and odious to scourge the back of a man for some former misdemeanour, but it by no means follows that I judge prison to be a wise and rational institution or fines a just measure.

"Do you want to wipe out cholera?"

"Certainly."

"But by what infection should it be replaced? And will this new infection be easier to bear?"

No doctor will answer this question.

Rods and prison, the robbery of wages by court decision and the forced labour of the guilty are all forms of corporal punishment and can only be replaced by a different social system.

Materialist Owen neither sought for criminals nor for punishments intermediary between handcuffs and floggings but concentrated, instead, on those conditions of life which would not impel people to commit crimes. He began with education. The pietists closed his school, frightened by the immunity enjoyed by the children.

Fourier tried to turn for the good of society those passions which call forth, in their unbridled and, at the same time, repressed state, all the criminal outbursts and deviations. He was ridiculed for his pains.

There are countries in which corporeal punishment has been abolished whereas in our country the question of whether a man should be flogged or not is still a matter of dispute. And if he is to be flogged—what instrument is to be used? And if he is not, should the offender be chained or put in a cage? Which is preferable—the rod or the cage? To be more specific, what kind of cage and what kind of rod? The rod is an excellent method for children while the cage is unsuitable for them.

"It is impossible to do away with punishment," you say, from the point of view of religion which has specialized in forgiving all. Perhaps; but this does not mean that punishment should be labelled truth and not what it actually is—a painful necessity, an unfortunate result. As far as charges go, one need not worry. They will be found. So long as the profession of prosecutor exists, so long as the bloody code of social vengeance and the medieval ignorance of the masses exist, that surgeon of justice, the hangman, will not die of unemployment.

But let us be done, at last, with all these general disquisitions. I once again "wave them aside" and return to our domestic affairs.

LETTER TWO

You judge us harshly. "Your propaganda," you say, "has affected a whole generation, as a disastrous, *unnatural habit*," inculcated on a young mind which has not yet matured and grown strong enough. You have enfeebled his brain and his nervous system, rendering him incapable of concentration, endurance and energetic activity. The reason for all this evil is that you have no ground underfoot and so go on with that *revolutionary itch* of yours without faith, out of sheer habit.

I have already told you that we have ground under our feet, and that this ground has something in common with yours. We stand on our most real ground in a fashion that is most real;

ground is usually to be found underfoot; you have it overhead; you are richer than we are but, perhaps, that is why you see terrestrial objects upside down.

As for the "itch," we shall discuss it later; for the time being allow me to ask you: has the brain and the nervous system of the new generation really been enfeebled? Is it indeed incapable of *endurance and energy*? I question this most emphatically.

I am afraid that it is we old men rather than the young generation who will have to reproach ourselves of having unnatural habits. Both you and we, in our situation, impelled by necessity, were dreamers, philosophers, theoreticians, bookworms, secret spouses of our ideas. All that was appropriate and, indeed, inevitable after the great change in Russian life in 1825. It was essential to search deeper within oneself and reach a light of some sort. That is all true, but we were not very conspicuous for our *energy, activity, courage*. You will reply that there is little opportunity to display military heroism when there is no war. Very true, but what right have we to throw stones at the young people impatient to give battle, for being too reckless and, chiefly, for not learning their textbooks from cover to cover? History and geography are excellent things but that is no reason for damning an entire generation for its ignorance of these subjects and for following the young people, after rending our frock-coats, with malicious eyes on their way to penal servitude. In 1812 boys went to war and no one blamed them for winning the St. George Cross without first completing their studies.

Certainly I have no less hatred than you for ignorance when it is not an inexorable necessity but due to sloth and negligence; but, firstly, I would like to know what precisely you mean by the word ignorance. Formerly education meant the study of linguistics and ancient classics. Today there are more specialists of a different nature, and the natural sciences are more in vogue. Then, secondly, there are periods in the history of peoples when the pulse beats faster and interferes with the usual organization of things in which everything becomes unstable and changes, when demands that absorb the mind are different than in times of stagnation. Russia has clearly found

herself in this position after the Crimean War. Quiet study in the seclusion of one's library was hardly possible not only for young people but even for grey heads.

We had a tremendous amount of leisure for study. The only things we really cared for were books. We shunned practical activity. It was either so vile or so impossible that we had to. People like Chaadayev or Khomyakov frittered away their time in empty talk, going from one drawing-room to another to argue about theologic subjects and Slav antiquities. We were all bold and courageous but only in the sphere of thought. In practical fields, in conflicts with authorities, most of us proved to be feeble, vacillating, and ready to make concessions. Khomyakov was past forty when Zakrevsky[249] ordered him to shave his beard and he obeyed. When cross-questioned in 1834, I concealed my opinions, as did my comrades. I don't know what others would say who were imprisoned in fortresses or were called to the Third Department but it seems to me that from the days of the Decembrists up to those of the Petrashevsky group everybody deteriorated. Even the most revolutionary figure of the days of Nicholas, Belinsky, was reduced to writing on aesthetics, the philosophy of Hegel and to obscure allusions.

Everybody kept sadly to their holes, read books, wrote essays and later showed them, for the most part, in secret. Suddenly, when it was least expected, Peter I's vessel sprang a leak. The captain was the first to lose his head and died. Amidst the sinister and dead silence the news of his death was like a flash of lightning; everything stirred, and everyone raised his head and his voice; everybody was prepared to dash forward filled with hope, expectations.... But where to? No one knew that yet. They only kept asking: when? what? how soon?

The moments when a whole country begins to stir from its sleep are magnificent! The dawn illumines the summits of all classes of society—and everybody feels that a new era, a new day, is at hand.

And you could conceive that young people, boys of sixteen or seventeen, would remain unmoved and would wisely continue their studies with that forced impassivity for life and

that desperate diligence which we showed in our studies at the university? And this, in spite of the fact that they no longer had such professors as Granovsky and that talk of public affairs was seeping into the class-rooms from all sides. How little you know the human heart!

What, then, troubled and frightened you? Was it the fact that students began to gather in groups, sent deputies to the director, and made speeches? And why shouldn't students gather in groups? Why should they keep the silence of the monastery, of the lackey in the ante-room, or of the soldier in line? There were no sick people—why then ardent youngsters should not have been permitted to speak a bit louder? Why did you and your friends introduce into these spring holidays the sombre figure of disapproving teachers, of monks at a carousal? Why did you see in this natural outburst of young enthusiasm nothing but disorder and an attack on the system (and what a system!)? Why were the words addressed to the youth spoken in so sacerdotal and admonishing a tone? A soft, friendly word would have produced a far greater impression than volumes of stale sermons. You wounded the young people by your indifference and disapproval at a time they held precious. Why then be surprised if some young people who hitherto had listened to you withdrew and abandoned you?

The new producers who mounted the stage which, little by little, had been abandoned by the old ones for fear that the play which they had been staging all their lives was beginning to turn into actuality, led the youth in a different direction, and if they taught these young people less by book, they taught it more by example. With the result that the young generation grew more staunch, courageous, and fit for battle. This may not suit you, perhaps, but it is, nonetheless, quite different from that *enervation* which you spoke of.

Would you like some examples? I shall mention three or four cases known all over Russia. If these aren't enough I am prepared to give a score more. One thing I am afraid of is that they will not have any effect on you; for you to be able to appreciate an act of love and devotion, it must needs come from the lives of saints or, at least, happen in Bulgaria or

Serbia; whereas all these examples are taken from the laity, and happened in St. Petersburg and the provinces.

After the lapse of eighteen hundred years religious people are still deeply moved by the story of some Roman centurion boldly reading "prohibited" prayers, without fear either of his legionnaire, or of savage beasts. Yet when midshipman Truveller[250] declared openly and frankly: "Yes, I distributed these leaflets and books among soldiers because they contain the truth," or when Slivitsky admitted that he was the author of the letter which was the only existing testimony against him and signed the statement, aware that he was signing his death sentence; or when Muravsky,[251] ill and destitute, rose before the judges and gave vent to all that had been seething in his heart—then the admirers of the centurion called it puerility, insolence, a demonstration in the manner of the West.

Did the *enervated* Mikhailov[252] ask for mercy? Did Obruchev[253] fall on his knees before the tsar? Did Chernyshevsky[254] renounce his convictions? No, they went into exile with their saintly impenitence intact. Nor were Martyanov's nerves particularly weak when, wounded by the hostile attitude of all Europe to Russia, he gave himself up to the tsar.

I can recall nothing like this in the thirties or in the forties.

On April 12, 1861, Russian soil was stained red with the blood of Russians: fifty peasants were killed on the spot: eighty, severely wounded, died in their huts without receiving any medical aid. The fanatic who led them, a simple peasant, like Martyanov,[255] who believed in the "peasant tsar" and golden freedom, was shot by Apraksin. The execution of Anton Petrov[256] initiated the bloody reprisals of the new reign which has continued in scope and severity ever since. But that same execution marked the beginning of courageous protest, unprecedented in Russia. It was not a stifled murmur, not a whisper, but a general clamour which reached the pulpits. Students in Kazan held a requiem for the victims; their professor[257] made the funeral oration. They cannot possibly be called faint-hearted people.

A publicist prevented by a capricious censorship from expressing himself on the peasant question, printed his pam-

phlet in Germany, signed it and declared in his introduction that the time had come to act openly. This publicist has been confined in a dungeon for over two years, waiting for his sentence of penal servitude.[258]

Where is the proof of that moral dissolution, that incapacity for energetic activity of which you accuse the young generation? What has incited you so against it? Can it really be only because it is so lax in its studies and gives it so little time? Our young people in Russia have always been lax and careless in their studies; did those who studied in the schools for officers do any better? Why does that not distress you?

The government persecutes the young generation because it is afraid of it, because it is certain that the fire was lit by "Young Russia,"[259] and that another two or three proclamations would be enough to bring the year 93 to St. Petersburg. The government before "Young Russia" and the one after "Young Russia" do not at all resemble each other. "Young Russia" has indeed brought about a revolution. Ministers of progress and directors of liberalism, the humane police and the head clerks of liberation have all dissipated like smoke in terror at the words "Young Russia." The government endeavoured to regain the haven of the repressive regime of Nicholas. Fortunately, it was also terrified to make for that port and it stopped, like a vessel without coal or sails, suffering all the inconveniences of the ship's pitching, but without making headway. The fear inspired by a handful of energetic young people was so great that a year later Katkov[260] congratulated the government and all of Russia on having escaped a terrible revolution. Thus, the persecution instituted by the government can be explained: fear magnifies the reality.

You are in quite a different position. You are certain that any revolutionary attempt in Russia is impossible, that the "Russian people will not go against their tsar, while the nobility would be helpless without them and that one must be stark mad to suppose that a handful of students who have not finished their studies could make a revolution in Russia with proclamations *à la Babeuf*." Granted! Then let this impotence alone and don't magnify it into a power. People are, indeed,

as strong as they themselves and the people around them believe them to be.

"Yes, but they are mistaken and they must be set on the right path." But then those who turn tables and believe Hume[261] to be walking over their heads are also wrong. Why don't you turn your blowpipe on them?

If what frightened you was the fact of "illegal literature" itself, that only proves your great naïveté in these matters. Was there ever a country with censorship and arbitrary government where secret print-shops and the underground distribution of manuscripts didn't exist once intellectual movements and the desire for liberty existed? That is just as natural a state of affairs as the publication of material abroad and emigration.

All of Christianity was spread by means of illegal literature like that of our Raskolniki.

No, there is something else behind this: all this is not to be explained by your saintly ire. Is it not the *doctrine* which underlies the new trend that incites your anger?

Are you not persecuting *materialism* in the young generation just as you are persecuting *Catholicism* in the Poles?

Is not your vexation with me, and your reproaching me with exercising a disastrous influence on a whole generation to be explained by a special feeling of *dépit*? You should be on particular guard against this feeling. It is unconsciously caused by the realization that your propaganda, *in spite of the ponderous "Conversations" and the far from light "Days,"* enjoyed no success whatever with the younger generation and could not have tempted it without the medical stimulants of patriotism.

If I expressed myself with that same pathological frankness which you employ I would say that what enrages you is that our *revolutionary itch* has prevailed over the *theological mange* of your priests, following in the steps of their saints Magnitsky, Runich, and their like.

You conclude your scholastic controversy by mercilessly flaying the young generation, and the government finds a justification in your words for its persecutions. You give vent to your anger in diatribes, and the government in penal servitude and executions.

Can this unequal battle be to your liking? Do as you like but this is a poor method of holding scientific and theological discussions.

LETTER THREE

You speak with the same injustice, but far more harshly, of the young officers who wrote to us from Poland. Officers are always punished far more severely by court-martials. But you and I are civilians.

The education engrafted on us by Peter I has accomplished marvels: it has deprived us of all sense of liberty and independence. Our striving for liberation hardly lasted us for five years after the death of Nicholas. Two or three proclamations, matriculation cards[262] and officers given to thinking were enough to frighten us and send us back under the shelter of the wings of the police guardian angels and of government tutelage. Like Saint-Just we hasten to drape "the Statue of Liberty and the rights of man"[263] forgetting that we have no liberty and that what, for the time being, replaces the rights of man is only the abolition of serfdom.

It is said that England loves freedom but does not love equality; that France loves equality but does not love freedom. Russia has outdone both: she has no more of a predilection for equality than she has an inclination for liberty. That is what leads directly from the empire *à la* Arakcheyev to the empire *à la* Pugachov.

We are quite familiar with the former. It means military drilling, hard and implacable, unbroken silence, blind obedience, a mechanical system. It is the ideal of the great Kurfürst, in Gargantuan proportions. In the lamentably shabby German life, corporalism had no room to stretch its limbs; on Russian black earth, however, owing to the seignoral traditions, it quickly developed to beatings to death and to ***musical spurs.*** The whole educational method of Peter and his successors consisted of variations on this theme, i.e., in inculcating the discipline of the German barracks in Russian life. Catechisms were drawn up for general use, philosophical maxims were current like the famous one: "Out of ten recruits produce one

soldier, but let him be a real *soldier*," in other words, the remaining nine may be beaten, killed, mutilated but the tenth must have music in his spurs. What is most astonishing in all this is that love for this music was to be found in all spheres of civilian society, among men as well as women.

It vexes you to know that young officers appealed to me as to the "*directeur de conscience*." It annoys you to find that they preferred to join the ranks of the Poles fighting for their liberty than to shoot them. You reproach me because "it had not *occurred* to me to explain to them how vicious it was for someone *wearing a Russian uniform, on the pay roll of the Russian Government* and authorized by that government to command Russian soldiers, *to plot going over to the enemy* in time of war."

And so, according to you, the uniform turns a man into a spadassin devoid of will or morals, while the bribe of wages reduces this spadassin to the role of hired assassin. Your arguments brought to mind that Voltairian soldier who, asked by a traveller: "What are you fighting for?" answered: "Why should I care? My trade is to kill, be killed and live by this trade; all the rest is my commander's business."

If this theory of the uniform and pay roll were made the criterion of morality, not a single nation would ever free itself of its dependence on an armed gang. All movements for liberation in the world began with a revolt against immoral commands, with a refusal to obey them. Officers have never considered themselves to be in the pay of their sovereign anywhere; they always knew that they are paid by the government, but that the money comes from the people. Everywhere they know that there is a limit beyond which submission cannot go. Can it be that those generals, colonels and officers who, year after year, did whole villages to death in order to establish unnecessary military settlements, showed more valour than Colonel Krasovsky[264] who told his soldiers: "Don't shoot your own kin, brothers, don't beat the peasant," and went into exile for that?

