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HISTORY OF

ITALIAN LITERATURE

VOLUME TWO

HISTORY OF

ITALIAN LITERATURE

BY FRANCESCO DE SANCT'S

TRANSLATED BY JOAN REDFERN

VOLUME TWO



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CHAPTER XIII

THE "ORLANDO FURIOSO"

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO was born in 1474, in the same year as Michelangelo. Machiavelli, Berni, Bembo, Guicciardini, Folengo, Aretino, in fact, all the principal men of this literary era, were born towards the end of the century, close to each other: Machiavelli in 1469, Bembo in 1470, Guicciardini in 1482, Folengo in 1494, and Pietro Aretino in 1492.

In 1498, the very year in which Machiavelli was elected secretary of the Florentine commune, Ludovico was writing his first two comedies in prose. While Machiavelli was occupied with grave affairs of state, and was travelling in Italy and Europe, and was gaining that science of man and that knowledge of the world which were to make him the mirror of the thought and consciousness of the century, Ariosto was leading the life of a literato and was turning out sonnets, elegies, *capitoli*, and comedies, completely immersed in the world of his imagination.

He was twenty-six at the time. Five of these twenty-six years he had wasted at the law, but his father had allowed him to give it up, and he had thrown himself with ardour into letters. With his head stuffed with Virgil, Horace, Petrarch, Plautus, and Terence, he had begun to make verses in Latin and Italian, as every one else was doing: elegies, canzoni, odes, epigrams, madrigals, sonnets, epistles, epithalamia.

In 1494, when Charles VIII descended on Italy, the young Ludovico was writing a Horatian ode to Filiroe, a name he had tacked on to a little peasant girl. Charles threatened:

asperi
furore militis tremendo,
turribus ausoniis ruinam.

by the vast fury of the rough soldier the ruin of the Ausonian towers.

And the young man, stretched full length on the grass and gazing at his Filiroe, writes:

Rursus quid hostis prospiciat sibi,
me nulla tangat cura, sub arbuto
iacentem aquae ad murmur cadentis.

Not a thought vexes me of what the foe may again be designing, as I lie under the trees to the murmur of falling water.

He thinks and he feels and he writes like Horace. The world is collapsing, but what does it matter, so long as he can wander in the fields, following after Lydia, Lycoris, Phyllis, and Glaura, and singing of his loves?

Est mea nunc Glycere, mea nunc est cura Lycoris,
Lyda modo meus est, est modo Phyllis amor. . . .
Antra mihi placeant potius, montesque supini,
vividaque irriguis gramina semper aquis. . . .
Dum vaga mens aliud poscat, procul este Catones.

Now is Glycera my care, mine now the care of Lycoris,
Now Lyda is my love, and now again Phyllis. . . .
More do the grottoes delight me, and sloping hillsides,
And grass springing fresh by the pervading waters. . . .
While my inconstant mind calls for change, be ye far, O Catos.

And he writes *De puella, De Lydia* (one of his lady-loves at Reggio whom he calls by this Horatian name), *De Iulia* (a singer), *De Glycere et Lycori, De Megilla,* and lastly *De catella puellae,* a happy imitation of Catullus. Louis XII conquers the Duchy of Milan, having been summoned by Alexander VI; but what does it matter

si furor, Alpibus
saevo flaminis impetu
iam spretis, quatiat celticus ausones?

if Celtic fury now
The Ausonians shakes as shake the Alps
Before the cruel onslaught of the blast?

What does it matter whether the king he serves is Latin or French?

si sit idem hinc atque hinc non leve servitium? — Whether here or there, is not dire slavery the same?

Barbaricone esse est peius sub nomine, quam sub moribus? — Is it worse to bear the name or the character of a barbarian?

Barbarians all of them, and a wretched crew. And the young fellow, crying out, "O evil condition of this century!" bewails "the destruction and ruin of Latium,"

nuper ab occiduis illatum gentibus, olim
pressa quibus nostro colla fuere iugo.

of late brought us by people of the West
whose necks of yore were pressed by our own yoke.

He turns his eyes away from the spectacle and takes refuge in Horace and Catullus. Near the date of the invasion of Charles VIII we find him in the cathedral of Ferrara, delivering the inaugural speech of philosophical studies, *De laudibus philosophiae,* and next putting it into hexameters. He writes sonnets, canzoni, elegies, in which we feel the study of Petrarch. In 1493, at nineteen, he writes an elegy on the death of Leonora of Aragon, wife of the Duke of Ferrara. In the preamble the hand of the student and the amateur is still noticeable:

Rime disposte a lamentarvi sempre,
accompagnate il miserabil core
in altro stil che in amorose tempre:
ch' or giustamente da mostrar dolore
abbiamo causa, ed è sí grave il danno
che appena so s' esser potria maggiore.

O rhymes, always ready for lamentations, accompany my miserable heart in other ways than in loving mood:

for now have we just cause for showing sorrow, and the loss is so great that I hardly know if it could be greater.

In Italian, his loves are Platonic, à la Petrarch; in Latin they are sensuous, à la Horace. In Latin he holds Megilla in his arms, and cannot believe his eyes, and says:

An haec vera Megilla,
cuius detineor sinu?
Haec, haec, vera mea est; nil modo fallimur,
mi anceps anime: en sume cupita iam
mellita oscula, sume
expectata diu bona.

Is this indeed Megilla
Who holds me to her heart?
She 'tis and mine, nor do we err,
O my twin soul! Take now
The honeyed kisses long desired,
Take now the good so long awaited.

But in Italian Megilla is "the lofty beauty who illumines and whitens the West," and the lover is "slow and halting in his words," and does not describe her, for "who can adequately describe the sun?" "*Non è valor uman che tanto ascenda*"—"There is no human power that aspires so high." If he had happened to know Greek, no doubt Anacreon and Theocritus would have put another phraseology into his imagination. But at that time he was full of everything that was Latin and was not thinking of Greek:

Ché 'l saper nella lingua degli achei
non mi reputo onor, s' io non intendo
prima il parlar de li latini miei.
Mentre l' uno acquistando, e differendo
vo l' altro, l' occasion fuggi sdegnata,
poi che mi porge il crine ed io nol prendo.

For I would not think it creditable to know the language of the Achaians without first understanding the tongue of my own Latins.

What with acquiring the one and trying to make out the other, the occasion would flee away with contempt, having offered me its hair and I not having seized it.

When he was still only twenty-one his father died, and he found himself the head of the family, with little sisters and brothers round him, so Homer had to be put aside for account books:

Mi more il padre, e da Maria il pensiero
dietro a Marta bisogna ch' io rivolga,
ch' io muti in squarci ed in vachette Omero.

My father died, and I was forced to turn my thoughts from Mary to Martha, and to give up Homer for account books.

Then he came to the court, and no longer had the leisure nor the means for reading "in the writer's own language" what Ulysses suffered at Troy and later in his long rovings, or the writings of Euripides, Pindar, and the rest, whom the generous Muses had endowed with "so sweet and fruitful a tongue," for Cardinal d'Este, his master, sent him hither and thither, and he felt the weight of his yoke:

E di poeta cavallar mi feo:
vedi se per le balze e per le fosse
io potevo imparar greco o caldeo.

And from a poet he turned me into a post-boy. Imagine if I could learn Greek or Chaldean while riding over rocks and ditches!

A fruit of his studies and imitations was the *Cassaria*, a comedy in prose, written with all the rules of the comedies of Plautus, a work that seemed truly a miracle to the people of Ferrara, because it gave them in Italian precisely what they were accustomed to admire in Latin. Comedy and tragedy had taken the place of the mysteries and the farces—with all the rules of poetic art, and with the forms of Plautus and Terence. And not only was the mechanism of the Latins copied, but also the same comic world was reproduced—the world of servants, parasites, courtesans, miserly fathers and spendthrift sons. And the young author who had turned his peasant girls into Phyllis and Lycoris lived entirely in that world of Plautus, and working away at his imitations lost touch with the society in which he lived. His comedy is not a creation but a reconstruction. By keeping his attention so continually on the mechanism he allowed the finest situations and comic contrasts to escape him. In Bibbiena and Lasca there is a sort of life that comes from the *Decameron*—an indescribable something of the licentious and buffoonish, in keeping with the comic spirit which had grown in Florence, and which we feel in Lasca, and in Berni, secretary to Bibbiena. But Ariosto was quite outside of that atmosphere, in a world entirely composed of erudition; and when he tried to be comic he only succeeded in being gross.

And moreover, that world being a thing already put together, with its character settled beforehand, he was ill at ease in it and was unable to give himself up to it or to absorb it. There are certainly comic effects in his *Cassaria,* produced by the confusions, the intrigues, the ambiguities, which arise from chance or malice, in a dramatic interweaving that is often a strain to the attention. But something more than intrigue is required in a work if the interest is to be kept alive when the characters are not properly developed nor the plot resolved into a comic situation. Trappola, Volpino, Nebbia, Erofilo, Lucrano, are meaningless creatures, and not a single fundamental scene develops from the plot—not a single scene in which the whole of the interest converges. Later he was to turn out other comedies, persistently doing them in *sdruccioli,* so as to copy more closely from the Latin, for the *sdrucciolo* metre seemed the perfect imitation of Latin, and to come extraordinarily near to iambics. But this ill-chosen form, which does not succeed in being poetry and fails to be prose, did not make his comedies more successful, though now and again their subjects were suited to the feeling of his day, as with the *Negromante.* But having taken the wrong road he never could get right again. A magician or astrologer who trades on his art and gets money out of fools by his lies was a popular subject, and was very fashionable with the story-writers of that day. Boccaccio had peopled his scene with priests or friars—for instance, the priest of Varlungo or Frate Cipolla. Now the swindlers and cheats were not priests or friars, but astrologers: the names were different but the comic motif was the same. We have seen with what brio this motif was treated by Lasca in one of his tales: we felt the tradition and malice of Boccaccio and the atmosphere of Florence, where the clever apothecary was walking in the steps of Sacchetti, Pulci, and Lorenzo the Magnificent. But the thing that we feel in the *Negromante* of Ariosto is the Latin world—the world in which the servant is intellectually the superior of his master—and depicted by a person who has not been able

to sink himself deep in it and does not understand it, but has learnt it from books. Cintio, Camillo, Massimo, are more like mummies than men, and are easy victims of the rogues who surround them. They are not the centre of the picture but are merely its background—the vile herd on which the servants and adventurers practise their tricks: a profound conception, if Ariosto had only discovered it for himself and had turned it into comedy. But he is foreign to that Latin world of comedy, and is never really in it, presenting it as though it were the most ordinary thing possible—that world seen upside down, in which the servants know more than their masters, and become their teachers and rescuers, like Fozio and Temolo, who see through the machinations of the magician and defeat them. The magician, the principal character, is not a real astrologer as in Lasca, or in the sense that Boccaccio's priest was a priest, but is an out-and-out rogue, who is practising astrology without the smallest belief in it. In Lasca the comedy springs from astrology turned into a joke; but here astrology is only a sort of stage property, and has nothing to do with the action of the play. If the magician, Maestro Iachelino, had been a real astrologer, tricked by the servants while endeavouring to trick the masters, the conception would have been as witty as the astrologer of Lando, who is fooled by the peasant, even by the peasant's donkey. But Ariosto's astrologer is an ignorant creature, who according to Nibbio, his servant and confidant, can barely read and is bad at writing, but all the same professes to be a philosopher, a physician, an alchemist, an astrologer, a magician,

e sa di queste e dell' altre scienzie
che sa l' asino e 'l bue di sonar gli organi.

and knows about as much of these and other sciences as an ox knows about organ-playing.

So the whole thing is reduced to a competition in malice between Maestro Iachelino and Nibbio on the one hand, and the servants,

Fozio and Temolo, on the other. Here and there in the play there are fine passages, which prove that the author had powers of perception and a comic spirit above the average; for instance, the passage in which Cintio talks to his servant of the wonderful things done by the magician, and the servant makes fun of the magician and also of his master: the servant who, in the end, is the person who plays tricks on them all. Cintio tells him seriously that Maestro Iachelino has the power to change men and women into animals. Temolo answers:

Si vede far tutto il dí, né mir-
acolo
è cotesto. . . .
Non vedete voi che subito
un divien podestade, commissario,
provveditore, gabelliere, giudice,
notaio, pagator degli stipendii,
che li costumi umani lascia, e
prendeli
o di lupo o di volpe o di alcun
nibbio?

But one sees it all day long; this thing is not a miracle. . . . Do you not see that when a person becomes mayor, commissary, purveyor, custom-house officer, judge, notary, bursar, he at once ceases to have human habits, and takes on those of a wolf, or a fox, or some sort of vulture?

And Cintio says: "I see how it is: you only speak in that way because you know so little of the world. But I presume at least that you believe he can exorcise spirits." And Temolo answers:

Di questi spirti, a dirvi il ver,
pochissimo
per me ne crederei; ma li grandi
uomini,
e principi e prelati, che vi cre-
dono,
fanno col loro esempio ch' io,
vilissimo
fante, vi credo ancora.

To tell you the truth I of my own accord would believe very little in those spirits; but the great men of the world, the princes and prelates, who believe in them, compel me, who am only a base-born servant, to believe in them too, because of their example.

The irony of this passage is stupendous: the ignorant peasant, with the good sense that Nature has given him, is making fun of the great men of the world. A situation that is purely dramatic is where Nibbio, seeing the snare which has been set for Cintio

and Massimo, and for Camillo, the richest of them, asks the magician:

Delle tre starne che in piè avete, ditemi
qual mangiarete?

Astrologo

Vedraimi ir beccandole
ad una ad una, ed attaccarmi in ultimo
alla piú grassa, e tutta divorarmela.

Nibbio

Eccoven' una, e la miglior: mettetevi,
se avete fame, a piacer vostro a tavola.

Astrologo

Chi è? Camillo?

Nibbio

Sí.

Astrologo

Sí ben; mangiarmelo voglio, che l' ossa non credo ci restino.

Which of these three partridges set before you are you going to eat?

Astrologer

Thou shalt see me picking them one by one, and at the last getting my teeth into the fattest, and devouring it.

Nibbio

There is one that is the best of them. Sit down comfortably at table if you are hungry.

Astrologer

Which is it? Camillo?

Nibbio

Yes.

Astrologer

Very well; I am ready to eat him up so that not a bone of him will be left.

And when the astrologer's knavery is exposed, it is Nibbio, the servant and go-between, who gives him the donkey's kick, robs him, and goes off and leaves him there. These are good touches swamped by much that is conventional and superficial, and poorly developed, and bungled at their climaxes. The author is better at narrating, at expounding, at describing, than at dramatizing. In one of Nibbio's soliloquies we are shown most admirably the kind of man Maestro Iachelino is, but when we get him in action we find that he is dull and vapid and gross, not at all what we expected.

Ariosto was not on a level in culture with the many learned men of his time, nor even on a level with some of the men at

court. Cardinal Ippolito valued poets (an idle class of people in his opinion) much less than he did his lackeys and servants; and wanting to put our poet to some use he made him into a post-boy, and sent him riding about on his business. Leo X was pope, and Ludovico, recalling the great friendship that Leo had shown to him and his family in past times when they had been banished from Florence, went to him in Rome full of hope and received fine words from him—but nothing else. He went to Florence, too, on a mission from the court of Ferrara. The deep impression made on his imagination by the sight of Florence is proved by an elegy he wrote on that occasion:

A veder pien di tante ville i colli
par che 'l terren ve le germogli, come
vermène germogliar suole e rampolli.

When one sees the hills so covered with villas one feels that they have sprung from the ground just as sprigs and suckers are used to sprout from it.

Se dentro un mur, sotto un medesmo nome,
fosser raccolti i tuoi palazzi sparsi,
non ti sarian da pareggiar due Rome.

And were these scattered palaces to be collected inside a wall and under a single name, two Romes put together would not compare with them.

He was sent to Garfagnana as its governor, and complained that the Cardinal had snatched him away from his sweet studies and dear friends and forced him into that "unpleasant labyrinth." And finally, the Cardinal wanted to drag him in his train into Hungary. But here our poet loses hold of himself, and declares that nothing on earth would take him to Hungary. If he was to praise the Cardinal in verse, very well, he was prepared to do it. But to go as a super in his suite, well, no, he refuses:

Io, stando qui, farò con chiara tromba
il suo nome sonar forse tanto alto,
che tanto mai non si levò colomba.

I shall remain here, and I shall blow a clear-sounding trumpet and cause his name to ring perhaps more highly than ever pigeon rose into the air.

And he praised him in Latin, and in the vulgar tongue too, but more brazenly in Latin:

Quis patre invicto gerit Hercule fortius arma?

Who bore arms more bravely than the unconquered father Hercules?

mystica quis casto castius Hyppolito?

Who celebrated mysteries more chastely than chaste Hippolytus?

But Ippolito did not care for his praises; he wanted him as servant, not as poet:

Non vuol che laude sua da me composta
per opra degna di mercé si pona:
di mercé degno è l' ir correndo in posta. . . .

He will not admit that the praises I compose for him are worth money. But to go running about with the post is worth money. . .

S' io l' ho con laude ne' miei versi messo,
dice ch' io l' ho fatto a piacere e in ozio:
piú grato fôra essergli stato appresso.

And when I have praised him in verse he has said that I did it for my own pleasure, in idle moments; he would have been better pleased if I had been at his elbow.

Ludovico Ariosto, writer of comedies, was himself the most comic of characters. And while he succeeded but poorly with his comedies, in which he painted a conventional world, when he showed himself just as he was, simply and naturally, he succeeded marvellously. He had qualities that make us fond of him. He loved his little brothers and sisters and his aged mother, and was ready, for their sakes, to stay in harness, though he fretted at the bit. His ideal life was a tranquil existence in his own house, staying at home and versifying, living and letting live. The poor fellow was idyllic by nature, had no ambition, cared nothing for greatness or honours. He preferred a turnip in his own home to a "thrush, partridge, or wild boar" at other people's tables.

E cosí sotto una vil coltre,
come di seta o d' oro ben mi corco.
E piú mi piace di posar le poltre

So under a mean coverlet I lie down as comfortably as under a golden or a silken one. And I am better pleased to rest my weary

membra, che di vantarle che agli sciti
sien state, agl' indi, agli etiòpi ed oltre.
Degli uomini son vari gli appetiti:
a chi piace la chierca, a chi la spada,
a chi la patria, a chi li strani liti.
Chi vuole andare a torno, a torno vada;
vegga Inghilterra, Ongheria, Francia e Spagna:
a me piace abitar la mia contrada.
Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
quel monte che divide e quel che serra
l' Italia, e un mare e l' altro che la bagna.

limbs than to praise them for having wandered among the Scythians, the Indians, the Ethiopians, and even further.

Men's tastes differ. Some like the tonsure, some the sword, some their own country, and some foreign lands. Whosoever wants to gad, then let him gad; let him see England, Hungary, France, and Spain. For myself, I like to live in my own country. I have seen Tuscany, Lombardy, and Romagna, the mountain that divides Italy and the one that shuts her off, and both the seas that lave her.

Questo mi basta: il resto della terra,
senza mai pagar l' oste, andrò cercando
con Tolomeo, sia il mondo in pace o in guerra.

And that's enough for me; the remainder of the earth I will explore with Ptolemy, without ever paying the host, and whether the world is at peace or at war.

But the difficulty is that he is not let live; he has the Cardinal weighing him down, feels irritated, and vents his humour on this and that. Now and then, though rarely, the irritation rises to the height of indignation, and he breaks into noble words:

Apollo, tua mercé, tua mercé, santo
collegio delle muse, io non possiedo
tanto per voi ch' io possa farmi un manto.
Or, conchiudendo, dico che, se 'l sacro
cardinal comperato avermi stima

O Apollo, thanks to thee, thanks to thee, O sainted teacher of the Muses, because of thee I do not possess the money to make me a mantle.

And now I say in conclusion that if the holy Cardinal thinks to have bought me with his gifts, it

con li suoi doni, non mi è acerbo ed acro
renderli e tôr la libertá mia prima.
Se avermi dato onde ogni quattro mesi
ho venticinque scudi, né si fermi
che molte volte non mi sien contesi,
mi debbe incatenar, schiavo tenermi,
obbligarmi ch' io sudi e tremi, senza
rispetto alcun ch' io muoia o ch' io m' infermi;
non gli lasciate aver questa credenza:
ditegli che piú tosto ch' esser servo,
torrò la povertade in pazienza.

is not sour and acrid in me to give them back to him and regain my former liberty.

If he has given me money, so that every four months I have twenty-five scudi (and not so certain either, for they are often disputed), is this to chain me and keep me a slave, and make me sweat and tremble, with no care whether I die or fall sick?

Let him not think it: tell him that sooner than be a servant I will bear poverty with patience.

But sparks like these are rare in him. He is not so submissive of soul nor so greedy of honours as to copy the courtiers and sacrifice his comfort to please the Cardinal, nor yet so proud as to break his chains once for all and send him to the Devil. He serves him grumblingly and gives vent to his ill humour with a face that belongs to the Sancho Panzas and the Don Abbondios of the world. And stupendously comic situations are the result; for example, his journey to Rome, so filled with hopes of his friend Leo. How well he was received! But only with words, and at night he was forced to go as far as the Insegna del Montone [1] for his supper:

Piegossi a me dalla beata sede:
la mano e poi le gote ambe mi prese,
e il santo bacio in amendue mi diede. . . .
Indi, col seno e con la falda piena

He bent towards me from his sacred chair, and took my hand and gave me the holy kiss on both my cheeks. . . .

Then, with my breast and robe full of hope, but splashed with

[1] A humble inn near the Pantheon.

di speme, ma di pioggia molle e brutto,
la notte andai sin al "Montone" a cena.

rain and mud, I went at night as far as the Sign of the Ram for my supper.

Now he gets irritated, and works it off by describing the exorbitant avarice of the cardinals; now he is philosophic, as much as to say, "and even if I were as rich as the Grand Turk himself, and had three or four mitres, what good would it do me?"

Sia ver che d' oro m' empia la scarsella
e le maniche e il grembo e, se non basta,
m' empia la gola, il ventre e le budella . . .
in ch' util mi risulta essermi stanco
in salir tanti gradi? Meglio fôra
starmi in riposo o affaticarmi manco.

Even supposing it were true that he had filled my purse with gold, and my sleeves and lap; and more, if he had filled my throat, belly, and bowels . . . what good would it have done me to have tired myself climbing so many steps? It would have been better to have rested and to have tired myself less.

And now he has the air of excusing the Pope—poor thing! What with relations and the cardinals, who gave him the "finest of all mantles," and friends who helped him to come back to Florence, what a lot of people he has to provide with drinks!

Se fin che tutti beano aspetto a trarne
la volontá di bere, o me di sete
o secco il pozzo d' acqua veder parme:
meglio è star nella solita quiete.

If I wait here till the wish to drink has gone out of me, it seems to me that either I shall have dried up from thirst, or the well of water will have gone dry. It is better to stay quiet, as usual.

This magnificent situation is developed with a rich variety of motifs and shades of meaning, with perfect truth of characterization, and with an irony that is all the more pungent the more he has the air of being ingenuous and good-natured. And it is the same with Ludovico as governor; he paints with irascible strokes the people he is governing, and bemoans the

time wasted on them. And it is the same with Ludovico when he refuses to go to Hungary, or when he recommends his son to Pietro Bembo, or when he tells of his life, with its vexations, and of his studies. Between the lines of his irritation we recognize that special type of resignation which belongs to feeble characters, which means: "What can one do? Just bear it, that's all." And we find a sort of confiding amiability, which leads him to show up his faults as though they were pearls of price. Berni was the same—Berni, who decked himself out in his indolence. But Berni overloaded his colours and played the buffoon to make people laugh, while Ariosto paints himself just as he is, and merely to give vent to his moods—and the less he tries for effects, the more he gets them. We laugh at the people he describes, and a little bit at himself, but without his guessing it for a moment. In a century so artificial as this, when reality of life has been forgotten among all the studies and imitations and all the striving for effects, Ludovico, who in comedies or canzoni keeps to the conventional world, here in his own person, like Benvenuto Cellini, creates one of the most interesting of comic characters. For not only is the picture his own portrait, but it is also the portrait of the Italian bourgeois and literato of that time, on his less objectionable side. He has seen Rome, has seen Florence, and has been in Lombardy, but his world has not grown wider: the centre of his existence is still Ferrara, and he is wrapped up, as before, in his family affairs, in his worries at the court, his little vexations, his love-affairs, his literary connections, his private concerns—and just at the very moment when Italy is overrun by barbarians and struggling in her death agony. Here we have the cultured, thoughtless bourgeois, lazy, tranquil, living entirely with his family or among the merry companies, with his quietude and his "*Fuge rumores.*" There is a touch of Horace in the portrait, but with Ludovico the imitation is unintentional; it comes from a likeness of soul, of genius. Our laughter is free from bitterness and contempt, for we feel that this man we are laughing at is honest,

kindly, ingenuous, inoffensive, has all the likable qualities of good, feeble creatures. In Ariosto there is nothing of the *capitolo* or the satire, for it never occurs to him to scoff or censure; his only wish is to unload his vexations on his brother or his friend. So his narration is mixed with pithy remarks, jokes, mottoes, proverbs, irritated spurts of the imagination, and satirical strokes, portraits, and above all the prettiest of descriptions, which really are little masterpieces. The *terza rima*—the heroic and tragic language of the Middle Ages, the language of the *Divine Comedy* and of the *Trionfi*—in this profound literary transformation has turned into the language of comedy, and is the metre of the *capitolo*, of the satire, of the epistle, with a note of contempt in it that brings it near to prose. In these epistles of Ariosto, the change is complete; the *terzina* is profoundly modified, and is pedestrian, sharpened, and pithy, like an epigram or a proverb.

The *terzina*, like the sonnet and the proverb, was the literary and traditional form. The *ottava*, the octave, of which the rough outline has already been visible in the *rispetti* and the songs of the people, was the language of romances, narrations, descriptions, and was brought to perfection by Politian. It was the fashionable and popular form, and the *terzina* would have remained stationary and conventional, like the sonnet and the canzone, except that Berni and Ariosto endowed it with a new life, by snatching it away from Heaven and putting it on the earth and giving it a dress suited to the day. The *ottava rima* sang; the *terzina* discoursed, ridiculed, satirized, expressed the prosaic and everyday part of life.

It was among these many vexations and little pricks of life that Ariosto wrote his *Orlando furioso;* he was continually annoyed by Cardinal Ippolito, who felt that the time that should have been spent in his "service" was being thrown away on these "*corbellerie*" ("fooleries"), as he called them.

Boiardo had broken off his *Orlando innamorato* at the very moment when Charles VIII was coming down the Alps, to go

"who knows where," and he died soon afterwards, at the time when Ludovico was busy translating Plautus and Terence and writing comedies that were splendidly produced at the court theatre. The fame of Boiardo, the Homer of Ferrara, spurred Ariosto on to attempt some work in the same style. He commenced an epic tale in *terza rima* telling of the deeds of the Este family, but gave it up immediately, the metre being badly suited to his broad vein; and he made up his mind then and there to continue the tale of Orlando, taking it up at the point where Boiardo had laid it down. He consulted Bembo on the matter, and Bembo advised him to write it in Latin. The *Orlando* in Latin! Bembo had not grasped what it was. But Ariosto had grasped it—Ariosto, whose delight it was to read it—and he resolved without more ado to use the same metre and the same forms. So he laid aside his classical imitations and let his genius go free. He commenced the work in 1505, in his thirty-first year, and was immersed in it for ten years, and spent the rest of his life in amending it. There are many tales of his absent-mindedness. He is supposed to have gone as far as Modena in slippers and to have noticed the fact only when he was halfway on his journey. What was in his head then? The *Orlando furioso*. Never was a work of art conceived or toiled at with a greater degree of seriousness than was the *Orlando*.

But the thing that made it serious was not any feeling for religion or morality or patriotism (for not a trace of these things had survived in art) but was the pure feeling of art for its own sake—the need of the artist to realize his phantasms. In his aims there was also a slight desire to follow the taste of the century, and play on the chords that it enjoyed, and partly a desire to weave together a history, or rather a panegyric, of the House of Este. But these were aims that never became more than accessories, and were swamped and forgotten in the immensity of the canvas. The thing that inspired him, that filled his mind, was a higher feeling, a feeling that to him was faith, morality, and everything else into the bargain; and this feeling

was the cult for lovely form, the pure inspiration of the artist. We find him changing and rechanging his poem until he has clothed his creations in the ultimate form that satisfies him. And this warmth of talent and this seriousness resulted in the great epic work of the Renaissance—the temple dedicated to art, the only god that was still revered in Italy.

Ariosto and Dante were the two standard-bearers of opposed civilizations. Each of them stood between two centuries and each was announced by lesser planets: they were the syntheses in which their times were completed and closed. Dante closed the Middle Ages; Ariosto closed the Renaissance.

Each of these two men was a portrait of his age. Dante was more poet than artist; the artist in him was damaged by scholasticism, by allegory, by asceticism, and also by the very greatness and energy of the man. In his consciousness there was a real world, which was too alive and was too impassioned and too resistant to be transformed and dissolved by art. And that real world was enveloped in forms so dense and so fixed that his deep gaze could not always pierce them and reach to the thing in its truth.

With Ariosto this world of Dante had already been dissolved, in both its reality and its forms, and dissolved by a work that had been written before his time, in which he had taken no part. In Petrarch we already saw the dawning of the artist who was fashioning the world of his heart and composing it like a painter, believing in it and becoming impassioned by it, feeling its torments and joys. And in Boccaccio art had begun to amuse itself at the expense of that reality and those forms of Dante. The smirk of Lorenzo and the mocking laugh of Pulci had already passed over that world; and on the altars of the empty temple had already risen the new divinity announced by Orpheus, among the refined perfumes of Politian. There was nothing left for Ludovico Ariosto either to affirm or to deny; he found a surface already cleared, through no work of his own. He neither believed nor disbelieved: he was just indifferent. He

found himself in a world empty of everything that is noble and lofty—without religion, without fatherland, without morality—and he was not very interested in it. He was a good man in his way, a man of kind and liberal instincts, one who served his master not with anger and rebellion, but patiently though sulkily, and he filled the part that his poverty forced him to accept with faithfulness, with intelligence, but without enthusiasm and without its affecting his inner life in the least. People regarded him as absent-minded; but the fact is, ordinary life was only a distraction to him, an accessory; his occupation was art. He was a mediocre, middle-class man, like most of the literati of that time; a kindly man, but one whose kindness and tranquillity were easily turned into irritation; a man who was not able to set himself free, and at the same time was not capable of really submitting to servitude, who took a small view of everything, and was wrapped in his little contrarieties, and who often makes us laugh by his absent-mindedness and his cholers. But if we look at this same man when his fancy is let loose and he is creating, we shall see him with gaze illuminated and face inspired—a man who feels that he is a god. For there, on that brow, is the only thing that was still alive in Italy—the artist.

In Italy that world of chivalry—that world which filled his imagination—had never been anything but a world of fantasy, seen from afar. But when every form of idealism had become corrupted, many people were seeking in chivalry for the ideal of goodness and virtue that others had found in pastoral life. So on the ruins of the Middle Ages rose the chivalric poem and the idyllic poem—the two poetical and ideal worlds of the Renaissance. Some lingering memory of that world of chivalry survived among the people, but dimmed by time and confused as to dates, places, and events. Moreover, it had come to them not through national tradition, but through the reading of translations or imitations of romances. But an image that bore some resemblance to it was still to be found in the courts, where there existed that indefinable something of knightly and gentle and

human which went by the name of "courtesy," and shows were frequently held that awakened memories of the chivalric forms and customs. So there did exist a world of chivalry in the Italian consciousness, distinguished from the world of the common people by its cleanness of forms and nicety of feeling. Its laws did not derive from the Bible, but from the fact of being a knight and a gentleman; even today we have the expression "behaving like a gentleman." This world of chivalry had its codes of honour and of love, with all the obligations of a valiant and noble knight: constancy and faithfulness in love, devotion to his lord, the keeping of his word, the protecting of the weak, satisfaction for offences against honour: these were the chief articles of the code. Taken together, they constituted what was known as the "point of honour." We have already met with this world of courtesy in the *Decameron*—the poetical world opposed to plebeian roughness. And certainly Gerbino and Guglielmo and the daughter of Tancredi and Federigo degli Alberighi are noble images of a world superior in fineness and in pride of temper. But in the Italian courts—for instance, in the courts of Urbino, of Ferrara, of Mantua—there was hardly a glimmer remaining of these feelings, and the little that did survive was more in appearance than in substance, so that often we find the most shameless treachery coupled with elegant and gallant customs, as in Cesare Borgia. So a true and deep feeling for honour was not an intimate part of the national character; and though men of honour of course existed, there was certainly no people, and no class as a whole, in which honour was a rule of life. Moreover, the cultured and enlightened men of that day were inclined to consider fools the people who observed those laws to their own disadvantage and inconvenience. They saw such observance as stupidity instead of as virtue, and it awakened that little hint of irony which is just concealed and no more in the exclamation of the poet: "*O gran bontá di cavalieri antiqui!*"—"Oh, the great goodness of the knights of old!"

So a serious feeling for chivalry—a feeling that was capable

of inspiring a work like the *Cid*—was non-existent in Italy; and the crumbling of every religious, moral, and political feeling had left honour without a basis, bared of everything except one or two of the more superficial qualities that are brilliant rather than solid, and which we find in the *Cortigiano* of Castiglione. Like mythology and like religion, chivalry was legend and romance, a world of the imagination that was interesting not for its ideals but for the novelty, the variety, and the extraordinariness of its chance events. And in proportion as the meaning was empty and frivolous, the content became fantastic and lewd, and all the limits of time and space and verisimilitude were done away with. The *cantastorie* aimed at tickling the curiosity and satisfying the imagination by weaving the most absurd fables on the old traditional groundwork of chivalry, and by entwining these fables in such a way as to keep the attention curious and suspended; and the result is that curious form of narration with interruptions, interpolations, and taking up again of the thread, with even the outward plot of the story incoherent.