You used the word "*war*." There was no *Polish war*, there was a *Polish uprising*, which is an altogether different matter. Moreover, the officers wrote to us long before the

uprising began. They wrote to us in the autumn of 1861 and asked us to advise them on a course of action if Poland rebelled and they were sent on a punitive expedition. We advised them to hand in their resignation and under no circumstances fight against people who were striving for the independence of their country.

Almost a year later we received another letter (both were written by A. Potebnya[265] at the request of his comrades). The officers informed us that they had not received our answer (probably thanks to the allied Prussian post): that their propaganda was spreading quickly and that they had decided, in case of an uprising, to side with the Poles, but that they were very eager to learn my opinion. You laugh at this and call me their *directeur de conscience*. What makes this so funny? Perhaps, the fact that I do not wear a director's uniform, or that I receive no wages—say from the synod—for my spiritual guidance? What is amusing in the fact that young people turned for advice to me, a person who has for thirty years preached one and the same thing, and that these young people were, perhaps, awakened by my words at a time of painful conflict between their duty to humankind and their duty to their service?

Before we had time to decide how to answer it some terrible news reminded us with how savage a brute the officers were confronted: Arnholdt, Slivitsky and Rostkovsky[266] were shot on June 16, 1862 for propaganda among the soldiers, for "insolent speech" and "*misinterpretations*."

The Rubicon was crossed. Frightened by the press alarmists and Nicholas's generals the government went to the length of applying the death sentence unnecessarily, when there was no danger. The execution of Anton Petrov pointed the way. To inure a society and a people to legal murders, to blood, is a piece of monstrous immorality. We had thought that, at least, the knout, the brand, torn nostrils, thrashings, bludgeons, whips, rods, blows with the flat side of the sword, ramrods and other means of punishment were the price paid by the Russian people for their immunity from the gallows and death from lead, but nothing of the kind. The door was opened to the hangman through the guardhouse. Horror of executions vanished;

nerves grew stronger. One could foresee that insane governor-general who shot a highwayman in Nizhni-Novgorod *on suspicion*, as well as that prostituted journalism which applauded the executions and stimulated the unbridled government to further excesses. You, as a theologian, know very well that there are forbidden, sacred things which stand fast and firm so long as no one touches them but fall no sooner than an exception to the rule is made. In Russia a man was worth nothing; or if he was it was the price per head according to the bill of sale or else that fixed for a recruit. But a human life was, for some reason or other, sacred. How logical this is is of no import. The conscience of the government, like that of the people, was filled with aversion for executions. In Russia, in the recent past, the death sentence was applied only in extreme cases and that, more to please the tsar than because of any sense of justice. We boasted to other nations of our abolition of the death sentence.

All of a sudden three victims, *three* young victims, were shot without a show of mercy, without even the honour of their condemnation being confirmed by the tsar's seal.... And in all the world of literature there was not a single poet, in all of society there was not a single statesman nor woman, nor church dignitary who dared raise his or her voice and point to the horror of this *first* bloodshed; was there a single person, a single member of the tsar's family who would rush to the tsar to stay his hand before it was stained with the blood of Russians? Only young people, "enervated by our propaganda," only the unfortunate officers who regarded us as their "*directeurs de conscience*," honoured the victims by holding funeral services for them and our distant *Kolokol* sadly tolled for their eternal memory and for their repose among our saints.

The death of Arnholdt and his comrades produced that effect which martyrdom always produces: redoubled energy, redoubled hatred. The executions intimidated no one and the officers' circle serried their ranks more closely around Potebnya. For my part, I understand perfectly that no uniform, neither that of the hussars, nor a gold-braided one, no wages, even if they include board and travelling expenses, could hush the conscience of the officers in face of this orgy of execution, blood

and insane patriotism. They sent Potebnya to London before our answer had reached them.

I have rarely met a person more winning in his utter simplicity, his grand devotion, his purity and absolute integrity, in the tragic awareness of his fate. There isn't a shade of exaggeration in Ogaryov's article "An Epitaph" (*Kolokol*, May 1, 1863). Potebnya is one of those who incarnated the age-old tragedy of a whole people through whom, on rare occasions, it gives expression to its sorrow, suffering, and pangs of conscience. He had no particular faith in success but he continued on his way because he could not resign himself to the idea that the Russian army, that Russian officers could go unprotestingly, coldly and implacably, to kill people with whom they had lived intimately for two years, simply because these people wanted to be free. The death of three of his comrades, shot in Lublin, made his blood boil and he died because he wanted to die and because he was firmly convinced that his death would atone for the obedience of others. "I am leaving," he wrote on his way back to Poland, "and in my ears I can hear: 'We, who are going to our death, salute you.' "

We foresaw their doom and did all we could to retard the uprising. The government, on the contrary, fatigued by the state of quasi-legality, hastened to put an end to the "Polish difficulties."

The officers made a last, solemn overture, a last protest: they wrote an address[267]...

Before you wax indignant, in the name of discipline, at the insolence of the officers, and give vent to your official horror, stop and consider it well. Rid yourself for a moment from that *Petersburgish* irritation at a word pronounced "in spite of the authorities," a statement drawn up not strictly in accord with the rules, and at every free action, and tell me what is criminal in the fact that on the eve of the strife the officers opened up their hearts to the brother of their sovereign, the governor of the region, and pleaded *to be spared* the alternative of betraying their conscience or their duty? "We find ourselves in an unbearable position in Poland," they wrote. "We do not want to betray the Russian people, but we do not desire to be executioners!" The siege of Sevastopol did not raise such

doubts, did not provoke such questions. If Konstantin Nikolayevich, in his turn, had given this a thought (unfortunately they never have time to think), then perhaps, instead of charging Minkvits to draw up a counter-address which became the object of ridicule of the whole world, he would have brought the first document to the attention of the Tsar. How much misfortune, how much bloodshed would then have been prevented!... No, he could not have permitted such insolence not only in his officers but in the general-in-command! But why is it that the man who goes to his death in the performance of his service, has not the same right as the condemned, to utter his last words, to voice his last desire? If in 1849 the Paskeviches and Ridigers[268] had brought to the attention of the Winter Palace the morale of the Russian troops and officers in Hungary we would not have had to witness that criminal, odious spectacle of a Russian army massacring a nation well disposed to us for the benefit of its worst enemy.

The Petersburg government has, throughout its history, crushed everything in its path, so long as the path was strewn with sand and, above all, ran in a straight line. Nothing ever stopped it and it trod underfoot, without the slightest compunction, everything that was dear and sacred to the heart of man. If a humane solution ever did occur to it, it always occurred too late. Brute, destructive force was inevitably the first resort and when the cause was half lost, an effort was made to remedy the evil. To begin with it will drive an entire population to the sea, to get rid of them, and only then will it realize from hints in the foreign press that the least it might have done was to supply them with ships.

Human paths are long and tortuous; those of violence short and straight. Recourse to it demands a heart of stone, a very narrow mind and absolutely unlimited power; it also demands executors who never ask why and wherefore. The possession of all these, circumstances favouring, plus incompetence and mediocrity, bring about heights of absurdity and ruin God only knows what: "Make Petropolis rise from the marsh," the Winter Palace out of the ashes, turn villages into military settlements, and military settlements into villages....

... On the eve of the Polish uprising there were two possible ways of stopping it: either the deportation of several thousand persons by means of a fabricated *recruitment* or the *emancipation* of the peasants which took place a year following the massacre and terror.

I have not met a single person of sense whom the idea of the recruitment didn't overwhelm. Count Orlov[269] galloped to Warsaw to try to make the Grand Duke change his mind; it is said that the Grand Duke himself hesitated and telegraphed the Tsar. But the matter was too *Petersburgish*, and the recruitment was not cancelled. All efforts, all pleadings and arguments by means of which many tried to stop or stave off the uprising, dissipated like smoke in the face of the recruitment.

"Now you see," Sigismund Padlewski[270] told us in December in London, "whether we can wait any longer and whether it is within our power to stop the uprising. If this barbaric hunt for people continues the rebellion is sure to take place even if we all perish." And he went with Potebnya to Poland.

The notorious "branka"[271] was called in Warsaw on January 15; on January 21, the rebellion burst out and three months later neither Potebnya nor Padlewski were among the living; rivers of blood flowed; two dull stains loomed up on the sombre Russian horizon—the Hangman and his mouthpiece[272] whose names mark the epoch which began with the end of 1862.

It would be useless to try and explain these black days *only* by outbursts of patriotism and exalted expressions of national dignity. Only utter confusion of notions and cynicism of language can compare the year of *executions* with the year of *victories*, the year of great and small police activities with the great year of 1812. That the impotent arrogance of Western notes could enrage all of Russia and make her show her readiness to act, is natural; that many wanted to profit by the excellent occasion offered to get rid of the moral yoke of Europe* in which we were held by all kinds of famuli[273] of Gneist and apprentices of the German *Gelehrten*, is also understandable. But look and

* Which we (let alone the Slavophils) have preached for fifteen years without end.—*A.H.*

see what all this clamour led to! Yesterday's admirers of England who had hitherto loudly acclaimed their scorn of all things Russian made a wise manoeuvre known in horse training as "a shift to the middle ground" and, joining the ecstatic and hysterical admirers of all things Russian, helped them to fan the patriotic sparks into a high flame. This flame, however, lacked but one thing—combustible material, that is to say, an enemy, and so they should have calmed down at the consciousness and display of their strength. But nothing of the sort happened. All this excitement, all the readiness to measure swords with Europe took the shape of *police* activities. The new Prokopi Lyapunovs and Minin Sukhorukys[274] saw themselves as police inspectors and police superintendents; while informers and sleuths became Figners and Seslavins,[275] and Muravyov—Prince Pozharsky. Having neither a country to save nor a world to conquer they proceeded to the police pacification and Russification of Poland, to the propaganda of the Orthodox Church through the police, and the democratization of the land by means of bureaucracy. Such a source of patriotism is too reminiscent of our Petersburg and gives no evidence of the national Russian sentiment. The Russian would have slung his bundle of black bread over his shoulder and gone to fight for Russia, but he never considered Poland as Russian land. Why should he? He was too preoccupied with everyday cares, with the partition and redemption of the land to bother about Poland.

And even if the people had been convinced that Poland lay behind the threat of war, that a Pole was to blame for every fire that broke out, if, indeed, they had been infected by the police pestilence of the cultivated classes we would, nonetheless, have not taken its side against our conscience, any more than we take your side. We are neither slaves of our love for our country nor, indeed, of anything else. Far from existing in the *modern* world, such pagan, Asiatic absorption of one's will and individual reason by the tribe, by the people, never, in fact, existed in the Christian world, at least in that world which was founded and developed "not in freedom" but "through logical necessity."

No matter under what logical or natural necessity we find ourselves we shall not renounce our free moral will, our sacred and sovereign independence; we shall never make its criterion something outside our conscience. That is why we understand so well the voice of the young man who hesitates to shed blood and asks himself: "Should one really be a blind instrument of the government?" That is why we hold them infinitely higher than the swarms of "amateurs" who went to help the government crucify Poland and who changed their military uniform for that of the policeman.

And while these wretches completed their work of revenge and hate, persisting in it even after their victory, like that Guards officer who rushed to give Paul a last kick as he lay dying,[276] even then the blood of Potebnya and his comrades served as the fountain to submerge the past and to cement a future alliance which will give both nations a new life. In dying in the ranks of the Poles the Russian youths proved not their rupture with the Russian people but the unity of the Slav world which implied that all its nations were branches of the same tree.

The penal code and police regulations, the military law and bonds imposed by the uniform and the pay roll cannot be applied to such tragic events; neither persons nor acts can be measured here by the judiciary, be it the Governing Senate with all its departments. You are very familiar with the religious attitude towards our lay affairs. Remember what the monks did (if they were honest) on the bloody fields of savage battles? They did not blame the wounded, nor did they poison the last minutes of the dying, no matter on which side they were. They prayed for both and consoled the dying with promises of the future as they understood it. Religion consists not only of *intolerance* and *persecution*. Why do you choose to see only that side?

LETTER TO MY SON ALEXANDER HERZEN[27]

My dear Alexander,

I have read your booklet on the nervous system very attentively. In writing to you my aim is not to disprove what you have said nor to offer any different solution of the problem. I should like merely to point out some weak points in your method which seems to me to be rather one-sided.

There are no radical divergences in our points of view, but it seems to me that you over-simplify a question which lies outside the bounds of physiology. Physiology has courageously performed its task, dividing man into an infinity of acts and reactions and reducing him to a point of intersection, to a whirl of reflexes. Let it make room now for the sociologist to re-establish man's wholeness. Sociology will snatch man from the anatomical amphitheatre and return him to history.

The meaning which is ordinarily attached to the words *freedom* and *free will* is evidently derived from religious and idealistic dualism which dissociates things that are quite inseparable. From this standpoint will is just as related to action as the soul is to the body.

As soon as man begins to think he already possesses the consciousness, based on experience, that he can act as he likes. That leads him to the deduction that he is free to determine his acts, losing sight of the fact that consciousness itself is the result of a long series of previous acts which he himself has already forgotten. He is conscious of the oneness of his body, the unity of all its parts and functions as well as of the centre of his sensuous and intellectual activity, and hence concludes the objective existence of a soul, independent of matter and reigning over the body.

Does it then follow that the sense of freedom is an illusion and the recognition of one's ego a hallucination? I think not.

It is essential to reject false gods, but that is not enough: behind their masks one should seek for the reasons which gave rise to them. A poet has said that prejudices almost always express an anticipated truth, though in infantile form.

Everything in your pamphlet hinges around a very simple principle: man cannot act without his body, while the body is subordinate to the general laws of the physical world. Hence it follows that organic life represents only a limited number of phenomena in an endless chemical and physical laboratory which surrounds it, and in these, life which has developed to the point of consciousness, holds so insignificant a place that it would be absurd to regard man as an exception to the general laws of nature and attribute to him a subjective freedom, *outside the law*.

However, this in no way prevents man from developing in himself the faculty composed of reason, sentiment, and memories which *weigh* the possibilities and decide on the action to be performed. This ability is not developed by divine grace, nor does it follow an imaginary scheme of freedom, but is simply developed by man's organs, his innate and acquired faculties which take on a thousand different forms and aspects of the social life. From this point of view the *acts* of man are, certainly, the result of the organism and its development; nonetheless, this result is not so inevitable and spontaneous as respiration and digestion.

Physiology decomposes the consciousness of freedom into its component elements; it simplifies it in seeking to find the explanation for it in the conditions of the individual organism--and completely loses sight of it.

Sociology, on the contrary, regards the consciousness of freedom as a result achieved by reason, as its basis and point of departure, as its indisputable and essential postulate. For sociology man is, above all, a moral being, that is to say, a social being who is free to determine his acts within the limits of consciousness and reason.

The task of physiology is to trace life from the cell to cerebral activity. It ends with the beginning of consciousness, it stops

at the threshold of history. Social man escapes physiology, while sociology, on the contrary, takes possession of him as he leaves the state of simple animal life.