But a science of man and Nature was already dawning. The invention of printing, the discoveries of Copernicus, the voyages of Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci, the writings of Pomponazzi, the *Discorsi* of Machiavelli, the Reformation, the solid construction of the great states like Spain, France, and England, were enormous facts, which were renewing the face of the world. But as yet their results were not very clear; and the modern world of man and of Nature, or, to say it in a word, of science, was still like a sun enveloped in mists, which obstruct its rays. These mists were the popular world of the imagination, which filled the earth with miracles instead of looking to science. Everything supernatural was accumulated and believed in, whether the miracles of the Christians, or the prodigies of the pagans, or the charms of wizards and fairies, or the frauds of the astrologers. And man, standing in the middle of that bewitched Nature, was about worthy of it: a primitive, credulous, ignorant being, governed by desires and passions, and

moved to action by sudden impulses rather than by reflection; one who never stopped to look into himself, and lived entirely on the surface, all in the outer tumult and the heat of life. So man was more like a force of Nature than a conscious being, a force pulled this way and that and confused by the changing play of events, poor in character and in autonomy.

Yet all the same, Italy was the country in which man from the point of view of intelligence was the most matured by education and culture; it was the country in which the supernatural was not admitted under any of its forms except as a mere poetic mechanism, a game of the imagination. In the other parts of Europe there was still a link between the world of chivalry and the real world, but in Italy that link had been broken, and chivalry had become a world of pure imagination. Ariosto was anything but a man of chivalry, indeed, he approached the comic. And when he was seized by the wish to continue the story of Boiardo he was like a painter who is equally ready to depict a saint, a nymph, or a fairy so long as he can do it well. People often ask what aim Ariosto had. He had no aim at all except the aim of representing and painting that world of chivalry. Homer sang the wrath of Achilles, Virgil sang Aeneas, Dante sang the redemption of the soul. But Ariosto does not sing the deeds of Agramante or Charles, nor the madness of Orlando, nor the loves of Ruggiero and Bradamante. The deeds of Agramante are only the fixed point around which his world is developed; they are not its reason for existing, but provide the time and the place for it to show itself. He sings of the ladies and the knights, of the courtesies and daring exploits that took place at the time when Agramante came to France. The madness of Orlando and the loves of Ruggiero are not episodes, for the reason that there is no central action, but are only important parts of that immense totality which is called the world of chivalry. And so the unity does not consist in this or that action, nor in this or that personage, but in the whole of the spirit and development of that world in that very place and in those very

times. If the deeds of Agramante had been true and serious action, the reason for the poem, instead of merely the stuff from which the chivalric world was developed, and if Orlando and Ruggiero had been episodes in that action, the romance would have been as defective as the *Divine Comedy* would be if judged by the same criterion. And how fine are those episodes which invade the action and overload it! How fine, too, is that action itself, whose chief incidents are outside the poem in Boiardo's story, and which interests Ariosto only mildly. He only remembers it when the threads have grown too scattered and he wants to draw them together again. He forgets it gladly and for long stretches at a time, and when it is finished he carries on the poem without it. "Unity of action" and "episodes" are conventional terms bequeathed by Aristotle and Horace; it would only be absurd to apply them to the world of chivalry, because the very essence of chivalry is precisely the freedom of the individual, the want of seriousness and order, and the want of continuity, the want of a single main action, so that the deeds in chivalry are known as "adventures," and the knights are "errant." To be cut off from the centre and go wandering about seeking adventures, is the essence of that world, as alien to unity as to discipline. To want to arrange it by the rules of Aristotle and Horace is to want to falsify it, for order here is disorder, and unity is variety. Just as the unity of the world in its endless variety depends on its spirit or laws, so the unity of this vast representation is in the spirit or laws of chivalry.

The converging force is extremely feeble in this world of liberty and individual initiative, and the help of the Angel Michael or the Devil is required to draw the knights errant to Paris, where the fighting is. And we find them in Paris on only two occasions, and for barely a day at a time; the very next day they are off again, running after the phantasms of their passions, drawn by love or by glory, and without exception enjoying strange and marvellous adventures. Even the

undertaking of Agramante is not a religious nor a poetical thing, but is a great adventure like the rest, caused by the wish for revenge. A stable point is Paris, where Charles and Agramante are facing each other with their armies. But their paladins and knights, who are chiefly kings and gentlemen, go rushing here and there, and Paris is nothing more than a point of convergence, where the story gathers itself together every now and then and takes a rest, and which the poet makes use of to arrange and tie up the threads in certain great intervals. For beyond and above this chivalric anarchy is the calm and harmonious author, who holds the threads in his hands and weaves them skilfully, who knows how to stir up curiosity without fatiguing the attention, and how to accumulate the intrigue with so great a variety and spontaneity of movement, and to bring into the story for our benefit persons and events that we thought he had forgotten. In the midst of the greatest appearance of disorder he is holding the threads, the only tranquil and smiling person in the midst of the tumult of so many disputing elements. The main nucleus of the plot is Paris; it is like a lighthouse, which flashes out from time to time and illumines everything around it. The scene opens in Paris, when the Christians have just been routed. And precisely at this critical time of urgent, desperate need Rinaldo, Orlando, and Brandimarte go off: Rinaldo to run after Baiardo (Bayard), Orlando to run after Angelica, and Brandimarte to run after Orlando. We are plunged into the heart of the world of chivalry: adventures develop. And while these knights are running about on their different quests Agramante sets fire to Paris and Rodomonte enters it alone, sowing terror among the people. Paris is saved because of a miraculous rain that comes down and extinguishes the fire; and Rinaldo, guided by the Angel Michael, arrives in the city exactly at the right moment and routs the pagans: Agramante, formerly the besieger, is now the besieged. The pagan knights are knights errant like the others; Ferraú goes looking for Orlando, having made a vow to wrench off his

casque; Gradasso goes looking for Rinaldo, to rescue Baiardo from him; Sacripante goes after Angelica; Marfisa, Rodomonte, Ruggiero, and Mandricardo quarrel and fight. The Devil succeeds in making them run after Doralice's horse, which draws them to Paris. They arrive at Paris and rout the Christians. But the very next day they have come to blows again: Mandricardo is killed by Ruggiero, and Marfisa and Rodomonte leave the battlefield in anger.

Then who is left? Among the Christians there is Rinaldo, and among the pagans Ruggiero. A duel between Rinaldo and Ruggiero is to end the war, but Agramante breaks the pact. Agramante is defeated and his fleet is scattered by contrary winds, and looking on from a distance he sees his country being burnt by the Christians. The poem, which opened in Paris, closes in Paris, with the nuptials of Ruggiero and the death of Rodomonte. Paris is the hinge of the tale, but is not its soul nor its inner motive. Its motive is the spirit of adventure and the satisfying of appetites—love, or the point of honour, or the marvellous, which draws the knights in its train, that is to say, when they are not misled or kept back by supernatural forces. The supernatural is merely a machine or force, without personality, and Michael and the Devil and Discord and Atlante and Melissa are only forces, not persons. It is a supernatural robbed of its aureole and prestige; and the enchanted swords and shields and the magic rings and the hippogriffs and Argalía's lance and Astolfo's horn and the other stories of the same kind are stale and familiar, and leave the poet's imagination cold. He is so accustomed to this supernatural that he exists in it as though it were something quite ordinary. That never-varying fantastic finishes by cutting its own throat and losing its points and its colours. If we are interested in it at all, it is not because of the magic itself, but because of the tragic or comic results that the poet knows how to draw from it; for example, the comic results of Astolfo's horn. In this supernatural world there lives an undisciplined, almost primitive

force in its various stages of development from the monster and the giant and the pagan up to the Christian knight, whose model of conduct is the code of honour, and who represents civilization and progress amid the prevailing barbarism. Love, honour, the marvellous, the spirit of adventure, which are the spiritual motives of this world, are carried by the poet as far as that extreme point which approaches the ridiculous. Orlando is robbed of his senses by love, and Rodomonte is brutalized by love; the point of honour degenerates into punctilio and leads to the strangest results, whose tragic image is Mandricardo, and whose comic model is Rodomonte in his deeds on the bridge; the marvellous takes us as far as the threshold of Hell and the Earthly Paradise and the Land of the Moon. The chivalric world, in its inner motives, is pushed to the furthest possible point. Though the supernatural element is feeble, and though even Alcina seems almost like an allegorical personification rather than a real poetic personage, yet the picture of events, determined by natural and human forces, and embracing the whole circle of life in its various and contrary appearances, is extremely lively. Profound aesthetic combinations, both serious and comic, are developed; for instance, Angelica, who ends by marrying a poor infantryman, the madness of Orlando, the wanderings of Astolfo in the moon, the discords in Agramante's camp, Agramante looking at Biserta, and the bewitched Gradasso, who had fought his whole life long to get Baiardo and Durlindana, and having got them thinks himself happy, and is killed by Orlando. Ruggiero, who is rescued from the idleness of an enchanted castle and the delights of Alcina, and becomes the perfect model of knighthood, reminds us of Achilles. And around these great combinations are lesser groups, which provide the whole with a finish and outline even to the lightest touches; such are the death of Zerbino, Isabella's lament, Olimpia deserted, the death and burial of Brandimarte, the adventures of Grifone, Dudone, and Marfisa, and the comic scenes of Martano, Gabrina, and Giocondo. Though the world

he paints is so out of the ordinary, so far removed from the customs and thought of his time, yet Ludovico is so entirely at his ease in it and sees it so vividly in his imagination that he produces it with all the characteristics of the real life of his day.

And here we get the really marvellous part of Ariosto's genius, which is his power to depict a world so extraordinary as this with simplicity and naturalness. The conditions of life are fantastic to the point of absurdity; and yet when once we have accepted these conditions, the movement of the story becomes profoundly human and natural. With what fine gradations Orlando is brought to the point of losing his reason, and how intelligently the different stages of the grief of Olimpia are shown, or the quarrels of the pagans in Agramante's camp! Those personages are alive, and are there before us, and can never be forgotten; in fact, some of them have passed into proverbs as comic characters, like Rodomonte, Gradasso, Sacripante, Marfisa.

And never once does the poet let his own personality come into the story; he is more a spectator than an actor—a spectator who is enjoying himself looking on at his world, almost as though it were not his own creation, the child of his own imagination. The result is the perfect objectivity and lucidity that are known as "Homeric clearness." In this simplicity and clearness of Ariosto Italian art touches perfection; simplicity and clearness are the two qualities that make him the prince of Italian artists—of artists, not of poets. Ariosto cares nothing at all for the things themselves, which are detached from reality and a game of the imagination, but he cares immensely for their form, and at this he toils with the greatest seriousness. No smallest detail escapes his attention, or is left without its finishing touches. And the interest being not in the thing but in its form, we no longer have the sober and comprehensive manner of Dante: instead of the Dantesque sketches we have finished pic-

tures. The *Decameron* gave us the period; the *Orlando* gives us the octave, with a perfect framework, and composed like a picture, with its protagonist, its accessories, and its background. Politian gave us a series, with the links left to the imagination. Ariosto gives us a real period, so well distributed and proportioned that it seems like a person. And the effect is due not only to the material framework, so solid and well composed, but also to that musical wave, to that flowing and facile surface which makes us reach forward to the soul while we are following the events and the motives and effects. In that century of great painters, when the Italian artists aimed at depicting the image with the last possible touch of perfection, Ariosto is the perfect painter; he does not leave us with the object till he has made it into a finished and perfect picture. And in all this there is never the slightest hint of affectation or pretension, but only the object in itself, which explains itself naturally. The poet is not casting around for special effects of light, nor for out-of-the-way harmonies, nor for rich colourings or accessories; but what he does is to fix the object in the moment when it is most alive, that is to say, when it has fallen into such and such an attitude because of some inner or outward impulse. He does not observe it, nor think about it, nor scrutinize it deeply, nor ask it questions, nor look into it, nor touch it, nor handle it with the wish to improve it: the picture remains objective and undisturbed. We are conscious only of the thing, which is living and moving, not of the poet; the hand that propels it is invisible, the thing seems to be moving of itself. This sublime simplicity combined with complete clearness of vision, is what Galilei rightly described as the "divineness" of Ariosto.

And this quality is shown not only in the details but also in the big masses. The poet's vision is clear and tranquil, even when the general action is most sudden and complicated. His duels, battles, jousts, festivals, spectacles, landscapes, castles, are all painted with that same purity and simplicity of line with which he paints the smallest things. In Politian's octaves the

surface is cleared of every roughness, but we are conscious that it has been rubbed down and smoothed and minutely finished: for example, take the rose—the striving for elegance is visible:

Questa di verde gemma s' incappella;
quella si mostra allo sportel vezzosa;
l' altra, che 'n dolce foce ardea pur ora,
languida cade e il bel pratello infiora.

And this one crowns herself with green jewels, and that one shows herself charmingly at the little wicket; and the other who is burning just now in a sweet fire, falls languidly down, and makes the lovely little meadow bright with bloom.

Here the rose has the airs of a coquettish girl who is posing to make herself attractive. That "*incapellarsi*," that "*sportello*," that "*ardere in dolce fuoco*" are images added to the rose by the human imagination: it is the rose not in its real naturalness, but as it appears to man, together with the work of the mind that adorns it and makes it charming: it is the rose passed through the author's mind, and changed in the process. And now let us look at the rose of Ariosto, the rose

che in bel giardin sulla nativa spina
mentre sola e sicura si riposa,
né gregge né pastor se le avvicina:
l' aura soave e l' alba rugiadosa,
l' acqua, la terra al suo favor s' inchina:
gioveni vaghi e donne innamorate
amano averne e seni e tempie ornate.

which safely reposes in a lovely garden on its native stock; nor shepherd nor flock comes near it. The soft breeze and the dewy dawn, the air, the earth, bow down to it. Desirous youth and enamoured maidens love to put it on their bosoms and braid it in their hair.

Ma non sí tosto dal materno stelo
rimossa viene e dal suo ceppo verde,
che quanto avea dagli uomini e dal cielo
favor, grazia e bellezza, tutto perde.

But no sooner is it torn from its native stem and green stock than it withers away; all the grace that it found with men, or Heaven, all its bloom and beauty—all are gone.

This is the story, the romance, of the rose. The poet has not the air of describing, but of narrating; and he puts the thing before us in its natural truth, so that nothing seems to be exaggerated or changed. The "*alba rugiadosa*," the "*ceppo verde*," the "*nativa spina*," the "*gioveni vaghi*," the "*donne innamorate*," the "*seni e tempie*," the "*gregge*," and the "*pastore*" are all of them natural images, produced by an impersonal mind absorbed in the spectacle. And notice how graceful is the movement of the octave—so completely simple that the last line seems to fall to the ground, like low prose, together with the rose that has fallen from its virginal height to the earth. The elegance, the harmony, the colour, are not the result of a preconceived idea, but are the form itself of the things; not their ornament and their clothing, but actually the things themselves. And the same treatment is seen in the big masses, which are painted with the same clearness and purity as the smallest details. And in all these battles and deeds and incantations and landscapes never do we find a repetition or a reminiscence; each thing is like a separate individual, perfectly distinct and perfectly characterized. Though the pictures, whether small or large, take their movement and colouring from the thing represented, yet each separate picture is distinct and finished in itself, with every smallest detail handled and drawn with the same care. The mind with preconceived ideas is a limited mind, and the result is a "manner," which instead of putting the thing before us, puts the way of looking at it before us—the vision—so that the subjective poets, whose work is largely composed of manner, such as Petrarch, Tasso, Marino, and others of the same type, are easily imitated. But Ariosto is impossible to imitate; he is without a manner because he is deeply immersed in the thing itself, and has no personal attitude of his own toward it. In fact, he has an air of perfect simplicity, of relating the things just plainly and straightforwardly as they come to him, as though he were adding nothing of his own to them. He has a porous talent, a gift of

receiving the things in the clearness and distinctness of their personality, and giving them back unaltered; they seem to pass through his mind without meeting with obstacle or being changed in the process. Hence his talent is transmutable into every manner—not in accordance with his humour, but in accordance with the different natures of things. The heroic, the tragic, the comic, the idyllic, the licentious, all of them come out with the same ease and the same sureness, which seems like an inherent quality of the thing itself and to have nothing to do with the writer's mind. And this is the reason for the miraculous clearness in its endless variety and liberty, and for the artistic seriousness shown in the smallest details as much as in the whole. The clearness is due to that fixing of the objects when they are alive, that is to say, when they are in action, and putting the essential accessories before us while they too are in action, showing them like movements, attitudes, and motives—accessories that Dante leaves us to guess at, but which here are unfolded in the large sweep of the octave. And the objects being fixed in action and in movement, it follows that there are few descriptions, and only sober ones, the characteristics and landscapes being barely indicated. Man and Nature are shown in their state of immobility, the connecting links and simple circumstances are sketched with the lightest touch, and the previous events are recalled in the fewest words, while the action is fixed in its moment of greatest interest and drawn onwards with sails spread and a favourable wind. We are never stuck in a marsh, or turned aside from our route. As time and space seem not to exist in this poem, it follows that the style is never obstructed; we are in clear and running water. All is sap, and all is definite meaning, yet nothing is shown in an absolute sense, but is always relative and intentional, contributory to the effect, now serious, now comic. And the effect is such as could be given to us only by a world of the imagination in which the poet takes no part except as an artist, a world that has nothing to do with his passions or feelings. The result

is a lively curiosity, always fed, and often accompanied by a quiet satisfaction, the satisfaction of a person who knows that he is dreaming, enjoys it, and keeps his eyes half closed, sunk into that contemplation. He enjoys the dream, and yet it is a dream that has nothing to say to his heart or his mind, is nothing more than a sweet indolence of the imagination. But the images of the dream are so alive and limpid, so natural, so wonderfully expressive, that they hold us enchained; and they are borne to us by sonorous waves, among colours and murmurs that enchant the eye and ring deliciously in the ear. That world is our enchanted castle, our golden dream. The impression is not so deep as to overstep the imagination and strike our inmost being in what is most serious in our thought and feeling. Even when the expression is most vigorous we barely feel an emotion—a little cloud at once dispersed in that limpid sky. The tale is full of these light cloudlets, barely sketched in. They are sudden movements that bring a laugh or a tear, immediately repressed and transformed. Here are some examples of them:

—Né men ti raccomando la mia Fiordi . . .—
ma dir non poté "ligi" e qui finío. . . .
Stese la mano in quella chioma d' oro,
e strascinollo a sé con violenza;
ma, come gli occhi a quel bel volto mise,
gli ne venne pietade e non l' uccise.

"I recommend to thee my Fiordi . . ." But he could not finish the name by saying "ligi," and there he died.

He thrust his hand into that golden mane of hair and dragged him towards him with violence; but as his eyes fell on that lovely face, pity came to him and he did not slay him.

So sudden, so fleeting are our emotions when certain tender images spring to meet us. Something awakens suddenly in our hearts that moves us—something that can hardly as yet be called feeling—and then, suddenly, a new image comes forward, and tells us that it was only a game, and we sink back into the tranquillity of our vision. One of the most lovable of Ariosto's

creations is Zerbino, and when the sword of Mandricardo falls on him there is just a little movement in our hearts that echoes the palpitations of his Isabella; but the poet, with a gallantry full of grace, compares the long but not deep wound to the purple ribbon that divides the cloth of silver embroidered by his loved one—and the movement in our hearts is smothered at its birth. An extremely tender scene is this death of Zerbino, in which very graceful images blunt the effects and save our feelings from being torn too badly. Isabella is bending over the dying man; the poet looks at her and finds her as wan as a rose:

rosa non còlta in sua stagion, sí ch' ella
impallidisca in su la siepe ombrosa.

a rose not gathered in its season, so that it fades away on its shady hedgerow.

Zerbino, dying, sends a last despairing look of passion to his loved one:

—Per questa bocca e per questi occhi giuro,
per queste chiome onde allacciato fui.—

"By that mouth, by those eyes, by that hair which first enchained me, I swear."

Now and then a single circumstance, by its very position in the sentence, suddenly jerks us away from emotion and makes us look at the image: "*E straccia a torto l' auree crespe chiome*"—"And tears and does a wrong to his curly golden mane." This effect is chiefly the result of comparisons, which in the very quick of our emotions turn our attention away to something else. Sacripante in his pain compares the little maiden to a rose; Angelica, hotly chased by Rinaldo, seems like a little fleeting roe, which has seen its mother in the mouth of the leopard:

ad ogni sterpo, che passando tocca,
esser si crede all' empia fera in bocca.

at every sapling which touched it in passing it felt itself in the savage beast's mouth.

The "*impasto leone*" ("moulded lion"), the "*uscito di tenebre serpente*" ("serpent coming from the darkness"), the "*orsa assalita nella petrosa tana*" ("she-bear assailed in the stony cave"), the "*vase a bocca stretta e a lungo collo, onde l' acqua esce a goccia a goccia*" ("vases with narrow mouth and long neck, so that the water comes out drop by drop")—these and other images (not new and not original as they are in Dante, but very lively in appearance and movement) distract our attention and recall us to objective life even when our feelings are most severely torn. Note the lament of Bradamante in Canto XLV, which is a true elegiac canzone, with charming comparisons. That wandering eye, seeking itself in Nature, has already dried its tears. The result is a general tone of sentiment nearer to the elegiac and the idyllic than to the heroic or the tragic, in harmony with the poet's impressionable and tender nature, as also with the tendencies of art from Petrarch onwards. And Nature like the rest is all on the outside and does not search for our souls, as in the Garden of Alcina and the Earthly Paradise: we get the image but not the feeling:

Zaffir, rubini, oro, topazi e perle
e diamanti e crisoliti e iacinti
potriano i fiori assimigliar che per le
liete piagge v' avea l' aura dipinti. . . .

Sapphire, rubies, gold, topazes and pearls and diamonds and chrysolites and jacinth, might well pass for flowers in the happy meadows, catching their colours from the breeze. . . .

Cantan fra i rami gli augelletti vaghi
azzurri e bianchi e verdi e rossi e gialli,
murmuranti ruscelli e cheti laghi
di limpidezza vincono i cristalli.

The wanton birds sing among the branches, azure and white and green and red and yellow. Murmuring stream and quiet lake surpass the crystal in their clearness.

What is the note that this Nature sends out? What are the impressions? What are the inspirations? Astolfo, among all that

loveliness, looks, and passes by; the only sight that moves his heart to wonder is a wall made of a single gem,

piú che carbonchio lucida e vermiglia,
Oh stupenda opra! oh dedalo architetto!

more shining and ruddy than the carbuncle. Oh, stupendous work! Oh, clever architect!

So there is no feeling for Nature any more than there is a feeling for country, for family, for humanity, or even for love and honour. Instead of feeling we are given the moral maxim, its abstraction—the feeling naturalized and crystallized into fine lines of poetry, like:

Il miser suole
dar facile credenza a quel che vuole.

A wretched man gives ready faith to what he desires.

Here are magnificent maxims on love:

Quel che l' uom vede, Amor gli fa invisibile,
E l' invisibil fa vedere Amore.

Love makes man to be blind to what he sees; and so he sees Love.

Che non può far di un cor ch' abbia suggetto
questo crudele e traditore Amore?

What is there that Love cannot do to a heart that is governed by this cruel and traitorous Love?

Che lietamente in sul principio applaude,
e tesse di nascosto inganno e fraude.

Who praises sweetly at the beginning, and in secret weaves but deceits and frauds.

Amor, che sempre
d' ogni promessa sua fu disleale,
e sempre guarda come involva e stempre
ogni nostro disegno razionale . . .

Love, who has always been faithless in all his promises, and has ever sought a way to dissolve and bring to confusion every reasonable plan that we make . . .

Io dico e dissi e dirò finch' io viva,
che chi si trova in degno laccio preso,

I say, and have said, and will say as long as I live, that whoever finds himself caught in a worthy snare, if he has placed his

pur che altamente abbia locato il core,
pianger non dee, se ben languisce e muore.

heart highly must not weep, even though he languish and die.

Chi mette il piè sull' amorosa pania,
cerchi ritrarlo e non v' inveschi l'ale:
ché non è insomma amor se non insania,
a giudizio de' savi universale.

Whoever has put his foot on the bird-lime of love, let him draw back his foot and not lime his wings: for after all love is only folly, in the universal judgment of wise men.

O gran contrasto in giovenil pensiero
desir di lauda ed impeto d' amore!
né, chi piú vaglia, ancor si trova il vero,
ché resta or questo or quel superiore.

How great a conflict there is in the mind of a young man: the wish to be commended and the impetuosity of love! And sifting for the truth he does not find it, for now one comes to the top, now the other.

Amor sempre rio non si ritrova:
se spesso nuoce, anco talvolta giova.

Love is not always wicked: though sometimes it is harmful, sometimes also it does good.

La lunga absenzia, il veder vari luoghi,
praticare altre femmine di fuore,
par che sovente disacerbi e sfoghi
dell' amorose passioni il core.

Prolonged absence, the seeing of different places, and having relation with new women of other places seem often to mellow the heart and unburden it of the passion of love.

Amor dee far gentile un cor villano,
e non far d' un gentil contrario effetto.

Love ought to make a coarse man gentle, and not have the contrary effect on a gentle one.

These sayings are neither profound nor original, but are commonplaces, extremely well versified, that leave no impression behind them. The feeling, whether condensed into a maxim, or translated into an image, is hardly born before it dissolves. Now and then comes a touch of sentiment, like Dardinello's reply to Rinaldo, or Brandimarte's to Agramante, or Olimpia's laments, or Orlando's, or Cloridano's, so musical and elegiac.

But they seem to be sunk in that strange and marvellous sea, and shipwrecked in that ebb and flow of images; they are voices of anguish and passion, which before they reach us have become mixed with the noise of the waves and have become visible: they are images. A supreme example of this is given by Orlando, who, weeping and calling Angelica, compares her to a lost lamb, and weaves embroideries around this fancy.

We can easily see how greatly these plastic pictures must have been admired by the society of that day, so wanting in feeling and superficial and shifting, but as rich in imagination as it was poor in conscience. The new literature, which had made its entrance in the musical coils of the *Decameron,* was contemplating and admiring itself in these flexuous octaves, in which the rapid vicissitudes of life are so palpable, so limpid. *Procul este, profani!* No shadow of the real, no spectre of the present, no deep voice of the heart or of the mind, shall come to disturb the serenity of the dance. We are in the realm of pure art, are watching the miracles of the imagination. The poet has turned his back on Italy, on the century, on the real and the actual, and is journeying like Dante in another world. And when he returns from his long road he encircles himself, as with a crown, with poets and with artists: the true image of that Italy, the mother of culture and art, to whom he was presenting the *Orlando.* Dante drew the whole of the earth after him into the other world; his fatherland pursued him even among his phantasms. But Ariosto journeyed with his head and his heart free and tranquil, like an artist who is wandering about and painting what he sees. The only thought that has the power to make his hand tremble and his heart beat, is the fear that what he sees with his brain, the thing that is written so clearly within him, may show less well when he paints it. And he touches and retouches it till his death, always dissatisfied, always unquiet; for no one is ever tranquil who has something to realize. What Ariosto had to realize was not this or that content in its reality and seriousness; he saw the world of chivalry as some-

thing outside of history, the free creature of his imagination. What he needed to realize was form, and nothing else but form, pure art, the dream of that very century and that very society, the muse of the Renaissance.

And he had all the special qualities of the Renaissance: sensibility more than feeling, impressions and emotions more than passions, clarity of vision more than depth. His soul was tranquil and free from worry; he was full of fantasy, and was happy in his artistic production, which was all squandered on the surface of his phantasms. The soul was not yet conscious of itself, but was living on the surface of life, was expanding in that world of chivalry and making itself one with it, and reflecting it with youthful brio. So that world of chivalry comes out, as it were, in a gush, like a sort of spontaneous generation: a smile of the Graces, eternally fresh, taken out from the shadows and cloudiness and mysteries of the Middle Ages and illumined under the Italian sky by a soft and happy light. Nothing has yet been born from the modern imagination that can at all compare with this clear Homeric world: the Renaissance was realizing its dream, the new literature had found its world.

The new literature no longer desired this or that content; it was sceptical and cynical, and believed in art and in nothing but art. And Ariosto gave it that world of art in a content of pure imagination.

Let us beware, however, of coming too close to that beautiful surface. Touch it, and it flies away like a shadow; look under it and there seems to be emptiness. With Homer a thousand voices of Nature seem to come to us, voices that find an echo in our inmost fibres, that seem to be our own voices, the voices of our soul. For with Homer the form is one with the content, and the content is ourselves, life of our life, blood of our blood. In the *Orlando* the content is a game of the imagination, and we do not sink into it nor get impassioned over it, for the simple reason that we feel it to be a dream. And sometimes

in our dream tears do come to our eyes and are ready to fall; then suddenly we wake up with a start, and instead of weeping break into a laugh. This lovely surface seems to have nothing beneath it. But all the same there is something beneath it—there is Momus; there is the spirit of Giovanni Boccaccio.

In Florence the negative and dissolvent in art had already run through its cycle, and turned into pure buffoonery. Boccaccio, Sacchetti, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Pulci, Berni, were all deliberate caricaturists, who took the world of reality as their model, throwing the comic side of it into relief. Ariosto had no intention of making fun of chivalry, as Cervantes did; with Ariosto comic and licentious episodes, and also grotesque episodes, like that of Gabrina, meet together with the same indifference as tragic and elegiac episodes. But on the other hand, if his comedy is not deliberate, neither is it a simple means of style; he is doing more than just amusing his readers by playing the buffoon, like Berni in his *Orlando*. Ariosto's laugh is deeper and more serious. It is the laugh of the modern spirit—the mocking at everything that partakes of the supernatural. It is true that the laugh is not yet science, but at least it is good sense, germinated by a feeling for the real, or the possible; it is the forerunner, the announcer, of science.

Above everything else Ludovico was an artist. He did not believe in this world of chivalry; but all the same he fell in love with it, became impassioned by it, and made it his own world, more serious to him than the world around him. But his love for it, his interest, is merely that of an artist. His imagination assimilates it, gains a complete knowledge of it, and does and undoes, composes and recomposes, with absolute mastery; he knows his world absolutely, and he poses and fashions the different parts at his pleasure. The material, which in Dante was so resistant and rough, with Ariosto loses its angles and sharpnesses, and receives impressions like wax. Ariosto is free from every preconceived idea and from every intention, and he sinks down into his world and forgets himself in it and

becomes like the material itself; the creator vanishes in the creature. The objectivity is complete. And yet, looking at it carefully, we shall notice that the creature has the same want of reverence in the look on its face as has its creator, who in certain moments seems to be making fun of our emotions and cutting them short. We are not quite sure whether the fun is at our own expense or at his creature's, but whichever it is he does it so gracefully that we love him for it. The joke springs out when we are least expecting it—at the moments of greatest seriousness. The most interesting creations are dissolved in an instant by a joke or a witticism; it happens so often that we begin to grow chary of giving ourselves up to our feelings, and we gradually get accustomed to the equivocal atmosphere. Even when the author seems to have utterly vanished in his creation we suspect him; we know that the moment will come when he will pop out his head and make a face at us. Beneath that Homeric objectivity there suddenly develops the subjective and negative element, under the form of irony.

Then exactly what is this world of Ariosto? It is the synthesis of the Renaissance in all its various tendencies. It is the Middle Ages; it is the world known as "barbarous"—the past, but remade in the imagination and dissolved by the mind. Within it are the feeling for art, the cult of form and of beauty, the objectivity of a youthful imagination, rich, analytic, picturesque, that characterize the new literature and generate the miracles of painting and architecture, and in the *Orlando* attain to perfection with splendour and harmony, combined with the greatest simplicity and the greatest naturalness of design. And all the time there is that intimate sense of man and Nature, or the real, which brings a sort of involuntary smile to our lips when we see that world filing before us, a world outside of Nature and outside of man, born of our imagination. We pile up the clouds and heap them into shapes and make them into magnificent forms; we laugh at them because we know it is

we ourselves who are making them, and know that they are only serious because we make them so. We are boys, and yet are men. As boys we feel the need to invent, to make soldiers and castles and imagine stories about them; but then comes the man with his smile, and that smile seems to say, "They are paper soldiers and paper castles." Culture is blossoming; imagination has reached its point of highest vigour and is working the greatest miracles in art; but the mind is already adult, materialistic, realistic, unbelieving, and ironical, and is amusing itself at the expense of the imagination. This moment of the modern spirit, which is reconstructing the past not as reality but as art, at the same time seeing it as a simple game of the imagination or pure art, and pursuing it with its irony, is the inner life of the world of Ariosto, is its aesthetic organism. Let us take a picture by Raphael and a sonnet by Berni; they will show us clearly the two extremes connected by this unity. All that is too ideal on the one hand and too material and gross on the other is fused together and tempered. The fusion is achieved with such natural and intelligent lights and shades and connections, and the reader from the beginning is so well prepared for it, that nothing jars on him, nothing strikes him as discordant. Nothing jars because the poet is working unconsciously; it is his natural way of conceiving, and he himself is the unity that he communicates to his world.

And notice how he conceives it. The protagonist is not the wise Orlando, but Orlando become mad and violent. Chivalry shown and changed like this is already an ironical conception. And see too how the conception is developed. The moment of madness is shown with so much reality of colouring that our illusion is perfect. It reveals a profound knowledge of human nature in its finest shades. It is a crescendo of details and colouring. So strange a fact as Orlando's madness is made to appear the most natural thing in the world by the details and colouring that lead up to it. When Orlando has "become violent and mad,"

the poet leaves him to the laughter of the public. So a scene of tenderness is followed by the purest comic gaiety, in which caricature is pushed to buffoonery. And even the way in which Orlando recovers his reason is profoundly comic. According to the tradition of the Middle Ages, man could only find peace in the other world: that is the basis of the *Divine Comedy.* Ariosto materializes this conception and makes it comic, drawing from it the quaint conception that whatever is lost on the earth is found again in the other world. So Astolfo is made to journey to the other world on the hippogriff—a real parody of the Dantesque journey. The smoke and the stench of Hell prevent him from entering it. But at the entrance he finds the first female sinner, punished, like Lydia, for her too great cruelty to her lovers: it is the conception of Francesca da Rimini, turned upside down and made comic. Next he rises to the Earthly Paradise, and in a beautiful palace made of gems he finds St. John the Evangelist, Enoch, and Elias, who lodge him in a room, give him good oats for his horse, and give him fruit of such a flavour

che' a suo giudicio sanza scusa non sono i duo primi parenti se per quei fûr sì poco ubbidienti.

that in his judgment our two first parents were not without excuse if they failed in obedience for the sake of such fruits as these.

Astolfo is well fed, well rested, and finds "every comfort." It is the Earthly Paradise made material. From there, having "got out of bed," he ascends with St. John into the moon. And here the parody becomes a satire, a satire without any bitterness and with an air of fun. In the deep valley have been gathered together all the things which have been lost on earth:

Le lacrime e i sospiri degli amanti,
l' inutil tempo che si perde a giuoco,
e l' ozio lungo d' uomini ignoranti,

Lovers' tears and sighs, the time unprofitably spent at play, and the long idlenesses of stupid men, and vain plans that are never fulfilled, vain desires so many that they clutter up most of the

vani disegni che non han mai loco,
i vani desidèri sono tanti,
che la piú parte ingombran di quel loco:
ciò che insomma qua giú perdesti mai,
lá su salendo ritrovar potrai.

place; in fact, whatever thou losest here below on the earth, in rising thither thou shalt find it.

If we are really to grasp this irony we must remember that in the popular mind the moon was like a castle in Spain or a castle in the air, and even today a person inclined to vagueness is said to be living in the moon. Here are various bottles containing a thin and delicate liqueur, which are the wits lost by people on earth:

di sofisti e di astrologhi raccolto
e di poeti ancor ve n' era molto.

and there was much common sense of sophists and astrologers collected here, and also of poets.

Notice how he calls the philosophers "sophists," and lumps them in with astrologers and poets! To the minds of the Middle Ages philosophy was the highest possible good sense; to Ariosto it is emptiness and abstraction. The end is the purest merriment:

E vi son tutte l' occorrenze nostre;
sol la pazzia non v' è poca né assai,
ché sta qua giú, né se ne parte mai.

And up there is everything we lack; but madness is not there, either little or much of it, because it stays down here on the earth, and never moves from it.

The irony hits Angelica too—Angelica, the daughter of the greatest king of the Levant, Angelica, the beloved of Orlando, of Rinaldo, of Sacripante, and of Ferraú, who ends up as the wife of a "poor infantryman." In Boiardo's *Orlando* the scene opens with all the heroic trappings of chivalry: jousts, tournaments, duels, Charlemagne surrounded by his paladins and by the flower of the knights of France, of Spain, of Germany, of England, with the figure of Angelica, the heroine of the story, parading amongst them; and it ends with an idyll, in the union of Angelica and Medoro. What in Boiardo has epic and chival-

ric proportions, especially in the battles of Albracca, in passing through the brain of Ariosto is transformed into an ironic conception.

And again in the war between Charles and Agramante, which provides the poem with its outer and mechanical unity, chivalry is looked at from a comic point of view. The heroic side of chivalry is individuality, that force of initiative which makes a free man of every knight, and which finds its limits only in itself, or to put it differently, which finds its limits in the laws of love and honour, which the knight obeys of his own free will. But once we remove these limits, then individual initiative turns to confusion and anarchy: the heroic becomes comic; the knight no longer obeys anything but his instincts and passions, the animal part of him is developed, collisions take place and attritions are born, and it all becomes comic in the extreme. The conception is already suggested with brio in the description of Discord, whom St. Michael discovers in a monastery of friars, "amid holy offices and masses":

avea dietro e dinanzi e d' ambi i lati
notai, procuratori ed avvocati.

in front of her, and behind her, and on both sides of her were notaries, attorneys, and advocates.

The actors in this scene are St. Michael, Silence, Fraud, and Discord; the scene is extremely original, and the colours are admirably fused:

Dovunque drizza Michel angel l' ale,
fuggon le nubi e torna il ciel sereno:
gli gira intorno un aureo cerchio, quale
veggiam di notte lampeggiar baleno.

Wherever the Angel Michael directs his wings, the clouds fly away and the sky becomes clear again.

Around him turns a golden ring like the lightning that flashes in the night.

Stupendous epic lines, which fall gradually, with natural changes of tone, to the satirical. And the satire is all the more effective from seeming to be utterly unintentional; indeed, it

has the simplicity and want of malice that make the irony of Ariosto the delicate thing that it is. Discord is busy at her trade, and the result is the famous scene in Agramante's camp, which has passed into a proverb: it is here that the action is really unravelled, and here that we are shown the inner cause of the dissolution and defeat of the pagan army. The comedy is more in the subject matter than in the wording; it is founded on the sudden and unforeseen impressions and instincts, which have nothing to do with reflection, and which force the knights to fight each other. The outstanding character of this type is Rodomonte, a mixture of force and courage and bestiality, who has passed into a proverb. His curses on women, his credulity and stupidity in regard to Isabella, his comic war with the mad Orlando, his scurrility and grossness towards Bradamante, are extremely happy touches showing the knight errant on his comic side—stupidly strong, devoid of sense, gross, and bestial. His antithesis is Ruggiero, "the fount of virtue," in whom the poet tried to depict the heroic and serious side of the knight: loyal, gentle, magnanimous. In Ruggiero there is something of Homer's Achilles, something of Damon and Pythias, and something of Quintius and Flaminius, collisions between honour and love and between honour and friendship, which are very rich in dramatic effects. But whoever has studied Ariosto a little, and noticed his painting of his own likeness, will see that the man is underneath the poet, and will see that he had not the stuff in him to create grand heroic figures, which moreover were out of place in his day. His much-loved hero is wanting in simplicity and naturalness, and the heroic descends by degrees to the fantastic and the idyllic. So Ruggiero never succeeded in supplanting Orlando and Rinaldo, the heroes of the old chivalry; and in spite of the poet's affection for the founder of the House of Este, Orlando and Rodomonte, who are genial and original creations, are much more interesting than Ruggiero.

The irony of the poem is not only in its fundamental conception, but also in the details taken from chivalry. Orlando's love

for Angelica is perfectly chivalrous; so chivalrous, indeed, that having had her in his power for a long period he has made no attempt whatever against her honour—at least, so Angelica assures Sacripante, who for his own part hopes not to be "so stupid." Doralice mourns the death of Mandricardo, and if she were not ashamed "perhaps" would accept the hand of Ruggiero:

Io dico "forse," non ch' io ve l' accerti,
ma potrebbe esser stato di leggiero. . . .
Per lei buono era vivo Mandricardo;
ma che ne volea far dopo la morte?

I say "perhaps," I do not give it to you as certain; but it might easily have been so. . . .

Mandricardo was good to her when he was alive; but what use could he be to her dead?

A sceptical laugh flutters round the chivalric virtues and over the great feats of the knights—those great feats "which only they know how to do." A sentence, or sometimes only a word, reveals the irony under the serious surface. It is only the faintest of smiles, which barely hovers on the lips and is hardly perceptible on the otherwise serious face.

This little smile that is almost involuntary and rarely spreads from the lips to the rest of the face, and still more rarely becomes open and ringing laughter, this magnificent artistic exposition that gives us the appearance and illusion of reality in the most unreal things, fused together without the least air of intention or malice, and with perfect simplicity, show us the conception like a body that is moving and changing, which cannot be fixed or defined—in fact, a phantasm rather than a body. And we do not know if the thing is serious or a joke, but it pleases us, because it feeds our imagination without offending our good sense; and we contemplate the lovely fantasies so excellently painted—fantasies of centuries still in childhood, painted with the little ironical smile of a century grown to manhood.

This world, which is utterly wanting in the seriousness of inner life—empty of religion, fatherland, family, feeling for Nature, and even of honour and love—this world of pure art, a joke of the imagination that is laughing at its own work and amusing itself at its own expense, is at bottom a humorous conception, deeply buried beneath the seriousness of a high artistic inspiration. The poet does not look at this world as a serious manifestation of life in its aim and its means, but as malleable material, docile to the combinations and enjoyments of his imagination. He knows that his work artistically is as serious as the work of Homer, or the work of Virgil, or the work of Dante; but at the same time he knows that his work is artistic and nothing else, and therefore, from the point of view of the real, is a joke, or, as Cardinal Ippolito put it, a "*corbelleria.*" And foolery it would certainly have been, had the author tried to load it with greater seriousness than it was able to carry and had tried to make it the foundation of a real epic. But the *corbelleria* is made into a profound conception of truth because the author himself is the first to laugh at it from the wings, and has the air of making fun of his audience. His way of standing above his world, of holding the threads in his hands, of knotting and unknotting them just as he pleases, of considering it only as material for the imagination, is the quality known as "caprice" and "humour"—except that Ariosto is often lured from his path by imagination, forgets himself in that world, and gives it the finishing touches that make it perfect. So his humour has the form that savours of irony, and we fluctuate to and fro in an uncertain and floating atmosphere, in which the boundaries of vice and virtue, of the false and the true, are all of them confused, and passions, characters, means and ends, are only on the surface—a marvellous surface in its clearness and simplicity and naturalness of exposition, which in the end disappears like a phantasm, scattered by an ironical phrase. It disappears, but not before it has awakened our admiration and roused in us many emotions. This childish world of the imag-

ination, which reveals so high a sentiment for art, and at the same time the consciousness of an adult and enlightened world, brings the Middle Ages to an end by dissolving it, and generates the modern world. And the whole thing is done without definite *intention*, indeed, with the perfectly simple manner of a person who happens by nature to feel and conceive in that way. Therefore the two worlds are not opposed to each other, as they are in Cervantes, but live together in harmony, the one entering into the other, and are the artistic presentation of a world that has received the imprint of another world. This fusion, more felt than thought, which welds the author and his creations into a single harmonious world, perfectly interpenetrated, is the quality that endows the *Orlando* with its truth and its everlasting youthfulness, the quality that makes it, for artistic excellence, the most finished work of the Italian imagination, and because of the deep significance of its irony a pillar of fire in the history of the human spirit.

CHAPTER XIV

THE "MACCARONEA"

WHILE Ariosto was composing his *Orlando* at Ferrara, Girolamo Folengo was beginning his studies there under the tutelage of a certain Cocaio. Girolamo came from Cipada, a village in the province of Mantua, and belonged to a titled and well-to-do family. He struck up a friendship with Ludovico. It was just at this time that the *Spagna*, the *Buovo*, the *Trebisonda*, the *Ancroia*, the *Morgante*, were appearing in print, and Cieco di Ferrara's *Mambriano*, and the *Orlando innamorato*. Girolamo's head was much more occupied with romances than with grammar, and he thought of rewriting the *Orlando innamorato*, but when he heard that Berni was doing it, he put it aside for the time being. Later, having moved to Bologna to study, he came under the influence of Pomponazzi, who was preaching an open naturalism and denying the existence of the supersensible and the supernatural. In Bologna the students were divided into different castes, each with its own laws and privileges, the rashest and most daring of the youths being chosen as leaders. One of them was a certain Francesco Gonzaga, who had been called after his godfather, the Marquis of Mantua. There were still some survivals of chivalry among the students, which they kept alive and fresh by reading; duels, challenges, adventures, and love-affairs were a part of their daily existence, more interesting certainly than the university lessons. And among these rash young fellows was Folengo. But he was expelled from Bologna for his eccentricities, and as his

father refused to receive him at home, he ended by being a friar at Brescia with the new name of Theophilus. From Brescia he eloped with a woman and came back into the world of laymen, where he started to write romances for a living, under the name of a certain Cocaio whom his father had given him as tutor, and under the name of Merlin, the famous wizard of the romances of chivalry. Renown came to him in plenty, but very little money. So, tired of a wandering life, our Merlin, the "beggar," as he calls himself in his *Orlandino,* went back to being a friar, wrote religious poems, and died repentant and confessed and a good Christian, like Boccaccio.

As we have seen, Merlin, or rather Theophilus, or rather Girolamo, was a "wild" young man—one of those men who lose their bearings at the very beginning, and "go wrong." By putting himself beyond the pale of respectable society and leading an equivocal existence, being neither layman nor friar, and by being poor and despised, he became hardened and a cynic, impudent and vulgar; he met the world as an enemy and spat in its face and burst into a laughter full of bile. To laugh at the forms of religion and chivalry was the fashion of the day, but Folengo laughed deliberately and with passion—what in others was only colouring in him was a deliberate intention. His weapons were an original fantasy, a rich imagination, and a comic vein that was a cross between buffoonery and satire. We are told by Cocaio that his first conception was the *Orlandino*, or the deeds of the little Orlando, a poem in *ottava rima,* and in eight chapters. The author declared it to be the first "authentic" account of Turpino, dismissing the other stories in vogue as apocryphal, with the exception only of those by Boiardo, Pulci, Ariosto, and Cieco di Ferrara:

Apocrife son tutte, e le riprovo
come nemighe d' ogni veritate;
Boiardo, l' Ariosto, Pulci, e 'l Cieco
autenticati sono; ed io con seco.

They are all apocryphal, and I contemn them as being enemies of every truth; Boiardo, Ariosto, Pulci, and Cieco are authentic; and I with them.

But Orlando is only born at the seventh chapter, and he has hardly begun to be alive when the poem finishes. Perhaps it was his poor result that discouraged Merlin, and made him drop the work. The form is frightful, hideous with barbarisms and solecisms, and even the author acknowledges that his readers found in it "*oscuri sensi ed affetate rime*"—"obscure meanings and affected rhymes." "But what is the good of blaming me?" adds Merlin.

Non tutti Sannazari ed Ariosti,
non tutti son Boiardi ed altri eletti,
li cui sonori accenti fûr composti
de l' alma Clio negli ederati tetti,
tetti sí larghi a lor, a noi sí angosti;
e rari son purtroppo gli entro accetti!

Not all of us can be Sannazaros and Ariostos, nor Boiardos, nor other chosen people, whose resounding words were composed under the ivied roofs of the beneficent Clio, roofs so wide for them, but for us so narrow; and those whom they receive alas! so few!

I have given these lines as a specimen of his style. He had little culture, and people, to torment him, called him the "grammarian," "*che tanto è dire quanto 'son puro asino'* "—"which is as much as to say that I am an 'unmitigated ass.' " Caring but little for language, he called the Tuscans "chatterboxes"; while the Tuscans accused him of Lombardisms and Latinisms:

Tu mi dirai, lettor, ch' io son lombardo
e piú sboccato assai d' un bergamasco:
grosso nel proferir, nel scriver tardo,
però dal tosco facilmente i' casco.

Thou wilt tell me, reader, that I am a Lombard, and much more coarse in language than a Bergamese; thick in speech and slow in writing, and so I easily fall short of Tuscan.

A crude sort of language this—a mixture of Latin, Italian, and native terms without flavour or harmony; a thin, dry, low, plebeian style. It explains the cold reception of his work by a public so cultured and artistic. The conception is the defence of the natural imagination against religious restrictions; it gives us

satirical pictures of the clergy "who preach emptiness when their stomachs are full." He has also some ideas from the Reformation, such as Berta's prayer, not to the saints, she says, but to God. It is mixed with invective and buffoonery at the expense of the friars or *incappucciati* (those muffled in hoods) written with the bile and anger of an expelled friar. But his anger has nothing to do with intellectual faith or with the indignation of a lofty soul, but is only the fruit of looseness of life and conscience. An example is the portrait of Griffarrosto, which is a hit at the prior of his convent: an obscene portrait, full of spleen, a cross between the snarling of a dog and the infantile, shameless acts of a monkey. His caricature of the chivalric jousts, conceived with brio but developed in a coarse and laboured form, shows an original fantasy that has not yet found its instrument.

Having succeeded but badly in Italian, he next attempted a poem in Latin, which, however, he gave up immediately. And in the end he discovered his instrument: a language without grammar or dictionaries, in which no one could take him to task—a language entirely his own, which he could change at his pleasure, according to the need of his ear or imagination, in a word, the language of macaronics.

The Latin language at that date was alive and diffused among the cultured classes; a greater prestige attached to the names of Sannazaro, Vida, Fracastoro, and Flaminius than to those of Berni, Ariosto, or Boiardo. It is true that in Florence Italian was uppermost, but in the rest of Italy the preëminent tongue was still Latin. In that universal dissolution of ideas, beliefs, and forms, into these two languages, as into everything else, there crept buffoonery, and the result was a third language, a graft of the two; a language that could have been possible only in Italy, where Latin and Italian were familiar and kindred tongues. There was the *pedantesco*, an Italianized Latin, and the *maccaronico*, a Latinized Italian, with their boundaries only vaguely defined, so that at times the pedantic penetrated into

the macaronic and at others the macaronic penetrated into the pedantic. A few unsuccessful and forgotten attempts had been made to unite the two when, in 1521, five years after the publication of the *Orlando furioso,* appeared the *Maccaronea* of Merlin Cocaio. And so great was the impression it made that in four years it ran into six editions.

The *Maccaronea* begins like the *Orlandino,* except that the names are different. In the *Orlandino* Milone rapes Berta and then leaves her, and Berta gives birth to Orlando; in the *Maccaronea* Guido, a descendant of Rinaldo, rapes Baldovina, the daughter of Charlemagne, and flies with her to Italy, where he is hospitably received by a peasant at Cipada, the actual home of our Merlin. Guido goes off in search of adventures, deserting Baldovina, who gives birth to Baldo, and dies. Up to this point the *Orlandino* and the *Maccaronea* move together. But here the *Orlandino* finishes suddenly, and the plot is taken up and continued in the *Maccaronea.* Baldo, like Orlandino, has a great deal of strength and a great deal of courage, and throws himself into rash undertakings. He has several companions, one of them being a knight called Fracasso, who reminds us of Morgante, from whom he is taken; another is Cingar, who reminds us of Margutte. These knights are supposed to have been portraits of the restless students of Bologna, captained by Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, and Baldo is supposed to have been Gonzaga himself. Be that as it may, Baldo after many and grievous blows of fate is thrown into prison; and Cingar, disguised as a friar, rescues him. So here they are, travelling all over the sea and the land as knights errant, and doing daring deeds. Baldo destroys the pirates, exterminates the fairies, discovers his father (who has become a hermit and prophesies a great destiny for his son). And he goes to Africa and discovers the mouths of the Nile, and then goes down into Hell. Having arrived at the part of Hell that is specially reserved for liars and charlatans (and where he finds the necromancers, astrologers, and also the

poets), Merlin feels that he is really at home at last, drops his personages, and ends his story.

At first sight Merlin's aim in this work would seem to be the usual one of abandoning himself entirely to his unbridled imagination and piling adventure on the top of adventure, as with all the writers of that day. Indeed, the adventures are overdone, and the author at times seems confused and exhausted by all the intrigues; before we have properly assimilated the scene before us he whisks us away into a new one. Many of these adventures are classical reminiscences, but changed and remade by Merlin in his own way; and the whole is extremely original. It begins with Charlemagne and the paladins, but after a few books or cantos we are taken to Cipada, and are wandering in imagination between Mantua, Venice, and Bologna, with Italy spread out before us—Italy with its outer bark of the Middle Ages pierced by a cynical and dissolvent spirit. The forms are epic, but so heavily loaded that they are seen to be ironical; the caricature is more than a mere venting of comic and buffoonish imagination, and the adventures are more than a mere stimulus to curiosity; for into these deeds and into these forms there has entered a deliberate intention that governs them, which is parody.

Baldo is the last of that series of knights errant who began with Ajax, Achilles, and Theseus, continued with Brutus and Pompey and the other heroes sung by Livy and Sallust, and ended with Rinaldo and with Orlando, who begat Baldo. Baldo's mission is to purify the earth from monsters, murderers, and witches. Chivalry is the instrument of God against Lucifer. And Baldo defeats the corsairs, downs the monsters, kills the witches, and conquers Hell. The author blows the trumpet so loudly from the beginning to the end and overcharges the epic note so heavily that we laugh heartily at the expense of Baldo, Fracasso, Cingar, and the rest of them.

But this merry parody is imbued with an intention that is deeper—with a satire of the opinions, the beliefs, the institu-

tions, the habits, and the religious and social forms of the day. The whole of the Middle Ages is shown to us in flight, whipped to the blood by this terrible friar turned layman; because at bottom these monsters, witches, and Hell are nothing else, if we look at them carefully, than religious and social forms—the lusts, vices, and prejudices of the people. The dissolution is not the result of a new faith or of a new consciousness, but on the contrary springs from a complete want of faith or of consciousness. So it follows that the chivalry that conquers Hell in the name of justice and virtue is itself a parody, and the impression we carry away is that every one and everything has been mocked at. There is just an attempt in the poem at something more serious; for instance, Leonardo, who dies to save his virginity, is a fine allegorical image, but swamped by the caricature. We are witnessing a universal dissolution of all the ideas and all the beliefs of that age, and shown with the greatest cynicism. There, in that picture, is the whole of Italian society of that day, caught and fixed from real, actual life in its latest expression. Culture and art, mocking and empty, are seated on the ruins of the Middle Ages.

The language itself is a parody, a mixture of Latin and Italian, each making fun of the other. As a dish of macaroni needs to be well mixed with cheese and butter, the language of macaronics also needs to be well mixed. And often a third ingredient appears in it, in the shape of the local dialect, turning the dish into a very tasty ragout. The language is comic in itself: that grave, epic Latin which suddenly stumbles on an Italian word strangely Latinized, and sometimes taken from the vernacular. The parody in the content sinks down into the language, which seems like a hero with the mask of Punchinello, a Virgil shown in a carnival. Attempts at this language had already been made by Alione of Asti and by one or two others, but the person to bring it to perfection was Merlin. Not one of its secrets is hidden from him. He takes it in hand with all the audacity of a master, and with such wonderful feeling for its harmony that

it seems to have been ringing ready-made in his ears from the beginning. As a specimen, here are some lines from his invocation of the muse of macaronics:

Sed prius altorium vestrum chiamare bisognat,
o macaronaeam Musae quae funditis artem. . . .
Non mihi Melpomene, mihi non menchiona Thalia,
non Phoebus grattans chitarrinum carmina dictent. . . .
Pancificae tantum Musae doctaeque sorellae,
Gosa, Comina, Striax, Majelinaque, Togna, Pedrala,
imboccare suum veniant macarone poëtam.

But first I will invoke from your high seats, you, O Muses who inspire me with the art of macaronics. Not Melpomene, nor yet Thalia, nor Phoebus who scratches the little guitar, shall dictate to me this poem, but the large-bellied Muses and their learned sisters—Gosa, Comina, Striax, Maselina, Togna, Pedrala—it is they who shall come to their poet, to cram him.[1]

And listen to the way he describes the Parnassus of these plebeian Muses:

Credite, quod giuro, neque solam dire bosiam
possem, per quantos abscondit terra tesoros:
illic ad bassum currunt cava flumina brodae,
quae lagum suppae generant, pelagumque guacetti.
Hic de materia tortarum mille videntur
ire redire rates. . . .
Sunt ibi costerae freschi tenerique botiri,
in quibus ad nubes fumant caldaria centum,
plena casoncellis, macaronibus atque foiadis.

I pray you believe what I swear to you, for I would not tell you a lie for all the treasures that are hid in the earth. There were rivers composed of soup which formed a lake; and there was a sea of ragout, in which, coming and going, were thousands of boats made of pastry. . . .

The shores were of tender and fresh butter; and on them were hundreds of saucepans, smoking to the clouds with ravioli and macaroni and other dainties. As for the Nymphs, they live on the

[1] It is of course impossible to give in an English translation the comic effect of the macaronic mixture of Italian and Latin.—Translator.

Ipsae habitant nymphae super alti montis aguzzum,
formaiumque tridant gratarolibus usque foratis.

top of the high mountain, where they scrape cheese with drilled graters.

And he is no less original in his style. The three "stylists" of the new literature had been Boccaccio, Politian, and Ariosto. These when they narrated made pictures—the thing that constituted the "period." They offered us the thing painted, they were colourists. But Merlin paints the things not with conceptions and images, but with facts; his colours are facts. He has few classical reminiscences, nothing interposed between him and Nature. He is not content to generalize vaguely; his imagination goes right down into the smallest detail of reality, and draws from it new results in comparisons and colours. He describes events, even the most ridiculous and extraordinary, with their every detail complete, and with the clearness of history; he shows in a very unusual degree the gift of observing man and Nature, not only generically but in the separate and local forms of their existence. Read the description of the Cavern of Eolus and the storm, and Cingar's despair:

Solus ibi Cingar cantone tremabat in uno,
atque morire timens cagarellam sentit abassum. . . .
Undique mors urget, mors undique cruda menazzat.
Infinita facit cunctis vota ille beatis.
Iurat, quod cancar veniat sibi, velle per omnem
pergere descalzus mundum, saccove dobatus,
vult in Agrignano sanctus retrovare Danesum,
qui nunc vivit adhuc vastae sub fornice rupis,

Cingar was shivering alone in a corner and in his fear of death felt that his bowels were getting loose. Death, cruel death, pressed on him from every side. Making endless vows to the blessed saints he prayed that a cancer might come to him if he failed to go barefoot round the world dressed in sackcloth. He would go with the Portuguese who wore but a single tunic and put on shoes only when they arrived at Taprobana. And he would visit the Danish saint who still lived in Agrignano in a cave hewn from a rock, and had his

fertque oculi cilios distesos usque genocchios.
Ad zocolos ibit, quos olim Ascensa ferebat,
quos in Taprobana gens portugalla catavit.

eyelids stretched to his knees and wore the sabots that once Ascensa had worn.

Hisque decem faciet per frates dicere messas,
his quoque candelam tam grandem, tamque pesentam
vult offerre simul, quam grandis quamque pesentus
est arbor navis, prigolo si scampet ab isto.

And he would cause the friars to say no fewer than ten masses for the saint, and at the same time he would offer him a candle as big and heavy as the mast of a ship—all this he would do if only he escaped from that danger.

Se stessum accusat multas robasse botegas,
sgardinasse casas et sgallinasse polaros;
at si de tanto travaio vadat adessum
liber speditus, vult esse Macharius alter,
alter heremita Paulus, spondetque Sepulchri
post visitamentum, vitam menare tapinam.

He confessed to himself that he had robbed many shops and had broken into many houses, and emptied some roosts of their fowls. But if only he escaped free and unhurt from that danger, he would turn into a second Macarius, a second hermit Paul, and he would visit the Holy Sepulchre, and afterwards he would live in poverty.

Talia dum Cingar trepido sub pectore pensat,
en ruptae sublimis aquae montagna ruinat,
quae superans altam gabiam strepitosa trapassat,
nec pocas secum portavit in aequora gentes.

Now while Cingar was meditating thus in his mind, there suddenly collapsed a high mountain of water which, rising above the level of the high cage, rushed noisily onwards, carrying along with it not a few people.

The same wealth of detail is found in the description of the winds and the phases of the storm. They are typical of Merlin's style, the outcome of realism enlivened by an impressionable imagination and inextinguishable humour. His style, it is true, is not always at this height of perfection; it is often bungled,

and from facility it sometimes falls into carelessness. We find ourselves wishing for the finished hand, for the artistic seriousness of Ariosto.

Merlin's rapid realism, nourished by facts and sober of colouring, makes him the writer nearest to Dante in manner, except that with Dante as a rule we have sketches, whereas Merlin draws and finishes the thing completely. To find his continuator and imitator we must look beyond Italy: we find him in Rabelais, who has the same manner. In Italy the manner that was uppermost was that of rhetoric, which feeds upon vague generalities and above all has a horror of detail. But Merlin, on the contrary, has a horror of periphrases, conceits, abstractions, and that empty method of colouring by means of figures and images. He never seems to be reflecting or imagining, but is deep in the middle of that moving world, looking at it minutely, and parodying it in its smallest movements. Baldovina and Guido arrive in a semi-starving condition at Berta's house and prepare their meal for themselves. And nothing of it escapes the poet: neither the food, nor the way of cooking it, nor the table, nor the housekeeping of Berta, nor the looks and behaviour of the two guests. The result is a picture of family life full to the brim of comic merriment, whose effects are entirely in the details. The boy Baldo goes to school, and instead of studying Donatus as he ought, he reads romances. The school of that time stands vivid and complete before us, with the books they used, and the habits of the masters and the scholars, every detail with its own character:

Baldovina tamen cartam comprarat et illam
letrarum tolam supra quam disceret "a, b."
Unde scholam Baldus nisi non spontaneus ibat,
nam quis erat tanti, seu mater, sive pedantus,

Yet all the same Baldovina had brought with her some writing-paper, and the Alphabet from which to learn her A.B.C. But Baldo went to school only when he was forced; and in fact it needed a powerful person, whether his mother or schoolmaster, to

qui tam terribilem posset sforzare putinum?
Ipse tribus sic sic projectum fecerat annis,
ut quoscumque libros legeret, nostrique Maronis
terribiles guerras fertur recitasse magistro.
At mox Orlandi nasare volumina coepit,
non deponentum vacat ultra ediscere normas,
non speties, numeros, non casus atque figuras,
non Doctrinalis versamina tradere menti,
non hinc, non illinc, non hoc, non illoc et altras
mille pedantorum baias, totidemque fusaras.
Fecit de cuius Donati, deque Perotto
scartozzos ac sub prunis salcizza cosivit.

make such a terrible boy read a book. It is said that in three years he had advanced sufficiently to be able to repeat to his teacher the awful wars of our Maro. But once he had but smelled the books of Orlando he no longer cared to learn the auxiliary verbs, nor the species, nor the numbers, nor the dates, nor the rhetorical forms, nor to commit to memory the verses of the *Dottrinale,* nor this nor that of the thousand stupidities of the pedagogues. Porretto and Donatus he twisted into bundles and having put them under some twigs, cooked sausages on them.

Orlandi tantum gradant, et gesta Rinaldi,
namque animum guerris faciebat talibus altum.
Legerat Ancroiam, Tribisondam, facta Danesi,
Antonnaeque Bovum, Antiforra, Realia Franzae,
Innamoramentum Carlonis, et Asperamontem,
Spagnam, Altobellum, Morgantis bella gigantis,
Meschinique provas, et qui "Cavalerius Orsae"
dicitur, et nulla cecinit qui laude Leandram.

All he cared for were the deeds of Orlando and Rinaldo. His spirit finding an outlet in reading of these wars, he read Ancroia, Trebisonda, the emprises of Danese di Bove of Antona, of Antiforra, the *Reali di Francia;* and he read of Charles falling in love, and of Aspramonte, and of Spain, and of Altobello, and of the wars of the giant Morgante, and the brave deeds of the Guerrin Meschino, and of him who is called the "Cavalerius Orsae," the Knight of the She-bear, and who sang Leander without praise.

Vidit ut Angelicam sapiens Orlandus amavit,
utque caminavit nudo cum corpore mattus,
utque retro mortam tirabat ubique cavallam,
utque asinum legnis caricatum calce ferivit,
illeque per coelum veluti cornacchia volavit.
Baldus in his factis nimium stigatur ad arma,
sed tantum quod sit picolettus corpore tristat.

And he read of how the wise Orlando loved Angelica, and how in his madness he walked with naked body, and dragged after him everywhere his dead mare, and how he wounded with a kick the donkey that was laden with wood, and how the donkey flew up into the sky like a carrion crow. By the reading of things such as these Baldo was overincited to warlike deeds. He was only sad that his stature was so small.

It is a picture of the life of that day, drawn from the author's memories of his student life at Ferrara and Bologna, when his pedagogue Cocaio used to put Donatus and Porretto into his hands, and he would twist them into "pokes," and read romances instead of them, especially the *Orlando furioso*. In the whole picture there is not a single generality; everything is definite stuff, and each separate thing is alive and individual, just as a person has his own face and his own movements, determined by inner forces. Not only do we see what Baldo does, but also what he thinks and what he feels. The words in their literal sense give us an action, while their macaronic air, their very position in the sentence, and their harmony give us the feeling of it: for example, that "*nasarat*," that "*volavit*," that "*piccolettus*," and that "*hinc, illinc, hoc, illoc, et altras mille pedantorum baias.*"

The serious part of the tale ought really to be chivalry, as this is the power which is waging war against Hell, in other words, against evil and vice. But the seriousness is only apparent; the foundation of the poem is an open parody. Its most likable hero is the giant Fracasso, a parody of the superhuman force that was attributed to the knights errant.[2]

[2] For example, where Fracasso crosses the river at a bound, in spite of Charon.

Tunc Fracassus ibi largum saltare canalem — Fracasso made ready to jump the wide channel. Spitting on his hands he

What shows it to be an open parody is the extremely ingenious ending; for when the knights have arrived at the region of Hell reserved for poetic lies, Merlin drops them, and he settles down in that region as in his own country. And that country of the poets, the singers, the astrologers, the necromancers, in fact of all those

qui fingunt, cantant, dovinant somnia genti,
complevere libros follis vanisque novellis,

who feign, sing and divine people's dreams, and have filled books with useless and foolish novels,

is a shellfish, or rather an immense gourd, dry and empty, "eatable, if it were tender," in which three thousand barbers are engaged in pulling out the teeth of the damned. And Merlin exclaims:

Zucca mihi patria est: opus est hic perdere dentes
tot, quot in immenso posui mendacia libro.

My fatherland is a pumpkin: then we must lose as many teeth as there are lies massed against us in the great Book.