Thus, physiology is to social phenomena what organic chemistry is to physiology. Undoubtedly, by generalizing, simplifying and reducing facts to their simplest expression, we shall ultimately arrive at *motion*, and perhaps, that will be true; but we lose the world of phenomena, full of diversity, quality and details—a world in which we live and which alone is real.

All phenomena of the historical world, all manifestations of organisms, complex, agglomerated, and of the second order, are based on physiology, but advance beyond it.

Let us take, for example, aesthetics. The beautiful, certainly, is not an exception to the laws of nature: it cannot be reproduced without matter or felt without organs. But neither physiology nor acoustics can supply a theory of artistic creation.

Hereditary memory, traditional civilization—all that ensues out of the human intercourse and historical development, all that has produced a moral environment with its own elements, its laws, which, though very real, are but little accessible to physiological experience.

Thus, for example, *ego* is for physiology nothing more than an unstable form of organic activities, related to a definite centre, to the mobile point of their intersection, conditioned by habits and preserved by memory. In sociology this *ego* is something quite different: there it is the prime, the basic element, the cell of the social tissue, an absolutely essential condition.

Consciousness is not indispensable to the physiological *ego*; organic life is possible without consciousness or with amorphous consciousness which is reduced to the feeling of pain, hunger and muscular contractions. For physiology life does not cease the moment consciousness does, but continues in different organic systems; the organism does not pass out instantaneously as does a lamp, but part by part, degree by degree, as do the candles of a candelabra.

The social *ego*, on the contrary, presupposes consciousness and the conscious *ego* cannot act or be stimulated, unless it *assumes* itself to be *free*, i.e., to have the faculty of being able, within certain limits, to do or not to do one thing or another. Unless he believes this the individual dissolves and disappears.

Awakened from animal sleep by his historical development, man is constantly endeavouring to achieve ever greater and greater control over himself. The social idea, the moral idea is possible only if the individual is free. The development of history is nothing but the continual emancipation of the human personality from one state of enslavement after another, from one authority after another, up to the greatest harmony between reason and activity—a harmony in which man *feels himself to be free*.

If man merged into the social concert like a musical note he would not be asked to account for the origin of his consciousness; his conscious individuality would simply be accepted as free and he himself would be the first to regard it as such.

Every sound is produced by vibrations of the air and reflexes of hearing; but it acquires still another significance for us (or even if you like, another existence) in a connected musical phrase. The string snaps, the sound disappears but as long as the string is whole the sound does not belong exclusively to the world of vibrations; it belongs at the same time to the world of *harmony* and here it has the quality of *aesthetic reality*. Symphonies, though composed of sound waves, dominate the physical aspect of sound, absorb it, exceed its limits.

A social individual is a conscious sound which exists not only for others but for itself as well. Being a product of physiological and historical necessity, the individual strives to confirm his being between the two non-beings of his existence—non-being before birth and non-being after death. Developing under the laws of this fateful necessity, he invariably regards himself free on this path. That is the essential condition for his activity, it is a psychological and social fact.

We should pay close attention to such general phenomena; they demand more than simple negation, more than a decision not to accept explanations; they call for serious investigation and explanation.

There has been no religion, no stage in the development of philosophy which has not endeavoured to solve this antinomy, which, nonetheless, remained insoluble.

Throughout the ages man has sought to find his autonomy, his freedom, and, influenced by necessity, *does not want to do anything other than what he desires*; he does not want to be either a passive grave-digger of the past, nor an unconscious midwife of the future; history for him is his free and essential work. He believes in his freedom no less than he believes in the existence of the external world as it appears to him because he believes his eyes and because without this faith he could not take a single step. Moral freedom is, thus, a psychological reality or, if you like, an anthropological reality.

What is objective truth, then, you will ask?

You know that the thing-in-itself, as the Germans say, is the *magnum ignotum* as the absolute and ultimate cause. Wherein lie the objectivity of time and the reality of space? I do not know that, but I do know that I must get these coordinates of consciousness and that without them I shall flounder in the darkness of chaos without measure or sequence.

Man has deified free will as he has deified the soul; he deified all abstract conceptions in the infancy of his intellect. Physiology flings the idol off its pedestal and completely denies freedom. Yet the idea of freedom has still to be analyzed as a phenomenal need of the human mind, as a psychological reality.

If I did not fear the old philosophical language I would repeat that *history is the development of freedom in necessity.*

What man requires is to *realize that he is free.*

Where is the way out of this circle?

The whole point is not to find the way out of it but to understand it.

TO AN OLD COMRADE[278]

LETTER ONE

> No matter how adequate the motives in themselves may be, they cannot produce the necessary effect without adequate means.
>
> *Jeremy Bentham*[279]
>
> (Letter to Alexander I)

ONE AND THE SAME question occupies our minds. As a matter of fact there is but one *serious question* on the historical agenda. All the others are either an expression of its growing force or of the maladies concomitant to its development, that is to say, growing pains by means of which the new and more perfect organism arises out of obsolete and narrow forms, adapting these to superior needs. For both of us the final solution is the *same*. We by no means differ in principle or theory but rather in method and practice, in the appraisal of forces, in the means to be applied, in the time, and in our interpretation of the historical material. The ordeals we have experienced since 1848 have affected both of us but differently. You have not changed much, though sorely tried by life. I got off with a few bruises. But you were far away while I was right there. And if I have changed, remember that *everything has changed*. The economic and social question is formulated today differently than it was twenty years ago. It has outgrown its religious and ideal adolescence as well as the age of clumsy attempts, and experimentation on a small scale; the very period confined solely to complaint, protest, criticism and accusations is drawing to a close. This is the important sign of its maturity. We can see it in the process of growth; it has not yet, however, reached it not only because of external obstacles or because of resistance but also because of internal reasons. The minority marching in the vanguard has not arrived

at manifest truths, at practical means, at complete formulas of the future economic life. The majority who suffered most endeavours through one group of its urban workers to throw off this state but is restrained by the old, traditional outlook of the other, more numerous group. Knowledge and understanding are not to be acquired by any *coup d'état*, nor by a *coup de tête*. The sluggishness, incoherence of the historical course of understanding exasperates and depresses us; we find it intolerable and many of us, against our better judgement, hurry ourselves and others. Is that good or bad? That is the question.

Should we exert external pressure on the natural course of events in order to hasten the internal process which is in evidence? Certainly a midwife can hasten, lighten, eliminate the difficulties of travail, but only within certain limits which are difficult to ascertain and dangerous to exceed. This requires, over and above logical self-sacrifice, tact and inspired improvisation. Moreover, not everywhere are the work or the limits the same. Peter I and the Convention taught us to march in seven-league boots, to pass directly from the first month of pregnancy to the ninth and destroy, without discrimination, everything in our way. *Die zerstörende Lust ist eine schaffende Lust*—and forward we dashed in the steps of the unknown god-destroyer, stumbling on broken treasures intermingled with all kinds of rubbish and refuse.

... We have seen the frightful example of a bloody insurrection which, at a moment of rage and despair, took to the barricades and only then realized that it had no banner. The conservative world, rallied in one compact group, defeated it and the result was that regression which was to be expected. But what would have happened if the barricades had triumphed? Could those formidable combatants, at the age of twenty, have given voice to all that lay in their hearts? Their testament does not contain a single constructive, organic idea, and economic errors unlike the political ones which have an indirect effect, lead directly and deeply, to ruin, stagnation, and starvation.

Our days are precisely the days of thorough study which must precede the work of realization, just as the theory of steam preceded the introduction of railways. Previously, the force of courage, zeal, valour were applied to attain the end

and it was a blind, haphazard attempt. We shall not act haphazardly.

It is plain to us that things cannot continue as they have been in the past, that the exclusive rule of capital and the absolute right of property has come to its end just as had the reign of feudalism and the aristocracy in its time. Just as the downfall of the medieval world began before 1789 with the realization of the unjust subjection of the middle estate, so today the economic revolution began with the realization of social injustice toward the workers. Just as the obduracy and degeneracy of the nobility contributed to its own downfall, so today the obstinacy and degeneracy of the bourgeoisie precipitates its end.

But the general terms in which the problem is formulated neither suggest the ways nor the means, nor even a favourable medium. They are not to be conquered by violence. Even if the whole bourgeois world were blown to bits, *some sort of bourgeois world* would arise after the smoke had dissipated and the ruins had been cleared away, though somewhat modified, because that world *is not yet dead* internally and *also because neither the world* that builds nor the new organization are yet so ready as to be able to perfect themselves as they come into being. Not a single pillar on which the modern system rests, and which must fall and be recreated, is affected enough or so shaky as to be torn up by force, to be debarred from life. Let every conscientious person ask himself if he is or is not ready. Is the new organization towards which we are moving as plain to him—as the general ideals of collective property and solidarity and does he know the process (except for downright destruction) by means of which the old forms must be changed within it? Let him, if he is personally satisfied with himself, say whether that medium is ready which, due to its position, should be the first to act.

Knowledge cannot be gainsaid but it possesses no means of coercion. Prejudices yield only to slow treatment; they have their phases and crises. Violence and terror are resorted to in order to disseminate religion and politics, to establish autocratic empires and indivisible republics. Violence permits one to destroy and clear the ground, but no more. By means of Peter the Great'ism the social revolution will not advance

beyond the levelling of Gracchus Babeuf's hulks and of Cabet's system of communist corvée. The new forms must embrace everything and include all elements of modern activity and all human aspirations. Our world cannot be transformed either into a Sparta or into a Benedictine monastery. The future revolution should not strangle certain forces for the benefit of others but should be able to reconcile them all for the general benefit.

The economic revolution has an immense advantage over all religious and political revolutions in that its base is sound. Such should also be the paths it follows; and the manner of handling its problems. As it outgrows the state of vague suffering and discontent, it automatically plants its feet on *firm soil*. All other revolutions invariably found themselves with one foot resting on fantasies, mystic ideas, superstitions and unwarranted patriotic, juridical and other prejudices. Unlike these, economic questions are subject to mathematical laws.

Certainly, the law of mathematics contains, as a scientific law, its own proof and needs neither empirical justification nor a majority of votes. But in order to be *applied* the empiric aspect and all the external conditions of realization should come to the foreground. "No matter how adequate the motives in themselves may be, they cannot produce the necessary effect without adequate means." All this is so when human affairs are concerned but is disregarded by too impatient people in matters of such significance as social reconstruction. Any mechanic knows that his calculation, his formula will not enter the sphere of reality so long as the series of phenomena, handled by him, contain insubordinate elements, alien to it or else subject to other laws. These disturbing elements are, in the physical world, not generally complex and are easily introduced into the formula like the lines of the pendulum, the resistance of the medium in which it oscillates, etc. But this is not so simple in the domain of historical development. The processes of social growth, their digressions and deviations, their final results are so interwoven, are so deeply rooted in the popular consciousness that they are by no means easy to approach and must be seriously considered. Treating them as

a list of things to be rejected, proclaimed as an "order of the day of the social army," will yield nothing but confusion.

One cannot fight against false dogmas, against superstitions no matter how insane they are, simply by denying them, no matter how much sense there is in this denial. To say "I do not believe" carries just as much weight and is, at bottom, just as ridiculous, as saying "I believe!" The old order of things is stronger than are the material forces that support it because it is *recognized.* This is seen most clearly where it possesses no punitive or coercive force, where it rests firmly on subjected conscience, on an uncultivated mind, on servile immaturity of new ideas,* as in Switzerland and in England.

The popular consciousness, as it is, represents a natural product, crude and irresponsible, the result of diverse efforts, attempts, events, successes and failures, diverse instincts and conflicts; it should be accepted as a natural fact and combatted as we combat all that is unconscious by studying it, mastering it and adapting its means to our end.

On the whole, no one is to blame for the social absurdities of modern life and no one can be chastised with greater justification than the sea whipped by the Persian king, or the Veche Bell punished by Ivan the Terrible. To accuse, to punish, to deliver over to the executioner are all things beyond our comprehension. We should look at things more simply, physiologically and once and for all discard the criminal point of view which, unfortunately, continues to make itself felt and warps our understanding, introducing personal passions into the general cause and making us see the chance transposition of accidental happenings as a premeditated plot. Private ownership, the family, the church, the state were tremendous educational forms of human emancipation and development. We cast these off as the need for them disappeared.

* What's the good of talking of papal syllabuses and indices, of police penalties for such and such opinions, of decrees by the Senate on philosophical questions when the world of *free thought*, the high spheres of the opposition and the revolution astonish us by the obscurity, the confusion reigning in their most elementary ideas. Recall the old arguments between Mazzini and Proudhon and the new debates on responsibility, on will, on ideals, on the positivism between Girardin, Louis Blanc and Jules Simon.—*A.H.*

To lay the blame for the past and the present on the last representatives of "the truth of other days" which became "the untruths of today," is no less an absurdity and injustice than the execution of French marquises simply because they were not Jacobins. It is even worse for we have not the same excuse the Jacobins had, a naive faith in the justice of their ideas, in their right. We change the fundamental principles of our views, condemning whole classes and, at the same time, rejecting the juridical responsibility of the individual. This is, in passing, so as not to return to it.

Former revolutions were made in the dusk; they lost their way, regressed, stumbled on and, because of their lack of inner clarity, exacted all manner of things, diverse beliefs and heroic deeds, a multitude of sublime virtues, patriotism, pietism. The social revolution requires nothing but *understanding and strength*, knowledge and means.

But understanding imposes a terrible obligation. It entails invariable compunctions, implacable reproaches of logic.

So long as the social idea was amorphous, its propagators who were themselves believers and fanatics, addressed themselves as much to the passions and the imagination as to the intelligence; they threatened the property owners with punishment and ruin, discredited and shamed them for their riches, exhorted them to a voluntary renunciation of their wealth by presenting pictures of frightful suffering. (A strange *captatio benevolentiae*—I grant you.) These are the means by which socialism was raised. We have to prove to property owners and capitalists not that property owning is sinful, immoral (a conception borrowed from a view quite alien to ours) but that the absurdity of its contradictions has reached the consciousness of the propertyless and it has thus become *impossible*. They should be shown that the struggle against the inevitable is a senseless waste of power and the more stubborn it is and the longer it lasts, the greater will be the losses and the destruction it will entail. The citadel of ownership and capital must be undermined by calculation, by double-entry book-keeping, by a clear balancing of assets and liabilities. The worst miser will not choose to drown with all his wealth if he can save part of it and himself by throwing the rest overboard. To achieve this

it is essential that he see the danger *just as clearly* as he sees the *possibility of being rescued.*

The new order which will establish itself must be not only the avenging sword but also a protecting force. In dealing a blow to the old world, it not only must save all that is worth saving but leave intact that which does not interfere, which is different and original. Woe to that revolution, so poor in spirit and in artistic sense, which will reduce all the past and all that has been accumulated into a dull workshop in which all interest is concentrated on subsistence and subsistence alone. But this will not happen. Humanity has always shown, even in the very worst days, that its potentialities exceed its needs and that it possesses more power than it requires for the mere conquest of life. Development cannot suppress it. There are such treasures which people will not forego and which only despotic violence can wrest out of their hands and that only at times of passion and cataclysms. And who will say, without voicing a glaring injustice, that the past and the passing do not contain much that is beautiful and that they must sink together with the old ship?