And he brings the tale to an end, and bids good-bye to Baldo: "*Balde, vale, studio alterius te denique lasso*"—"Baldo, fare thee well; I leave thee now forever, to study something else." He ends the poem making fun of Baldo and making fun of

praeparat, et spudans manibus se retro retirat,
discorsamque piat vel tres vel quinque cavezzos,
inde movens passus longones, inde galoppans,
inde citum corsum, de ripa saltat in altram:
quo saltu intornum graviter campagna tremavit,
terribilemque omnes balzum stupuere barones.
Baldus mandat ei, tota cum voce cridando,
ut voiat barbam nautae streppare pilatim,
rumpere cervellum ac totos corporis ossos.

walked backwards, and then came forwards again with three long springs; after galloping and running he jumped very swiftly from one bank to the other.
ed from his great
jump the surroundi country trembled very violently, and e the barons were astonished at the ter ble bound he had made. And Baldo s outed to him with
ck out the pilot's beard, hair by hair, and to smash his skull and all the bones of his body.

his own art and of himself, who has composed a real Horatian monster, outside of all the rules of literature, having lost his bearings, and having mixed the south wind with the flowers, and the wild boars with the sea:

Tange peroptatum, navis stracchissima, portum,
tange, quod amisi longinqua per aequora remos:
he heu, quid volui, misero mihi, perditus Austrum
floribus et liquidis immisi fontibus apros.

Oh, tired ship, make at last the longed-for harbour, for I have lost my oars in distant seas. Alas! Alas! What did I want, O wretched me—who mixed the south wind with the flowers and the wild boars with the waters!

It is the comic carried to the extreme of humour. The caricaturing of Boccaccio, the buffoonery of Pulci, the irony of Ariosto, have turned into the gay and capricious humour of an open and universal negation, in the most cynical of forms.

This universal denial is pervaded throughout by satire, which hits the society of the Middle Ages in all its forms, whether religious, political, moral, or intellectual. The scholastic is pilloried: St. Thomas and Scotus and Albertus are put in Hell as visionaries, together with astrologers and necromancers; there is a fearful picture of all the disorders of the Church and the popes, drawn by Megera; and Aletto thunders impartially at the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, at the followers of France and at the followers of the empire. But the chief target of these poetical darts is the monks. One of the most comic of the pictures is that rascal of a Cingar dressed as a Franciscan monk, to get Baldo out of prison:

Iam non est Cingar, quia sanctos portat amictus . . .
sub tunicis latitant heu sanctis saepe ribaldi!

How can he be Cingar, considering that he is wearing the holy tunic? . . . But sacred dresses often conceal scoundrels.

A remarkable satire is the one of the friars, in Book VIII:

Postquam giocarunt nummos, borsamque vodarunt,

When they had gambled away their money and emptied their

postquam pane caret cophinus, vinoque barillus,
in fratres properant, datur his extemplo capuzzus.

purses, and when the trough was emptied of bread and the barrel of wine, they made haste to enter among the monks; and one of these monks immediately provided them with cowls.

Merlin is afraid, with the convents increasing so fast, that one day or other the Christians will be stranded without soldiers or peasants. And he parodies confession. The knights errant arrive at the portal of Hell, where the famous inscription of Dante is parodied:

Regia Luciferi dicor, bandita tenetur
chors hic, intrando patet, ast uscendo seratur.

I am called the Royal Palace of Lucifer: here we keep open house. Here the door opens to let one in, and shuts when one gets out.

But the knights can only subdue Hell if they first confess themselves, and their confessor is Merlin himself, the poet:

Nomine Merlinus dicor, de sanguine Mantus,
est mihi cognomen Coccaius maccaronensis.

I am called Merlin of Mantua, and my surname is "Cocaio Maccaronico."

Imagine the type of confession the knights, and especially Cingar, would make to our Merlin! It is a farce. The work is permeated from beginning to end with that mocking and whimsical spirit: the spirit of Merlin, who used the world he lived in as a target, and gave it the forms of carnival.

Another work by Merlin that is a caricature or travesty of chivalry, though more correct in its style, is the *Moscheide.* The war with the flies ends with the complete rout of the flies, painted with touches borrowed from Ariosto and the other poets of chivalry, and exaggerated. Here are some lines of it towards the end:

Nunquam facta fuit tam cruda baruffola mundo,

Never in the history of the world was an altercation more

nil nisi per terram membra taiata micant.
Grandes mortorum vadunt ad sydera montes,
sydera quae multo rossa cruore colant.
Pulmones, milzae, lardi, ventralia, nemboi
Saturni ad sphaeram foeda per astra volant.
Una corada Iovis mostazzum colsit, et uno
Sol ibi ventrazzo spinctus ab axe fuit.

bloody than this. Nothing was seen on the ground but severed limbs and great heaps of dead that were piled as high as the stars, and the oozing of red blood. Lungs, spleen, and entrails flew up in clouds through the stars to the ring of Saturn. A lung got stuck in the beard of Jove, and a belly shifted the sun from its axis.

Dumque dei coenant, puero Ganimede ministro,
multa super mensas ossa taiata cadunt.
Nunc brazzus Ragni, nunc gamba cruenta Pedocchi,
nunc cor Moschini, nunc pulicina manus. . . .

While the gods were taking their supper, with the boy Ganymede as cup-bearer, many bones fell on the table, now a leg of a spider, now the blood of a louse, now the heart of a small fly, now the foot of a flea. . . .

. . . trucidatis ducibus, Moschaea ruinat
tota, nec una quidem vivere Mosca potest.
Formicae, Pulices, Ragni—Victoria!—clamant,
trombettae tararan iam frifolando sonant.

. . . and when the captains had been massacred, the mosque immediately fell all to ruins and not a single fly survived.[3] The ants, the fleas and the spiders all sang "Victory!" and the trumpets sounded "Ta-ra-ra!"

The Rodomonte of the flies is Siccaborone; an enormous stone is thrown on him from a tower,

qui super elmettum schiazzavit Siccaboronem,
vitaque cum gemitu sub Phlegethonta fugit.

which smashed Siccabarone over his casque, so that his life flew away from him with a groan under the Phlegethon.

[3] A typical play of words: on *moschea* = a mosque, and *mosca* = a fly.—Translator.

The *Zanitonella* of Merlin, which tells of the loves of Zanina and Tonello, is a little bucolic in caricature, making fun of Petrarchan and idyllic feelings. Petrarch narrates how love had caught him unawares and defenceless; and the same happens to Tonello:

Solus solettus stabam colegatus in umbra,
pascebamque meas virda per arva capras.
Nulla travaiabant vodam pensiria mentem,
nullaque cogebat cura gratare caput.
Cum mihi bolzoniger cor, oyme, Cupido, forasti,
nec tuus in fallum dardus alhora dedit. . . .
More valenthominis schenam deretro feristi:
o bellas provas quas, traditore, facis!

I was lying down, quite alone, in the shade, and pasturing my goats in the green fields, and no thought was working my free mind and no care making me scratch my head, when suddenly, O Cupid, thou didst wound my bouncing heart; thy arrow did not miss its mark. Thou didst wound me from behind, in my back, following the custom of brave men.

What a lovely and brave deed, O traitor, thou didst do to me!

If we probe into the depths of this poem we shall see that here and there in the middle of the universal caricaturing there are signs of a new world. We feel the spirit of the Reformation, the sufferings of an Italy torn between the empire and France—of an Italy which, had she been united, would have governed the universe. And there is indignation, too, at the corruption and licence in that century of hypocrites and courtesans, contempt for the fads of scholasticism, theology, and astrology: a feeling for the real and the human. But they are feeble wishes; formless, fluctuating images, which barely appear, and have no hold on that roving spirit and that freakish imagination.

CHAPTER XV

MACHIAVELLI

In 1515, when the *Orlando furioso* appeared, Machiavelli is supposed to have been in Rome. He praised the poem, but did not hide his displeasure that Ariosto had forgotten to include his name in that long list of Italian poets which he spins out in the last canto. These two great men, who between them were to typify the century in its double face, though they were contemporaries and acquaintances seem not to have known each other.

In his outward traits Niccolò Machiavelli was a typical Florentine, with a great deal in common with Lorenzo de' Medici. He was an extremely agreeable man, who enjoyed going round with the confraternities and merry companies making verses and mottoes with that mocking, pointed wit which we saw in Boccaccio and Sacchetti and Pulci and Lorenzo and Berni. Being a poor man, in the ordinary course of things he would probably have become a salaried literato, among the many in Rome and Florence, and of the same stamp. But the Medici fell, the republic was revived, and Machiavelli was chosen as its secretary and had an important part in public affairs, conducting many legations at home and abroad and gaining experience of men and of things. So deeply attached did he grow to the republic that he thought it a small thing to suffer even torture for its sake when the Medici were restored. Working and struggling like this for his country, his mettle was proved and his spirit was formed. Removed by the Medici

from public affairs, he was reduced to living in idleness at San Casciano, where he mused on the deeds of ancient Rome and the destinies of Florence and of Italy. He saw with great distinctness that if Italy was to keep her independence, she needed to be wholly, or at any rate partially, united under a single prince. And he hoped that the House of Medici, which was powerful in Rome and Florence, would provide this prince. He hoped, too, that they would accept his services and rescue him from idleness and poverty. But the Medici used him but little, and badly at that, and he finished his life sadly, leaving nothing to his sons but his name. Of him it was written: "*Tanto nomini nullum par elogium*"—"No praise could equal his name."

His *Decennali*, a dry chronicle of the "labours of Italy in ten years," his eight *capitoli* of the *Asino d' oro*, in which he satirizes the degenerate Florentine citizens under the names of animals, his other *capitoli* on "*L' occasione*" ("Opportunity"), on "*Fortuna*," on "*Ingratitudine*," on "*Ambizione*," his carnival-songs, and some of his *stanze* or serenades or sonnets or canzoni, are literary works typical of that time; some are a mixture of licence and bantering while others are allegorical and sententious, but all of them are arid. His verse is rather like prose; the colouring is sober, often inadequate, and the images are few and ordinary. And yet, in this dull and unfortunate beginning there are fragments that announce a new being, an unusual depth of judgment and observation. There is little imagination, but a great deal of mind. There is the critic, not the poet—not the man in his state of spontaneity who composes and muses, like Ludovico Ariosto. Instead there is the man who observes even when he is suffering, and ponders his own fate and the fate of the universe with philosophical quiet; his poetry is like talking:

Io spero, e lo sperar cresce il tormento;	I hope, and hoping increases my torment; I cry, and crying

io piango, e 'l pianger ciba il lasso core;
io rido, e 'l rider mio non passa drento;
io ardo, e l' arsion non par di fuore;
io temo ciò ch' io veggo e ciò ch' io sento;
ogni cosa mi dá nuovo dolore.
Cosí sperando piango, rido e ardo,
e paura ho di ciò ch' i' odo o guardo.

feeds my tired heart; I laugh, and my laughter does not sink into me; I burn, and my burning does not appear on the surface of me; I am afraid of what I see and of what I hear; everything brings me a new pain. So while I am hoping I cry and laugh and burn, and I am afraid of what I hear or see.

His remarks on the mutability of earthly things in his *capitolo* on "*Fortuna*" are the same kind of thing. Of his poetry nothing has survived except here and there a clever line like "*la voce d' un Cappon fra cento Galli*"—"the voice of a Capon among a hundred Cocks"—in his *Decennali*, and one or two maxims or deep conceptions, as in the song "*De' diavoli o de' romiti*"—"The Devils or the Hermits." His masterpiece is the *capitolo* on "*L' occasione*," especially its ending, which strikes us unexpectedly and makes us think. In the poet we are conscious of the author of *Il principe* and the *Discorsi*.

And even in prose Machiavelli had literary pretensions in keeping with the taste of that day. At times he is affected and Boccaccian, as in his sermons to the confraternities, in his description of the plague, and in the speeches he puts into the mouths of his historical personages. See, for example, his meeting with a woman in church at the time of the plague, which is full of the allurements of rhetoric and artificialities of style—the thing that was known as "elegance."

But in *Il principe*, in the *Discorsi*, in his letters, in his *Relazioni*, in his *Dialoghi* on the art of war, and in his *Storie* Machiavelli writes as the words come to him, completely absorbed in the thing he is saying, and with the air of a man who thinks it beneath his gravity to go running after words and periods. And here, where he was quite unconscious of form,

he was a master of form. Without looking for Italian prose he found it.

In Machiavelli we see the same sceptical and facetious spirit as in Lorenzo, the spirit that was stamped on the brow of the Italian bourgeoisie of that day. And he had also that practical sense, that shrewd understanding of men and of things, which made Lorenzo so eminent among princes, and which we find in Italian statesmen as a whole in Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Milan, when Ferdinand of Aragon was alive, and Alexander VI, and Ludovico il Moro, and when the Venetian ambassadors were writing such shrewd and vivid descriptions of the courts to which they were attached. There was art, but not science. In Lorenzo we had the artist; Machiavelli was to be the critic.

The heart of Italy was still Florence: in Florence there was still the likeness of a people, the image of a fatherland. Liberty in Florence was dying hard. The Guelf and Ghibelline idea had expired, but instead there was the republican idea after the Roman fashion, the result of classical culture. Strengthened by the traditional love of freedom and the glorious memories of the past, the republicans had resisted the Medici. The habit of freedom and the political struggles kept firm the temper of the soul, and made Savonarola, Capponi, Michelangelo, and Ferruccio possible, and the immortal stand against the papal and imperial armies. Independence, the glory of the fatherland, and the love of liberty were moral forces, which stood out all the more vividly for the background of Medicean corruption.

Machiavelli, in his literary culture, his dissolute life, and his merry and facetious and comic spirit, is linked with Boccaccio and Lorenzo and with all the writers of the new literature. He did not believe in any religion, so he accepted them all, and while praising morality in the abstract, he did without it in practice. But the fibre of his soul had been tempered in political duties and struggles, and sharpened by ingratitude and by his solitary idleness. And his consciousness was not empty: it con-

tained the ideal of freedom, the independence of his country. His superior and practical intelligence kept him from illusions and held him down within the limits of the possible. And when he saw that freedom was lost, he hoped for independence, and hoped that the Medici might be the means of salvation. Certainly this hope was Utopian, illusory; it was the last bit of wreckage that he clung to wretchedly in the inevitable shipwreck. But it was a Utopia that reveals the youthfulness and strength of his soul and the liveliness of his faith. Francesco Guicciardini had a clearer vision of things and a more exact judgment of the conditions of Italy, because his consciousness was empty and petrified. Machiavelli has come down to posterity a lovable figure surrounded by an aura of poetry because of the strong fibre of his nature, the sincerity of his patriotism, the loftiness of his language, and his air of virility and dignity among all that crowd of grasping, venal literati. In his day he was not rated as he deserved: his contemporaries thought of him as a man of the pen and the desk, more statesman than man of action. And his poverty, his dissolute habits, his plebeian "ill-regulated" way of living, with which the extremely proper Guicciardini reproached him, must have harmed his reputation. Conscious of his own greatness, he despised those surface forms and artificial methods of getting on in the world which mediocrities know so well, and take to so easily. But his influence with posterity has been enormous. His fame has grown greater and greater, amid the hatred of some and the glorification of others. His name has been the banner of the new generations, the standard around which they have fought in their varying movements, now back, now forward.

There is a little book by Machiavelli that has been translated into every language—*Il principe*, *The Prince*—and which has put the rest of his works into the background. The author has been judged by this book alone, and the book itself has been judged not by its logical and scientific value, but by its moral value. And the world has declared this book to be the code of

tyranny, based on the greatest of all turpitudes, that the end justifies the means and that a deed is magnified by its success. And the world has christened this doctrine "Machiavellism." Many and ingenious apologies have been made for this book, crediting the author with this or that more or less praiseworthy intention. So the discussion has become limited, and Machiavelli himself has been made smaller by it. But this manner of criticism is only pedantry. On the other hand, it is equally trivial to make the greatness of this man depend solely on his Utopia for Italy, which today has come true. So we propose in these pages to reconstruct the image of Machiavelli as a whole, and to look in that whole image for the foundations of his greatness.

Niccolò Machiavelli above everything else is the clear and serious consciousness of all that movement which stretched spontaneously from Petrarch and Boccaccio down to the second half of the *Cinquecento*. In Machiavelli are the true beginnings of prose, in a word, the consciousness and reflection of life. Machiavelli was himself that movement, was of it and took part in it, shared in its passions and its tendencies. But when the movement ceased to be action and he was reduced to a solitary life, musing on the works of Livy and Tacitus, he had the strength to stand outside of his society and to turn to it and ask it, "What are you? Where are you going?"

Italy had still her traditional arrogance, looked at Europe with the eyes of Dante and Petrarch, and dismissed the nations beyond the Alps as barbarians; her model was the Greek and Roman world, which she was trying to assimilate. And unquestionably in culture, commerce, and wealth, and in regard to art and intellect, Italy was far ahead of the rest of Europe; her place as intellectual head of Europe was never even questioned. Great was the alarm of the Italians when they found the invader in their land, but they soon grew accustomed to their conquerors, and mixed with them, confident that they would chase them out by their superior intelligence. It is very instructive to look at that crowd of Landknechts, Swiss, Germans,

French, and Spaniards, and to see among them the laughing and careless literati, artists, Latinists, story-tellers, and buffoons of the elegant courts of Italy. The princes were followed even to the battlefield by the writers of sonnets; Giovanni de' Medici fell amid the gibes of Pietro Aretino. The foreigners were astonished at the marvels of Florence, of Venice. of Rome, and at all those miracles of genius. Their princes made presents to the literati and courted their favours; and the literati in their turn were as ready to glorify Francis I as Charles V. So the devastators of Italy bowed down to the Italians and studied them, as the Romans had bowed down to and studied the Greeks.

And into the middle of all this flowering of civilization and greatness came Niccolò Machiavelli with his keen eye, and where others saw nothing but prosperous health Machiavelli saw disease, the thing which he called "corruption," but which nowadays would be known as "decadence." And here is the whole basis of Machiavelli's speculations: the corruption of the Italian race, indeed of the Latin race, and the healthfulness of the German race.

The grossest form of the corruption in Italy was the licence in habits and language, especially among the clergy—the same corruption that had aroused the anger of Dante and of Catherine, and was now put well to the fore in paintings and writings, and had penetrated into every class of society and into all forms of literature, and had become a sort of piquant sauce that gave a flavour to life. This licence, joined with profanity and scepticism, was chiefly centred in the court of Rome, with Alexander VI and Leo X as its protagonists. It was the sight of the court of Rome that inflamed the ire of Savonarola, and incited Luther and his fellow citizens to break loose from the Church.

But all the same, the clergy, from tradition and from habit, continued to thunder on parchment, denouncing this licence. The biblical ideal had never been disputed; it was only that people

ignored it in their lives. Thought was no longer speech, and speech was no longer act; the harmony of life was gone. It was precisely this want of harmony which had provided the chief comic motive for Boccaccio and the other writers of comedies, tales, and *capitoli*.

No Italian, speaking in the abstract, could possibly approve of this licence, even the men who succumbed to it most easily. But theory is one thing and practice is another. No one could fail to wish for a reform of habits and a restoration of conscience. But these feelings and wishes were feeble, and were drowned in the noise of the bacchanals; people had not the time to turn their gaze into themselves or to look at life in its seriousness. Yet these were the feelings and wishes which later were to facilitate the work of the Council of Trent and the Catholic reaction and make them fruitful.

To restore the Middle Ages and obtain a reform of customs and conscience through a religious and moral restoration was the conception of Savonarola. The Council of Trent adopted this same conception, and refined it: it was the one most easily understood by the masses and most easy to present to them, for the common people looked to the past for their remedy.

But Machiavelli, looking at the corruption, saw it from another and a higher standpoint. Pensive and ill at ease in the middle of the Italian carnival, he saw this corruption of Italy as nothing else than the Middle Ages in putrefaction—dead in men's consciousness, but still surviving in forms and institutions —and far from wishing to plunge Italy back into the past and to revive the Middle Ages, he took his share in destroying that past.

The literature of the Middle Ages had turned in a circle round the conceptions of the other world, chivalry, and Platonic love, of all of which the new literature was a more or less deliberate parody. Indeed, on the face of Machiavelli there is a momentary look of irony when he is speaking of the Middle Ages, above all when he is affecting the greatest seriousness. His

strokes are all the more terrible for the quiet restraint of his language. When we watch Machiavelli at his work of destroying, we see his kinship with Boccaccio and Lorenzo the Magnificent: his Belfegor is of the same race that produced Astarotte.

But with Machiavelli negation is something more than mere buffoonery and comic effects, born from an empty consciousness. He denies, but he also affirms. A new world was developing in his consciousness. So the negation of Machiavelli is serious and eloquent.

Papacy, empire, Guelfism, Ghibellinism, the feudal and the communal system, in fact, every institution of the Middle Ages, had already been destroyed in his mind; he had destroyed them because at the same time he was erecting a new social and political edifice to replace them.

The ideas that had sprung from them were dead, and no longer had the slightest effect on the consciousness, which was empty. Here, in this inner idleness, was the root of Italian corruption. To renew the people of Italy it was first necessary to renew their consciousness, and this was precisely the aim of Machiavelli. While destroying he creates. In the middle of a universal and empty negation he begins his work of reconstruction. It would be impossible here to follow his teaching in its details; it is enough to point to his fundamental ideas.

The Middle Ages had rested on this basis: that to attach oneself to the life on earth as a substantial thing was sin; that virtue consisted in denying earthly life and in contemplating the other life; that life on earth was not reality or truth, but was only shadow and appearance; and that reality was not that which was, but that which ought to be. So the real content of the Middle Ages was the other world—Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, the world in keeping with truth and justice. From this theologico-ethical conception of life came the *Divine Comedy* and the whole of the literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Its natural forms were symbolism and mysticism. Earthly

reality was a symbol, Beatrice was a symbol, love was a symbol, and man and Nature had their meaning and their root in the entities and universals, in short, in ultra-earthly forces, which are the major of the syllogism, the universal that gives rise to the particular.

But with Boccaccio and with all the writers who came after him the whole of this material of the Middle Ages had been rejected, caricatured, and parodied, the forms equally with the conception being turned into stuff for amusement—pure negation in its cynical and licentious form, and based on the glorification of the flesh or sin, or voluptuousness, Epicureanism, a reaction against asceticism. Theologians, astrologers, and poets were all of them classed together as visionaries—as in the delightful ending of the *Maccaronea*, which Folengo had taken from Ariosto's moon. In theory there was complete indifference; in practice there was complete licence.

Machiavelli lived in this world, and took part in it with the same licence in practice and the same indifference in theory. His culture was nothing extraordinary; there were many men in his day who were ahead of him and of Ariosto in learning and erudition. He seems to have given as wide a berth to philosophic speculations as to scholastic and theological pronouncements. In any case he was not worrying about them; his mind was entirely on practical life.

In the natural sciences he seems, if anything, to have been behindhand, if we are to judge from some passages in his books, in which he speaks of the influence of the stars. Battista Alberti had certainly a vaster and more complete culture: Niccolò was not the philosopher of Nature; he was the philosopher of man. But his genius pushed him beyond his subject, and led him to prepare the way for Galileo.

Man, as Machiavelli conceives him, has not that ecstatic, contemplative face of the Middle Ages, nor the tranquil, idyllic face of the Renaissance: he has the modern face, the face of the man of modern times, who has an aim in life, and who

works and produces around that aim. Every man on this earth has his mission, suited to his abilities. Life is not a game of the imagination, and is not contemplation. It is not theology nor art; life is a serious thing in itself, and its ends and its means are here on the earth. To make this life on earth the important thing that it once had been, to give it a purpose, and to bring back health to the inner stream of character, to restore seriousness and activity to man—here is the vital motive that breathes in all the works of Machiavelli.

He rejects the Middle Ages, and he rejects the Renaissance. He has as little use for divine contemplation as for artistic contemplation. Culture and art seem to him excellent things in their way, but not the type of thing that ought to, or indeed that could, constitute the aim of a man's life. He fights the imagination as the most dangerous of enemies. That habit of looking at things not as they are but as they ought to be seems to him the very malady that needs to be cured: he repeats again and again that things must be judged as they are and not as they ought to be. That "ought to be," that tendency of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance alike, must give place to what is, or, as he puts it, to "effectual" truth. The basis of all his teaching is the principle that imagination, whether in religion or in art, must be made subordinate to the real world as shown by experience and observation.

Having entirely scrapped the superhuman and the supernatural, he sets up the fatherland as the basis of life. The first mission of man on earth and his first duty is patriotism—the duty of working for the glory, the greatness, the freedom, of his country.

Duty to country was a thing unknown in the Middle Ages; the only ideals of that time were allegiance and citizenship. Every human being from his birth onwards was a subject of the pope and of the emperor, the two powers that represented God on earth. The papacy was the soul of human society, the empire was its body. And revolving around these "suns," as they were

called, were minor planets—the kings, the princes, the dukes, the barons. And besides these suns and planets there were the free communes, by their very nature antagonistic to them. But liberty was the privilege of the pope and the emperor, and even the communes existed by the grace of God and therefore of the pope and the emperor, and often begged for papal or imperial legates to be sent to them, to rule their people or to reduce them to order. Savonarola had proclaimed Jesus Christ as the King of Florence, of course reserving for himself the right of representing Him and interpreting Him: it is a touch that throws a light on the whole of the thought of that time.

In Machiavelli's day the pope was still in existence, and so was the emperor, but the ideas on which their powers had rested had quite disappeared from the cultured classes of Italy. And even the pope and the emperor had changed their tone: the pope's authority had dwindled, though his territories were wider than before, and the emperor had become weak and perplexed by the affairs of his country.

Papacy, empire, Guelfism, Ghibellinism, were subjects that were never mentioned in Italy except to laugh at them; people laughed at them as they did at chivalry and at everything else that pertained to the Middle Ages. The only remains of that world in Italy were the pope, the gentlemen, and the soldiers of fortune, or mercenaries. Machiavelli looks on the temporal power of the papacy as not only an absurd and ignoble form of government, but as the principal danger threatening Italy; as a democrat he fights the idea of a narrow government, and often is very severe on the gentlemen, the survivors of feudalism. He looks on the mercenaries and soldiers of fortune as the chief cause of Italy's weakness in the face of the foreign invader. In fighting the pope, the gentlemen, and the adventurers, he is fighting the last remaining traces of the Middle Ages.

By "*patria*" he meant of course the free commune: free by its own virtue and strength and not by the grace of pope and emperor, and governed by all in the interests of all. Yet all the

same it was impossible for such a shrewd observer as Machiavelli to ignore the historical phenomenon of the great states that had been formed in Europe, and he realized that the commune must inevitably vanish with the other institutions of the Middle Ages. The commune seemed too small a thing to be able to survive in the face of those powerful conglomerations of races called "states" or "nations." The same thought had occurred to Lorenzo, who had made the experiment of a great Italic League to maintain the balance of power between the different states and to insure their mutual defence, which, however, had not prevented the invasion of Charles VIII. The scheme that Machiavelli proposed was nothing less than a great Italian state, to be the bulwark of Italy against the foreigner. So the conception of the fatherland was no longer the little commune, but was the whole of the nation. In Dante's Utopia Italy was the "garden of the empire"; in Machiavelli's Utopia Italy is the *patria*, the fatherland, an independent, autonomous nation.

Country to Machiavelli was a god, higher even than morality, and higher than law. Just as the ascetics saw the individual as absorbed into the Godhead, and just as the Inquisitors burned heretics in the name of God, so for one's country everything was lawful—actions that in private life would be crimes, when done for the sake of country became magnanimous. This right of country above every other right was commonly known as "reasons of state," or "public welfare." God had come out of Heaven and descended to the earth, and had changed His name to "Fatherland" but was no less terrible. Country was supreme, its will and interests were *suprema lex;* the individual was absorbed as before into the collective being. And when this collective being became absorbed in its turn into the will of a single person or of the few, there was servitude. Liberty meant the participation, in some degree, of all the citizens in public affairs. The rights of man did not enter as yet into the code of freedom. Man was not as yet an autonomous being, an end in himself: he was the instrument of his country, or what was

even worse, of the state. "State" was the term that applied to governments in general, even to despotic governments depending on the will of a single person; but "fatherland" or "country" was the place where each man took his part, whether large or small, in public affairs, and where all obeyed and all commanded—in fact, the thing that was called a "republic." When a single person commanded and the rest obeyed, it was called a "princedom." But whether republic, princedom, country, or state, the conception was always the same: the individual absorbed into society, or as they called it then, "the omnipotence of the state."

Machiavelli puts these ideas forward not as things discovered or analyzed for the first time by himself, but as things accepted by long tradition and backed by classical culture. They have the spirit of ancient Rome in them. Rome was the exemplar of glory and liberty, to which every one turned as to a magnet; and not only was Rome the exemplar in art and letters, but also in government.

And country absorbed even religion. The Roman court was a grief to Machiavelli not only because it had called in the foreigners to protect its temporal power, but also because by its riotous, licentious habits it had weakened the authority of religion among the people. What he desired was a state religion, which could be used by princes as a help in governing. The word "religion" had lost its meaning: to the literati it was art, to the statesmen it was a political instrument. Machiavelli had a liking for morality; he praises it in his books, and he praises clemency too, he praises the habit of conforming to religion, and sincerity and the other virtues—but always on the condition that they benefit the fatherland. If he meets with them on his road not as instruments, but as obstacles, he smashes them. His books have many resounding passages in praise of generosity and clemency and the other virtues of good princes, but somehow or other they have always a hint of rhetoric; we notice it all the more that his prose is usually so naked. Neither he nor

any of his contemporaries had a pure and true feeling for religion or morality.

We of this century are looking at these things across a distance of time, and what we see is a laic state that is breaking loose from the bonds of theocracy and becoming a tyrant in its turn. We should remember that the struggle was still active, and that every exaggeration brought another in its train. Putting aside the exaggerations, what we see is the ideal of an autonomous and independent civil power, freed from every tie of vassalage and subjection to Rome. In Machiavelli from beginning to end there is never the slightest allusion to divine right; the basis of his republic is the *vox populi,* the consent of every one. And the foundation of his princedom is force, or legitimate conquest, made secure by good government. There is mention of Heaven in his books from time to time, and also of the pope, but only as useful forces for keeping the people quiet and obedient to the laws.

The basis of life on this earth being the fatherland, Machiavelli could not possibly be expected to care for the cloistral virtues of humility and patience, the virtues "by which Heaven itself was disarmed and the world made effeminate," and which rendered men "more prone to suffer injuries than to avenge them." "*Agere et pati fortia romanum est*"—"To do and to suffer greatly is Roman." The Catholic religion, if badly interpreted, is inclined to make a man more ready to suffer than to do, and Machiavelli blames ascetic and contemplative education for the feebleness of body and soul that prevent the Italians from chasing the foreign invader from their country and regaining their freedom and independence. "Virtue" he takes in the Roman sense, meaning strength, energy, the quality that fits a man for great undertakings and sacrifices. Italians are not lacking in this virtue, indeed in single encounters they are often victorious; but they are lacking in training and in discipline, or, as he puts it himself, in the "good systems and good arms" that render nations valiant and free.

Virtue is rewarded by glory. "Country," "virtue," and "glory" are the three sacred words, the triple base of Machiavelli's world.

Nations, like individuals, have their missions on earth. Individuals without country or virtue or glory are like scattered, lost atoms, "numbers born to consume the fruits of the earth." And nations too can be empty and idle and leave no trace behind them in the world when they die. The historical nations are those which have discharged some special function towards humanity, or the "human species," as they called it then—like Assyria, Greece, Rome. A nation is great through its virtue or mettle, its energy of body and of mind. And nations like persons have their old age, when the ideas that made them great grow weak in their consciousness, their strength fails, and the reins fall from their weakened hands and pass to others.

The world is not ruled by superhuman or casual forces, but by the spirit of man, which proceeds by organic and therefore inevitable laws. The mover of history is not Providence nor Fortune, but is the "force of things," determined by the laws of spirit or of Nature. The power of spirit is immutable, and continues to produce everlastingly.

So history is not a chance collection of fortuitous and providential events, but is a necessary conjunction of cause and effect, the result of the forces put into motion by the opinions, the passions, and the self-interests of man. The field of politics or the art of government is not an ethical world, determined by ideal laws of morality, but is the real world of here and now. To govern is to understand—to know how to regulate the forces that move the world. And the statesman is the man who is able to regulate and handle these forces and use them for his ends.

So the greatness and the fall of nations are not accidental or miraculous, but are necessary effects caused by the special forces that move them. When it happens that these forces are completely exhausted, those nations die. The rulers who stand alone, like the lion, know nothing of governing; the fox, or

prudence, is necessary, in a word, intelligence—the calculating and handling of the forces that move states. Nations, like individuals, have their ties with each other, and their rights and duties. And just as there are private rights there are also public rights, or the rights of peoples, or as they call it today, "international law." And even war has its laws.

Nations die, but the spirit of man never dies. Immortally young, it passes from nation to nation, and continues the history of the human species, obeying its organic laws. Therefore, there is not only the history of this or that nation, but there is also the history of the world, inevitable and logical like the rest and determined in its course by the organic laws of spirit or thought. Here we have arrived at the thing that was known in those days as the "philosophy of history."

Of this philosophy of history and of the rights of peoples all that we find in Machiavelli is the bare scientific basis, a clear point of departure for his successors to make use of. His own particular field is politics and history.

These conceptions were not new. Philosophical conceptions, like poetical conceptions, are the fruit of long elaboration. The ideas of Machiavelli were the natural outcome of all that universal movement which led to man's being freed from the supernatural and the fantastic, and gave him the knowledge and possession of himself. And his contemporaries did not think of them as new or daring; all Machiavelli did was to put into words what every one had been feeling vaguely.

Even in the Middle Ages we saw the influence of paganism; even in Dante Rome was close to us. But Dante's Rome was providential or imperial Rome, whereas Machiavelli's is republican Rome; he speaks severely of Caesar. To Dante the glorious emprises of republican Rome were miracles of Providence and preparations for the empire. But to Machiavelli there are no such things as miracles, unless the miracles of "good systems," as he calls them. In his books a certain amount of credit in the ordering of life is given to fortune, but by far the

greater share is given to virtue. It was Machiavelli who spoke this profound saying, "Good systems make good fortune, and good fortune makes enterprises turn out successfully." Classicalism was merely the outer covering in which the two ages wrapped their tendencies. Under the classicalism of Dante were mysticism and Ghibellinism: the kernel was mediaeval. Under the classicalism of Machiavelli is the modern spirit that is looking for itself and is finding itself. He admires Rome to the detriment of his own times, in which he says there is "nothing but extreme misery, shame, and reproach; no regard to religion, to laws, to good order, or to discipline, but everything tainted to the last degree of foulness."

He believed that if he could once renew the good systems and the old habits of ancient Rome he could bring back Roman greatness to Italy, and could retemper the metal of her soul. In many of his suggestions and maxims we feel the wisdom of the ancients; it was ancient Rome that gave him his lofty inspirations and that kind of moral elevation which runs through his writings. At times he seems like an ancient Roman himself, wrapped in his toga, so grave he is; but if we look at him again more closely we shall see that he is really the bourgeois of the Renaissance, with the little equivocal laugh of those times. Savonarola had been an echo of the Middle Ages, an apostle or prophet in the manner of Dante; but Machiavelli, in spite of his Roman toga, is the real modern bourgeois, not standing on any pedestal, but speaking simply and naturally, an equal with his equals. With the ironical turn of mind of the Renaissance he has the traits of modern times very clearly indicated.

With Machiavelli we see the Middle Ages collapsing on every one of its foundations, whether of religion, morals, politics, or intellect. But here we have something that is more than an empty denial; we have affirmation. The world is not being destroyed, it is being renewed. Instead of theocracy we have the autonomy and independence of the state. Between the empire and the city or the fief, the only political unities of the

Middle Ages, we have a further nucleus—the nation, to which he assigns its special features: race, language, history, frontiers. So between the princedoms and the republics there is arising a sort of medium or mixed form of government with the advantages of both, with stability on the one hand and freedom on the other: a form of government that foreshadows the constitutional governments of our own day. This is hinted at for the first time in history by Machiavelli in his plan for the reform of the political system of Florence. A new political world is dawning—take as an example among others the passage where he touches on the formation of the great states, and especially where he speaks of France.

Not only the political but also the religious basis is changed. Machiavelli wants religion to be completely separated from temporal power; like Dante he fights against the confusion of the two régimes. His description of the ecclesiastical princedoms is a remarkable piece of writing for the depth of its irony. He considers that religion, if he could once put it back into the province of the spirit where it belongs, would be a help in upbringing and education, but would be none the less useful as an instrument of national greatness. Indeed, at bottom the Church that he plans is a national Church dependent on the state, and brought into line with the aims and interests of the nation.

The basis of morality is changed, too. The ethical aim of the Middle Ages had been the sanctification of the soul by means of the mortification of the flesh; and Machiavelli, though he inveighs against the licentiousness of his times, is quite as severe on the subject of ascetic upbringing. Not Rachel, but Leah, is his goddess, not the contemplative life, but the active life. Virtue is the life of action, of service to country. His saints are more like the heroes of ancient Rome than those of the calendar of the Church; or to put it better, the new moral type is no longer the saint but the patriot.

And the intellectual basis is renewed. Machiavelli, like every one else in his day, does not trouble himself as to whether

religion is true or untrue, but simply puts religion aside, does not think of it at all. When it is necessary to mention religion in his books he does so with a sort of equivocal air of respect. Having done away with every supernatural and providential cause, he establishes his world on the immutability or immortality of thought or the human spirit. He holds that the creator of history is the human spirit: this in itself is a complete revolution. Here we get the famous "*Cogito*"—"I think"—the beginnings of modern science—mankind emancipated from the supernatural and superhuman and together with the state proclaiming his autonomy and independence, and taking possession of the world.

And the method is new. Machiavelli does not recognize any *a priori* truth or any abstract principles, nor the authority of any one at all as the criterion of truth. Theology, philosophy, and ethics are all one to him—all of them imaginary worlds, outside of reality. Truth is what is true in fact; and so the way to look for truth is by experience and observation, the intelligent study of facts. The whole of the scholastic formulary collapses. Instead of its empty mechanism, founded on the abstract combinations of the intellect and depending on the supposed existence of universals, we get the ordinary direct way of speaking, straight and natural. Those general propositions, the "majors" of the syllogism, are all turned about and changed, and in the end appear as results of experience made clear by thinking. Instead of the syllogism we have a "series," in other words, we have a chain of facts that in themselves are both cause and effect. For instance, read the following:

> The City of Florence, having lost a part of her territories, was obliged to make war on those enemies that occupied them; and because the occupying enemies were very powerful the war was attended by a heavy expense, and with no advantage at all. The great expense gave rise to grievous taxes, and the taxes to endless complaints among the people; and because the war was conducted by a magistracy of ten citizens . . . the commonality began to be out of all patience with them, and accused them of being the cause of all the burdens arising from it.

Here the facts are excellently marshalled, so that each explains the next. They make a double series; one series is complicated, giving the real causes, which can be seen only by the man of intellect; the other is very simple indeed, giving the apparent and superficial cause, which all the same is the one that drags the universal into acts that are quite unreasoning, and with a gravity and a sureness of touch that make the conclusion deeply ironical. The facts spring out at us just in the same way in which they develop in Nature and man; there seems no art at all in the writing. But if we look closer at these facts we shall see that each is linked, subordinated, and coordinated by thought; that each has its place, its value of cause and effect, and its function in the whole chain. The separate facts are not merely facts and accidental, but are reason, thought: beneath the words there is an argument. And so the author was able to condense the whole history of the Middle Ages into a few pages and make it the splendid vestibule of his history of Florence. His reasoning is made of facts, therefore what he does is merely to state them, without demonstrating them. They are facts taken from history, from the experience of the world, seen by an acute looker-on, and put into words as simple as they are vivid. Many of these intellectual facts have come down to us as proverbs, such as "reducing things to their first principles"; the expression "unarmed prophets," so ironical; "Man is inclined by nature to be surfeited by blessings and impatient of ills"; and "You must either flatter men or stifle them." Some of these maxims or thoughts of Machiavelli have been collected. They are a splendid storehouse for writers to steal from and deck themselves out in their spoils. Whoever wants an example of these intellectual facts as shown by a lofty and rare mind, let him read the famous dedication of the *Discorsi.*

With the collapse of the scholastic form came the collapse of the literary form founded on the "period." In didactic works the period had been a syllogism disguised, a proposition with its

major and its middle ideas. If the matter was intellectual it was called "demonstration," if one of pure facts it was called "description." But Machiavelli does away with ornamentation, and gives us simple propositions—not describing or demonstrating, but merely stating them, without the help of the period. And not only does he do away with literary form, but he kills form in itself—and this in a century in which form was the only remaining god on the altars. His mind is full of a new content; the content itself is everything to him and the form is nothing, or to put it more exactly, the form is the content itself in its real truth, in its material and intellectual existence. What matters to him is not that the thing is reasonable or moral, or beautiful, but that it *is*. The world is so, and we must take it as it is; what use then of thinking that it could be, or that it ought to be, something else? The basis of life, and therefore of knowledge is *Nosce te ipsum*—the knowing of the world as it is. Indulging in fantasies and demonstrating and describing and moralizing are only the fruits of the intellect placed outside of the realities of life and left to the sway of the imagination. So his prose is free from everything that is ethical and abstract. He looks at the world from the lofty height of a superior intellect, and his motto is *Nil admirari*. He neither wonders nor gets impassioned, because he understands. And he spends no time in demonstrating or describing, because he sees and touches. He goes direct to the thing itself, and never indulges in periphrases or circumlocutions, or amplifications, or argumentations, or fine phrases, or figures, or periods, or ornamentation: to him these are only obstacles that delay the vision. And then, having taken the shortest and therefore the straightest path, he keeps his mind on it—and ours too. What he gives us is a limited and rapid series of propositions and facts, with all the middle ideas and all the accidents and all the episodes suppressed. He runs through it quickly, with the air of a Roman praetor who *non curat de minimis;* of a man whose mind is concerned with grave affairs, who has neither the time nor the wish to look around him.

That rapid style of his, that habit of condensation, is not the result of art, as is sometimes the case with Tacitus and always with Davanzati, but is due to a natural clearness of vision. Middle ideas are for mediocre minds, to help them to arrive laboriously at conclusions; Machiavelli has no need of them, nor yet of the usual padding and painting of empty spaces, which indolent brains are so fond of: his prose is woven of definite thoughts. It is true that his simplicity is sometimes very like carelessness and his sobriety now and then is meagreness, but these are only the defects of his qualities. The people who dig in that divine prose for Latinisms, loose ends, slips of the pen, and similar negligences, and when they find them blow out their cheeks like pedagogues, need not be considered, for they are nothing but pedants.

The prose of the fourteenth century was wanting in organism, had little structure or inner cohesion; it had feeling and imagination in plenty, but was poor in intellect. With the prose of the sixteenth century we get the appearance, in fact the affectation, of structure, expressed in the "period." But the structure is only in appearance; in spite of the wealth and all the abundance of links and parts and parentheses we get the feeling of inner emptiness and decay. The void is not in the intellect but in the consciousness, which has become indifferent and sceptical. So the work of the intellect is entirely external, is foliage and flowers; the most frivolous of arguments are treated with the same degree of seriousness as the weightiest question —all have the same importance. But the seriousness is only apparent, is formal, and therefore is rhetoric. When Monsignor della Casa wrote the oration on Charles V, he did it in the same state of soul as when he wrote the *capitolo* on the bake-house; but the former, being on a subject suited to his nature, turned out cynical, whereas the latter, being on a subject unsuited to him, turned out false. The best examples of prose representing that polite and elegant society are the *Galateo* and the *Cortigiano*. It was a society entirely on the surface, and in the midst of

it were Casa and Castiglione, who placed the chief importance of life in customs and manners. And even the intellect, in its idle virility, placed the chief importance of composition in customs and manners, or in dress. The adornments of Boccaccio and Cicero had become a convention, a mechanism that was purely imitative, and had nothing to do with the intellect. Scholastic forms were still in use with philosophers, poets still Petrarchized, and writers of prose used a kind of mongrel language, a mixture of the poetical and the rhetorical, an outward imitation of Boccaccio. But the disease was the same: passivity or indifference of the intellect, of the heart, of the imagination, in other words, inertness of the soul itself. They were merely writers, not men; writing was a trade, and consisted in the mechanism called "literary form," with the soul entirely indifferent—a complete divorce between the man and the writer. And into the middle of all this ebullition of rhetorico-poetical prose comes the prose of Machiavelli; it is the first foreshadowing of modern prose.

Here man is all in all; we only meet with the writer in so far as he is a man. Machiavelli seems almost to ignore that an art of writing exists. Now and then he has a try at it and proves himself to be a master of it; he too can be a literato when he chooses. But the man in him is everything. What he writes is the direct product of his brain. It comes to us warm and breathing, often condensed into a single word. For here is a man who thinks and feels, destroys and creates, and observes and reflects, with a mind unceasingly active and present. What he cares for is the thing, not the colouring, and yet the thing comes out of his brain with its own impressions, its natural colouring, crossed at times with irony, with melancholy, with indignation, with dignity, but more often just the bare thing itself in its plastic clearness. His prose is clear and rounded like a piece of marble, but marble with veins in it. The grand manner of Dante is in it. Speaking of the changes introduced in the Middle Ages in the names of things and of men he finishes like this: "The men also,

from Caesars and Pompeys became Pieros, Giovannis, and Matteos." Here we have just the marble, the naked thing, but how many veins are in that marble! We feel the whole train of impressions made on his brain: admiration for those Caesars and Pompeys, contempt for those Pieros and Matteos, the contempt for that change. We see him choosing the names that were characteristic, and putting them facing each other like enemies; and that final "became," so full of energy, seeming to say that the change was not merely in the names but in the souls.

This prose of Machiavelli, so dry, so terse, and so precise, composed so entirely of thought and definite matter, shows an intellect already mature, emancipated from all the elements of ethics, poetry, and mysticism, and become the regulator of the world: logic, the force of things, the modern Fate. Fate, in effect, is the inner meaning of the world, as Machiavelli conceives it. The world, no matter how it came to be so, is now what it is; an attrition of forces, human and natural, and with laws of its own. And the thing we call "fate" is logic, and nothing else; it is the necessary outcome of all these forces, appetites, instincts, passions, opinions, imaginations, and self-interests; and it is governed and propelled by a higher force than itself—by the human spirit, the thought and the intellect of man. Dante's God is Love, the force uniting intellect and act, and the result is wisdom. "We must love," says Dante. "We must understand," says Machiavelli. The soul of the Dantesque world is the heart; the soul of Machiavelli's world is the brain. The one is essentially mystical and ethical, the other is essentially human and logical. Virtue has changed its meaning; it is no longer a moral feeling, but is strength and energy, the fibre of the soul. For instance, Cesare Borgia is virtuous, for the reason that he possesses the force of soul to act in accordance with logic; in other words, having accepted the end, he accepts the means to it. The soul of Machiavelli's world being the brain, the prose he gives us is entirely and solely brain.

And now that we have followed Machiavelli in his theories

we shall be able to understand him in his applications. His history of Florence, written in narrative form, gives us the logic of events. It is not like Dino's history, written with heart moved and imagination stirred. To Dino all the events had seemed new, had seemed strange, and everything had offended his moral sense; the feeling that was strongest in Dino was the ethical feeling, as it was also in Dante, in Mussato, and in fact in all of the writers of the fourteenth century. But the thing that interests Machiavelli is the explanation of facts by the human forces that move them. He writes in a calm and meditative style, in the manner of a philosopher explaining the world. His personages are not caught in the heat of feeling, the tumult of action: it is not the dramatic type of history. The author is not on the stage, nor even in the wings, but is sitting at his desk in his study. And while the events of history are filing past him, he endeavours to seize their causes. But his calm is not the calm of a philosopher who is intent only on explaining, who is entirely wrapped up in the work of his intellect, and is not distracted by emotions or impressions. Machiavelli's is the calm of a man of higher intellect, who looks with pity on the nervous, convulsive movements of passion-ridden men.

In the *Discorsi* we get a life more vivid, more awake intellectually; the intellect here has a way of breaking loose from the facts, coming back to them, however, for breath and inspiration. The facts are only the fixed point of the book, its pivot, and the author gets through them quickly, like one who narrates what every one knows already, and who is in a hurry to move on. But when he has finished with the facts and begins to discourse, we notice that the facts have given him life; his intellect seems to rise from them invigorated, freshly inspired, surprised and happy at the same time. And we feel his satisfaction in working his intellect, his pleasure in his own originality, in that special way, entirely his own, of saying things that are only paradoxes to ordinary people. His thoughts are marshalled like soldiers; nothing from the outer world can come into their ranks to dis-

turb them. He has none of that agitation from the heat of production which we find at times even in the greatest writers; his intellect is young and fresh, quiet in its own strength, and mistrustful of everything that is not itself. So in Machiavelli there are no digressions, no images, no efforts to create an effect, no comparisons, no vicious circles; each idea leads in turn to another idea, creating a series of disciplined thoughts, mobile and productive, each linked to the others by inflexible logic, and analyzed with a degree of vigour that is remarkable. It is all so clear, so simple, that it seems superficial—and yet is profound.

The *Discorsi* are based on the conception that "few men can bring themselves to be absolutely good or absolutely bad," therefore they are wanting in the logical temper, are wanting in "virtue"; they have weak wishes but not will; they are weakened by imaginations and by fears and hopes, and by vain cogitations and superstitions; they are chary of committing themselves, choose the middle ways, and run after appearances. In the spirit of man there abides an insatiable appetite, a never-ceasing stimulus that keeps it everlastingly in movement and creates the progress of history. So man is forever restless, and he rises from one ambition only to follow a new one, defends himself and attacks, and the more he has the more he wants; and so the aims of man are never-ending, and the means to attain them confused and uncertain.

The same remarks apply to man as a collective being, as a family or a class. At bottom there are only two classes in society—the upper class and the lower class, the rich and the poor—and history is only the eternal war between him who has and him who has not, and political systems are the means for balancing the classes. But political systems are only "free" when they are based on equality, so that a country which has its "gentlemen," or a privileged class, can never be free.

It is clear that no political science or art would be possible that did not take as its basis a knowledge of the material it had to handle; so the *Discorsi* are in great part made of social por-

traits, whether of the lower classes or the people, or of the nobles or gentlemen, or of princes, or else of Frenchmen, Germans, or Spaniards, of individuals or of nations. These portraits show a wonderful subtlety in their observations and are very distinctly presented. The thing that stands out from them is character; in other words, the forces that move individuals and peoples and classes to act in this way or in that; and his remarks on these things are the results of his own personal experience, so are fresh and alive even today.

As human desires are never-ceasing and as the strength to attain them is weak and wavering, it is evident that the means are not in proportion to the ends; this and nothing else is the cause of all the oscillations and disorders of history. So the basis of political science, or the art of leading or governing men, is precision of aim and strength of means. In the union of these lies that energy of the intellect which makes individuals and nations great. For the world is governed by logic.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* is this merciless logic applied. He does not blame those princes who by fraud or by force have wrested liberty from peoples. As they have already seized the state, he shows them how best they can keep it. He is not thinking here of the defence of country—except in so far as the prince in providing for himself is providing for the state: public interest is the prince's own interest. He cannot give liberty to his subjects, but he can give them good laws that will protect their honour, their lives, and their property. He should aim at winning the favour and graces of the people, curbing the gentlemen and the turbulent characters. Let him govern his subjects not by murdering them but by studying them and understanding them, "not being deceived by them, but deceiving them." In regard to appearances he must have the best possible; if he does not wish to be religious, or good, or merciful, or a protector of the arts, or a patron of men of brains, let him at least appear so.

This logical point of view, which preponderates in history, is

the thing that gives to Machiavelli's exposition its special quality of intellectual calm, forceful and assured, the calm of a man who knows and who wills. A man's heart grows bigger as his brain grows bigger, and the more he knows the more he will dare. But if the temper of his soul be weak, his mind will be confused. A weak man does not know what he wants, is swayed by his imagination and passions, and is pulled this way and that, like the common herd. The prince need never be afraid that his subjects will see through his schemes, for men are simple by nature and easy to deceive. The finest weapon a prince can have is fear, therefore he must aim at being feared more than at being loved. And above everything else he must avoid being odious or contemptible.

Any one who reads the treatise *De regimine principum* of Egidio Colonna will find in it a magnificent ethical world without any connection with life as it is. But any one who reads Machiavelli's *Il principe* will find in it a cruel, logical world, founded on the study of life and of man. Man, like Nature, is subject to immutable laws—not moral laws, but logical laws. The thing a man ought to ask himself is not whether his actions are good or beautiful, but whether they are reasonable or logical, whether his means are consistent with his end. The world is governed not merely by force as force, but by the force of intellect. Italy was no longer capable of giving us a divine and ethical world, so gave us a logical world instead. The only thing that was still alive in her was intellect. Machiavelli's world is the world of intellect freed from the passions and the imagination.

And this is the lofty point of view from which Machiavelli should be judged. What he advocates is seriousness of intellect, or in other words, precision of aim, and the strength of soul to steer unswervingly for that aim without looking to the right or to the left or allowing one's attention to be turned aside by secondary or extraneous considerations. His ideal virtue is clearness of intellect: a mind untroubled by the supernatural or the

fantastic or the sentimental. And his hero is the person who is able to govern man and Nature and use them for his ends. An end may be praiseworthy or blameworthy, and if it deserves blame Machiavelli is the first to raise his voice and protest against it in the name of the human race. For instance, read Chapter X of *The Prince,* one of the most eloquent protests that has ever issued from a great heart. But when the end has already been determined upon, he has only admiration for the man who has willed it and has known how to gain it, and praises him without stint. Moral responsibility lies in the end, not in the means to it. In regard to the means there can be only two faults, lack of will or of knowledge, feebleness or ignorance. He accepts the terrible, but he does not accept the odious or contemptible. An act is odious when it is done from wantonness or passion or fanaticism; and by "contemptible" he means the weakness of fibre that hinders a person from going where his intellect tells him he must nevertheless go.

While Machiavelli was engaged in writing things such as these, the Italian people were busy amusing themselves by reading tales and romances, with the foreigner in their home. They were the least serious people in the world, and the least disciplined. Their fibre of character was gone. It is true that "barbarian tyranny stank in every nostril," and that all were agreed in wishing to be rid of the foreigner; but they had only the wish to do it, not the will. So we can understand how the first aim of Machiavelli was to bring back fibre to the Italian soul, attacking the evil at its root. To a nation that has lost its fibre, morality, religion, liberty, are only words. But if only the fibre, the mettle, can be restored, then everything else can be restored. Machiavelli glorifies mettle, even in wrong-doing. Cesare Borgia, clear of intellect and strong of character, was more of a man in his eyes than Pier Soderini. Yet the former was utterly wanting in moral sense, while the latter was the very perfection of a man of honour, but a "stupid fellow," who ruined the republic by his ineptitude and weakness.

Though fibre of character was weakened in Italy, the Italian spirit was still intact. While on the one hand Machiavelli, by propounding the doctrine that the first quality in a man is manliness, was opening the virile age of intelligent force, on the other hand, Italian wit was taking force—but undisciplined, aimless, incoherent force—as the chief comic motive for its romantic literature. The chivalrous type of man as conceived in Italy was ridiculous because he seemed like a sort of disordered, gigantic force, without seriousness of aim or of means—force for its own sake, and moreover the whole of force, and used for the most frivolous as well as for the most serious ends. Morgante and Mandricardo and Fracasso are so very comic just for that reason.

There were certainly chivalric aims, such as those of guarding women and protecting the oppressed, but they seemed to that sceptical and intelligent public to be no less comic than the extraordinary feats of bodily strength. We can say of those Italian knights of chivalry what Doralice said of Mandricardo: "It was not love that moved thee, but natural rage of the heart." [1] So the Italian spirit on the one hand was caricaturing the Middle Ages as a disordered game of forces, and on the other was laying the foundation of a new age on the virile principle that the meaning of force is seriousness of means and aim, guided by intelligence. Italy, in what she was destroying and in what she was creating, was manifesting the power of intellect, anticipating the rest of Europe by a century. In Italy there was intelligence but not strength. Italians imagined that they could chase out the foreigner by their superior intelligence. The Italian intellect was adult, wide awake but abstract, like formal logic, which takes no account of the thing that is argued—in fact, science for its own sake, like art for art's sake. The Italian consciousness was empty; it had no content and was aiming at nothing; and an empty consciousness, as we know, is

[1] *Orlando furioso* XXX, 33. The passage in which Doralice reproaches Mandricardo for being ready to do as much for the sake of a shield or a sword as he had done for the sake of possessing her.

another word for a cold heart and a weak-tempered character. The movement of wit was entirely negative and comic; it was easier for the Italians to laugh at undisciplined forces than to discipline their own character, and it was easier to make fun of the foreigner than to chase him out. The fact that they were amused is a proof of their superior intelligence, but also of their moral decadence. They had plenty of physical force, but had none of that moral force which holds a man tightly to an idea and makes him ready to live or die for that idea.

Machiavelli had no confusion in his mind as to this decadence of Italy, or, as he calls it himself, this "corruption":

> Here there is great strength in the limbs, though the head is weak; we see daily in duels and in encounters, in which only a few are engaged, how superior is the vigour, dexterity, and intelligence of Italians.

Yet Italy was corrupt, because poor in moral force; she was wanting in a worthy aim to fill the national consciousness. It was Machiavelli who originated the grand conception that the sinews of war are not money, nor fortresses, nor soldiers, but moral forces—or, to use his own words, patriotism and discipline. The chief cause of this corruption in Italy was the debasement of the clergy, and Machiavelli, in a passage on Luther, has left us the following memorable words on religion:

> Had Christian princes but taken care to maintain their religion in the purity it was delivered by its Founder, it is certain that Christendom would have been a great deal happier and more united than it is at present; but it is the surest sign of its declension to see that those who live nearest to the Church of Rome, the head of our religion, are the least devout. For whoever will consider its first foundations and then compare them with the practice of these times, will judge that some dreadful scourge, or perhaps utter destruction, is at hand.

Certainly it is not a grateful task to tell home-truths to one's own country. To Machiavelli it was a duty, and he realized its greatness to the full.

> Whoever is born in Italy and is not an ultramontane, or in Greece

and is not a Turk, has sufficient reason to bewail his lot in being born into such times as these.

To speak the truth is a holy mission, an act of patriotism. He surveys the history of the world, and he sees how great were the glories of Assyria, of Media, of Persia, of Greece, of Italy, of Rome; he praises the rule of the Franks, the rule of the Turks, the rule of the Sultan; and he praises the virtues of the German peoples of his own day. The spirit of man, immutable and immortal, has passed from one race to another, showing its virtue in them all. And when his eye falls on Italy, the comparison tears his heart. The finest pages of his history are those in which he tells of the decadence of Genoa and Venice and other Italian towns, at a time when the states of Europe were flowering so richly. As a man of upright character he feels the duty of speaking the truth to his country, of diagnosing the illness and prescribing the remedy, not feeding it with flattering words, but on the contrary turning its eyes to its own decadence, to make it ashamed of that decadence, to rouse it. His words have the high moral loftiness that comes from duty:

> If the virtue of the past as well as the wickedness of the present had not been clearer than the sun in the heavens, I should have been more sparing in both my praise and my censure. But the case being so utterly clear that nobody can deny it, I shall make no scruple of declaring my opinion of the present times, in order to incite such young men as may chance to read my works to imitate the virtues of the one or avoid the vices of the other. . . . For it is certainly the duty of a good man to point out to others the great, the virtuous, and the praiseworthy; though it may happen that either through adversity of fortune or through the evil of the times, he may not be able to act on it; for if many are instructed in what they ought to do, some of them, perhaps, more blessed by Heaven than he, may be able to act on it.

These words are a monument. One feels the spirit of Dante in them.

Machiavelli keeps his promise. He judges things and men severely. Every one knows what he wrote about the papacy, and he is quite as severe on the princes:

Let those of our princes who have lost dominions that they have long possessed, not put the blame on fortune, but on their own ineptitude; for having taken no manner of care in peaceable times to provide against any change that might ensue . . . when evil times befell them all they thought of was to run away instead of thinking of some defence.

Of the soldiers of fortune he writes:

It is to them that we owe it that [our country] has been overrun by Charles, plundered by Louis, and insulted by the Swiss . . . so much so that they have led Italy into slavery and contempt.

Nor is he less severe on the gentlemen, the survivors of feudalism. He has painted them for eternity in this marvellous picture:

By "gentlemen" I mean such men as live in idleness and luxury on the incomes of their possessions without ever troubling to cultivate them, or working in any other way for their living. Subjects like these are very pernicious in any province. But more pernicious still are those who besides having money are also the owners of castles and have subjects who obey them. With these two sorts of men the Kingdom of Naples, the territories of Rome, Romagna, and Lombardy, abound: from which it follows that in all these provinces there has never been a republic nor any political freedom, because men of that type are all of them the enemies of civilization.

Notice in this quotation the idea, entirely modern, that man's business in life is to work, and that the worst enemy of civilization is idleness. It was the idea that later was to break up the monasteries, destroy the ascetic and contemplative system root and branch, together with the feudal system, which was founded on the presumption that the few should live in idleness on the work of the many. A man who can note the causes of Italian decadence with so much sagacity and frankness might well say, alluding to Savonarola:

Whence it came to pass that Charles of France was suffered to conquer Italy with chalk; and he who said that it was due to our own sins, said truly; though not to the sins he meant, but to those which I have here pointed out.

Idle people are fatalists. They attribute everything to fortune. Machiavelli says:

> Fortune . . . displays her might where no preparations have been made to resist her, and throws her whole force on that side where she finds no banks nor ditches thrown up to hold her back. And if we look at Italy, which has been the seat of those changes and also their cause, we shall perceive that it is like a field without embankments or protection.

Italy being in this state of corruption, Machiavelli appeals to a redeemer, to some prince of Italy, some Theseus or Cyrus or Moses or Romulus, to restore it to order, persuaded that the work of restoration must be done by a single person, just as its subsequent government must be done by every one in unison. The Romans in times of special danger had set up dictators; and in the extreme of corruption into which Italy had fallen Machiavelli sees no other help than a dictator:

> A prince who is seeking to attain earthly glory must want to possess a corrupted city, not in order to spoil it utterly, like Caesar, but in order to bring it back again to order, like Romulus.

His judgment on Caesar is famous:

> Let no one be dazzled by the glory of Caesar, seeing him so greatly extolled by writers, because those who praise him were subverted by his fortune, and afraid because of the length of his reign. For it was not permitted to writers to speak freely of him. But whoever wishes to know what a historian who was free would have said of him, let him read what is said of Catiline. And of the two Caesar was much more detestable, if a man who actually commits a crime is worse than another who only intended it. Let him also observe what eulogies they bestow on Brutus; for not being able to speak impartially of Caesar, because of his power, they were forced to be content with magnifying his enemy. . . . The reader will then see clearly what Rome, Italy, and the world owe to Caesar.

To the person who seizes the state by force he promises not only forgiveness but even glory, but only on the condition that he knows how to govern it:

Let those consider, therefore, who are blessed with the opportunity, that they can choose between two courses; one will make them to live secure and will glorify their memory after their death; the other will make them to live in continual troubles and make them for ever infamous after their death.

So he invokes some savior beloved of Heaven, who will stanch Italy's wounds, and "put an end to the sacking of Lombardy and the imposts of Naples and Tuscany, and heal those sores of hers which through long neglect are festering." It is the old traditional idea of a redeemer or Messiah. Dante too had invoked a political Messiah, symbolized by the Greyhound. But Dante was a Ghibelline, and the Italy of Dante was the "garden of the empire," so the savior he invoked was Henry of Luxemburg. But the Italy that Machiavelli dreamed of was an independent autonomous nation; and as every one who was not Italian was a foreigner, a "barbarian," an "ultramontane," the savior invoked by Machiavelli had necessarily to be an Italian. Any one who wishes to trace the progress of the Italian spirit from Dante to Machiavelli should compare Dante's *De monarchia*, so very mystical and scholastic, with *Il principe*, so entirely modern in form and conception. Machiavelli's idea proved to be only a Utopia, like Dante's. And we of today can easily see the reason for it. The masses of the people in Italy were still in darkness, unillumined by the smallest ray of education, so that "country," "liberty," "Italy," "good discipline," "good weapons," were only words to them. The upper, the cultured, classes had retired into private life, passing their time in idyllic and literary idlenesses; they were cosmopolitans—people without a country, who were only excited by the general interests of culture and art. The Italy of the literati, fawning and fawned upon, had lost her freedom, though she seemed to be barely conscious of it. At first the foreigners had frightened her with their ferocious acts and habits; and then they had conquered her by cajoling her, bowing down to her, and doing honour

to her learning. For a long time the Italians continued to boast of themselves, through the mouths of their poets, as the lords and masters of the universe, and to recall their hereditary glories. There was certainly hatred for the foreigner, and a wish to chase him out. But the wish was only a wish; not a single attempt was made to put it into effect. Even with Machiavelli the wish was no more than an idea; he never, so far as we know, made a serious effort to bring it about, beyond the writing of a magnificent *capitolo* in a poetical and rhetorical language different from his ordinary style, a poem that bears witness rather to the aspirations of a noble heart than to the calm conviction of a politician. These were illusions. He saw Italy a little through his wishes for her. But it is only to his honour as a citizen that he had these illusions. His glory as a thinker is the fact that he based his Utopia on true and permanent elements of modern society and of Italy, which were destined to develop in the future, and he pointed the way for other generations. The illusions of the present became the truth of the future.

And after all, there is nothing strange, if we stop to think of it, in the fact that Machiavelli had illusions, in spite of his sagacity and all his experience of the world. There was a great deal of the poet in his nature. For instance, watch him for a moment at an inn, playing at cards and backgammon with his host and a butcher and a miller and a pair of bakers:

> And . . . a thousand quarrels arise and a thousand insults, while most of the time we haggle over a farthing, and our screaming can be heard from San Casciano.

Which is merely plebeian, of course, but is made profoundly poetic by the passage placed in contrast with it:

> And wrapped in that baseness I take my brain out of the mud and let the malignity of this fate of mine burst out of me, being glad that it should trample on me like this, just to see if it can be ashamed of itself.

And again, look at him wandering in the woods with only his Petrarch and his Dante for company, "wantoning" in spirit, dreaming, and floating on the waves of imagination:

> When evening falls I go back to my home and enter my study; and on its threshold I put off my country garments, filthy with mud and dirt, and clothe myself again in royal courtly raiment. When I am worthily attired I make my entrance into the ancient courts of the men of old; and there they receive me with love; and I browse upon that food which alone is mine, and to which I was born. And I feel no shame in speaking with them and asking them the reason of their actions. And they, in their humanity, answer me; and for four hours' space I feel no tedium, forget all care, I feel no poverty, and death does not appal me: I am lost in them.

Only a contemplative, ecstatic man, moved by enthusiasm, could have found that vivid "lost in them," and "wantoning." Machiavelli has a good deal of Dante in him—if we can picture a Dante born after Lorenzo and fed on the spirit of Boccaccio, who makes fun of the *Divine Comedy* and looks for his comedy in the world here below. In his Utopia he reveals an exaltation of soul, a poetical, divining spirit. He calls on his prince to raise his banner and cry, "Out with the barbarians!" like Julius. They are the words of a poet; he actually sees the thing he has imagined:

> What gates would be closed to him? What people would refuse him obedience? What jealousy would stand in his way? What Italian but would yield him homage?