Nice, January 15, 1869

LETTER TWO

THE International Congresses of Workers[280] are becoming sessions at which one social question after another is discussed; they assume an ever-increasing organizational nature; their members are experts and lawyers. They call strikes and allow the cessation of work only as a dire necessity, as a *pis aller*, as a way of testing their strength, as a fighting organization. Their serious character astonished their enemies. Their great restraint frightened the manufacturers and mill owners. It would be most unfortunate if they prematurely abandoned this line of conduct.

In forming a sort of "state within a state," which establishes its own system and its rights without capitalists and proprietors, the workers will constitute the first network and the first germ of the economic organization of the

future. The international association may turn into Aventine hill *à l'intérieur.* Withdrawing towards this mountain, the world of workers, united among themselves, will abandon the world of the idle, thus compelling them *nolens volens* to come to terms. And if they refuse, all the worse for them; then the destruction of the old world will be postponed only as long as the new world lacks power. Empty threats without power to back them up are injurious. A suppressed rebellion will only result in regress. Leisure is essential for the twofold work of making a serious study and for a recruitment by spreading understanding. Ever on his guard and with power in his hands, the enemy will take up arms in defence before the attacking camp has a chance to deploy. It is easier to destroy and to trample young shoots underfoot than to accelerate their growth. He who refuses to wait and work is moving along in the old rut of the prophets and soothsayers, of heresiarchs, fanatics and revolutionary sectarians. But everything that is accomplished through the medium of insane, mystical, occult elements will ultimately yield insane results along with those of a positive nature. Moreover, these paths become increasingly impassable for us, understanding and investigation being the only weapons left to us. Theocratic and political dogmas do not require to be understood; they rest on faith even more solidly and more firmly when not subjected to the spirit of criticism and analysis. The Pope must be considered infallible; the country must be defended; precepts and commandments must be observed....

It is this pattern that the past, which we want now to leave behind, has followed. The forms, aspects, and rites have changed but the essence has remained the same. He who bowed his head before a Capuchin friar bearing a cross is no different from the man who bows his head to a court decision no matter how absurd it is.

It is this world of moral slavery and subjection to authority, I repeat, that we seek to leave behind in order to enter the expanses of understanding, the world of *freedom of thought.* Every impatient attempt to evade or skip a stage, to carry away by one's own passions or one's own example, will lead to frightful conflicts and, what is worse, to almost certain defeat.

It is just as impossible to escape the process of understanding as to elude the question of force. To impose a preconceived solution of all that *constitutes the question* means to take too many liberties with the *emancipated matter*. To take a man who is mentally asleep by surprise and stun him before he is fully awake with a number of ideas which run counter to all his moral conceptions, and to which he has not been gradually prepared, will hardly contribute to his development, but will rather disorientate the individual thus taken unawares or will have the opposite effect and drive him into extreme conservatism.

The term "gradual progress" holds no terrors for me, discredited though it is by the vacillations and mistakes of diverse reformers. "Gradual progress," like continuity, is an inalienable part of every process of understanding. Mathematics is transmitted gradually; why then assume that man can be inoculated with final deductions and that the ideas of sociology can be applied like a vaccination against smallpox or injected in the brain as a dose of medicine is administered to horses? The final deductions are connected with the actual state of affairs by practical stages, ways, compromises, diagonals. In order to determine which of them is the shorter, more convenient and feasible we must have resort to practical sense, to strategy. A headlong dash forward entails the risk of finding oneself stranded, as Napoleon found himself in Moscow, and of perishing in the retreat without even reaching Berezina. The International Association of Workers, all possible types of unions, their organs and representatives, must exert every effort to secure that same non-intervention of the government in *labour* as in the *administration of property*. The forms which keep people semi-shackled will not *à la longue* withstand the force of logic and the development of social understanding. Some of them are rotten to the core and need but a kick for them to topple over; others, like a cancer, have sunk their tentacles in the tainted blood. In destroying the former and the latter in the same fashion there is a risk of destroying the organism as well and this will, certainly, alienate a vast majority. Those who suffer most from the "cancer" will be the ones to fight most stubbornly for it.

That is very stupid but the time has come to realize that stupidity has a tremendous force behind itself.

All throughout Europe the peasant population will rise to a man in defence of the old order. And do we not know what the rural population is like, how stubborn it is and how great its inertia? It was the peasants who, after having received at the hands of the revolution the lands of the emigrants, left the republic, and the revolution stranded. It will, no doubt, recoil from the movement and will attack it merely because of its ignorance and lack of understanding—which only makes the fact all the more important.

It is on lack of comprehension and ignorance that the stability of the existing order rests; this is what supports the obsolete forms of education in which people were bred and which now oppress the minority; but the majority do not understand how useless and injurious they are. We know what it means to be mistaken as to the maturity and the degree of understanding. Universal suffrage imposed on a people unprepared for it turned out to be a razor on which it almost cut its own throat.

But if the ideas of state, of justice, are stable and strong, those of the family, of property, of inheritance are stronger still. The denial of private property as such is nonsense: "property will not perish," I say, paraphrasing the well-known words of Louis Philippe. Its transformation, its transition, so to say, from *private* to *collective property* is obscure and vague. Love of his land is as deeply rooted in the peasant of the West as is the idea of communal possession in the Russian peasant. There is nothing absurd in this. Property, particularly the ownership of land, has represented to the man of the West his emancipation, his independence, his dignity and constituted an element of the highest civic importance. It may happen that one day he will realize that the continuous parcelling of his dwindling land is detrimental and see his account in the free economy of the communal cultivation of the fields, but in the meantime how can one make him suddenly and of his own accord renounce a dream he has been fostering for centuries, which has been his life and joy, which really did put him on his

feet and attached the land to him, the land to which he had, until then, been attached.

The question which bears directly on this one—that of inheritance—is even a more difficult one. Except for celibate fanatics such as monks, Raskolniki, or Icarians, no large group of people will consent to renounce their right to leave part of their property to their heirs. I know no argument which could counteract this form of love, be the ties selective or of blood, this desire to transmit objects which were our tools, together with life, with traits of character and even with diseases that still cling to them. Perhaps this can be renounced in the name of forced universal *fraternity* and love for the whole world? But even domestic serfs, people on the lowest rungs of society, had some rags or other which they left to their families and which their lords almost never took away. The poorest muzhik deprived of his right to make his will is sure to take up a stick and go to defend his own property, his family and his liberty.

What should we do then? Should we furl our banners and retreat because in power our enemy will, evidently, be superior to us? Or are we to rush into battle and, should we win a local, temporary victory, proceed to establish the new order, the new form of emancipation by resorting to a massacre?

Arakcheyev had a hard enough time introducing his military-economic utopia, supported though he was by an army, and even then he got nowhere. We would be still worse off, for, after having suppressed the state, where are we to turn to for the "executive" power, the hangmen, and, above all, the police-informer? And the need for them will be tremendous. Should we really begin the new life by retaining the corps of socialist gendarmes? Can it be that civilization by means of the knout and liberation by means of the guillotine must always necessarily accompany every step forward?

I shall go no further at the present moment but this is what I want to say in conclusion. When I passed by the corpses and ruins, when I shuddered at the sound of prisoners being shot I invoked, with all my heart, with every thought, the savage forces to take revenge, to destroy the old criminal world. I invoked these forces without giving too much thought to what would arise in their place.

Since then twenty years have passed. Vengeance came from another direction—from above. The people bore with it all *because it understood nothing either* then or afterwards. The middle elements have been completely trampled underfoot, in the mud.... The long, painful days that followed gave the passions time to cool down and ideas to take shape; they allowed leisure for reflection and observation.

Neither you nor I have changed our convictions but we view the question differently. You tear along, as before, filled with the passion of destruction which you take for a creative passion ... breaking down obstacles and respecting only the history of the future. I do not believe in the former revolutionary paths and try to understand the *march of mankind* in the past and in the present in order to find out how to fall in step with it, without either straggling or running so far ahead that people will not and cannot keep up with me.

One more word. To say this in the circle in which we live demands, if not more, then certainly not less, courage and independence than to take a most extreme side in all questions.

I think you will agree with me in this.

Nice, January 25, 1869

LETTER THREE

No, my dear friends, my mind refuses to understand much which you seem to think is clear and take for granted, and against which I can find thousands of objections.

My brain grows old, perhaps, and I cite in my justification what one of our friends wrote about me or against me.

"It is very difficult to convince a man of something once he holds a different opinion on this subject. What we have here is actually a physiological process about which so many general things are said and which no one wants to reckon with when one gets down to facts. The brain does not arrive at anything arbitrarily, the product is always the result of the relation between the impressions received. Consequently, if the impressions of one individual differ from the impressions of another to the extent of an infinitesimal, then the subsequent

development of the relations between impressions and the result which is deduced from them, i.e., the formulation and further development of the equation (which is the only form of intellectual activity) may lead to a difference between the two results making their coincidence impossible. Herein lies the wisdom of argument which may prove to be almost futile."

These lines, written against me, are absolutely true, painfully so.

This passage, taken from Ogaryov's reply to my letter to Bakunin, ends with the following words: "Every individual brain, since it is an accumulation of impressions, receives new impressions differing from the preceding ones in a manner that is either completely indifferent to them, or else too insensitive or else quite negative (that is to say, hostile). Hence every person is biased or convinced, rightly or wrongly, that he is right, which is something that cannot be absolutely proved even in abstract questions such as mathematical systems (the theory of Tycho Brahe was founded on mathematical calculations no less than was the theory of Galileo); and that is why the real recognition of truth demands new brains which have not been affected by previous impressions. These are the pillars on which the celebrated historical development, or progress, rests."

My objections, like all objections in general, begin to irritate impatient people. "The time for words has passed; the time for action has come." As if the *word* is not *action*? As if the time for words can pass? Our enemies never separated the word and the act and executed for the *word* no less than for the act and often with even greater ferocity. And indeed, such words like Mirabeau's "*Allez dire à votre maître*" are no less important than a *coup de main.*

The separation of the *word* from the *deed* and their artificial dissociation cannot withstand the light of criticism, but unfortunately it implies an admission that everything has been elucidated and understood, that there is nothing more to discuss, that the time has come to act. Combat formation admits of no discussions or hesitations. But who, then, except for our enemies, is ready for combat and strong enough for *action*? Our strength lies in the power of the idea, in the power of truth,

in the power of the word, in historical *expediency.* International unions of workers are strong only in their propaganda, materially, they cannot go beyond the negative act of strikes.

Does that mean, then, that we must remain seated, as of old, with arms folded, to the end of our days, content with fine speeches?

I do not know whether that will be to the end of one's days or only part of one's days, but surely we should not engage in a hand-to-hand battle until we have reached a unanimous opinion and rallied our forces. To have right on one's side in battle does not mean much; right brought victory only in the court of God. We have little hope for the intercession of Heaven.

What was the upshot of the Polish uprising, impossible because of the disproportion of forces?

What are the feelings of those who encouraged the Poles?

This is what our opponents say about it with a sort of philosophical fatalism: "The choice of the paths of history does not lie within the power of the individual; it is not events that depend on the individual but vice versa, the individual on the events. We only seem to direct the movement, but actually we swim with the current, without knowing what shore this will bring us to."

The paths are by no means immutable. On the contrary, they do change depending on the circumstances, on the degree of understanding, on the personal energy. The individual is the creation of the environment and events, but events, too, in their turn, are the work of individuals and bear their imprint; here we have a reciprocal action. We have overgrown the stage where we could remain a passive instrument of blind forces. To become a blind instrument of fate, a scourge, an execution of God presupposes naive faith, the simplicity of ignorance, savage fanaticism and the candour of infancy. We cannot honestly assume either the role of Attila, or even that of Anton Petrov. If we do, it will mean either that we are deceiving others or ourselves. We will have to answer for this deception to our own conscience and in the court of kindred spirits.

What thinking men forgave Attila, the Committee of Public Welfare and even Peter the Great, will not be forgiven us. We have not heard voices exhorting us from above to fulfil the

destinies, nor have we heard subterranean voices from below indicating to us the path to follow. There is but one voice and one authority for us—that *of reason and understanding.* In rejecting them, we become unfrocked priests of science and renegades to civilization. The very masses who bear the entire burden of life, with their Macedonian phalanxes of workers, seek the word and understanding and look with distrust at people who preach the aristocracy of science and call to arms. And mark you, these preachers do not come from the people but from schools, from books, from literature and they live in an abstract world. Old students that they are, they withdrew further away from the people than did their enemies. The Pope and the aristocrat, the policeman and the merchant, the proprietor and the soldier, have more direct contacts with the masses than they. That is why they consider it possible to begin the economic revolution with *tabula rasa*, with completely clearing the historical field, not realizing that the field with its furrows and tares comprises all the immediate soil of the people, their whole moral life, habits and consolation.

The people are conservative by instinct and because they know nothing else. They have no ideals outside the conditions that exist. Their ideal is bourgeois comfort as the ideal of Heine's Atta Troll was the pure white bear. They cling to their desolate existence, to the narrow framework within which they are confined. They believe in its stability and security, not realizing that it is they who give it this stability. The more remote people are from the movement of history, the more stubbornly do they cling to the accustomed, to the familiar. They even understand the new only if it is clad in the old raiments. Prophets proclaiming the Anabaptist social revolution donned the archbishop's chasubles. Pugachov, in order to overthrow German influence in Russia, called himself Peter, the most German of them all, and surrounded himself with Cossack chevaliers of the Order of St. Andrei and all sorts of pseudo-Vorontsovs and Chernyshovs.

The forms of the state, the church and the court fill up the chasm between the incomprehension of the masses and the one-sided civilization of the summits. Their power and extent are in direct proportion to their ignorance. It is impossible to

overcome ignorance by force. Neither the republic of Robespierre, nor that of Anacharsis Cloots, left to themselves, could maintain themselves while Vendéeism took years to extirpate. Terror is as little effective in wiping out prejudices as conquest is in annihilating a nation. Fear, on the whole, drives customs and forms inwards; it suspends their operation but does not affect their inner contents. The Jews have been persecuted for centuries; some lost their lives, others went into hiding to appear after the storm richer, stronger and firmer in their faith.

One cannot liberate a people outwardly more than they have freed themselves inwardly. Strangely enough experience shows that people find it easier to bear with the violent burden of slavery than with the gift of too much freedom. Essentially all forms of historical *nolens volens* lead from one emancipation to another. Hegel finds in slavery itself (and most justly) a step to freedom; the same can most plainly be said of the state—it, like slavery, moves onward towards self-destruction and cannot, up to a certain age, be discarded as one discards old clothes. The state is the form through which every human community, after attaining considerable dimensions, must pass. It continually changes depending on the circumstances and adapts itself to the needs. The state everywhere begins with the complete subjection of the individual, but having reached a certain stage of development, it strives for his complete liberation. The rise of estates was a tremendous step forward, for it meant enlightenment, the end of animal uniformity, the division of labour. The disintegration of this structure was even a greater step forward. Every principle, born or incarnated in historical life, represents the supreme truth of its epoch and inspires the best people; for its sake blood is shed and wars waged. Later it becomes a lie, a memory. The state has no definite contents of its own; it serves reaction and revolution alike; it serves the side that is stronger. This is a set of wheels around a common axis; it is equally convenient to guide them in one direction or another for they have a common pivot and the unity of motion is assured. The Committee of Public Welfare was the strongest state authority bent on the destruction of the monarchy. The Minister of Justice Danton was Minister of the Revolution. An

absolute monarch took the initiative in the liberation of the peasants. Lassalle wished to utilize state power in order to introduce his social system. Why destroy the mill, thought he, when its millstones are capable of grinding our flour as well? For this same reason I see no sense in refusing to make judicious use of it.

Between Lassalle's views and that of the inevitable dissolution of the state into a federation of communes there is all the difference between normal birth and a miscarriage. The mere fact that a woman is pregnant does not necessarily mean that she must give birth the very next day. It does not follow that since the state is a *transitory* form, this form belongs to the *past*. Is there a nation in existence which can dispense with the guardianship of the state as a superfluous bandage, without stripping bare such arteries and vital organs which will *now* result in a calamity but which, *subsequently*, would drop off by themselves?

As if any nation could undertake such an experiment with impunity, surrounded as it is by other countries like France, Prussia, etc., clinging passionately to the principle of state? Can one speak of the immediate disappearance of the state when the disbandment of a regular army and disarmament are ideals of the distant future? And what does the *denial* of the state mean when the chief condition of its disappearance is the *maturity* of the majority? If you could only have a glance at what is happening in Paris awakening to life! How confined are the bounds in which the movement is thrashing about, bounds set not by anyone but which have arisen by themselves, as if out of the earth. Small towns, narrow circles distort one's sense of proportion. By repeating *one and the same thing* day in and day out among one's friends, one naturally ends up by being convinced that this is what is being said everywhere. In seeking to convince others over a long period of time of one's own power, you may ultimately convince yourself and retain this conviction till the first defeat.

Bruxelles, Paris,
August 1869

LETTER FOUR

OUR ICONOCLASTS do not stop short at the usual negation of the state and the destruction of the church. Their zeal makes them attack science as well. Here reason forsakes them completely.

The absurd statement made by Robespierre that atheism was aristocratic is supplemented by the one taxing science with being aristocratic.

No one asks how far such definitions fit or do not fit the subject at all. And, indeed, the entire dispute around "science for science's sake" and science as purely utilitarian is based on an extremely false approach to the question.

Applied science cannot exist without theoretical science.

Science is a force; it reveals relations between things, their laws and interaction, and it has no concern with the manner of its application. Science is not to blame if it is in the hands of the government and capital, as are the army, the court, and the executive organs. Mechanics offers the same service in the construction of railways as in the construction of cannons and *Zündnadelgewehre*.

The mind cannot be arrested at any one point and commanded to continue no further with its investigation until we have been liberated.

The mind cannot be prescribed only because the majority has no knowledge while the minority abuses its knowledge.

The savage clamour calling for the banning of books, the abandonment of science and the unleashing of the blind forces of destruction belong to the most unbridled and most baneful demagogy. It always provokes the worst passions, the *déchainement des mauvaises passions*. We make a joke of these fearful words without taking into the least consideration how greatly they injure the cause and those who hear them.

No, great revolutions are not made by unleashing evil passions. Christianity was preached by the apostles and their disciples who lived austere and pure lives, by ascetics and men who repressed all passions save one. Such were the Huguenots and the Reformers; such were the Jacobins of '93.

Fighters for liberty, like the men in Cromwell's army, who took up arms for a cause, were always pure and therein lay their strength.

I do not believe that people who prefer destruction and brute force to evolution and to amicable agreements are really serious. Propaganda, unceasing, continual propaganda, is what people need regardless of whether they are workers, owners, farmers or bourgeois. We have a greater need for apostles than for vanguard officers, sappers of destruction. We need apostles who will preach not only to their own disciples but to their adversaries as well.

To preach to one's enemy is a great act of love. It is not the enemy's fault that he has found himself outside the modern flow of events, living on promissory notes, long overdue, on the morals of the past. I pity them as I would anybody suffering from a malady, as I would a cripple standing on the brink of a precipice and burdened down with wealth which will drag him down into the chasm. Their eyes should be opened rather than gouged out so that they can be saved if they wish to be saved.

The Greeks expressed themselves more explicitly than we. "The wise man has no need of a law; his mind is his law." Well, then, let us begin by "making" ourselves and others wise.

Nor do I pity people alone. I pity things as well, and *some things even more than some people.*

An outburst of unbridled savagery provoked by obstinacy will spare nothing; because of hardships which one might have personally undergone he will take revenge on the most impersonal chattels. Along with the capital amassed by the usurer will be wiped out that which has been transmitted from generation to generation and from nation to nation, a capital which bears the imprint of the personality and creativeness of different ages and which is itself an annal of human life and a crystallization of history. The unbridled forces of destruction will wipe out, along with the fences, those extreme mileposts of human power which mankind has attained in all directions since the dawn of civilization.

Christianity and Islamism have demolished enough of the antique world; the French Revolution has destroyed enough statues, pictures and monuments for us to be able to dispense with playing at iconoclasm.

How vividly I felt this as I stood dejectedly, almost shamefacedly, listening to some custodian's words: "All this was destroyed during the Revolution . . ." as he pointed to a bare wall, a broken statue, or a disinterred tomb.

NOTES

V. I. LENIN IN MEMORY OF HERZEN

[1] *Arakcheyev, Alexei*, Count (1769-1834)—a reactionary statesman who introduced in Russia a system of police tyranny and arbitrary rule by the militarists. *Biren, Johann* (1690-1772)—Kurland nobleman, headed the reactionary reign of terror during the rule of Empress Anne (1730-1740). P. 5

[2] *Manilov*—a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, the personification of smug complacency and futile day-dreaming. P. 5

[3] *Decembrists*—Russian noblemen revolutionaries who in December 1825 rose in an armed rebellion against the tsarist autocracy. P. 5

[4] *Trudoviks*, or "Group of Toil"—petty-bourgeois faction in the State Duma chiefly consisting of the peasant deputies. It was founded in 1906. P. 8

[5] *Kolokol (Bell)*—a political magazine, published by Herzen from 1857 to April 1865 in London and from 1865 to December 1868 in Geneva. It played a tremendous role in the Russian emancipation movement. P. 8

[6] *Polyarnaya Zvezda (North Star)*—a literary magazine published by Herzen in London in 1855-62. P. 8

DILETTANTISM IN SCIENCE

[7] The essays *Dilettantism in Science* were published in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski (Fatherland Notes)*, Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 12 in 1843. P. 15

[8] *Mohammedans of science*—thus Herzen calls people who believe blindly in the letter of science. P. 16

[9] *Jena*—a city of Saxe-Weimar where a battle took place between the Prussians and the French in 1806 and terminated with the defeat of the Prussians. *Wagram*—a village near Vienna where the French defeated the Austrians in 1809. P. 46

[10] *Jean Paul (Richter)*—German author. P. 59

[11] Herzen is referring to the Right-wing Hegelians. P. 59

[12] In the winter of 1807-08 Fichte delivered his "Reden an die deutsche Nation," which were sharply nationalistic. P. 60

[13] *Klaproth, Martin Heinrich* (1743-1817)—German chemist. P. 72

[14] In Hegel's philosophic system the *phenomenology of mind* is "a development of individual consciousness through its different stages, set in the form of an abbreviated reproduction of the stages through which the consciousness of man has passed in the course of history." (F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy.*) P. 75

[15] Herzen is quoting Hegel's *Philosophy of History.* P. 79

[16] Reference is made here to the fifth scene of the first act of the second part of *Faust*, wherein Mephistopheles tells Faust that in order to conjure up the spirits of Paris and Helen he shall have to betake himself to the land of the mysterious Godesses—*the mothers* who live beyond time and space—and obtain a magic tripod from them. P. 82

LETTERS ON THE STUDY OF NATURE

[17] *Letters on the Study of Nature* were first published in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1845 and 1846. *Letters on the Study of Nature* played an important part in the development of advanced philosophic thought in Russia. P. 97

[18] Herzen is referring to J.J. Rousseau. P. 98

[19] *Agassiz, Louis* (1807-1873)—the author of works on geology and zoology. Reference is made here to Agassiz' *Recherches sur les poissons fossiles* (*Researches of Fish Fossils*), 5 volumes, 1833-42. Agassiz subsequently came forward as a violent opponent of the theory of Darwin. P. 100

[20] *Orbigny, Alcide* (1802-1857)—French naturalist. P. 100

[21] *Isis*—a newspaper devoted mainly to natural science, was published by Oken in 1816-18. P. 124

[22] *Little Elba*—draws an analogy between Schelling's position in the university and that of Napoleon I as a captive on the Elba. P. 124

[23] The term "metaphysics" was not used by Aristotle himself. "Metaphysics" ("that which comes after physics") was first used by Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century B. C. to define those works of Aristotle which appeared in the list of his works which

followed *Physics*. Subsequently the word acquired another meaning as a philosophical term. P. 129

[24] *Gessner's Abel*—the hero of a poem by the German poet S. Gessner (1730-1788), *The Death of Abel*. P. 136

[25] Schelling's idealistic philosophy of nature established the qualities of distension, repulsion and the striving for limitless extension as the primary and positive "force" of nature. This force was opposed by "negative force" or the "force of attraction" which counteracted the first force. According to Schelling both of these "forces" preceded matter and formed the basis for "the construction of matter." P. 158

[26] "Reason," "Nous" was conceived by Anaxagoras to be the world principle, the very finest matter, which was the cause of motion. P. 165

[27] The works of the French authoress Genlis were notably vulgar, pharisaical and full of false moralization. P. 168

[28] *Nisi intellectus*—This formula was applied by Leibnitz to define the bounds of the sensual: "There is nothing in the reason which did not previously exist in the feelings." P. 192

[29] The teachings of Epicurus actually omitted the immaterial "divine principle," superior to physics and the world of matter. His "deities" dwell in interplanetary space and have nothing whatever to do with the development of nature and the affairs of men. P. 204

[30] *Chosroes* (*Khosrau*)—ancient kings of Persia. The king referred to here is Chosroes I Anushirvan who reigned from 531 to 579. P. 217

[31] When Justinian, the Byzantine Emperor, closed all Athenian schools of philosophy as hostile to Christianity seven Neoplatonists headed by Aristotle's eminent commentator Simplicius found protection at the court of Chosroes I. They were permitted to return to Athens in 533 without the right to promulgate their teachings. P. 218

[32] *Skalozub*—a character from *Wit Works Woe* by A. S. Griboyedov. P. 227

[33] *Etrurian priests*. Etruria, the north-western region of ancient Italy which after long wars was conquered by Rome at the end of the third century B.C. The religion of the Etruscans bore a morose and cruel character. P. 243

[34] Herzen wrote to Krayevsky about this article on June 12, 1845: "The essay on medieval philosophy is finished and I shall now do my best to present the new philosophy in as popular a form as possible; everyone claims that my articles are obscure. I shall try all the harder since I have formed entirely new views: let the reader judge for himself whether they are good or bad." Several days later

Herzen made the following note in his diary: "Continuing my article on the history of philosophy, I have had occasion to acquaint myself more closely with Bacon. There is no need to read the systematizers, for example, Descartes. One can get to know him from cover to cover by reading even the shortest of treatises about him. But Bacon requires study. Things sudden, new and bold turn up on nearly every page." On June 23 Herzen once again wrote to Krayevsky. "My essay on Bacon and Descartes is finished and, I believe, is more successful than the others. I am sure that the views I have unfolded there have not been presented in any of the modern histories of philosophy. It is too bad that, try as I would, I could not simplify the language even more." (*Ibid.*) V. G. Belinsky was displeased with the obscure language of the essays. "What abstract language, what gibberish he uses, as if he were writing for his own pleasure alone." (P. V. Annenkov, *Literary Reminiscences*, L. 1928, p. 436.) When this remark reached Herzen he reacted as follows: 'This queer gentleman believes that it is difficult to set down a sensible and intelligent view in obscure expressions, but he forgets that otherwise no sensible and intelligent view can be set down in the Russian language at all." (*Ibid.*, p. 442.) He was here referring to the gendarme censorship of Nicholas I. P. 249

[35] *Vanini* (1585-1619)—Italian materialist philosopher, atheist and ardent opponent of scholasticism, was fearfully put to death. P. 252

[36] On discovering his scientific method, Descartes vowed a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Lorette. P. 253

[37] In his introduction to Copernicus's treatise which defined the principles of the heliocentric system of the world, Osiander, a theologian and one of the publishers, made the reservation that the treatise dealt with the mathematical hypothesis to facilitate astronomical calculations and not the new system of the cosmos. P. 256

[38] Reference is made here to the views of the sixteenth century French humanists who set themselves the main task of creating a new system of education. P. 258

[39] By *the philosophers of theoretical emancipation* Herzen means the philosophers of the Renaissance. P. 260

[40] *Cardan* (1501-1576)—Italian mathematician, philosopher and physician. P. 261

[41] Scholastic terms formed from the Latin words *hoc* and *quid*. P. 276

[42] The principle of the indestructibility of matter can be traced back to antique materialism, notably to the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus which was the immediate source of the philosophy of Gassendi. P. 277

[43] Gassendi played a prominent part in natural science and philosophy by reviving ancient materialism. P. 278

[44] Herzen abbreviated Bacon's *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum.* P. 280

[45] Herzen alludes to Rousseau. P. 284

[46] Herzen quotes *Allgemeine Anatomie* by Henle, published in 1841 in the form of Vol. VI of Sömmerring's *Vom Baue des menschlichen Körpers.* P. 293

[47] By *cranium diviners* Herzen means the phrenological school of Franz Gall (1758-1828). P. 293

[48] Herzen alludes to Montesquieu (1689-1755). He mentions his *De l'esprit des lois* (1748). P. 302

[49] *Helvetius, Claude Adrien* (1715-1771). Herzen refers to his book *De l'esprit* (1758) burned at the stake for its radical and atheistic ideas. P. 302

[50] Herzen refers to Diderot's *Essai sur le mérite et la vertu,* published in 1741. P. 303

[51] Herzen was dissatisfied with the mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century. P. 304

[52] *Wolf Christian*—Leibnitz's follower, schematically systematized his philosophy. P. 304

FROM THE DIARY

[53] Between 1842-45 Herzen wrote his diary more or less regularly. It was published for the first time posthumously in the first volume of his works published by his children in Geneva in 1870. P. 306

[54] In 1841-42, Herzen was in exile in Novgorod where he worked in the Gubernia Administration. Unable to adjust himself to the bureaucratic environment and unwilling to take part in the affairs connected with the oppression of the peasants, Herzen resigned in April 1842. P. 306

[55] Herzen alludes to his work *Dilettantism in Science.* P. 306

[56] *Villemain, Abel François* (1790-1870)—French statesman, historian and literary critic. Herzen was familiar with his *Cours de Littérature Française.* P. 306

[57] In French historical literature, this term implied the reign of Louis XIV. P. 308

[58] *Emile*—Rousseau's treatise on education. P. 308

[59] *Ruge, Arnold* (1802-1880)—German writer, Left Hegelian, took part in the Revolution of 1848-49, later became supporter of Bismarck. P. 309

[60] *Bauer, Bruno* (1809-1882)—German philosopher, Left Hegelian. Marx and Engels annihilated his views with their criticism in their work *The Holy Family*. P. 309

[61] *Marheineke, Philipp Konrad* (1780-1846)—German theologian, Right Hegelian. P. 309

[62] *Frauenstädt, Julius* (1813-1879)—German philosopher, Hegelian, later follower of Schopenhauer. P. 310

[63] *Jordan, Silvester* (1792-1861)—German politician connected with the revolutionary circles of the forties who took part in the 1848 Revolution. P. 312

[64] *Wiegand, Otto* (1795-1870)—founder of a publishing firm who once published the *Gallic Year Book* magazine to which Herzen here refers. P. 312

[65] Herzen refers to the magazine for which the circle of the Westernists with Granovsky at their head tried to obtain permission which was not granted by the government. It was for this magazine that Herzen had intended his *Letters on the Study of Nature*. P. 313

[66] *Uvarov, S. S.* (1786-1855)—Russian statesman and reactionary Minister of Public Education; he introduced an especially stringent censorship. P. 313

[67] Herzen refers to Feuerbach's *The Exposition, Development and Critique of the Philosophy of Leibnitz* (1837). P. 314

[68] D-tes stands for Descartes, B for Bacon. P. 314

[69] *Fries, Jacob Friedrich* (1773-1843)—German philosopher, professor of the University of Jena. A man of independent spirit, Fries was persecuted for his convictions and was deprived of his chair in 1870. Hegel vehemently attacked Fries accusing him of the desire to destroy morality and shake the social structure. Hegel's reactionary position in political questions was quite clear to Herzen who more than once criticized this aspect of Hegel's views. P. 317

APROPOS M. GRANOVSKY'S PUBLIC LECTURES

[70] *Granovsky, T. N.* (1813-1855)—Russian historian, professor of Moscow University, a close associate of Herzen. In 1843-44 he delivered a course of public lectures on medieval history in Moscow. The lectures were a great success. Herzen reacted to them in two articles, one of which was printed in *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, No.