And he ends with the lines from Petrarch:

Virtú contro al Furore	When bravery shall take the
prenderá l' arme, e fia il combat-	field against barbaric rage, the
ter corto:	strife will be short; for the an-
ché l' antico valore	cient valour of Italian hearts is
negl' italici cor non è ancor morto.	not yet dead.

But they were illusions, and were soon to die. In his soul was a lovely image of a moral and civilized world and a virtuous, disciplined people, an image from ancient Rome, which made

him eloquent when he praised and eloquent when he blamed. But his dream was too unlike reality, and he himself was too unlike that Roman type, and in many ways too like his contemporaries. So the real muse of Machiavelli is not enthusiasm, but irony. His mocking air, joined with his shrewdness of observation, leave no doubt that he was a man of the Renaissance. For instance, listen to him when he is speaking of the ecclesiastical princes:

> These are the only [princes] who have dominions that they do not defend, subjects whom they do not govern. Yet they are never stripped of their dominions through not defending them, nor are their subjects concerned at not being governed, nor think of escaping from their allegiance; nor have the power to do so did they wish it. . . . But inasmuch as [these princes] are sustained by a higher agency than the mind of man can reach, I will abstain from speaking of them: for since they were raised and are supported by God Himself it would be rash and presumptuous in any mortal to attempt to speak of these things.

In spite of his reverent wording it is not very difficult to surprise on his lips that ironical twist which we find in his contemporaries. His portraits of people are famous for their originality and liveliness. Of Frenchmen and Spaniards he writes:

> Frenchmen are very prone to rob people of their money, but afterwards are ready to spend all they have taken on the very person they have robbed. The Spaniards are of a different turn; if they rob you of anything you need never expect to see the least part of it again.

From this deep and original talent of observation, this ironical turn of mind, was born the *Mandragola:* his illusions and disillusions alike end in this burst of laughter.

Italian comedy, after the early idyllic attempts, became shut into the forms of Plautus and Terence. Ariosto wrote for the court of Ferrara, and Cardinal Bibbiena for the courts of Urbino and Rome. Plays, translated from the Latin and very

magnificently staged, were given at Rome. Some of them were played by children. Castiglione says:

It was a sad new thing to see little old men, about a foot high, with such gravity of manner and such severe gestures, aping parasites, and *doing things* which Menander himself would never have thought of.

Some of these comedies were accompanied by music, and had intermezzi or interludes of mimic balls called *moresche*. They were splendidly staged. When the *Calandria* was given at Urbino, there was, says Castiglione,

an octagonal temple . . . so marvellously finished that . . . it was difficult to believe that all this had been done in the space of four months. Completely covering the temple were beautiful stucco reliefs; the windows were made to simulate alabaster; the architraves and cornices were of fine gold and ultramarine . . . and there were roundels of marble containing figures and . . . finely worked columns. . . . At one end there was a triumphal arch. . . . Between the architrave and the vault was an admirable representation of the story of the three Horatii, painted to imitate marble. . . . On the top of the arch stood a beautiful equestrian figure, armed, in a fine attitude, and striking with a spear at a naked man at his feet.

Italy was ogling her own likeness in all the pomp of her arts: in architecture, in sculpture, in painting. And there was also curious music, the musicians being hidden in different places. The intermezzi were four in number, the first being a *moresca* of Jason, and the others showing cars of Venus, Neptune, and Juno. Here is what Castiglione says of the first intermezzo:

The first was a *moresca* of Jason, who appeared from one of the wings, dancing, armed with ancient weapons, and looking extremely fine, with magnificent sword and shield. From the other wing came two bulls, so like the real animals that many of the audience took them to be real, and breathing fire out of their mouths, etc. These the good Jason yoked to a plough, which he made them draw, and sowed the furrows with dragons' teeth: when all of a sudden ancient warriors sprang out from the floor. Altogether an excellently managed affair; in my opinion it could not have been better. Next the warriors danced a fiery *moresca*, trying at the same time to kill Jason, and as they left

the stage they demolished each other, one by one, though none was actually seen to die. Behind them entered Jason with the Golden Fleece on his shoulders and at once came out from among them dancing most excellently. This was the *moresca*, and this was the first interlude.

When the comedy was ended a little Cupid suddenly appeared on the stage and spoke a few stanzas explaining the interludes. Then

music of hidden instruments was heard, first from four viols and then from four voices which sang a beautiful melody, which was a sort of invocation to Love, to the accompaniment of the viols. So ended the *festa*, having provided great satisfaction and pleasure to all who saw it.

We are quoting Castiglione again, the author of the *Cortigiano*, who had taken no small share in arranging it.

What sort of a thing was this *Calandria*, which was given so sumptuously and elegantly, first at Urbino and then at Rome? The central figure is Calandro, a facsimile of Calandrino, the stupid husband—the comic motive of the *Decameron*, which had become proverbial in all the comedies and tales. There is also the usual necromancer or astrologer, who lives on the credulity of the foolish. The plot hinges on a brother and sister who are extremely alike. At times they are dressed as men, and at times as women, and the situations arising from this confusion are very strange and ambiguous. The stupid husband is of course balanced by a rogue. The rogue is Fessenio, licentious, clever, cynical, who is the go-between for his master. There is a scene between the pedagogic husband and Fessenio that is wonderfully fine; the pedagogue moralizes, and Fessenio makes fun of him. The plot, as we see, is in the style of Plautus, while the thought is taken from Boccaccio: the stuff is ancient, the pattern is modern. We might almost be watching a stage version of one of the most cynical tales of the *Decameron*. Characters, habits, language, and style, everything is fresh and alive; we feel the Florentine school of Berni, of Lasca, the breath of Lorenzo de' Medici. It is a merry and superficial glance thrown

on the world. The characters are barely suggested, all the events are the result of caprice, and the strangest accidents are piled on each other, crudely and without development, more in the style of the mimic balls of the intermezzi than in that of serious plays. Those people seem really not to have had the necessary time to think or to feel, and to have lived entirely on the surface, just as theatrical life in certain periods has been all in the throats of the singers and the legs of the dancers. This was the type of play called a "*commedia d'intreccio*"—a "comedy of plot," on the same lines as the tales.

At first sight the *Mandragola* seems like it. It has the same complications of plot, with extremely strange and comic incidents. But in the *Mandragola* there is a difference: not a single incident in this play arises from chance. For Machiavelli conceived comedy in the same way that he conceived history: he saw it as the result of an interplay of forces, each with its own nature, that must lead inevitably to a given result. So the interest of his play is centred in the study of the characters and in their development. His protagonist is the usual stupid husband: Calandrino or Calandro here is Doctor Nicia, an educated man who knows Latin, but is easily taken in by people who have read less but know much more of the world. So already the conception is a great deal deeper than that of Calandro: we feel the thinker. The central figure of the comedy is Nicia's wife, Lucrezia, a highly virtuous and very prudent lady, a real Lucretia. And the plot deals with the question of how to win her, not by force, but by cunning. The curtain rises on a tale something akin to the story of the Roman Lucretia. Callimaco, like Sextus, has heard of the beauty of Lucrezia, and is determined to possess her, and has left Paris and come to Florence, his native town, for that purpose. The Roman tragedy is here a Florentine comedy, the world has changed, has become smaller; Collatinus is Nicia.

How did it happen that Machiavelli was able to put his genius to the writing of comedies? Here is the answer:

Scusatelo con questo; che s' ingegna
con questi van pensieri
fare il suo tristo tempo piú soave,
perché altrove non ave
dove voltare il viso;
ché gli è stato interciso
mostrar con altre imprese altre virtue,
non sendo premio alle fatiche sue.

Excuse him with this: that he endeavoured to make his sad life less dreary with these useless thoughts: because he had nowhere else to turn; and because it had not been granted to him to show other qualities of his in other enterprises, there being no reward for his fatigues.

Bad poetry—but it rends the heart. His laugh is the fruit of melancholy. While Charles VIII was overrunning Italy, Piero de' Medici and Frederick of Aragon were writing to each other of their love-affairs; and Cardinal Bibbiena, who was "assassinated by love," and Bembo were exhaling their sighs in letters; the one was writing his *Asolani* and the other his *Calandria*. And Machiavelli was speaking to the desert, admonishing, advising; and there was none to listen to him, and none to heed him; so he did as every one else was doing—he wrote comedies, and he had the honour of making the pope and the cardinals laugh very heartily.

Callimaco, who is in love with Lucrezia, gets a certain Ligurio, a parasite of the Nicia household, to help him. Nicia is the fool; Ligurio is the rogue. Ligurio holds the strings and makes the puppets dance to his tune, because he knows their characters, knows what moves them.

Ligurio is a being entirely destitute of moral sense, who would have betrayed Christ for a good tip. He has no need to be an Iago, because Nicia is not an Othello. He is a common cheat, and if he were only a little more witty we should laugh at him. But as it is he is only hateful and contemptible, the worst type of man that Machiavelli conceived in *Il principe*. Fessenio is livelier and wittier, so we stand him better. The thing that moves Ligurio and sharpens his mind is his belly: he ends his career in a wine-shop. But this, the comic side of Ligurio, is barely suggested, and he remains a cold and vulgar figure.

Another associate of Callimaco's is his servant Siro. He is a minor character, but is excellently drawn. He hears everything, sees everything, and understands everything, and all with the air of not hearing, not seeing, and not understanding: he plays the imbecile. Not very interesting in himself, we admire him in what he does: we admire him in his work, while we forget the man himself.

Callimaco is a man in love; there is nothing he would stop at to possess his lady. The detestable rôle is given to Ligurio: to Callimaco the frenzies, the delirium, of love. Not love à la Petrarch, but real, natural love with its own colours, and shown with an exaggeration and good nature that make it comic:

> . . . I try to be jolly, but succeed only poorly, because I am assailed from every part of me with such a desire to be with that woman, if only once, that I feel myself changed altogether, from the soles of my feet to my head; and my legs tremble, my entrails shake, my heart jumps about in my chest, my arms hang down, my tongue is tied, my eyes swim, my brain turns.

But Callimaco and Ligurio and the rest of them are only secondary characters. The interest of the play is centred entirely in Nicia, in the stupid husband—so stupid indeed that he becomes the unconscious instrument of the lover, whom he conducts in person to the conjugal bed. While the minor characters are drawn with extreme restraint, the author concentrates his comic spirit in Nicia, and puts him into all the situations most calculated to show him off. With all his stupidity he has the airs of very great wisdom, and behaves with so much assurance that the comedy is heightened. And Ligurio not only tricks him but makes fun of him, and keeps the candle held to his face to show him clearly to the audience. For power of comedy and originality of thought the closing scenes of this play have rarely been equalled in any theatre, ancient or modern.

To deceive Nicia was easy; the really difficult thing was to manipulate Lucrezia. And here the action, so comic when it had to do with Nicia, becomes illumined by an obscure light showing

unfathomed depths of thought. Callimaco's tools in the winning of Lucrezia are her confessor and her mother—the venality of the one and the superstition and ignorance of the other; and Machiavelli, far from wishing to palliate, becomes horribly naked, and exposes that rottenness without pity. The mother, Sostrata, is admirably drawn in a few strokes; a good enough creature, but silly, who has the vice of thinking with her confessor's brain instead of her own. When the daughter demurs, she says to her: "I cannot tell thee so many things. Thou shalt speak to the friar, and see what he will tell thee, and afterwards thou shalt do whatever has been advised by him, by us, and by those who love thee." And here she sticks and nothing will move her; it is her fixed idea, in fact, her only idea: "I have told thee, and repeat to thee, that if Fra Timoteo tells thee that there is nothing wrong in it, then thou canst do it without a thought." The confessor knows very well what sort of a mother this is. "She is a donkey," he says, "and I shall find her a great help in making her [Lucrezia] do as I wish."

The most interesting character is Fra Timoteo, a precursor of Tartuffe: less artificial, indeed completely natural. He traffics in the Church and the Madonna and Purgatory, but people have ceased to believe in these things and his receipts are small. So he sharpens his wits. He has a grudge against the friars, because they have not known how to keep up the reputation of the miracle-working Madonna:

> I said matins and read a *Life of the Holy Fathers*, and went to church, and lit a lamp that had burnt out, and changed the veil of a miracle-working Madonna. Oh! how often and how often have I told those friars to keep her clean! And yet they are surprised that there is little devoutness. . . . Oh, what small brains they have, those friars of mine!

His first entrance is full of significance. He is discovered talking with one of his penitents, and the whole scene is a picture of customs that is very profound in its simplicity. Much of his time is spent in church, because in church his goods have a

better market. His intelligence is mediocre, just good enough for hoaxing women:

. . . Madonna Lucrezia is wise and good. But I will catch her through her goodness; and all women have little brain; and if there is one who knows how to say two words people think her a wonder; for in the land of the blind the one-eyed is king.

He knows whom he has to deal with:

Women are the most charitable persons in the world, and the most vexatious. He who drives them away refuses both the vexations and the profits, and he who has to do with them has the profits and the vexations together. For the truth is, there is no honey without flies.

He mumbles paternosters and *Ave Marias*, and does the usual things of his trade and speaks its jargon with the indifferent, mechanical ease of habit. When Ligurio comes to him and offers him a large sum of money in return for procuring an abortion, he says: "In the name of God, it shall be done as you wish; for the sake of God and charity everything should be done. . . . Hand me over that money, that I may begin to do some good with it." And he often talks to himself, and makes his examination of conscience, and gives himself absolution, always, of course, when it is likely to put something into his pocket:

Messer Nicia and Callimaco are rich, and on the point of getting a great deal all round, for various reasons. The thing must be kept a secret, for were it known it would be as bad for them as for me. But happen what may, I do not repent me of it.

If he shows uneasiness, it means he is afraid that people will hear of it:

God knows I never thought of injuring any one. I was in my cell saying my office, receiving my penitents. Then all of a sudden in walks this devil of a Ligurio, and makes me put my finger in a mistake, and now my arm is in it, and my whole body, and who knows where it will end! Still, I console myself with the thought that when a thing matters to many, many will look after it.

And this is the man to whom the mother brings her daughter! He does his very best to persuade her, and has no shame in using

the little he knows of the Bible and sacred history. At last she says: "Very well. But I am sure that I shall not be alive tomorrow morning." And the friar answers:

> Have no fear, my daughter, for I will pray to God for thee, and will say a prayer to the Angel Raphael, asking him to escort thee. Go to bed early, both of you, and prepare yourselves for this mystery, for it is already evening.

The mother answers, "Remain in peace, Father." And poor Lucrezia, who is still only half convinced, sighs: "God help me, and Our Lady, that I do not come to harm." This affair the friar calls a "mystery"; and the procurer is the "Angel Raphael"!

Things such as these were arousing indignation in Germany, and provoking the Reformation. But in Italy people laughed at them. And the first to laugh was the pope. When an evil is spread like this through a whole country and has become so ordinary a thing that people only laugh at it, then it is gangrene, and incurable.

Everybody laughed. But their laughter was only buffoonery, a pastime. The laugh of Machiavelli is different; it has something sad and serious in it that goes beyond the borderline of caricature and harms his work artistically. It is clear that he is not in touch with Timoteo, does not pose him as he does Nicia, does not get fun out of him, but keeps away from him, almost with disgust. Timoteo is a dry, vulgar, and stupid creature, with no wit or imagination; he is not sufficiently idealized; his colours are too crude, too cynical. And the style, so naked and natural, is more like discourse than dialogue. We feel the poet less than the critic, we feel the great observer and portraitist.

And this is precisely the reason that the *Mandragola* has had its day. It is too much a part of that society in all that it had of most real, most peculiar to itself. Those feelings and impressions which inspired it no longer exist. The depravity of the priests and their terrible influence on women and on families strikes us as a horrible subject: we of today could never, never make a comedy of it. Machiavelli himself, who put so much

drollery into his picture of Nicia, loses his good nature and charm when he comes to Timoteo, and is more like a dissecting surgeon cutting the flesh and laying bare the nerves and tendons. In his imagination there is neither laughter nor indignation at sight of Timoteo, but only that frightening coldness with which he painted the prince or the soldier of fortune or the gentleman. They seem like queer animals, and he a curious observer who is analyzing and describing them, almost making a study of them, without any emotions or impressions.

For this very reason the *Mandragola* is the basis of a whole new literature. It is a lively and vivacious world, with variety, swiftness, curiosity; it seems like a world governed by chance. But under the frivolous surface are hidden the profoundest complexities of the inner life, and the action is propelled by spiritual forces as inevitable as fate. It is enough to know the characters to guess the end. The world is a consequence and its premises are in the spirit or the character, in the forces that move it. Whoever can calculate these forces will win. Chance, the supernatural, the marvellous, are all discredited, and are replaced by character. So Machiavelli the artist is the same, after all, as Machiavelli the politician, and Machiavelli the historian.

Comedy was divided into two categories; there was the "comedy of plot" and there was the "comedy of character." In the comedy of plot the interest arose from the complications of the action, as in all the comedies and tales of that time, and also in the tragedies. The effects were gained by the strangeness and complications of the accidents. But in the comedies of character the action was a means for putting character into evidence. The classification was a vicious one. On the one hand it gave us comedies weighted down by the accumulation of plots, and on the other it gave us comedies meagre from poverty of action. Machiavelli's comedy is a mixture of both. It has a real and proper action extremely alive in movement and situation, propelled by inner forces, which are there not as ends or results, but

as instruments. And it shows us character not as an abstract quality, but as a living thing, an operating force. And the deepest thoughts come out from and are contained in the merriest and most earthly forms, down to the vulgarest and most cynical buffoonery, as in "Don Cucú" and the *palla di aloè*. The whole of Machiavelli is in it: the man who played cards at the inn, and the man who meditated at his desk.

Of every writer we may say that a part of him dies. And Machiavelli has his dead part like the others: the part that has given him his sad notoriety. It is the grossest part of him, not vital, but only his dross. Yet people have thought it so vital that they have called it "Machiavellism." Even today, when a foreigner wants to pay a compliment to Italy, he calls it "the country of Dante and Savonarola," but keeps quiet about Machiavelli. And even we Italians are afraid to call ourselves "sons of Machiavelli"; between us and the great man is the barrier of "Machiavellism." It is only a word, but a word hallowed by time, a word that speaks to the imagination, and frightens us like an ogre.

What has happened with Machiavelli is the same thing that happened with Petrarch. The thing called "Petrarchism" is a by-product, but his imitators took it to be the whole of him. And "Machiavellism" is a by-product, secondary or relative to Machiavelli's teaching, and the absolute and permanent part has been forgotten. Machiavelli has come down to us conventionalized, seen from one side only, and moreover from the least interesting side. It is time that some one should reinstate him in his completeness.

Machiavelli has formal logic, but has also a content. His logic is based on seriousness of aim, the thing he calls "virtue." For a man to propose to himself an aim that he cannot reach and does not wish to reach, is feminine. To be a "man" means to "march towards an aim." But in their march towards their aim men often go astray, because their intellect and will is confused by phantasms and emotions, and they judge by appearances.

They are nerveless and feeble creatures, who judge of things as they seem and not as they are, like the vulgar. To chase away vain appearances and move to one's goal with a clear mind and firm will, is to be a man—to have the stuff of a man. This man may be a tyrant or a citizen, a good man or a bad man—which is another question, is another point of view of him. What Machiavelli looks to see is whether he is a man; his aim is to revive the roots of the plant called "man," which is drooping. So in his logic virtue is character or a strong-fibred soul, and vice is incoherence, fear, wavering.

These are of course generalities in which all kinds of people can find lessons to suit themselves, bad and good alike, and the book may easily seem the code of tyranny to one, and the code of free men to another. But the lesson that it teaches to every one is the duty of being a man; this is the basis of all the rest. It teaches that history, like Nature, is not at the mercy of chance, but is ruled by intelligence, by forces that we can calculate, and is founded on the concordance between aim and means. And it teaches that man, whether as an individual or as a collective being, is not worthy of the name unless he too is an intelligent force, with consistency of aim and means. From this basis arises the virile age of the world, drawn away as much as possible from the influence of the imagination and the passions, and with a clear and serious aim put before it, and with definite means for attaining it.

This is the fundamental conception, the objective, of Machiavelli. But it is not an idle and abstract principle; it has a content, which we have just outlined in its main features.

The part that is absolute and permanent in Machiavelli is this: the seriousness of earthly life with its instrument, which is work; its objective, which is one's country; its principle, which is equality and liberty; its moral link, which is the nation; its agent, which is the spirit or thought of man, immutable and immortal; and its organism, which is the State, autonomous and independent, with disciplined forces. This is what is absolute

and permanent in Machiavelli's world, and gives it a crown of glory, that is, the approval of the human race. And its basis is virtue, or character: *agere et pati fortia*—to do and to suffer greatly.

The scientific foundation of this world is the "effectual thing"—the thing as proved by experience and observation. Imagination, sentiment, abstraction, are as pernicious in science as they are in life. Scholasticism dies: science is born.

This is the real Machiavellism; alive, indeed young, even today. Developed, corrected, simplified, and in part realized, Machiavellism is the program of the modern world, and the great nations are the nations that come nearest to realizing it. Let us be proud of our Machiavelli. Whenever a part of the ancient building crumbles, let there be glory to Machiavelli, and whenever a part of the new is built let there be glory to Machiavelli! Even as I am writing these words the bells are ringing far and wide, unceasingly, telling that the Italians are in Rome: the temporal power is falling, the people are shouting, "Long live the unity of Italy!" Let there be glory to Machiavelli!

As a writer not only is he profound, but he is lovable, for between the lines of his political transactions we are always able to see his real leanings: anti-papal, anti-feudal, anti-imperial, civilized, modern, democratic. And even when he is completely absorbed in his aim, and is putting forward certain means, we often find him interrupting himself and protesting against them, as though he were almost asking us to forgive him. He seems to be saying: "Remember, I am living in corrupt times; it is not my fault if the means are what they are, and if the world is what it is."

The thing that is dead in Machiavelli is not his system itself, but the exaggeration of his system. His "*patria*" had too much in common with the God of the past, and absorbed religion, morality, and individuality. His "state" is not content to be autonomous itself, but wants to cut away autonomy from everything else. There were the rights of state, but no rights of man.

The "reasons of state" had their gallows, just as the Inquisition had its pyres and "public welfare" had its axes. The world was at war; and in that fury of political and religious struggles the modern world had its blood-stained cradle. From force came justice. From those wars and struggles came freedom of conscience, independence of the civil power, and later, liberty and nationality. If the means are "Machiavellism" then surely the ends are "Machiavellism" too. Means are relative, and change, are the part of anything that dies; but Machiavelli's ends can never die. His glory is his program; it is not a fault in him if his intellect pointed out to him means that later history has proved to be in keeping with the logic of the world. And it has been easier to censure them than to find others to replace them. *Dura lex, sed ita lex*—The law is hard, but yet the law.

No doubt the world has improved in this respect. Certain means would no longer be tolerated, and would bring about effects the opposite of what Machiavelli expected; they would delay his end. For instance, political murders, betrayals, fraud, factions, conspiracies, are means that are tending to disappear. We can already look forward confidently to an era more humane, more civilized, in which wars, duels, revolutions, reactions, "reasons of state and the public welfare," will no longer be possible. It will be the Golden Age. The nations will be federated, and competition will all have disappeared, except in business, commerce, and study.

It is a fine program. And although it seems a Utopian ideal, I do not despair of it. Whatever the spirit conceives must sooner or later come to fruition. I have faith in progress and in the future. But that era will be very far indeed from Machiavelli—far even from our own times. It is not by the criteria of a world still hidden in the shadows of the future that we can judge Machiavelli. Even today we are forced to say: "The logic of history may be cruel, but there it is."

In Machiavellism there is a part that varies both in quantity and quality, and is relative to time, to place, to the different

conditions of culture, and also to the moral conditions among the peoples. This part, which concerns the means, has changed considerably, and will change completely when society is radically renewed. The theory of the means, however, is absolute and eternal, because founded on the immutable qualities of human nature. The principle from which the theory is developed is this: that the means to anything must be based on intelligence and on a calculation of the forces that move men. It is clear that these forces are in part absolute and in part only relative; and the mistake of Machiavelli (an extremely common mistake among great thinkers) is to have stated it all in an absolute sense, even the parts that are essentially relative and changeable.

Machiavellism, in its absolute and substantial part, is the considering of man as an autonomous being, self-sufficient, and containing within his own personality the laws of his development and his decadence, whether as a private person, or as a class or a society. It is the basis of history, of politics, and of every one of the social sciences. The beginnings of science are the portraits, the discourses, the observations, of men who are not only learned in the classics, but have a wide experience of life and a clear and liberal intellect. This is Machiavellism, as science and as method. It is here that modern thought finds its basis and its language. In regard to content, Machiavellism on the lumber of the Middle Ages outlined a volitional world. We see it through all the transactions and vacillations of the political means. It is a world founded on country, on nationality, on liberty, on equality, on work, on the virility and the seriousness of man.

II

In literature the immediate effect of Machiavellism was the emancipation of history and politics from all that was ethical, fantastic, and sentimental. History and politics took a rational form; human thought was directed to the positive studies of

man and Nature, and theological and ontological studies were laid aside. Language was purified from the dross of scholasticism and from classical mechanism, and was cut down to the rapid and natural forms of ordinary speaking or discourse. Machiavellism, in language, was the last, the most mature, fruit of the Tuscan genius. The first writer to meet us on this road is Francesco Guicciardini, escorted by all the political writers of the Florentine and Venetian schools; and the next is Galileo Galilei, with his illustrious cohort of naturalists.

Francesco Guicciardini, though only a few years younger than Machiavelli and Michelangelo, seems already to belong to another age; he seems like the precursor of a more feeble and more corrupt generation, whose Bible he wrote in his *Ricordi*.

Guicciardini's ambitions for Italy are the same as Machiavelli's. He hates priests. He hates foreigners. He wants a united Italy. And he wants liberty for Italy, liberty, that is to say, as understood by himself, within the limits of a moderate government that is something like the constitutional or mixed governments of today. But he only wishes for these things—he would never have lifted a finger to realize them. He writes:

> There are three things that I desire to see before I die. But I doubt greatly, even should I live to a great age, that I shall ever see one of them. I desire to see a well-ordered republic in our city, and Italy freed from all the barbarians, and the world delivered from the tyranny of those rascally priests.

A well-ordered liberty, independence or autonomy of the nations, and the enfranchisement of the laity: here is the program of Machiavelli, become the gospel of Guicciardini. And today as much as ever it is the standard of all the liberal and civilized part of Europe.

We can take it that these were the desires too of the cultivated classes in Italy. But they were Platonic loves, without influence on practical life. The living portrait of this society was Guicciardini, who wrote, "To know a thing does not mean to put it into action." It is one thing to wish, another to do. Theory

is different from practice. Think as you like, but do what suits you. Be guided in life by "your personal interests," your *particulare.*

Guicciardini censures the "ambition, the avarice, and the effeminacy of the priests" and the temporal power of the Church; he loves Martin Luther "for having brought this pack of scoundrels within proper limits, that is to say, deprived either of their vices or of their authority"; but for the sake of his personal interests he is forced to love the greatness of the popes and to be useful to the priests and the temporal power. He would be glad if religion were reformed in many ways, but personally he avoids getting mixed up in these things. He does not "contend against religion or against aught else that seems to have dependence upon God, for the minds of fools are too made up on these matters to be open to argument." He loves glory and would be glad to do "great and sublime things" so long as it is not to his "damage or inconvenience." He loves his country and would be sorry to see it perish—not for the sake of his country, since "what has to be, has to be," but for his own sake, he being "born into such sad times." He is zealous for the public good, but does not "involve himself so far in the state" as to put the whole of his fortune into it. He wants liberty, but he thinks that when liberty is lost it is better to leave things as they are, because "the faces of people change, not things, and you cannot count on the people," and if things turn out badly you get the "despised life of the exile." It is better to behave in such a way that those who govern "will not look at you with suspicion, nor even class you with the discontented." Those who do differently are "light" people. Many, it is true, cry "Liberty!" but "nearly all of them are thinking first of all of their own interests." The world being made like this, we must take it as it is and behave in such a way that we do not come to harm, but on the contrary get the greatest amount of comfort possible. That is what "wise" men do.

The corruption of Italy lay in this: that the national con-

sciousness was empty, and life was empty of a worthy aim. According to Machiavelli, the foundations of life on earth are country, nationality, liberty. Heaven has gone, but he still believes in the earth. Guicciardini accepts the aims of Machiavelli as good and desirable things; but he accepts them *sub conditione* —as he puts it, so long as they shall suit his *particulare,* his personal interests. He has no belief in virtue or generosity or patriotism or sacrifice or disinterestedness. Most people put self-interest first, and he classes himself frankly with these "most," whom he calls "wise"; the others he calls "mad." Among the "mad" were the Florentines, "who persisted in opposition against all reason" when the "wise men of Florence would have yielded to the storm." He is speaking of the siege of Florence, made glorious by the heroic resistance of those madmen, among whom were Michelangelo and Ferruccio. Machiavelli struggled against the corruption of Italy, and did not despair of his country; he had the illusions of a noble heart; he belonged to that earlier generation of Florentine patriots who in the midst of all the ruin searched for some cure for it, and were not resigned, and did honour to Italy in their failure. With Guicciardini appears a generation that is already resigned. He has no illusions. And seeing no remedy for the corruption, he wraps himself up in it, makes use of it for his sagacity, and makes it into his aureole. His *Ricordi* are nothing else than the Italian corruption made into a code and promoted to be the rule of life.

Guicciardini's god is his *particulare* and it is quite as absorbing a divinity as the God of the ascetics, or the "state" of Machiavelli. All ideals have vanished. The ties of religion, morality, politics, have all been broken, the ties that bind a people together. Nothing remains on the stage of the world but the individual. Every man for himself, with, or against, every other man. And the name for it is no longer "corruption," a thing to be censured; it is "wisdom," it is doctrine preached and inculcated, it is the art of living.

Guicciardini thinks himself wiser than Machiavelli because

he has not Machiavelli's illusions. That way of bringing in ancient Rome with every other sentence he finds tiresome, and he breaks out with these irritated words:

> How mistaken are those who with every other word quote the Romans! To do as the Romans did we should need a city conditioned like theirs. With means so inferior as ours it would be like wanting an ass to have the legs of a horse.

Guicciardini in this conception of life is in perfect good faith; he feels no shame for it, expresses it clearly, and has an air of contemptuous superiority for the men who do differently. He attributes the difference not to virtue or loftiness of soul, but to "feebleness of brain"—to the fact that they have allowed their minds to be clouded by appearances, impressions, vain imaginations, and passions. In Guicciardini we see the last result which the mature and advanced Italian spirit had reached. It had put behind it imagination, feeling, and faith, and had turned into brain, and nothing but brain, or, in the words of Guicciardini, into "positive intelligence."

A positive brain he describes as one that is regulated by "natural prudence" and "learning," and also by experience, which provides it with examples, and by a "good disposition," the sort of disposition that will keep it to the real and protect it from illusions. And more, it must also have "discretion" or discernment, because "to pronounce absolutely, categorically, and, as it were, by the card, concerning the things of this world, were a great mistake; for nearly all of them are marked by some singularity or exceptional quality, and these differences and distinctions will not be found in books, but must be taught by discretion." So the real book of life is the "book of discretion," which can be read only by "an eye that is clear and perspicacious by nature." Learning is not enough, nor is it wise "to form one's judgment by what is written, and in every question to want to see what every one writes about it; for time that could otherwise have been used in speculation is wasted in the reading

of books with weariness of soul and body, which is more like the toil of a rough porter than the task of a learned man."

The positive man does not see the world as the "vulgar" see it. He will not, for instance, believe in astrologers, theologians, and philosophers, and "all the rest of the people who write of the things beyond Nature which cannot be seen, and give utterance to a thousand follies: because men, in effect, are in the dark concerning these things, and their investigations have served, and serve, rather to exercise the intellect than to discover truth."

This intellectual basis is the same as Machiavelli's: experience, observation, facts, "speculation," or observation. And his system is the same; he rejects everything that Machiavelli rejects, and more decidedly still, and accepts what he accepts. But Guicciardini is more logical than Machiavelli, and more consistent. The world being what it is, he thinks it a waste of time to try to reform it; it is like asking it to have horses' legs when it has only those of an ass.

So he takes it as it is, brings himself into line with it, and makes it his rule of life and his instrument. To know a thing does not mean to put it into action. What is in our minds and our consciences cannot be made the rule of our lives. To live means to know the world and to turn it to our advantage. We should try to stand well with every one, for "people meet each other again on the road," and we must try to be always on the winning side, because a "part of the praise and advantages will come to us too." And we must "acquire possessions," because riches will make us respected, and poverty is despised. We must be frank, "so that when we do resort to simulation, people will be more likely to believe us." And we must hold our money tightly, because "a ducat in our purse brings us more honour than ten spent." And we should contrive to have the appearance of virtue, for "a good name is better than much riches." It is not desirable to get the name of being suspicious, but as bad men are more numerous than the good, it is well "to believe

little and trust little." This is the sap of the art of living. It was followed by the majority of people, though as a rule with a certain hypocrisy, as though they were ashamed of it. But Guicciardini makes it his code, founded on the divorce between man and conscience, and on personal interests. It was the code of the Italian bourgeoisie, sceptical, tranquil, intelligent, and positive; it was the code that had replaced the Code of Love and the code of chivalry.