142, 1843 and the other, which is included in the present edition, in *Moskvityanin*, No. 7, 1844. P. 318

[71] Herzen refers to Talleyrand's lack of principle and the apparent "indifferentism" of Goethe's attitude to the political events of his time and particularly to the French bourgeois revolution. P. 321

[72] Herzen quotes *Ulozheniye* (The Legal Code) of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (1649). P. 321

[73] Herzen alludes to the controversy between the Westernists and the Slavophils. P. 322

[74] The abstract character of German idealistic philosophy was in Herzen's opinion one of its main shortcomings. P. 324

[75] The edition promised by Granovsky was not actually published and so Herzen was unable to keep his promise. P. 324

PUBLIC LECTURES BY PROFESSOR RULYE

[76] *Public Lectures by Professor Rulye* was first published in *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, Nos. 147 and 148 of December 8 and 11, 1845. *Rulye, K.F.* (1814-1858)—zoologist, professor of Moscow University P. 325

[77] *Kosmos*—a work by Alexander Humboldt, the German geographer and traveller, is an attempt to synthesize all contemporary data on the cosmos, earth and nature into a single whole. P. 329

[78] The title of *Director of Jardin des Plantes* was conferred upon Buffon in 1739 in acknowledgement of his scientific achievements. He converted this garden into a centre of biological researches in France. P. 330

[79] *Camper, Pieter* (1722-1789)—Dutch anatomist. P. 331

[80] Herzen is here criticizing the main shortcomings of Cuvier's classification: the theory of the immutability of the species, the artificial doctrine of world catastrophes, the migration of fauna from continent to continent. P. 332

[81] The theory of the *single type* propounded by the French naturalist *Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire* (1772-1844) was based on the idea of a single pattern to be found in the structure of all animals subject to constant change by the environment. P. 333

[82] In 1840 the chemist Dumas put forth the idea that the properties of chemical compounds, including organic ones, derive from the combination of the atoms of which they are composed. P. 333

[83] Herzen is alluding the attacks on Raspail by F. Bulgarin, the reactionary journalist, in his article "Journalistic Odds and Ends."

(*Severnaya Pchela*, No. 243, October 27, 1845.) Herzen is hinting that the cause of Bulgarin's attacks was his political credo which rendered Raspail, the revolutionary and democrat, unpalatable to him. P. 334

Herzen did not carry out his intention of writing on Rulye's theory. P. 334

FROM THE OTHER SHORE

[85] Herzen's work consists of a number of essays. With the exception of the first, *Before the Storm*, which was set down at the end of 1847, i.e., before the 1848 Revolution, they were all written in the interval between 1848 and 1850, i.e., after the sanguinary June days of 1848, and reflect Herzen's thoughts and feelings caused by the defeat of the revolution and the triumph of the reaction. *From the Other Shore* was first published in one book in the German language in 1870. This book included only the first five essays and also *A Letter to Gerveg* and *A Letter to Mazzini* which were subsequently deleted by the author. In the Russian language Herzen's book was first published in London in 1855. This edition included, besides the five first essays of the German version, three more which saw light in 1850 in various French and German periodicals. The 1855 edition, moreover, was prefaced by the *Dedication*, *Introduction* and *Farewell*. The book had the same contents, but with some changes in the order of the essays when it was republished in London in 1858. Herzen also made some alterations with an eye to literary style. The present edition is based on that of 1858, the author's last lifetime edition. The obvious misprints were eliminated, while the principal variants of the earlier editions may be found in the notes. P. 336

[86] The son of the author, Alexander Alexandrovich Herzen (1839-1906), later a physiologist, professor of the University of Lausanne. P. 336

[87] *Kapp, Friedrich* (1824-1884)—German politician, took part in the 1848 Revolution and emigrated when it was suppressed. At one time, he was friendly with Herzen. Later he returned to Germany and became a supporter of Bismarck. P. 337

[88] *Froebel, Julius* (1805-1893)—German politician and democratic publicist, took part in the 1848 Revolution and emigrated to America when it was suppressed. On his return to Germany in 1857 he became a supporter of Bismarck. *Jacobi, Johann* (1805-1877)—German democratic leader, took part in the 1848 Revolution and subsequently joined the Social-Democratic Party. *Fallmerayer, Jacob Philipp* (1790-1861)—German historian and publicist. P. 337

[89] Herzen is here referring to December 2, 1851 when the French President Louis Bonaparte carried out a coup d'etat. P. 337

[90] *Solger, Reinhold* (1817-1866)—German politician and democratic publicist took part in the 1848 Revolution and emigrated to America when it was suppressed. P. 337

[91] *Michelet, Jules* (1798-1874)—French democratic historian, Herzen's friend. P. 338

[92] The quotation is taken from N. M. Karamzin's *Melador to Philalet* (1795). P. 340

[93] *Farewell*—a letter written by Herzen in 1849 to his friends in Moscow in which he explains the reasons causing him to become a political emigrant. P. 340

[94] By *despotism of the petit bourgeoisie* Herzen here means the bourgeois empire of Napoleon III. By the *Algerian Cossacks* Herzen means the Algerian troops, one of the chief props of Napoleon III. P. 346

[95] Herzen is referring to the German writer August Haxthausen (1792-1866) who travelled through Russia in 1843 and subsequently wrote a book devoted to the agrarian system of Russia and describing its landownership on the basis of village communes. P. 346

[96] *Before the Storm* was written in 1847 on the basis of talks which he had with I. P. Galakhov, a former member of his Moscow circle. P. 347

[97] In the 1850 edition this sentence was followed by: "I have really burned the bridges behind me, but I am not sorry." P. 348

[98] In the 1850 edition the words, "level of development," were followed by: "If we exclude the wretched people who are so oppressed materially that they have no time to suffer with human dignity and also those of the golden mean who keep at an equal distance from Heaven and Hell...." P. 350

[99] In the same edition the words, "new turn," were followed by: "The same, only on a different plane, happens on the eve of a cataclysm when the social organism experiences a shock and one of its parts grows atrophied while the other grows predominant at its expense" P. 351

[100] The same edition carried the words, "German idealism," instead of "idealism." P. 351

[101] *D'Escousse, Victor* (1813-1832), and *Lebras, Auguste* (1816-1832)—French romantic poets who committed suicide simultaneously after

the failure of their drama *Raymond*. Béranger who knew both of them dedicated his poem, "Suicide," to them. P. 356

[102] This refers to the French Revolution of 1830. P. 356

[103] *Illuminati*—members of a secret Masonic society which originated in Bavaria in the eighteenth century. P. 357

[104] According to the Italian philosopher and sociologist Vico (1668-1744), the social development is cyclic and each culture has its rise and fall (*corsi e ricorsi*). P. 360

[105] In the 1850 edition the words, "social life," were followed by: "Not the whole of mankind takes part in this development but only that portion which has emerged from the patriarchal state into social life. The march of progress is not as dry and boring as it is thought to be, progress does not travel in a straight line according to specified rules. To deny progress, however, is absurd. It is a reward granted by history to those who are the last to come." P. 362

[106] In the 1850 edition the words, "of a continuous line of generations," were followed by: "If you still seek a goal, then consider: nature is concerned only with putting man on his feet, with introducing him into his environment and giving him a chance to understand, to feel and to enjoy." P. 363

[107] In the 1850 edition the words, "to a thousand of accidental clashes," were followed by: "To live in society and constantly improve his lot, never resting until all are happy, to develop what is inherent in the soul and be constantly active. All this tends to stimulate man in one way or another. It is this that he is striving for even when he has apparently deteriorated and pursues other ends." P. 364

[108] In the 1850 edition the words, "genius will pave it," were followed by: "like Columbus or Peter I." P. 365

[109] In the 1850 edition the words, "ticking of the hours," were followed by: "Oh, we cannot forget that we are alive. Life is not so easy a burden as to be imperceptible. We perceive it by the weariness of the soul which oppresses us in a world in which we should like to act but which has no need for our activity. You are speaking of enjoyment." P. 366

[110] In the 1850 edition the words, "in its place," were followed by: "We can see nothing on the horizon, while the old walls, old and crumbling though they are, may yet stand for several millenniums." P. 367

[111] *After the Storm* was written immediately after the June days of 1848. This essay had been circulating in hand-written copies throughout Russia before it was published. N. A. Nekrasov wrote the following to I. S. Turgenev at that time: "*After the Storm* made me weep. It is devilishly moving!" P. 368

[112] *Grisi, Giulia* (1811-1869)—famous Italian singer. P. 368

[113] On February 24, 1848, Paris witnessed the revolution which overthrew Louis Philippe. P. 368

[114] In the 1850 edition the words, "Place du Carrousel," were followed by: "Deeply moved, I realized that something great was in the offing here: great success or great failure." P. 370

[115] *Bedeau, Marie Alphonse* (1804-1863)—Governor-General of Algiers, took part in the suppression of the June insurrection of the workers in Paris in 1848. P. 371

[116] Under Louis Philippe the social circles of the *National* were opposed to the government. After the February Revolution of 1848 they had the majority in the Provisional Government. P. 371

[117] *Radetzky, Joseph Wenzel*, Count (1766-1858)—Austrian field-marshal, cruelly suppressed the insurrections of the Italians against Austrian rule in 1831 and 1848. P. 371

[118] *Paskevich-Erivansky, Ivan Fyodorovich* (1782-1856)—field-marshal, one of the closest associates of the Emperor Nicholas I. After the suppression of the Polish insurrection in 1830-31, he was appointed vicegerent in Poland. In 1849 he commanded the Russian troops sent to suppress the Hungarian revolution. P. 371

[119] Popular patriotic song by Alexandre Dumas père. P. 371

[120] *Fouquier-Tinville* (1746-1795)—public prosecutor of the revolutionary tribunal during the Great French Bourgeois Revolution. P. 373

[121] On January 21, 1793, Louis XVI was guillotined in accordance with the sentence pronounced by the Revolutionary Tribunal. P. 374

[122] *Cloots, Anacharsis* (1755-1794)—prominent figure of the Great French Bourgeois Revolution, was sentenced by the Revolutionary Tribunal and executed. P. 374

[123] In the 1850 edition the words, "before the Vienna Congress," were followed by: "The same is happening in the heart of man. Atheism is only a principle, a general idea.... But what is the connection between these and the June days? The very closest. Having liberated ourselves from the past we are not yet free. In spite of the fact that reason was recognized and the republic was declared, we remained idol worshippers and slaves—so strong is man's urge to worship the superior and bow to authority. How could we create anything free while we continued to be slaves to prejudice and childish beliefs?" P. 374

[124] In 1850 the words, "to the state," were followed by: "All France, all Europe should at once be held responsible." P. 375

[125] *Affre, Denis Auguste* (1793-1848)—Archbishop of Paris who was killed by a national guardsman in the June days while attempting to reconciliate the warring factions. P. 375

[126] *Sénard, Antoine Marie Jules* (1800-1855)—French liberal politician, chairman of the Constituent Assembly in 1848, one of the instigators of the brutal suppression of the June insurrection. P. 375

[127] *Lamennais, Félicité* (1782-1854)—French journalist who attempted to combine Catholicism with the ideas of democracy. After the June days of 1848 he emphatically denounced the reprisals against the insurgents. P. 376

[128] *The LVIIth Year of the Republic, the One and Indivisible* was written in October-November 1848. P. 377

[129] In the 1850 edition the words, "equality and fraternity," were followed by: "They thought that their democratic *pia desideria* could be realized in the old forms of European civic life and were dumbfounded to see the difficulties of their task." P. 382

[130] In the 1850 edition the words, "different series of relations, of phenomena," were followed by: "The same is happening in the political world. A great social change cannot, of course, wipe out France, but the France of Louis XIV, of Napoleon and the Restoration cannot continue." P. 382

[131] *Gilbert, Gabriel* (1751-1780)—French poet who was popular and yet died in poverty. P. 384

[132] *Leroux, Pierre* (1797-1871)—French journalist, utopian Socialist. P. 386

[133] This chapter was written in 1848 and in it Herzen evolved his ideas on the moral and political death of the bourgeoisie. P. 389

[134] A slip of the pen: on November 12, 1848, the constitution of the French Republic composed by the Constituent Assembly was made public in Paris. P. 389

[135] Herzen is here describing an unsuccessful demonstration arranged on the day the constitution was made public by the republicans of Paris. The marchers met with a religious procession organized by the clergy. P. 390

[136] In the 1850 edition the words, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," were followed by: "in whose existence nobody believes any more." P. 391

[137] The reference is to I. P. Galakhov, the author's interlocutor, in the essay, *Before the Storm*. P. 391

[138] In the 1850 edition the words, "fleeing to America," were followed by: "To flee to America is childish. Does not America represent the ultimate development of all that we see in Europe?" P. 396

[139] In the 1850 edition the words, "dull and backward," were followed by: "These are facts and not idealism." P. 396

[140] *Windischgrätz, Alfred Ferdinand* (1787-1862)—Austrian field-marshal who brutally suppressed the insurrection in Vienna in 1848. P. 398

[141] *Charles Albert* (1798-1849)—King of Sardinia. In 1848 he inaugurated the constitution under the pressure of growing revolutionary sentiments and declared war on Austria with a view to liberating Lombardy. Owing to his dilatoriness and fear of popular unrest the war was lost and he was compelled to abdicate. P. 398

[142] In the 1850 edition the words, "the old world would have been solemnly vindicated," were followed by: "The justification of the absurdities of popular representation invested with full royal autocracy, the justification of the absurdity of a king liberating people and the pope acting in conformity with the spirit of the nineteenth century." P. 398

[143] In the 1850 edition the words, "but the revolution," were followed by: "and the desire to put an end once and for all to the autocratic popular assemblies, kings and executions." P. 398

[144] *Lamartine, Alphonse de* (1790-1869)—French poet and liberal politician, prominent member of the Provisional Government, who headed its Right wing in 1848. P. 400

[145] *The persevering Quaker*—Guizot. P. 400

[146] *Blanqui, Auguste* (1805-1881)—French revolutionary who favoured the seizure of power by a revolutionary party for the realization of a communist system. Blanqui underestimated the role of the masses in history. *Raspail, François* (1794-1878)—French revolutionary, physician and chemist by profession. In 1848 fought against the Provisional Government and published the newspaper, *Ami du peuple*, and was subsequently arrested. P. 400

[147] *Veterinary*—Marat, Jean Paul (1743-1793). P. 401

[148] In the 1850 edition the words, "political upheavals," were followed by: "But now it is absurd and this absurdity is clear to everybody after the reaction has triumphed in the republic. The republic dictated its draconic laws from the height of the National Assembly, exiled without trial and in the name of the free people, voted commendations to people who had arisen from the blood of those who had been shot down wholesale. Do you believe that those things which undermine a representative system can have no consequences? Who is going to believe in the possibility of freedom and equality where there is such slavish, hypocritical jurisprudence, relying on the two slavish doctrines: decayed Roman law and decrepit feudalism." P. 402

[149] In 1848 the governments of Austria and Prussia were forced under the pressure of the revolution to inaugurate constitutions which they discarded as soon as the triumph of the reaction was obvious. P. 402

[150] *Crapaudine*—Severe punishment meted out in the French army in Algiers. P. 403

[151] Herzen is here referring to Archbishop Affre. See note 125. P. 404

[152] *Barbès, Armand* (1809-1870)—French revolutionary, sentenced to death for taking part in the unsuccessful insurrection of 1839 in Paris. Louis Philippe commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. P. 407

[153] *Kaspar Hauser* (died in 1833)—a foundling who was raised in the family of a farm-hand. The attempts to discover his origin led to the writing of innumerable volumes. Finally, it was established that he was the son of the Duke of Baden and that his stepmother had put him out of the way to secure the throne for her own son. P. 409

[154] *Réforme*—a democratic newspaper published in Paris in 1843-51. Sponsored by Ledru-Rollin, it stood sharply against the monarchy of Louis Philippe. P. 411

[155] *Forty-five centime tax* was introduced in France in 1848 by the Provisional Government and greatly reduced its popularity among the peasantry. P. 411

[156] As is clear from the date at the end of the essay it was finished by March 1, 1837. P. 414

[157] *Levasseur, Thérèse* (1721-1801)—Jean Jacques Rousseau's life's companion who was notably narrow-minded and shrewish. P. 415

[158] In the 1850 edition the words, "one will find only death," were followed by: "I cannot see any purpose for all things living except their very lives at the present moment." P. 421

[159] By *schismatics* Herzen means the representatives of the French bourgeois democracy who were raised in the spirit of Rousseau and constituted the extreme Left wing of the Mountain. P. 424

[160] In the 1855 edition the words, "comes from hunger," were followed by: "the absurd social system at every step reduces increasingly larger numbers of people to destitution. Their protest, their resurrection is inevitable." P. 424

[161] A sentence from Robespierre's speech in 1793. P. 428

[162] *Wilhelm I*—an arrant reactionary, subsequently the first emperor of the united Germany, commanded the troops which cruelly suppressed the popular movement in Southern Germany in 1849. P. 434

[163] *Those who betrayed mankind* – the French whose army stormed Rome in 1849 to defend the rights of the Pope. P. 434

[164] Referring to the general who betrayed Hungary, Herzen means *Görgey* who commanded the army of the Hungarian revolutionaries and surrendered to the troops of Nicholas I in 1849. P. 434

[165] *Blum, Robert* (1807-1847)—German politician, member of the Frankfurt Parliament in 1848, was deputed by this parliament to revolutionary Vienna. He took part in the street fighting, was taken prisoner by Windischgrätz's troops and shot. P. 435

[166] In the magazine version the words, "but then we got over it," were followed by: "Haven't we seen patriots in Milan, on Ionian Islands or women in Hungary, Freiburg, Brescia who were held as hostages? Haven't we seen Bianqui beaten up by order of the chief of the turnkey wardens, creatures without names or honour?" P. 435

[167] *Maistre, Joseph de* (1753-1821)—French journalist who championed the feudal reactionaries and went to the length of glorifying the executioner as the instrument of God. P. 439

[168] *Niebuhr, Barthold Georg* (1776-1831) German historian, engaged chiefly with Roman history. P. 439

[169] Herzen is referring to the so-called historical school of law. P. 439

[170] This chapter was written early in 1850 and was published in the German magazine *Deutsche Monatsschrift* (No. 8) in the same year. P. 442

[171] *Brancaleone*—leader of the popular insurrection in Rome in the thirteenth century, headed an uprising against the unlimited power of the Pope and was exiled from Rome when the insurrection was suppressed. *Rienzi, Cola di* (1313-1354)—leader of the insurrection against the power of the Pope; he seized power in Rome but was soon overthrown by the nobility and was forced to flee. P. 443

[172] In the magazine version the words, "I desire to live," were followed by: "Yes, I want to live -I do not want to bow to the yoke oppressing our contemporaries." P. 444

[173] In the magazine version the words, "eternal mourner at the bier," were followed by: "I do not want to be an eternal widower. I have the right to life. I am no less real, no less free, no less sovereign than the rest of the world." P. 444

[174] In the magazine version the words, "to its gifts," were followed by: "After this question is put man protests with a titanic veto against the fatalism of the environment, and the latter surrenders." P. 446

[175] Herzen is referring here to the utopian Communists who in their visions of an ideal social system strove to prescribe old human relations and enforce rules embracing all aspects of life and notably man's work. Herzen points to their lack of attention to the interests of the individual and their inability to combine these interests with those of society. P. 450

[176] Speaking of *the duel between the free man and the liberators of mankind* Herzen means Proudhon's caustic polemics with the republicans, the members of the Mountain, which began in 1848. P. 450

[177] The president—Louis Bonaparte, the future Emperor Napoleon III. P. 451

[178] In the magazine version, instead of the words, "Let each ... exception to this," stood: "I hail it from the bottom of my heart as a free act. I deny it as a bitter necessity, as a moral duty imposed on us by others." P. 452

[179] In the magazine version the words, "on voluntary slavery," were followed by: "On the denial of personal independence in the name of God, church and the monastic rules, in short, in the name of various abstractions, generalizations, commonplaces which had no individual impress. Christianity, the religion of contradictions, carried man's state in the face of the absolute to the length of a consistent system of moral slavery." P. 452

[180] This chapter was written in 1850 and printed in Proudhon's *Voix du peuple*. *Donoso Cortés, Marqués de Valdegamas* (1803-1853)—Spanish politician, at first a moderate liberal and subsequently a reactionary. P. 459

[181] Donoso Cortés's speech was published in the Paris newspaper *Constitutionnel* which was the organ of the Bonapartists in 1848 and later. P. 462

[182] *Bochart*—a member of the French Constituent Assembly of 1848 who was at the head of the commission which investigated the demonstration of May 15 and the June insurrection in Paris. The transactions of the commission constitute three volumes and are permeated with hatred for the revolutionaries. Herzen has him in mind when he speaks about the "report of Bochart." By a "report of Pliny the Younger," Herzen means the latter's letters to the Emperor Trajan; Pliny the Younger governed one of the regions

of Asia Minor and sent reports on the persecution of the Christians. In reply Trajan advised Pliny to handle the informers with caution and carefully investigate the facts before taking action. P. 467

183 *La Patrie*—a reactionary newspaper in Paris. P. 469

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND SOCIALISM

184 *The Russian People and Socialism* was first published in 1852 in French on the occasion of the appearance of the book *Legendes démocratiques* by Michelet, the French historian. The book included articles dedicated to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the famous Polish political leader and national hero who headed the Polish insurrection of 1794. In this article Michelet was very scornful of the Russian people of whom he had only the faintest conception. Herzen was indignant and felt that it was his duty to reply, with the result that Michelet admitted his error and thereafter became a friend and admirer of Herzen. P. 470

185 The idea of the Slavonic Federation was put forth by the members of the Society of the United Slavs, which had no relation either to Pestel or to Nikita Muravyov, the leaders of the Southern and Northern Societies. As for the Polish revolutionaries, both the "Southerners" and the "Northerners" corresponded with them in order to coordinate their actions against the tsarist government. P. 476

186 A mass was held in honour of the executed Decembrists at the beginning of the Polish uprising in 1830. P. 476

187 *Konarski, Simon*, Count (1808-1839)—a participant in the Polish uprising of 1830-31 who emigrated after it was crushed. In 1838 he secretly returned to Russia to prepare a new insurrection but was arrested and shot. P. 476

188 *Biernacki, Aloisius Prosper* (1778-1855)—held the post of Minister of Finance in the Polish revolutionary government, 1830-31, and emigrated after it was suppressed. P. 477

189 *Vladimir Svyatoslavich* (d. 1015)—the Grand Duke of Kiev. P. 478

190 *Tengoborsky, Ludwig Valerianovich* (1793-1857)—economist and statistician. His work, quoted by Herzen, on the productive forces of Russia is of interest for its ample factual data collected by the author. The book was originally published in French and appeared in Russian later. P. 485

191 Herzen is referring to his essays *From the Other Shore.* P. 489

192 *Mozart and Salieri* P. 493

[193] *Leopardi, Giacomo* (1798-1837)—Italian poet and thinker whose views were permeated with despair and pessimism. P. 493

[194] *Bryullov, Karl Pavlovich* (1799-1852)—Russian painter. Herzen is referring to his famous picture *The Last Day of Pompeii*. P. 493

[195] Herzen is referring to the French electoral law instituted by Napoleon III on May 31, 1850. Under this law suffrage was granted to all who had not changed their residence for three years. This limitation deprived most of the workers of the suffrage. P. 494

[196] During the tour of Catherine II in the Crimea, Prince Potyomkin, desirous of showing the progress of the region, had built sham villages (the so-called Potyomkin villages) all along her route. P. 495

[197] *Beccaria, Cesare* (1738-1794)—an Italian political writer, the author of the treatise *On Crime and Punishment* in which he defended the necessity of mitigating punishments and safeguarding personal liberty. This treatise enjoyed great popularity in the eighteenth century and exerted great influence on the laws enacted by Catherine II. P. 495

[198] Following the Revolution of 1848, the government of Nicholas I attempted to check the penetration of revolutionary ideas into Russia and carried out a number of measures to strengthen the censorship and supervision over the universities and curtail the number of university students. P. 497

[199] *Du devèloppement, etc.* This book aroused the displeasure of the Moscow "Westernists" headed by Granovsky. P. 499

[200] *Bibikov, Alexander Ilyich* (1729-1774)—General-en-chef who was sent by Catherine II to suppress the insurrection of Pugachov but died without accomplishing his mission. P. 500

[201] The Kingdom of Poland was granted a constitution when it was incorporated into Russia in 1815. This constitution was annulled after the Polish insurrection of 1830-31. P. 500

[202] *Petrashevsky, Mikhail Vasilyevich* (1821-1866)—sponsor and leader of a revolutionary circle in St. Petersburg. He was influenced by the ideas of utopian socialism and notably Ch. Fourier. Petrashevsky and his associates were arrested and exiled to Siberia in 1849. P. 501

[203] After the death of Empress Anne, Ivan Antonovich, the grandson of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich and the nephew of Peter I, ascended the

throne in 1740. Since he was a baby at that time, his mother Anna Leopoldovna was appointed regent. In 1741 Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter I, carried out a coup d'etat and seized the throne. Ivan Antonovich, still a child, was taken from his parents and imprisoned in Schlüsselburg Fortress where he continued to be confined throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and Peter III. Under Catherine II, V. Y. Mirovich, a young lieutenant, made an attempt to liberate the Tsarevich but failed. The latter was killed by the guard while Mirovich was arrested and executed. P. 502

LETTER TO A. A. CHUMIKOV

204 The recipient of this letter was Alexander Alexandrovich Chumikov (1819-1902), a writer on pedagogical questions who published *The Magazine on Education* in 1857-59. When he was abroad in 1851 he wrote a letter to Herzen and then visited him. The present letter, like others addressed to Chumikov, was first published in the magazine *Russkoye Obozreniye* (No. 5) in 1898. P. 503

205 *Frank*—a bookseller who also sold Herzen's books P. 503

206 Herzen was exiled from Nice in 1851 by order of the Government of Sardinia as a man dangerous to public peace. Soon, however, he was able to return. P. 503

207 *Valerio, Lorenzo* (1810-1865)—Italian political leader, a deputy of the Diet of Sardinia. Having received the order to leave Nice, Herzen wrote a letter to him protesting against the measure. Valerio raised the question before the Diet and warmly criticized the government's decision. This, however, did not prevent Herzen's deportation. P. 503

208 *Omnia mea mecum porto* and *Lebe wohl* (the original title of *Epilogue 1849*)—essays included in Herzen's book *From the Other Shore*. P. 503

209 *Kolačec*—Austrian journalist who took part in the 1848 Revolution and subsequently emigrated. He was publishing a magazine with a democratic orientation entitled *The German Monthly of Politics, Science and Life* in Stuttgart in 1850-51. Several essays, later included in *From the Other Shore*, were published in this magazine. P. 503

210 The petty bourgeois democrats (the Mountain) headed by Ledru-Rollin organized a demonstration against the government of Louis Bonaparte on June 13, 1849. Their expectation that the populace would join them proved groundless. P. 503

[211] *Elysian clown*—Louis Bonaparte, President of the Republic. P. 505

[212] *Custine, Adolphe* (1790-1857)—French writer who visited Russia and published a book entitled *Russia in 1839*. P. 505

[213] *Sazonov, Nikolai Ivanovich* (1815-1852)—Herzen's friend at the Moscow University and a member of his revolutionary circle who emigrated in the forties. P. 506

[214] Herzen is here referring to Proudhon's book *Confession of a Revolutionary* the third edition of which was published in 1851, and his *Free Credit*. P. 506

YOUNG MOSCOW

[215] *Young Moscow* belongs to the fourth part of the memoirs, *Thoughts on the Past*. This essay was first published in instalments in *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, 1855, Vol. I, and 1862, Vol. VII, Instalment I. P. 507

[216] *March 3* and *May 9, 1838* is the title of Chapter 23 of the third part of *Thoughts on the Past*. Herzen here tells of two secret journeys from Vladimir, where he was in exile, to Moscow, the first time, to see his cousin and bride N. A. Zakharyina, and the second time, to take her to Vladimir where they were married on May 9. P. 507

[217] *Senator*—that is what Herzen called Lev Alexeyevich Yakovlev, the elder brother of his father in *Thoughts on the Past*. Herzen's father was I. A. Yakovlev (1767-1846). P. 508

[218] *Vadim*—Passek, Vadim Vasilyevich (1807-1842). Herzen's friend at the university. P. 508

[219] *Ketcher, Nikolai Khristoforovich* (1809-1886)—Herzen's friend and a member of his revolutionary circle, subsequently a translator of Shakespeare. P. 509