But Guicciardini, with all his wisdom, was to meet with some one even wiser than himself. When he tried to make use of Cosimo, it was Cosimo who made use of him, and he ended his life deserted and lonely like Machiavelli. And he too had his illusions and disillusions, less noble than Machiavelli's, less worthy to go down to posterity, because they were centred in personal interests. Living in retirement in his villa at Arcetri he employed his leisure in writing his *Storia d' Italia.*

If we judge by the standard of intellectual power, this book must be classed as the most important work that has ever issued from the Italian mind. What Guicciardini cares for in history is not the theatrical or poetical part of it, on which Giovio, Varchi, Giambullari, and other historians spread their rhetoric. The most extraordinary and moving events are told with a certain air of contempt; he seems to be saying that he has seen such a lot of them that he has ceased to be surprised or moved at anything. He has no likes and no dislikes, no weaknesses nor indignations, no preconceived ideas as to what will happen and what the future of his country will be. His clear, quiet intellect is shut into itself, and nothing comes into it to disturb it or to turn it from its path. His intellect is the positive kind, with the qualities we have enumerated: natural prudence, learning, experience, a good disposition, and discretion: Guicciardini has all of these qualities in a paramount degree. Marvellous above all is his discretion in refusing to recognize principles or rules as being absolute. He judges every case on its own merits, after he has looked carefully at the peculiarity of each of its events

and has seen every one of the circumstances that belong to it, and it only, and make it what it is, and not something different. So naturally the stage of the world interests him less than what is happening behind the curtain. Like Machiavelli he scorns the surface, the part that is seen, the part that he describes as "appearance." He studies not what seems, but what is—the things that are beneath the appearances, the part that is not seen. So he gives us not merely a description of events, but also their genesis and preparation; we see them born, and we see them developing. And he reveals the most utterly shameful and hidden motives with the same calm as those which are noblest and purest. Whether a motive is moral or ethical does not interest him; he is only concerned with its influence on events. History being determined by self-interest, he is quite as sagacious when he searches into private self-interest as into that which is known as "public," which pertains to kings and courts. But self-interest is often hypocritical and hides under loftier aims, such as honour, glory, liberty, independence—aims that are used as means when order has to be established by force, or armies conquered. Therefore we get, more especially in the declamations, a sort of rhetoric *ad usum delphini*, a rhetoric in the manner of the vulgar, whose eyes are fixed on the surface of things, and who are influenced by a good appearance. Peoples and armies are merely tools to him; the real and chief actors are the few men who move them by violence or by astuteness, and use them for their own ends.

In his history Guicciardini had literary aims. In prose, especially in his *Ricordi*, he has the same diamond-cut distinctness that we find in Machiavelli, with that quickness and simplicity and perfect clearness which bring him near to the finest, most finished examples of the French prose writers, but without their faults. In intellectual vigour of style and language both he and Machiavelli attain to a height of perfection that has never been surpassed. But Guicciardini, who was so completely sane in his judgment on human events, in literature had preconceived ideas,

ready-made opinions, accepted because every one else accepted them. Like the rest of the literary men of that time, he imagined that the art of writing consisted in translating ordinary speech or discourse into an exceedingly complicated mechanism; and he seems to have found it tiring, as though he were trying it for the first time. Many of the second-rate writers (for instance Casa and Castiglione and Salviati and Speroni) do it more easily, having been trained and brought up to it. The intellectual clearness and rapid perception of Guicciardini are in noticeable contrast to the complicated and breathless windings of his period. If his frankness, which amounts to cynicism, were not so utterly patent, we might almost think these periods were done on purpose to conceal his ideas and intentions. But they are purely a rhetorical artifice. And those circumlocutions, descriptions, orations, moral maxims, a certain warmth of imagination and feeling, and a certain solemnity of tone that we find in him, are only rhetoric. Beneath those artificial splendours is a solidly constructed world, with a perfect organism, a world as cold as logic and as exact as machinery, which perhaps at bottom is nothing more than the conflict of forces and self-interests, examined in their innermost recesses by a superior intellect.

Guicciardini's *Storia d' Italia* is in twenty books and extends from 1494 to 1534. It begins with the descent of Charles VIII into Italy and ends with the fall of Florence. At the conclusion, like a funeral announcement of worse times, appears Paul III, the pope of the Inquisition and the Council of Trent. This period of Italian history might well be named the "Italian tragedy," for it covers the years in which Italy waged her hopeless struggle against the foreigner, and at the end sank into his power completely. But the unity and the meaning of this tragedy escape Guicciardini altogether: the protagonist of his history is not Italy, nor even the Italian people. He has tragedy, of course, but the tragedy here consists in the great calamities that fall on individuals, such as arson, pillage, rape, in fact, the horrors of war. Absorbed in these many "atrocious accidents," the author,

so extremely sagacious in probing into the secret motives of individuals, misses the tragedy as a whole. The Reformation, the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII, the struggle between Charles V and Francis I, the changes in the papacy, the fall of Florence, the "balancing" of Italy by Lorenzo, and lastly, the final dismemberment and subjection of Italy, are facts that interest him less than the siege of Pisa and the petty gossip of princes. He sets to work like a naturalist, a student of herbs and plants and minerals, and examines the inner structure and physiology of his personages and the reasons for their being what they are. He sees man as a natural creature, who operates with the same fatality as an animal, and whose actions are determined by the passions, opinions, and self-interest of his nature or character as inevitably as the animal is governed by its instincts, or any living creature whatsoever by the laws of its being. Looking at man in this way, he is never in danger of losing his calm of intellect, the apathy or indifference of a philosopher explaining natural phenomena. He is quite as interested in Malatesta as in Ferruccio; indeed, of the two Malatesta is the more interesting to him, because the reasons for his actions are more obscure, so are more of a stimulus to the intellect. Thus a new conception of history arises: the conception that human actions even when they seem to be free are really determined by inner motives, or in other words by the person's character: we can foresee his actions and his degree of success with almost the same sureness as in natural history. So it follows that the person who fails in life is invariably in the wrong, for he has failed to calculate his own forces and the forces of others. In this sort of physical history the individuals are everything; and they are shown as little machines—marvellous, in fact, miraculous, to ordinary people; for us personally, they have very little interest, because we know their secrets and know the mind that produced those miracles, and the whole of our interest is concentrated on the study of that mind.

Machiavelli goes further. He glimpses a sort of social physics,

a collection of laws that regulate not only individuals but society and the whole of the human genus. So country, liberty, the nation, humanity, the social classes, have as great an interest for Machiavelli as the passions, self-interests, opinions, and forces that move individuals. Any one who is looking for the spirit, for the inner significance, of this epoch has a very great deal to learn from his works. So it follows that even today as a moral character the Florentine secretary inspires a warm affection in every man of lofty intellect who is capable of piercing to the inner meaning of his doctrine. To the deep analysis of Guicciardini he unites a largeness of view that the other lacks. Machiavelli is a starting-point in history: Guicciardini is like a fine picture —a work finished and complete in itself.

CHAPTER XVI

PIETRO ARETINO

THE theologico-ethical world of the Middle Ages reaches the extreme limit of its contradiction in this positive world of Guicciardini: a world that is purely natural and human, shut into the egotism of the individual, in which the moral ties that hold a man to his fellows have ceased to count. And the person who reflects this world of humanity and Nature most completely in its forms of the greatest possible depravity and cynicism—the person in whom the image of the century received its last finishing touches—is Pietro Aretino.

Born in 1492, in a hospice in Arezzo, the child of Tita, the lovely prostitute, the model of so many sculptors and painters, Pietro had no family, no friends, no protectors, and no education:

> I went to school just long enough to learn how to make the holy cross, so if I compose scurvily I deserve to be pardoned for it, but not those others who distil the art of the Greeks and Latins.

When he was thirteen he robbed his mother and ran off to Perugia, where he lodged with a bookbinder. At nineteen, having heard of the wonders of the Roman court, and that every one who went there was certain to grow rich, he started for Rome, arrived without a farthing, and was taken in as a servant by Agostino Chigi, a rich merchant, and afterwards by Cardinal di San Giovanni. And he tried his hand at getting rich in the

suite of Pope Julius, but failed. At last, after wandering in Lombardy and living a life of debauchery, he became a Capuchin monk in Ravenna. But Leo X became pope, and stories came to Pietro's ears of how the papal court was thronged with literati, buffoons, historians, singers, and every imaginable kind of adventurer, and it seemed the very place for him. So he put off his friar's habit, and rushed to Rome, and put on the livery of the pope, in fact, was his valet. Witty, gay, dissolute, impudent, a pander, he finished his education in that school. And he learned to compress his lecheries and flatteries into fourteen lines, made a trade of it, and earned good money. But when all was said and done, he was nothing but a valet, and the prospect of advancement seemed small in a court where the writers were able to improvise in Latin. So, armed with letters of introduction, he went to Milan, and to Pisa and Bologna and Ferrara and Mantua, and presented himself brazenly to princes and monsignors, with the airs and presumption of a man of letters. He had studied the art of pleasing as assiduously as a woman, and he backed up his charlatanry with complacency:

> Here I am, back again in Mantua, in the train of the Lord Marquis, and so high do I stand in his favour that he sacrifices his sleep and his food to discourse with me, and he says that no other pleasure is so great; and he has written things about me that will really benefit me honourably, and he has made me a present of three hundred scudi. . . . The whole of the court here adores me, and whoever gets possession of one of my poems thinks himself blessed; and my lord has ordered a copy to be made of all the verses I ever wrote, and I have composed a few in his praise. So I am staying on here. And all day long he gives me presents, and fine things, which you shall see at Arezzo. . . . But even at Bologna I had already begun to receive presents; the Bishop of Pisa had a black satin coat made for me embroidered in gold, and never have I seen a more magnificent coat made for any one.

So now he was *Messere* and *Signore;* the valet was a gentleman. And he returned to Rome escorted by pages taken from pot-houses, dressed like a duke, and became the partaker in and

procurer for gentlemanly pleasures, and walked abroad with the Estes and Gonzagas on either side of him, patting him on the shoulder familiarly. He continued the trade he had begun so well. His first pension came from a laud to Clement VII. It is doggerel:

Or queste sí che saran lodi, queste
lodi chiare saranno, e sole e vere,
appunto come il vero e come il sole.

Now there shall really and truly be praises; shall be clear praises; standing alone and speaking the truth: like truth itself and like the sun.

His wit, his jovial humour, his great enthusiasm in debauch, had gained him so much renown that when he was forced to flee from Rome on account of his sixteen sonnets illustrated by obscene drawings of Giulio Romano, he was at once sought out as a congenial crony by Giovanni de' Medici, the head of the *bande nere*, known as the "great devil." Pietro was now about thirty. Giovanni and Francis I were each trying to get him from the other: Giovanni had planned to make this sharer of his orgies and lusts into a lord of Arezzo, but a German bullet cut short his life and his intention. But Pietro had learnt his power. So, leaving the courts, he entrenched himself in Venice as in a fortress, and from there he governed Italy with his pen. Let us hear Pietro himself, as he describes himself in his letters:

I, having witnessed the liberty of that State, and having seen at last what liberty is, have renounced for ever the life of courts, and here [in Venice] I have retired till the end of my days as into a tabernacle, to protect those years which are left to me; because treason has no footing here, and favour cannot injure justice, and there is no cruelty of prostitutes, nor insolence of effeminate men, nor is a person robbed, nor forced, nor killed. . . . O universal fatherland! O country where every one is free! O hostel for the homeless! . . . When others shun thee, Venice doth enfold thee in her arms, when others starve thee she doth nourish thee, when others beat thee down she doth raise thee, when others reject thee she doth receive thee; and cheering thee in thy woes she doth nurture love and charity in thy heart. . . .

By the grace of God I am a free man. . . .

I snap my fingers at the pedants. . . .

It is not from ignorance that I have renounced the ways of Petrarch and Boccaccio, for I know very well what they are; I have renounced them through the loss of my time and my patience and my reputation in the madness of trying uselessly to change myself into them. Dry bread in one's own house is better than bread with rich viands at others' tables. I am walking slowly, step by step, through the garden of the Muses, and never does a single word fall from my lips that smells of the old fustiness. I wear my talent unmasked; I who do not even know the beginnings of A, B, C am teaching persons who know it to X, Y, Z; so that those who consider that no school exists under heaven equal to the *Dottrinale novellis* had better give in at last. . . .

Concerning the things of Florence . . . I care very little for them; though it is true that my hopes are founded in God and in Caesar, and thanks to the sums that their majesties have given me, added to the pension of a hundred crowns from the Marquis del Vasto and the same sum from the Prince of Salerno, I possess in all a yearly sum of six hundred crowns; and moreover with just a copybook and a little bottle of ink I have earned another thousand for myself this year; with these moneys I continue to live very well in this most serene city. . . .

Besides the medals of myself stamped in bronze, in gold, in silver, in copper, in lead, and in plaster, I have full-sized effigies on the façades of palaces; and my likeness is stamped on the chests, and it figures among the ornamentations of the mirrors, and also on plates of majolica, like Alexander, or Caesar, or Scipio. And I must tell you too that there are vases of crystal at Murano which are known by the name of "Aretine." And there is also a breed of horses called "Aretine," in memory of a mare that Pope Clement gave me, and which I in turn presented to Duke Frederick. And the little canal that washes one of the sides of my house on the Grand Canal has been christened "Aretine." And (a thing that makes the pedants really burst with rage!) people are speaking of the "Aretine style"; and three of my chambermaids or housekeepers, who have left me to become ladies, insist on being called "Aretines." So, you see, there are drawbacks in rising to this height by means of the "*ianua sum rudibus.*"

And moreover it was true—not invention, but the simple truth. Ariosto called him the "scourge of princes." And a pedant writing to Bembo, comparing his letters with those of Aretino, says: "You, Bembo, we shall call our Cicero and him we shall

call our Pliny." "As you will," said Bembo, "so long as Pietro is pleased." And Pietro was not pleased. Writing to Bernardo Tasso, who had been boasting of his own letters, he says:

> One thing is certain: Your excess of love for your own things and your lack of love for others' has affected your judgment. . . . Besides being condemned by the opinions of persons who understand, your ways have been proved in your letters; in which important exercise you show that you cannot come near me in my witty sayings or comparisons (for in me they are born, whereas in you they die), or in the polish of my language, or in my embellishments of clever connections of ideas, which I use in my writings. . . . It is true that in passages like these you follow me closely; but after all, how could it be otherwise, since you are more inclined to the smelling of flowers than to the tasting of fruit? So it is true that in epithalamia and hymns you resound with the grace of an angelic style and with heavenly harmony; which sounds, so gentle and so sweet, are not suitable to letters, which require the relief of ideas, and not the miniature ways of artifice. . . . Now, as it is not a fault in a man to praise himself for merits in the presence of somebody who does not know him, I will tell you plainly what I am, especially in the writing of letters. . . . But presumption is like the smoke of greatness, which blinds the eyes of a man, so that he thinks himself to be something, when really he is nothing, and makes him less, inasmuch as he has thought himself greater; so I, not wishing to resemble persons of that kind, do not claim, for instance, that virtuous men should keep my birthday as a day of rejoicing. But I do say this: Without my catching at opportunity, and without serving the courts, and without moving a step, every leader and every prince and every monarch pay tribute to my powers, and Fame is working for me in every corner of the world. Even as far as in Persia and India my portrait is admired and my name is esteemed. . . . Finally, I salute you; and I do assure you that no one praises your letters from envy, though many, for the sake of you who wrote them, may praise them from compassion.

This is the person he thought himself, and the person the world thought him: the world believed him to be a great man because he believed it himself. Glory, immortality, was not what he aimed at, the future was nothing to him: what Pietro wanted was the present. And he got it too—and more than any other

mortal who has ever lived. He got everything: medals, crowns, titles, pensions, gratuities, costly stuffs of gold and of silver, golden chains and rings, statues and pictures, precious vases and gems, in fact, everything that human greed could obtain. And Julius III made him a Knight of St. Peter; a little more, and he would have been a cardinal. His pensions brought him eight hundred and twenty scudi, and his gratuities amounted to twenty-five thousand scudi in eighteen years. He ran through more than a million francs in his life. Presents came to him from people as far distant as the pirate Barbarossa and the Sultan Suleiman. He had the dwelling of a prince, and it was thronged by artists, women, priests, musicians, monks, valets, pages; many of them came with gifts, one with a golden vase, another with a picture, another with a purse filled with ducats, another with clothes and stuffs. At the entrance of his house was a bust of white marble, the head crowned with laurel: it was Pietro Aretino. Aretino to the right, Aretino to the left, Aretino everywhere. Medals of every size and of every coinage were hung on tapestry of red velvet: always with the image of Pietro Aretino. He died at sixty-five, in the year 1557, and his fame died with him. His works were soon forgotten. His memory is infamous: a decent man would never pronounce his name before a woman.

Who then was this Pietro Aretino, this man pursued by women, feared by rivals, eulogized by poets, whose popularity was so enormous, who was kissed by the pope, who rode stirrup to stirrup with Charles V? He was the consciousness and the image of his century. And his century made him great.

Machiavelli and Guicciardini tell us that the lever of the world is appetite. What they thought, Pietro was. By nature he had great appetites, and great strength to gratify them. Look at his portrait, done by Titian. It is the face of a wolf looking for its prey. The engraver has added a frame of fur and the claws of a wolf; and above the head of the man is the head of the wolf; they have much the same structure. The eyes are

glittering, the nostrils open, the teeth stand out prominently because of the sunken lower lip; the back of the skull, the seat of the sensual appetites, is very large and is growing bald, and he seems to be tossing his head backwards towards it. "Son of a prostitute, soul of a king," is what he said of himself. Now how in reason could a man such as this remain a bookbinder, or the valet of the pope! He required everything, was insatiable. Eating was not enough for him, he wanted to taste: pleasure was not enough, he wanted voluptuousness; riches were not enough, he wanted to make others rich too; spending was not enough, he wanted to scatter money all around him. If any one expressed surprise, he answered: "Well, what of it? If I was born to live like this, who is going to prevent me?" His dreams were all of them costly; he wanted exquisite wines, delicate food, rich palaces, lovely young women, splendid clothes. Everything that was delectable, Aretino had the taste for. Never was a better judge of a delicious titbit, and of every species of pleasure, legitimate and illegitimate. Not only had he the sense of pleasure but also the sense of the art of it; he wanted magnificence in his pleasures, splendour, beauty, taste, elegance.[1]

[1] Here are some quotations:

At Boccamazza . . . while he was speaking to me as though to a man of unbounded wealth, I showed him twenty-two persons, even to women with their little ones sucking at their breasts, who had gathered suddenly together to eat the bones of my poor ink; and never does a day pass on which I do not see, if not more, at any rate quite as many starving persons around me. . . . "Oh," you will say to me, "why should a person who has only just enough to spend without check?" And I will answer you that men of royal souls do spend without check.

The day before yesterday I was eating some hares caught by hounds that Captain Giovan Tiepolo had sent me, and so much did I enjoy them that it seemed to me that "*Gloria prima lepus*" was a motto more suited to be placed in the choir of the hypocrites for their fasts, rather than the "*Silentium*" that the chattering fraternity put on the wall of the place where they are given their food. And while their praises went up to the *coeli coelorum*, one of your lackeys arrived with the thrushes; and the taste of them made me chaunt aloud the "*Inter aves.*" So good they were that our Messer Titian seeing and smelling them on the spit . . . abandoned a crowd of gentlemen who had arranged a dinner for him. And all of us joined together in giving great praise to the birds with the long beaks, which we ate with a little smoked meat, a couple of leaves of laurel, and some pepper. And we ate them for love of you, and because we enjoyed them. Fra Mariano en-

And his powers were equal to his appetites: he had a body as strong as iron, an energetic will, knowledge of men and contempt for them, and that marvellous faculty which Guicciardini calls "discretion," an intuitive feeling for the right thing to do in each circumstance. And Pietro knew what he wanted; no cleavage here, no scattering of life in different directions; he had one aim only—the aim of satisfying his appetites, or as Guicciardini would have put it, his *particulare*. All means to the end were good, and he used whichever was suited to the moment, and was hypocritical, or impudent, or cringing, or insolent, as the case demanded. At times he praised, at others he slandered. The credulity, fear, or generosity of a person in Pietro's hands was a battering-ram for breaking that person's defences and seizing him. Pietro had keys to all the doors. If he were living today he would be called a Camorrist, and many of his letters would be blackmail; he was the very perfection of the type. The thing he traded on most was fear. The language of that century was obliging, adulatory; Aretino's tone was contemptuous and brazen. Printed calumnies were worse than dagger-thrusts, for a printed thing was taken as a true thing: so he traded in calumny, silence, and praises. He was not averse to having the name of owning a bad tongue, indeed it was part of his power. When Francis I sent him a chain of gold made of tongues linked together and coloured vermilion at the tips, as though dipped in poison, and inscribed above them, "*Lingua eius loquetur mendacium*"—"His tongue speaks lies"—he thanked him again and again. When it happened not to suit him to speak evil of people he spoke evil of things, for the sake of his reputation; and this was the reason for his vehement abuse of ecclesiastics, nobles, and princes. Thus it came about

joyed them too, and Moro of the nobility, and Proto of Lucca, and Brandino, and the Bishop of Troia; just as they enjoyed the ortolans, the warblers, the pheasants, the peacocks, and the lampreys that went to fill their bellies, the victims of their cook-like souls and of the foolish and bad stars that dropped them into these big, bad bellies. . . . And blessed is he who is a fool, and in his foolishness gives joy to others and to himself.

that this abject creature was known as an apostle and was called "the scourge of princes." Now and then he met with a man who was not afraid. Achille della Volta stabbed him. His secretary, Niccolò Franco, wrote him pages of abuse. Pietro Strozzi threatened to kill him if he ever pronounced his name. He was beaten and spat upon. And then it was he who was afraid, for he was base and cowardly. Howell, the English ambassador, thrashed him and Pietro thanked the Lord for having granted him the power of pardoning injuries. And Giovanni, the "great devil," when he was dying said to him, "What makes me suffer most is to see a coward." But as a rule people preferred to treat him like a Cerberus and stop his yelping with bits of offal. His letters are masterpieces of malice and effrontery. There was no part he did not play, from the buffoon and braggart to the holy man of God, calumniated and denied. Take as an example the following letter, written to the very pious and Petrarchan Marchesa di Pescara, who had exhorted him to change his manner of life and turn his pen to the writing of pious works:

I do acknowledge that I am less useful to the world, and less pleasing to Christ, for employing my studies in writing lying tittle-tattles instead of true works. But it is all the fault of the desires of others and my own necessities; for if the princes were as pious as I am needy, I should confine my pen to "misereres." But then, most excellent lady, not every one on earth is endowed with the grace of divine inspiration: there are many people who are burning continually with concupiscence, just as you are burning every hour with angelic fire; religious services and sermons are to you what music and comedies are to them. You, for instance, would never allow your eyes to rest on a Hercules in the flames, nor on a Marsyas without his skin, while the others would never consent to have St. Lawrence on his gridiron in their room, nor the Apostle without his skin. Now listen to this: my gossip Bruciolo dedicated his Bible to the King, who moreover is extremely Christian, and in five years has received no acknowledgment of it. Was it, perhaps, that the book was not well translated, or not well bound? But my *Cortigiana,* which brought me a splendid chain from the King, did not laugh at that Old Testament of his, for it would not have been seemly. So you see I deserve to be excused for my tittle-tattles, which I write

for my living and not from malice. I pray that Jesus may inspire you to compel Messer Sebastiano of Pesaro, from whom I have received the twenty crowns you forced him to pay me, to send me the remainder of what he owes.

At the end comes a "dig," as we should call it today. It is a letter dashed down in a second by an infernal genius. How deliciously he makes fun of this pious lady, with the air of praising her! How cynically he speaks of his traffic in debauchery and human obscenity as though it were the most natural thing in the world! And he speculated in devotion, wrote obscene books and lives of saints—the *Ragionamento della Nanna* and the *Vita di santa Caterina da Siena*, the *Cortigiana errante* and the *Vita di Cristo*—all with the same indifference. And why not, since both of them brought him money? He used every material and every form: dialogues, romances, epopees, *capitoli*, comedies, and even a tragedy, his *Orazia*. We can imagine what sort of heroes his Horatii would be, and what sort of a heroine his Horatia, and what species of Romans would come from the pen of a Pietro Aretino! Yet this *Orazia* is the only work in which he had artistic intentions. He wrote it when he was old and satiated and had grown more greedy of fame than of money. It is a cold, abstract, pedestrian affair. The greatness and the simplicity of the Romans were beyond him. But in the works that he wrote for the pleasure of his public, to interest and capture them, to make his effects, we feel the man himself in the truth of his nature. He had a sort of moral market in his eye; he knew what kind of goods were in demand and easiest to deliver, and he knew how to sell them at the best price possible. He had an art that varied with the tastes of his master, the public. So he was the writer most in fashion, the one most appreciated by the people, and the best paid. His obscene books are the very perfection of the kind of literature that had invaded Europe under the name of "gallant stories." Ever since Boccaccio the piquant sauce of lubricity had been greatly in demand in Italy: here we get it in a ragout. His lives of saints

are romances, a conglomeration of lies; he comes out with the most impossible stories, pandering to the imaginative and sentimental nature of his public. His verses are gross; his sonnets and *capitoli* are bitter and malignant and at the same time servile. Alluding to the munificence of Francis I, he says to Pier Luigi Farnese:

Impara tu, Pier Luigi ammorbato,
impara, ducarel da tre quattrini,
il costume da un re tanto onorato.
Ogni signore di trenta contadini
e di una bicoccazza usurpar vuole
le cerimonie de' culti divini.

Learn, O thou maggoty Pier Luigi, learn, O thou little thrippenny duke, the customs of such an honoured king.

Every little squire of thirty bumpkins and a tumbledown hovel expects to be given the ceremonial of divine worship.

Pietro was not really a rogue by nature, but only a rogue deliberately and from necessity. He was in bad company from the beginning, with bad examples before him, and had no religion, home, or family. He was wholly lacking in moral sense, and had uncontrollable appetites and many intellectual means for satisfying them. The centre of his world was himself—he thought that the world existed to serve him. And he was logical: he perceived his means with perfect clearness and never scrupled to use them. He made no pretence about it, but gloried in what he did: he wanted people to know it, it was part of his power. And the rest of the world was rather like him; many would gladly have copied him, but they had not his brains, nor his diligence, nor his penetration, nor his versatility, nor his wit. So they admired him. He was the prince, the very perfection of the adventurer or soldier of fortune who was poisoning Italy at that time—vagabond people without principles or profession, looking for fortune at whatever cost. When Titian called him the "*condottiere* of literature," he was far from being offended at the name, but on the contrary was extremely proud of it. When he writes spontaneously, when not pushed by need of

money or other motives, he shows some good qualities: he is gay, sociable, open-handed, indeed lordly, a proved, trusted friend and a grateful one, and an admirer of the great artists, such as Michelangelo and Titian. He had the logic of evil, but appreciated the good.

Pietro, as a man, is an important personage: any one who studies him will be drawn into the innermost centre of the Italian society of that time; he reflected it completely, in that mixture of his of moral depravity and intellectual force and artistic feeling. But as a writer he is no less important.

Culture in Italy was tending to become fixed and mechanized. People had ceased to argue as to whether the language to be used in writing should be the vulgar tongue or Latin: the vulgar tongue had conquered the field. What they argued about was its name—as to whether it should be called "Tuscan" or "Italian." And it was an argument not about words, but about things. Many of the writers were claiming that the correct language for literature was the tongue that was used in speaking, from one end of Italy to the other, and refused to be instructed by Florence; they preferred Latinizing to Tuscanizing. While accepting Boccaccio and Petrarch as models, they considered themselves free to choose in regard to the living language. To them the living language was the common language—the tongue that inclined towards Latin and Boccaccio. It was a mechanism generally accepted. There was only the exception of Florence, where the foundation of language was not the common tongue, which was mixed with local, Sicilian, Lombard, and Venetian elements, but was the Tuscan idiom as it was handled by the Tuscan writers. And Florence, exhausted by her intellectual production, raised the Columns of Hercules in her *Vocabolario della Crusca* and said: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." Bembo, and later Salviati, fixed the grammatical forms. And the rules for every form of writing were fixed in the "rhetorics," translations and rearrangements of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. At last it was actually possible for a writer, Giulio

Camillo, to claim that he was able to impart the whole of knowledge by a mechanism of his own. It was the usual thing: the tendency of art to become mechanized—the ordinary phenomenon when production has become exhausted and culture comes to a standstill, settles down into its forms and becomes crystallized.

Now Pietro, a man of extremely indifferent culture, looked on these rules as pedantry. His inner life, so rich in productive forces, was badly suited to them. He looked on pedantry as his enemy and met it in a hand-to-hand fight. And that manner of seeing things not directly and as they really are, but through the medium of ready-made ideas and rules taken from books, he saw as pedantry: he loathed the habit of wrapping up words and forms, pretending to a modesty one does not possess and preaching humility and decency, and all the time being just as bad as any one else. He writes to the Cardinal of Ravenna:

> How much better it would be if a great master kept faithful men in his house, and free people and persons of good will, instead of adorning himself with the crafty humility of the pedantic asses of other people's books; which, when they have murdered the dead, and learned to twaddle from their works, cannot rest until they have crucified the living. And this is the truth. For it was pedantry that poisoned Medici, and it was pedantry that slit the throat of Duke Alexander . . . and what is worse, it provoked heresy against our faith, by the mouth of Luther, the worst of the pedants.

And literary pedantry was no less hateful to him. In a letter to Dolce he says:

> Go by the roads that show you Nature. . . . To imitate Petrarch and Boccaccio means to express one's thought with the same sweetness and the same grace with which those poets sweetly and gracefully expressed theirs; not to steal from them. And the worth of their poems does not lie in the words like "hence" and "whence" and "oft-times" and "apace," but in the verses as a whole. . . . The pedants spit blood in their efforts to turn out verses resounding with imitation; and in cackling about it in their copybooks they put it into a phrase and embroider it with phthisical words according to the rules. O erring crowd,

I tell thee and I repeat to thee, that poetry is a whim of Nature in her moments of joy; it comes from a man's own impulse; and if the gift be not there his verse will be nothing more than a rattle without peas or a bell-tower without bells. So he who expects to compose verses without possessing the gift in himself is a dolt. . . . Learn from the wise painter who, asked what he was imitating, pointed to a group of men; meaning to say that he was painting from life and from truth, just as I do in speaking and in writing. Nature herself, of whose simplicity I am the secretary, tells me what I am to compose. . . . It is certain that I imitate myself, because Nature is a generous mistress who helps her lover, whereas art is like a louse that one has to look for and catch. So try to be a large sculptor of feelings, not a little miniaturist of words.

There were many writers who wrote in the same natural way; it is enough to mention Cellini, so full of life and definite matter. But Cellini looked on himself as an ignorant man, and wanted Varchi to put his *Vita* into shape—to write it up in the manner of a learned man. But Aretino, on the contrary, thought himself vastly superior to the others, and when literary men distilled their phraseology he usually dismissed them as pedants. A critical consciousness so direct, so decided, as Aretino's must have seemed a most extraordinary thing in those days. And he brought the same liberty and the same high judgment into art, for which he had the feeling. Writing to Michelangelo, he says: "I sigh for your merits, which are so great, and my own powers, which are so small." His favourite painter is his friend and gossip, Titian, whose full, almost sensual realism appeals to his nature. One day when he is ill with a fever he leans from his window on the Grand Canal at Venice, watches the gondolas pass, and falls into a pensive and contemplative mood—he, Pietro Aretino! The sight of lovely Nature purifies him, changes him. And he writes to Titian:

. . . In the mood of a man who has begun to be bored with himself, because he does not know what to do with his mind and his thoughts, I lifted my eyes to the sky, which never, since the day on which God created it, was touched with such a loveliness of lights and shades as I saw that evening. The atmosphere was of the sort which

those painters try to express who envy you because they cannot be you. . . . The houses . . . though made of solid stone, seemed somehow unreal of substance. And the atmosphere which in some parts seemed to be limpid and fresh in others was turgid and dead. And try to imagine the wonder that seized me at the sight of those great clouds; partly low and heavy on the roofs of the houses, and partly in the middle distance; on the right of the picture they were a fusion of greys and blacks. I was astonished at such a great variety of colours; the clouds in the foreground were ablaze with the fires of the sun, while those at a distance glowed with brilliant red. Oh, if you had only seen the beautiful strokes of the brush with which Nature thrust the atmosphere back, clearing it away from the palaces—just as Titian does when he paints his landscapes! In certain parts the ether was coloured with a sort of bluish green, and again with a sort of greenish-blue; colours that none but Nature could have mixed—Nature, the mistress of masters. So marvellously did Nature create the effects of distancing and projection through lights and shades . . . that I, who know that your brush is the soul itself of the ministering spirits of Nature, cried out three or four times: "O Titian, why are you not here?" For, on my honour, if you had painted the scene I have described to you, you would certainly have awakened the same astonishment in men that I felt in my soul when I witnessed it.

Notice that no moral impression or elevation is produced by this feeling for living Nature, by its colours and its half-lights, but only a purely artistic admiration and wonder, typical of the Italy of that time. He looks at Nature across the brush of Titian, and of Vecellio, the landscape painter; but all the same he sees it, and gets it living and fresh; he has a feeling for art that we look for in vain in Vasari. In an era that produced such a great number of pedantic works on culture Aretino's letters are the first rays of the splendours of independent criticism, which passes beyond books and beyond traditions, and finds its basis in Nature.