[220] *Our sentence*—Herzen and Ogaryov were charged with "pernicious thinking." (For their arrest, trial and sentence see *Thoughts on the Past*, chapters 9 and 12.) P. 510

[221] *Natalie*—Natalia Alexandrovna, Herzen's wife (1822-1852), daughter of A. A. Yakovlev, the elder brother of Herzen's father, and K. I. Zakharyina, his serf woman. P. 511

[222] *Maroseika*—a street in Moscow, where V. P. Botkin lived and frequently received the members of Herzen's circle. Mentioned above are the various German professors of philosophy, mostly Hegelians. P. 517

223 *Yermolov*, A.—Russian general, took part in the wars against Napoleon. Herzen is referring to Yermolov's remark to Rayevsky at the dinner given by Barklai de Tolli. "There are only two foreigners here, you and I." The rest of the guests were Germans. P. 517

224 From *Verses Composed During a Sleepless Night*, by A. S. Pushkin (1830) P. 518

225 *Sokolniki*—a park in the suburbs of Moscow. P. 518

226 *Gans, Eduard* (1797-1839)—German jurist and Left Hegelian who applied Hegel's ideas to law. P. 520

227 *Abélard, Pierre* (1079-1142)—French philosopher and theologian whose views were condemned by the Catholic Church. P. 520

228 The reference is to the *Commemoration of Borodino* written not by Pushkin, but by V. A. Zhukovsky. At the time described by Herzen, Belinsky praised the poem in his essay (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski* 1839, No. 10). Zhukovsky's patriotic poems and Belinsky's essays on them are, most likely, what Herzen really meant when speaking of the bitter struggle that sprang up between himself and the critic. The reconciliation of Herzen and Belinsky took place in the middle of 1840, i.e., considerably later than the appearance of the "patriotic essay" of the critic. P. 521

229 *Vitberg, Alexander Lavrentyevich* (1787-1855)—an outstanding architect with whom Herzen was friendly when they were both exiled in Vyatka. P. 523

230 *Towianski* (1799-1878)—Polish mysticist. P. 523

231 *Ma-pah*—the nickname of Ganneau, the French sculptor, who founded a religious sect in the forties, to which even French radical intellectuals belonged. P. 523

232 *L. D.*—Larisa Dmitriyevna Filippovich, the wife of a retired official with whose family Herzen was acquainted while in exile in Novgorod. P. 523

233 Herzen is referring to the book by Y. F. Samarin, a Slavophil, on Stefan Yavorsky (1658-1722), a churchman of the time of Peter I and an opponent to his reforms. P. 526

234 The reference is to the philosophical letter by Chaadayev for the publication of which the magazine *Telescope* was suppressed in 1836. P. 527

235 It is not clear whom Herzen means by the letter K. It is probably N. Kh. Ketcher. P. 528

[236] *Sakharov, Ivan Petrovich* (1807-1863)—ethnologist and archeologist *Meyendorf, Alexander Kazimirovich*, Baron (1798-1865)—high official, the author of a number of works on economy. *Bichurin, N. Y.*, whose name as a monk was Ioakinf (1777-1853), a well-known sinologue, author of several works on language and history of China. P. 528

[237] *Krayevsky, A. K.* (1810-1899)—Russian journalist who edited and published *Otechestvennaye Zapiski* (1839-67). P. 528

[238] *The hostess*—Olga Stepanovna, Odoyevsky's wife, nee Lanskaya, who belonged to the court circles. *Vulgar tastes* (from her point of view) was Odoyevsky's acquaintance with writers of non-aristocratic origin. P. 528

[238(a)] *The Third Department*—the secret political police founded by Nicholas I in 1826. P. 529

[239] That is where the text of *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, Vol. I ends. The rest appeared in *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, Vol. VII, Instalment I, 1862. P. 533

[240] *Sungurov's circle*—a secret society founded by N. P. Sungurov, an official, in the thirties. In June 1831 the members of the circle who regarded themselves as followers of the Decembrists were arrested. Sungurov and another member of the circle were sentenced to hard labour while the rest were exiled to the Caucasus or placed under police surveillance. P. 538

[241] *Koltsov, A. V.* (1809-1842)—a Russian poet. P. 539

[242] *Ostrogozhsk*—Uyezd city in Voronezh Gubernia. P. 540

[243] *Klyushnikov, Ivan Petrovich* (1811-1895)—a poet, member of the circles of Stankevich and Belinsky. P. 541

LETTERS TO AN OPPONENT

[244] *Letters to an Opponent* were first published in *Kolokol* No. 191 (Nov. 15, 1864), No. 193 (Jan. 1, 1865), and No. 194 (Feb. 1, 1865). The letters are addressed to *Yuri Fyodorovich Samarin* (1819-1876), a notable Slavophil. As a young man Samarin belonged to Stankevich's circle. Herzen was acquainted with him from the forties and esteemed him for his "keen intelligence" and "integrity." As time passed Samarin gradually came to be a confirmed and intolerant monarchist which prompted Herzen's sharp retorts in his pamphlet *On the Development of the Revolutionary Ideas in Russia*. When Samarin was abroad he desired to meet Herzen (1864). The heated discussion that took place during their meeting revealed the unbridgeable gulf between their views. In his *Letters to an Opponent* Herzen defined their differences P. 546

[245] *Den (The Day)*—a weekly of the Slavophils published by I. S. Aksakov in Moscow in 1861-65. P. 548

[246] Herzen is referring to his arrest in 1834 and to the sentence passed upon him "on behalf of Nicholas I." P. 549

[247] The reference is to *A Letter to Emperor Alexander II*, published by Herzen in *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, Vol. I, 1855. P. 549

[248] *Cherkassky, Vladimir Alexandrovich*, Prince (1824-1878)—a publicist and politician who sided with the Slavophils. Herzen is here alluding to one of his articles published in connection with the preparations for the Peasant Reform of 1861. In this article Cherkassky suggested that with the abolition of serfdom the landlords should continue to enjoy the right of subjecting the peasant to corporeal punishment in the form of a definite number of whip lashes to be prescribed by the law. The article evoked indignant protests. P. 554

[249] *Zakrevsky, Arseni Andreyevich* (1786-1865)—a capricious and obdurate reactionary who, appointed Governor General of Moscow in 1848 and entrusted with the special task of crushing all opposition, persecuted the Slavophils regarding them as near revolutionaries. P. 557

[250] *Traveller, V. V.*—a naval officer who visited Herzen during his voyage in 1864 and took away with him a number of his works for distribution among the sailors, for which he was subsequently arrested, court-martialled and sentenced to hard labour. P. 559

[251] *Muravsky, Mitrofan Danilovich* (d. 1879)—a notable revolutionary of the sixties and seventies who was frequently prosecuted. In 1862-63 he was tried for "preparation to instigate riot" and was sentenced to hard labour. P. 559

[252] *Mikhailov, Mikhail Illarionovich* (1826-1865)—a poet and translator who was arrested in 1861 for the distribution of the leaflet *To the Young Generation* and sentenced to hard labour. He died before he had served his term. P. 559

[253] *Obruchev, Vladimir Alexandrovich* (1836-1912)—a participant of the revolutionary movement in the sixties, sentenced to hard labour for the distribution of the leaflet *A Russian.* P. 559

[254] *Chernyshevsky, N. G.* (1828-1889)—a Russian writer, journalist and revolutionary democrat. Arrested by the tsarist government, he wrote his well-known novel *What Is To Be Done* in prison in 1863. The novel exerted great influence on revolutionary thought in Russia. P. 559

255 *Martyanov, Pyotr Alexeyevich*—a serf who bought his freedom and longed for a Zemstvo tsar who would defend the interests of the peasantry. Arriving in London in 1861, he became acquainted with Herzen and published in *Kolokol* a letter to Alexander II demanding the convention of a "peasant assembly." When he returned in 1863 he was arrested, sentenced to hard labour and soon died. P. 559

256 Herzen is referring to the peasant uprisings in the village of Bezdna, Kazanskaya Gubernia in 1861, caused by the disappointment of the peasants in "the freedom" they had been granted. The troops that were dispatched to the scene headed by aide-de-camp Apraksin opened fire upon the peasants on April 12. Anton Petrov, the peasants' leader, was arrested and executed. P. 559

257 When they heard of the events in Bezdna the students of Kazan arranged a memorial service to be held for the victims. After this, *Shchapov, A. P.* (1830-1876)—a well-known historian and professor of the University of Kazan, delivered an indignant speech for which he was prosecuted. P. 559

258 Herzen is here referring to *Serno-Solovyovich, Nikolai Alexandrovich* (1834-1866), one of the organizers of the secret society "Zemlya i Volya" (Land and Liberty). In 1862 Serno-Solovyovich was arrested and in 1865 sentenced to life exile in Siberia for his participation in the revolutionary movement and his connections with Herzen. Abroad Serno-Solovyovich published in 1861 the pamphlet *The Final Solution of the Peasant Problem*. In this pamphlet he sharply criticized the February 19 Reform. P. 560

259 *Young Russia*—a leaflet distributed in May 1862 which called for sanguinary retribution against the enemies of the people and the revolution. This leaflet greatly impressed the society since its distribution coincided with the conflagrations that raged in St. Petersburg for several days. The government used this as a pretext to charge the revolutionaries with incendiarism for the purpose of fomenting unrest. P. 560

260 *Katkov, M. N.* (1818-1887) —a Russian reactionary journalist. P. 560

261 An English spiritualist who came to Russia in the sixties. His seances met with great success in society. P. 561

262 The introduction of matriculation cards and other measures taken by the government to curb the freedom of the students caused unrest in a number of universities. P. 562

263 Herzen is quoting Saint-Just's speech in which he calls for decisive terroristic measures to combat the growing counter-revolution. P. 562

[264] *Krasovsky, A. A.*—a lieutenant-colonel, arrested in 1862 for his appeal to the soldiers not to raise their weapons against the insurgent peasants. Sentenced to hard labour, he attempted to escape in 1868, but lost his way and committed suicide. P. 563

[265] Herzen is referring to the revolutionary organization which sprang up in 1861 among the Russian officers of the troops stationed in Poland. Later they joined the secret society "Zemlya i Volya." *Potebnya, Andrei Afanasyevich* was one of the initiators of this society. Joining the Polish insurrection of 1863, he fell in one of the battles. Herzen and Ogaryov became acquainted with him when he came to see them in London. P. 564

[266] The officers *Ivan Arnholdt* and *Pyotr Slivitsky*, and the non-commissioned officer *Frantz Rostkovsky* were arrested in 1862 and shot for their revolutionary propaganda in the army. P. 564

[267] At the end of 1862 Herzen published an open letter to the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, the tsar's brother who was then vicegerent in Poland. This letter was written by the officers who had joined the secret organization (see Note 265), and expressed their refusal to open fire on the Poles in the event of insurrection. To counteract the impression produced by this document on the public opinion of Western Europe, Konstantin Nikolayevich suggested that his chief of staff A. F. Minkvits should compose on behalf of the officers of the troops stationed in Poland another open letter which asserted that the document published by Herzen was false and had not really been signed by the officers in question. The latter were ordered to sign this second letter. P. 566

[268] *Ridiger, Fyodor Vasilyevich* (1781-1856)—a general who took part in the suppression of the Revolution of 1849 in Hungary. P. 567

[269] *Orlov, Nikolai Alexeyevich* (1827-1885)—a diplomat who championed the abolition of corporeal punishment. P. 568

[270] *Padlewski, Sigismund* (1835-1863)—a prominent personage in the Polish rising of 1863. P. 568

[271] Aware of the preparations for the rising in Poland and determined to forestall it, the Russian Government began the enlistment for military service on January 15, 1863 to isolate the Polish youth en masse. This measure induced the Polish revolutionaries to hasten the rising. P. 568

[272] *Hangman*—Myravyov, Mikhail Nikolayevich (1796-1866) was nicknamed hangman for his extraordinary brutality in the suppression of the Polish rising of 1863. *His mouthpiece*—Mikhail Nikifo-

rovich Katkov (1818-1887), who frantically supported Muravyov's measures in Poland in his newspaper *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*. P. 568

273 Herzen calls M. N. Katkov famuli of Gneist since he propounded the ideas of the latter in his magazine *Russky Vestnik* in the late fifties. P. 568

274 *Minin-Sukhoruky, Kuzma* (d. 1616)—the inspirer and leader of the struggle of the Russian people against the Polish invaders (early in the seventeenth century) for the national independence of the Russian state. *Lyapunov, Prokopi* (d. 1611), one of the leaders of the first Opolcheniye (1610-1611) (People's Volunteer Army) against the Polish invaders. P. 569

275 *Figner, A. S.* and *Seslavin, A. N.*—prominent leaders of the guerilla fighting in 1812. P. 569

276 Herzen is here describing the episode which took place at the time of the murder of Emperor Paul I. P. 570

A LETTER TO MY SON ALEXANDER HERZEN

277 *A Letter to My Son Alexander Herzen* was first published by Herzen's son in the magazine *Revue philosophique* (1876, Vol. II, Sept. pp. 290-3) in a French translation. Submitting his father's letter for print, A. A. Herzen wrote the following: "This letter was written on the occasion of the lecture I delivered on the function of the nervous system, in which I asserted that all activity of animals and men is no more than the development of the reflex and may be reduced to it as its source, and, therefore, the freedom of will cannot be admitted and is illusory. My father's remarks gave food for thought, but nonetheless left me convinced that the problem of freedom is essentially a physiological problem. I decided then to write a more extensive work on the subject. My little book on physiology of will appeared as a result." P. 571

TO AN OLD COMRADE

278 *To an Old Comrade* were first published in the collection of posthumous essays (Geneva 1870), compiled and edited by N. P. Ogaryov and A. A. Herzen. The letters are addressed to M. A. Bakunin. All the subsequent editions reprinted the essays as they had appeared in the collection since the original manuscript had been lost. They were written in 1869 (see the exact dates under each of them).

These letters, which mark Herzen's break with Bakunin, are noteworthy because Herzen, who had not hitherto seen that the

revolutionary workers' movement is the genuine path towards the socialist reformation of society, now turned to the First International headed by Karl Marx. They, however, are not free of Proudhonist illusions concerning the possibility of making "the world of factory owners and capitalists" come to terms with "the world of workers" by means of general strikes. While justly criticizing Bakunin's denial of the state, Herzen made the mistake of saying that "the people are conservative by instinct" and that "state forms are necessary to fill up the chasm between the incomprehension of the masses and the one sided civilization of the summits." Condemning Bakunin's ideal of "rebellion" Herzen expressed the unjustified anxiety that the coming revolution might destroy culture, and hence he concluded that it was necessary to "preach to the enemy" to prevent the revolutionary upheaval. P. 576

[279] This is an abbreviation of the quotation from Bentham's letter to Alexander I offering his services in the composition of the Russian Empire's code of law. Herzen used the Russian translation in A. N. Pypin's "Russian Relations of Bentham," published in *Vestnik Yevropy* (1869, Nos. 2 and 4). P. 576

[280] By *International Congresses of Workers* Herzen means the congresses of the First International founded in 1864. Prior to this letter three congresses were held, the first in Geneva in September 1866, the second in Lausanne in September 1867 and the third in Brussels in September 1868. P. 582

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