What he was as a critic, such he was also as a writer. The last thing he thinks of is words. He welcomes them all, no matter where they come from, or what they are, whether Tuscan, local, or foreign, noble or plebeian, harsh or soft, humble or sonorous. And the result is a language that is spoken universally

even today among the cultured classes in Italy. The period he abolishes entirely, breaks up the conjunctive sentences, dissolves the periphrases, smashes into every contrivance of the mechanism of "literary form," and draws near to the ordinary ways of natural speaking. In Lasca, in Cellini, in Machiavelli, we find an equal naturalness, but at the same time we feel the imprint of the Tuscan spirit, all grace. Pietro is an uneducated Tuscan, a child of Nature, who has lived away from his country; he uses every language, whichever seems best to him for expressing his thoughts. Tuscanizing he regards as pedantry, and avoids it, and grace is a thing he never thinks of at all. He aims entirely at expression and effectiveness; whatever word is useful for expressing the thing in his brain is a good word. But he never looks for it; so great is his facility that word and thing come to him together. The word is not always precise and not always suitable, because he often abuses his facility and scribbles instead of writing. His motto is, "It comes as it comes," and the result is a great inequality. He does not vex his brain by copying Boccaccio and Cicero, indeed he does the opposite; he does not seek the magnificence and breadth of form in which indolent brains rock themselves, but whatever form is the quickest and most convenient for his swift perceptions. Nor does he affect brevity, like Davanzati, whose brain, too indolent to look at the inside of things, is only interested in words and parenthetic clauses. Aretino does away with every mechanical process, and neglects the niceties and allurements of form. He writes and produces so easily, and his brain is so rich in concepts and images, that everything pours out of him impetuously, by the shortest way, without obstacles, digressions, or distractions. His style is as ready and decided as his life. Never was the saying that "the style is the man" so proved as in Aretino. He is the centre of his style in the same way that he is the centre of his universe. His world does not exist for itself, but for his personal benefit, and he treats it and handles it as though it were his own property—with the same caprice and liberty that Fo-

lengo brought to the world of his imagination. But Folengo was humorous, because his world was imaginary, therefore he could treat it without seriousness and laugh at it, while Pietro's world is a real thing and he is clearly conscious of it, and exploits it, even at the cost of profaning it basely. Jesus Christ he treats as a knight errant, and speaking of the Virgin he says: "Poetic lies become evangelists when they are used for singing the praises of her who is the refuge of our hopes." Of his *Vita di santa Caterina* he says: "One can float almost anything by invention . . . but besides the fact that everything is accepted that turns to the glory of God, the subject, which in itself is but small worth, would be nothing at all without the help that I have given it by my reflections."

At times he is bored, his brain is empty, and all he does is to collect adjectives with a show and ostentation that show him to be the charlatan he is:

> The easy, religious, clear, graceful, noble, fervid, faithful, truthful, mild, good, salutary, holy, and sainted discourses of Catherine—of that sainted, holy, salutary, good, mild, limpid, truthful, faithful, fervid, noble, gracious, gentle, and religious woman—have seized on my mind in such a way, etc.

It is like a bell ringing in our ears, splitting them, deafening them. This was the style called "flowery"; he gives it to us when he has nothing better at hand. At times he really has something to say, but seems not to be in the vein for it, does not feel it at that moment, so he treats us to exaggerated metaphors and ridiculous subtleties, more especially in his eulogies, the work which paid him so well. He writes to the Duke of Urbino:

> As all the stars of the sky in their glory speak of your merits, my intelligence, which can almost be called a planet, moves me to depict the image of your soul by the medium of words, so that the true likeness of your virtue coveted by the world may be seen in each separate part. But the power of my intelligence is outstripped by the height of the subject; and notwithstanding the emotions that overcome me at the thought of it, I find myself powerless to describe how exactly it has

come to pass that the goodness, the clemency, the strength, equally distributed in your nature, have inevitably, by the decree of fate, made you a prince.

This is a period à la Boccaccio, overstrained in conception and form. No question here of "as it comes, it comes," but rather of its not wanting to come at all, but being made to come whether it wants to or not. His panegyrics are all of them rhetorical, metaphorical, painted up, falsely pompous, and overinflated to the point of being ridiculous; they might almost be ironical caricatures posing as eulogies. Speaking ill of people comes easier than speaking well of them; in the former he is absolutely at home, and can spread himself with all the vigour of his cynical, sarcastic nature. But when he tries to speak well of people, somehow or other he gets an emphatic tone and makes use of far-fetched conceptions and out-of-the-way mannerisms; he gives us a refined language made of pearls, but of false ones—the sort of language that passed into France with Voiture and Balzac and was scourged by Molière, and in Italy became the hallmark of the literature of that time. Here are a few specimens of these false pearls which Aretino threw on the market:

So impetuously does [your eloquence] flow from your intellect that the tongue which tries to deliver it is dumbfounded by the marvel of the rush of thoughts, and the ears that hear it are confused. . . .

In the service of Christianity you have wrested the courage from Suleiman's soul, and the soul from his body, and his body from its armour. . . .

I give myself to you, O fathers of your peoples, brothers of your servants, sons of the truth, friends of virtue, comrades of strangers, props of religion, observers of the faith, accomplishers of justice, bursaries of charity, and users of clemency. . . .

. . . enfold my affection in the hem of your compassion. . . .

. . . the face of munificence is mirrored in the hearts of those who receive it. . . .

Your Excellency desires me to send you some tittle-tattle, to use as a fan in the great heat that is burning today. . . .

To fish with the hook of thought in the lake of memory. . . .

The honesty of certain persons is gilded with the thought of favours from others. . . .

The die of affection stamps on our hearts the firm name of our friends. . . .

To bury hope in the funeral urn of lying promises.

But every now and then this flowery and precious style is crossed by a flash of genius; original comparisons leap out at us, sudden and splendid images, new and daring conceptions, and incisive strokes of the pen. When the language is left to itself, and when the author is not bothering about effect, then the feeling and colours are true, as in the following extract from a letter, so simple and so touching:

The blue and gold stockings that I received with one of your letters have made me weep as much as they have pleased me, because the girl who was to have enjoyed them was anointed with holy oil that very morning, and I cannot write to you for the pity they awaken in me.

The dissolution of literary mechanism means a form of writing nearer to ordinary speaking and free from every preconception, and the direct expression of what is in the mind; a style now flowery, now precious, the two forms of the decadence of art and letters: this is the significance of Pietro Aretino as a writer. And he had no small influence on his contemporaries. All around him were secretaries, pupils, and imitators of his manner, such as Franco, Dolce, Lando, Doni, and other journeyman writers. "I live by *Kyrie eleisons*," says Doni. "My books are written before they are composed, and read before they are printed." His *Libreria* is read to this day for a certain brio that belongs to it, and for curious bits of information.

And Pietro has a certain importance too as a writer of comedies. Comedy had become conventionalized; it was based

on Plautus and Terence, with its accessories taken from the lower-class life of the day. The plot was centred in equivocal situations, cases of mistaken identity, and chance happenings that tickled the curiosity of the public. And the characters were conventionalized too. There was the usual parasite, and the greedy servant, and the courtesan, and the sly maidservant who acts as go-between, and the spendthrift son, and the miserly father who is made fun of, and the coward who pretends to be brave, and the pander, and the usurer. Any student who would like to pierce to the inner mysteries of Italian corruption could not do better than study the Italian writers of comedies. What he will find are broken family-ties, idle sons tricking their fathers and being baited in their turn by usurers and courtesans and panders, and the respectable public laughing at it all—the public that was a comedy itself, with its forms fixed and Latinized and punctuated with jokes and lubricity. The most prolific of the comic writers was Cecchi, who died in 1587. In less than ten days he could turn you out a comedy, a farce, a story, or a sacred play. He has the Florentine grace and liveliness of Lasca, but has less wit and less movement, indeed, he seems at times to be stuck in a quagmire. His characters and his world in general seem to have come from a repertory already fixed and classified, and he writes his works too hurriedly to give them colour, or flesh and blood. So he is often meagre and stagnant.

And here comes Pietro, smashing into the middle of this mechanism and breaking it up. Rules, traditions, theatrical usages, he rejects wholesale. In the prologue of his *Cortigiana* he says: "If I fail to observe the usual order that comedy demands, do not be surprised at it; because one lives in another manner in Rome than in Athens." According to the rules a character might not appear on the scene more than five times. Pietro makes fun of this rule with great wit. "If you see the personages coming on the scene more than five times, do not laugh at it, because the chains that hold the mills on the river

would not be strong enough to hold the fools of today." He aims at effect, so he cuts the delays, does away with the obstacles, and avoids preparations, episodes, descriptions, declamations, and the frequent soliloquies. What he wants are action and movement, and when the curtain rises we are thrown at once into the very heart of his knavish world, vividly presented in detail. He has not the synthesis of Machiavelli, the sure eye that embraces a vast whole at a glance and binds it together and develops it with logical fatality as though it were a thesis. Pietro's talent is not of the speculative kind; he is a man of action, one of the characters of his own comedies. He sees the world only in bits and in mouthfuls: the whole escapes him. So the action of his play is not well arranged and carefully studied, like the action of the *Mandragola*. But together with Machiavelli he has a profound experience of the human heart and a profound understanding of the characters, who stand out very distinctly from the many accidental events, dominate the play, and create a number of piquant novelties and situations. And how we enjoy this rogue among all the rascally tricks he puts on the stage! For this comic world which he shows us is his own world, the place where he had put his malice to such good proof. His play is based on the conception that the world belongs to the person who knows how to take it, in a word, to the cunning and impudent. And woe to the stupid! Their share will be the hurt and the ridicule; they are abandoned to the laughter of the public, the comic material. His play the *Ipocrita* is the glorification of a rogue who manages to get rich by intrigue and malice, exactly like Aretino himself. His Talanta is a courtesan who deceives all her lovers and ends up rich and respected, married to an old and faithful suitor. In the "philosopher" we have a hero who studies Plato and Aristotle while his wife deceives him: and the good man forgives her. In the *Cortigiana* Messer Maco, who wants to be a cardinal, and Parabolano, who thanks to his riches imagines that every woman is at his feet, are baited through the whole of the play

by courtesans and panders. The "marshal or groom of the stables" is afraid of displeasing his master, the Duke of Mantua, so consents to marry a woman he has never seen, though he hates women and hates marriage.

And this world is not in the least imaginary or subjective, but is the mirror of the society of that day, with all its customs, excellently shown in their finest shades and minutest details. And Pietro thoroughly enjoys himself in it, as though it were his element. Satires, eulogies, epigrams, knaveries, and indecencies spring from his brain with brio and ardour of movement, like fireworks. Some of his characters have passed into proverbs, but all are alive and true. A very original pleasantry is his "marshal," which Rabelais and Shakespeare both made use of. His Parabolano is proverbial: fatuous, vain men will be Parabolanos till the end of time. His Messer Maco is the original of Pourceaugnac. His "hypocrite" is a Tartuffe, but innocuous and put in a pleasant light; his "philosopher," whom he calls Plataristotile, is a skit on the Platonists of those times. Listening to this philosopher holding forth sententiously, we might think him extremely wise; but he has no experience of life at all, and his servant sees further than he, and his wife, Tessa, sees further than the servant. This philosopher deceived by his wife pronounces most excellent maxims on women, while his servant, whom nothing escapes, makes fun of him:

Plataristotile. Woman is the guide to evil and the mistress of perfidy.
Servant. Whoever knows it had better not say it.
Plata. The heart of woman is helped by trickery.
Servant. Sad for the man who does not see it.
Plata. . . . The only woman who is chaste is the one who has never been solicited.
Servant. Oh, yes, I believe it. . . .
Plata. A man who endures the perfidy of his wife learns to forgive injuries.
Servant. A good receipt for cowards.

And the servant concludes: "Let Your Sagacity take what may happen to you in good part. And do not allow yourself

to run so much after doctrinaire speculations, or the Devil may land you in a ditch." And the philosopher answers him: "Thou speakest like an eloquent man. But it is not to be thought of, because of the appetite for glory that comes to me whenever I philosophize."

His Boccaccio is one of those pigeons who are caught by a prostitute and plucked. Her maidservant sets the trap:

Boccaccio. Why does your lady want to talk to me, who am a stranger here?

Lisa. Perhaps because of your charm. Yes, yes, do not deny it. You know you have charm.

Bocc. You are pleased to flatter me.

Lisa. May I die this moment if she is not having spasms from the wish to talk to you.

Bocc. If she were kind she would give me some sign of it.

Lisa. If you saw her but once, you would never look at any other beauties but hers. . . . Stand still. Stop! Look at the sun and the moon and the star that are rising at that door.

Bocc. What a beautiful apparition!

Lisa. Your taste is good.

Bocc. If only I am the man she is looking for! It is easy to make mistakes in names.

Lisa. But yours is so sweet that it sticks to the lips. Ah! here she is! And running to meet you with open arms.

The courtesan is his favourite subject. His Angelica is typical of the whole species, and his Nanna is the supreme specimen of her kind.

Such was the type of comedy that the century was able to produce, the last act of the *Decameron;* a shameless and cynical world, whose protagonists are courtiers and courtesans. Its centre was the court of Rome, which Aretino, safely intrenched in Venice as in a fortress, scourged unmercifully.

There is a popular tradition, and a very expressive one too, that Pietro died from excess of laughter, as Margutte died, and as Italy herself was dying at that moment.

CHAPTER XVII

TORQUATO TASSO

THE three forms of the Italian spirit of this time are centred in Ariosto, Machiavelli, and Aretino. The first of these forms is a serene, artistic imagination, which mocks at its own image, knowing that it is only imagination and not reality; the second is an adult, virile intellect, which refuses to accept the illusions of imagination and feeling, and introduces us to the sanctuary of science; and the third is a moral dissolution, unrepentant, because conscienceless, because impudent and cynical. Around Ariosto are gathered the innumerable writers of tales and romances and comic works, the relished food of the cultured, idle people who enjoyed living in those regions of the imagination because real life had no serious meaning for them. Around Machiavelli presses the whole of that illustrious cohort of statesmen and historians—Guicciardini, Giannotti, Paruta, Segni, Nardi, and the many eminent thinkers of that day who were looking for the redemption of science. Around Aretino is collected the plebeian, vulgar crowd of literati, comedians, courtiers, buffoons, the exploiters of literature and journeyman writers. Ariosto pushes imagination to such a point that it provokes irony. Machiavelli pushes logic and reality to such a point that we end by shuddering at them. And Aretino is so completely cynical that he ends by disgusting us. The three forms of the Italian spirit of that time are reflected, enlarged and intensified, in these three men.

This was the time when the great states of Europe were

acquiring stability and order, were becoming the *patria* of Machiavelli, in a word, were growing into political unities, strengthened and held together by religious, moral, and national ideas. The only exception was Italy. Italians were not only not founding their *patria*, but had utterly lost their independence, their liberty, and the preëminent place that they had held till now in the world's history.

It was a catastrophe that the Italian people as a whole failed to grasp; there was no national consciousness of it, indeed, there was a certain satisfaction. Italy had endured such a number of calamities, and now, at last, a small measure of peace and rest seemed to have come to her. Italians were weary of tumult, were weary of struggling, were inured to changes of masters, and had learned to be patient in servitude. And then their laws, their customs, their traditions and superstitions, were none of them touched, and life and property were safe. Certainly from time to time risings did occur, in some places, like that in Naples against the Inquisition and the tax on fruit, but the reason was rather the stupidity of the rulers than any loftiness of feeling in the ruled. As to the upper, the cultivated, classes, who for a long time past had lived in retirement among literary idleness and the pleasures of the city and the farm, their personal lives were in nowise changed, so they noticed no change in Italy. And the literati were content; there was money in plenty to be had from the courts, and leisure could always be found in the academies. So much for one aspect of Spanish-papal Italy. But this Italy had another side to it, and a more respectable one. People for such a long time now had raised the cry that all the corruption had been caused by the licentiousness of habits, more especially among the clergy, that the Council of Trent gave itself up to curing this ill by reforming habits and discipline. "*Si non caste, tamen caute*"—"If not chastely, yet discreetly"; cynicism was replaced by hypocrisy. Vice was hidden, so scandal was done away with. The prurient literature that had flowered so richly was now forbidden; so

much so in fact that Niccolò Franco, first the pupil and then the rival of Pietro Aretino, who called himself "the scourge of the scourge of princes," was hanged for a Latin epigram: the laugh of Boccaccio died on the lips of Aretino. A preventative censorship, already established by the Lateran Council, was rigorously enforced, the Congregation of the Index was formed, and new religious orders were founded for the purification of habits and the education of the young—such as the Theatines, the Somaschi, the Barnabites, the Oratorians, and the Jesuits. Sacred poems were written and were sung in church and in the processions. St. Philip Neri introduced oratorios, sacred comedies, and sacred dramas. Everything smelt of sanctity.

Such was the reformation, or, as Sarpi puts it, the "deformation," of the Council of Trent. The scandals of the Roman court had always been a favourite subject with Italian poets and with Protestants. To Dante Rome was the "prostitute," to Petrarch it was Babylon, and the Protestants had attacked it on the side of its profligacy as being the side most effectual with the masses. But the Council of Trent seized this well-used weapon and broke it in the hands of the enemy by reforming discipline and putting old Savonarola in the right. Once the scandal was removed, the Council imagined that the Reformation had no further reason for existing, and hoped for conciliation. But the scandal of Rome was only a pretext: the true, the intimate, the fundamental reason for the Reformation was not the licence of Rome but the fact that intellect was now adult and was feeling the need of freedom, refused any longer to bow to authority, and insisted on its right to examine questions for itself. But here the Council of Trent was inflexible. To have yielded would have meant the bringing of the papal hierarchy near to a democracy, and would have meant allowing some degree of latitude in certain questions. In fact, what the Council did was the contrary: it strengthened the pope's authority at the expense of that of the bishops, putting the papal hierarchy in the position of an absolute monarchy. It defined questions of

dogma and faith, at the same time pronouncing that human reason and conscience were not competent to judge them. So the cleft became definite, and Christian Europe was divided into two camps, with the Reformation on the one side and Romanism and the pope on the other. The Reformation took as its watchword liberty of conscience and the competence of human reason to interpret the Bible and theological questions. Romanism, on the contrary, took as its basis the infallible authority of the Church, in fact, of the pope, and passive obedience, the *Credo quia absurdum.* The struggle between faith and science, between authority and freedom, is of course a very old one, indeed is coeval with the very origins of religion. But formerly the struggle in Italy had been manifested only in partial questions as to this or that dogma, while now it became conscious, and the differences were raised to questions of principle. The importance of the Reformation and that of the Council of Trent lie precisely in this clearer consciousness. Till now there had been a sort of eclecticism in Italy; philosophy and theology had managed to get on together without knowing very clearly how they did it, just as classicalism and Christianity had got on, and a place was found even for the broadest ideas, provided always that the clause "*salva la fede*" was tacked on to them. It was a kind of tacit compromise by which the world was kept going, for better or worse, and on the whole without too many clashes. But the whole situation was now changed: ambiguities, oratorical precautions, and hypocrisies were no longer possible; each side was clearly conscious of what it wanted, and faced the other as an enemy. The Church had proclaimed itself to be the sole and infallible interpreter of the truth—the pope had done the same, and he condemned not only this or that separate idea as a heresy, but the principles of liberty and reason and the right of examination and discussion. The fruit of this struggle was the modern conception of liberty. In ancient times "liberty" had meant the sharing by citizens in the government, and this was the sense in which Machiavelli had understood it. But in modern

times, besides this question of political liberty there is also the thing called "liberty of conscience," in other words, intellectual liberty, the liberty to think, to speak, to forgather, to discuss, to possess opinions and to voice them and spread them—in short, the substantial liberty of the individual, the natural right of man, independent of both State and Church. The interpretation and the divulgation of the truth were no longer the privilege of the priests only, but were the natural right of man. What the Reformation really meant was the secularization of religion, while the conception of Romanism, whose basis was the omnipotence of the Church or the State, was really divine right, theocracy, Caesarism, the absorption of the individual into the collective being, whether the name given to it be Church or State or Pope or Emperor.

But the Council of Trent carried other consequences, not only religious but political. On the ruins of feudal privileges and the communal enfranchisement arose the consecration of absolute monarchy: pope and king joined hands. The king helped the pope with the secular arm, and in return the pope consecrated the king, and gave him his Inquisitors and confessors. Monarchies became ordered like ecclesiastical hierarchies, with the same principles of authority and passive obedience, and the throne was quite as indisputable and quite as inviolable as the altar. To think freely of the king was as much an act of rebellion as to think freely of the pope, indeed, there was the motto, "*De Deo parum, de rege nihil*"—"Of God little, of the King nothing." So religion became an instrument of politics, and religious despotism became the natural auxiliary of political despotism.

But authority and faith are among the things that cannot be imposed; in Italy it proved to be quite as difficult to restore faith as to restore morality. The only result was hypocrisy, the observance of forms apart from conscience. Sensible men took to dissembling in their talk and habits, and in public and private affairs: an immorality so profound that conscience was

left powerless and the whole of life was robbed of its dignity. The sceptical, unbelieving, cultured classes settled down to this life of pretence with the same ease with which they had adapted themselves to servitude and foreign rule. As to the lower classes, they vegetated, and their masters were careful to leave them in this blessed stupidity; it was to their interest to do so.

It is true that from time to time individuals rebelled. Many pious men, with even priests among them, chose to be burnt at the stake rather than give the lie to their consciences; and whole families left Italy, taking their industries to foreign countries. Men renowned for virtue and science brought honour to their native country by their teachings in Switzerland, in England, in Germany. There was Socinus of Siena, one of the most active of them all, from whom the sect of the Socinians took its name. The merit of Socinus is the fact that he understood the Reformation much more clearly than either Luther or Calvin, which proves how far ahead of other nations the Italian intellect was in such speculations. Whereas Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin did their fighting about partial questions, Socinus rose above them in declaring that reason alone had the right to speak, in abolishing the supernatural entirely and denying divine omniscience and predestination, and in taking man and his freedom of choice as the centre of the universe. At once we see the Italian, the compatriot of Machiavelli.

But in Italy these examples and martyrdoms were unnoticed. Questions that stained half Europe with blood, and on whose solution the future of civilization and the fate of nations depended, did not stir the Italians. The Latin peoples, namely Spain, France, and Italy, remained Roman. But France and Spain were only subdued after desperate persecutions, in which the names of the Inquisition and St. Bartholomew's Day are unforgettable. Their national spirit regained its fibre from the struggle, intellects reawakened, and religious feeling, which political self-interests and the fanaticism of the people had fanned into flame, became a factor in civilization. The forces of

France and Spain became centred in absolute monarchies, which were strongly national unities, and quickened intellectual life. The Spain of Charles V and Philip II had its Cervantes, its Lope, and its Calderon; and France had its Golden Century, with its poets, philosophers, and orators—with Descartes, Malebranche, Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, Corneille, Racine, and Molière. Spain and France rose from the struggle strengthened and prosperous and solidly united.

In Italy there was no struggle because there was no conscience, that is to say, no convictions nor religious nor moral nor political passions. While other nations were only beginning their road, Italy was nearing the end of hers, and was tired and sceptical. She remained papal, but with a culture that was purely pagan and anti-papal. She was Roman, not from a renewal in her religious life (like the renewal, for instance, that the friar Savonarola had worked for) but Roman merely through passivity and inertia; she had the strength neither to fight Romanism nor to accept it. Italians were pleased with the outer improvement in chastity and the greater correctness of forms, plastered onto the licentiousness that still existed, and were pleased on the whole at the new splendours of the papacy. Not possessing a country of their own, they were glad to build a universal and Catholic country, with Rome as its centre. It became the fashion to rail against heretics and to celebrate Catholic victories over the Turks, such as the victory of Lepanto, and later, the victory at Vienna. The pope and Spain were the rulers, and no one objected to them. And yet it was a fact that neither pope nor Spain could say, "We are Italy," in the same sense that Philip II or Louis XIV could say, "*L'état, c'est moi.*" They had not that stout consensus of the people which comes from the inner life, and is the strong link that holds a nation together. The Italian spirit obeyed, inert and not displeased, but remained outside, was not absorbed. People no longer believed in the old ideas, and nothing new had come to replace

them, to form consciousness and bring back strength to the national fibre. The consent of the ruled was superficial, was only a state of passive acquiescence and moral somnolence. The virility of intellect in Italy was not with Rome but with the opposition. And if we want to trace the beginnings of a new Italy, we must seek them in the opposition that it raised to Spain and the pope, for the history of this opposition is the history of the new life.

The first phenomenon of the Italian somnolence was mechanism: the stagnation of ideas, the concentration on the work of fixing and immobilizing forms. The Council of Trent had placed the Columns of Hercules, had done the thinking for every one. Science was suspect and even Platonizing was barely allowed, and the gigantic problems of human destiny, whether ethical, political, or metaphysical, were shunted aside; hence, the only field left for human thought to expand in was the study of Nature within the limits of the Bible. On the other hand, the study of forms increased.

It was then that the Accademia della Crusca was founded, becoming, as it were, the Council of Trent of the Italian language, issuing its excommunications and imposing its dogmas. This resulted in a state of confusion in language that could be conceivable only in that idleness of the intellect.

Language by now had gained a stable form in the whole of Italy. And its "flower" was Tuscan, as Speron Speroni put it. So an Italian language existed, that is to say, a common grammatical form existed, with different leanings and colours in the different parts of Italy. Then, as now, one could feel in a writer the touch of the Lombard, the Venetian, the Neapolitan, as the case might be. This difference of leaning and colouring, this touch of the local, is of course the living part of a language, which the writer draws from his own surroundings. And if Florence had been the centre of Italy in the sense that Paris was the centre of France, the Florentine language would have

remained the living language of all the writers, and would have attracted them like a magnet. But Florence was only a sort of museum for the study of its monuments, that is, its writings. To the Accademia della Crusca the Italian language was like Latin, in the sense that it was a dead, finished language shut into itself, with nothing left to do to it except to make its inventory. The words in its dictionary that were used by this or that writer, were called "pure" words, and all the others were excommunicated. It picked and chose among writers, and on its own authority made a list of the saved and the damned. Thus language, by dint of being segregated from living use, became a dead body, a thing dissected, studied, reproduced artificially; and Italians became accustomed to learning how to write their language as though it were Latin or Greek. Petrarch and Boccaccio were as inviolable as Holy Writ; and "Thou shalt not" became applied even to words, so that even the Jesuit Bartoli lost patience. To show how the Italian literati studied we will quote from a man of great culture and an intelligence above the ordinary—Speron Speroni:

> Of a truth from my very earliest days I, having desired with great ardour to be able to speak and to write the conceptions of my intellect in the vulgar tongue, and less from the wish to make myself understood, which is a thing easily achieved by any ordinary person, than from the wish that my name might be remembered with some tribute of praise among the famous, put away from me every other consideration and applied myself with great earnestness to the reading of Petrarch and the *Cento novelle:* and after reading these authors by myself for not a few months, with but small result, at last, inspired by God, I betook myself for aid to our Messer Trifon Gabriele, who of his kindness helped me; whereupon I saw and understood these two authors perfectly, though I had already perused them many times over, without knowing which were the things I ought to observe in them.

And this, observe, is a single period! And how it gasps for breath! And I ask you if any one on earth could call that a living language. So now we have Trifone on the scene, one of

the grammarians and critics of highest repute in that day, who was known as the "Socrates" of the age. To continue:

> First of all this good father taught me the words, and next he gave me the rules for the declination and conjugation of the Tuscan nouns and verbs; and finally he explained to me very clearly the articles, the pronouns, the participles, the adverbs, and the other parts of speech; so much so that I, having gathered together all the little things that I had learnt, composed a grammar of my own from these things, to use as my rule in writing. . . . And as I seemed to myself to have grown into a weighty grammarian . . . I began to apply myself to the making of verses. Then, being full of the numbers and sayings of Petrarch and Boccaccio, for some years I continued to write things that my friends thought marvellous. Then, thinking that my vein was beginning to run dry (for now and then the words refused to come, and having nothing to say that was new I sometimes reproduced the same ideas in different sonnets) I had recourse to the thing that all the world is doing today, and made a rhyming dictionary or vocabulary in the vulgar tongue, in which I placed distinctly and in alphabetical order every single word that these writers had used; and besides this, I gathered together in another book their different ways of describing things, such as day, night, anger, peace, hate, love, fear, hope, beauty, so that it never could happen that I should use an idea or a word that was not to be found in their tales or sonnets. For I considered that our arts of speech and poetry ought to consist of nothing but imitations both of these authors, and of the writing of prose or verse in their manner.

So the "texture of the words" and their "numbers" and their "connections" (the expressions in vogue at that time) were studied in Boccaccio and Petrarch, and grammars, dictionaries, and repertories of phrases and conceptions were compiled from them. This was the teaching of Trifone Gabriele, who was called "Socrates," and this too was the practice of Speron Speroni, which resulted in the artificial, conventional jargon we have read. So the language, made classical and pure, remained motionless and crystallized like a dead language, and was extremely difficult to learn. Words had not only to be "pure" but must also be "elegant" and "full of numbers." And there was a science of "numbers"—accents that were pure in prose but not

pure in verse. The artifice of the period was extremely difficult to master. Here is what Speron Speroni says of it:

> . . . in the same way that prose consists in placing the words in a certain order, numbers are the ordering of their syllables; and the art of speech, when it is good, begins, continues, and ends in the pleasing of the ear with these numbers; so that every clause, just as it has a beginning, must also have a middle and an end. At the beginning it should move and rise; in the middle it should stand still, as though tired by the effort, and should rest awhile; and then it should sink and hurry towards the end, to appease itself. . . . Now in prose it sometimes happens that words not beautiful in themselves go well together, and it sometimes happens that beautiful words go badly together; just as in music good voices often harmonize badly, while voices that are not good often harmonize well because of practice or because of art. And the same with speech: the equals, the similars, and the contraries, which are all of them things of a naturally good sound, are sometimes spoken in a hard, ugly voice, and sometimes stupidly and with the mouth open. To conclude, it often happens that a prose with a perfect construction is like a river pleased with its own flow, which does not care to come to an end or rest on the way, but goes on and on, as if its breath would never give out, and as if it would go on forever and ever for the whole of its life. Now here we have recourse to numbers, which cross its flow, and invite it affably and with flattering words and with charms to pause and to refresh itself, and to lodge with them a little while; and then, should courtesy not suffice, they use force to it, and for its own good, and in spite of itself, they stop it violently.

With these standards in mind, we are not surprised that in the end things came to such a pass that a preacher composed his periods to the sound of music. And we can imagine that Speron Speroni did the same with his periods. No wonder that Bembo's, Casa's, and Castiglione's periods, joined and connected with such art, aroused the admiration they did. Words had their own personality, apart from the things they represented; they were divided into categories of pure and impure, beautiful and ugly, harsh and soft, noble and plebeian, and the whole secret of elegance was in the choice of words. People searched not only for the word, but for the word ornamented,

or else its periphrase. The one unforgivable sin was repetition; even when the thing was exactly the same a different word had somehow or other to be found for it. Speroni says of Petrarch that he "embellished everything with words that meant other things . . . calling the head 'fine gold' or a 'golden roof,' the eyes 'suns,' 'stars,' 'sapphires'; the cheeks now 'snow and roses,' now 'milk and fire'; the lips 'rubies' and the teeth 'pearls,' the breast now 'ivory,' now 'alabaster.' " When a language is alive the word must inevitably express the thing; the word comes out together with the thing, because word and thing are the same. But a dead language can never have rightness of wording, because it is taken already formed from dictionaries and writers, and is bared of all the accessories that the people of a country add to it, and which determine its meaning and its colouring. So the Italian language, which by now had attained to a high level of perfection, and moreover had proved its power in the *Eneide* of Caro and the *Tacito* of Davanzati, ceased to develop, in the same way that Italian life had ceased to develop. People were disputing as to whether the name of the language should be "Tuscan" or "Florentine" or "Italian," when the thing itself was already embalmed and coffined in the dictionary of the Crusca, and the lid nailed down on it.

The same thing had happened with grammar. It was judged not by the words themselves and their meaning, or by their logical necessity, but by the special senses in which writers had used them, which varied considerably. The authorities had compiled a list of arbitrary rules and arbitrary exceptions, a single word being given a crowd of different meanings; and those many useless things adorned with the name of "*ripieno*"—"stuffing"—arose, and those endless subtilizings on a syllable or a letter. The result was an orthography in great part uncertain and tentative, with a complicated, variable syntax, composed of a real jumble of participles, pronouns, genders, cases, alterations, and constructions: a grammar that even today is one of the least precise in existence. Language had no propriety and

grammar had no precision, because language and grammar were not considered in relation to the things, but merely in themselves, and were nothing but empty and arbitrary forms.

What mattered was the outside, the surface. Literature was only a mechanism, a technical artifice; people searched for the examples to be found in writers, instead of the intrinsic reasons for the forms in their relation to the things. As with the period, so with the rest of literature: an artificial and stationary scheme of composition had been imagined, consisting in a certain concordance of all the parts, like that in a clock, and this was known as "classical writing." Feeling for art and poetry being dead, the only ideal that remained was a prosaic standard of mechanical perfection, regularity, and correctness. An extraordinary importance was given to language, to grammar, to elocution, to the period, to composition: and here were placed the Columns of Hercules, where criticism ended. Such were the standards by which writers were judged, and these were praised in so far as they approached them. Comedies and tragedies were praised in so far as they conformed to rules. But as it was necessary for playwrights to hold their public, and as, after all, that much-admired regularity was the dullest thing in the world, the playwrights endeavoured to gain their effects by the grossest, heaviest means—the means that mediocre men have recourse to. So comedies were made of buffooneries, tragedies were made of horrors. And certainly one of the least endurable of these tragedies is Speroni's *Canace*. One thing, and one thing only, was lacking to Italy—the heroic poem—and poor Speroni was quite inconsolable at not finding a single example of it in Petrarch. "I laboured almost like a new alchemist, trying to find the heroic poem, for none of the poems woven by Petrarch can properly be described as such." He considered that Trissino had handled the heroic badly, and that the *Orlando furioso* was not in keeping with the rules, but he forgave the *Orlando* because, after all, it was not a poem but a "romance." The problem, according to Speroni, was to find

the heroic. Well, any one can see how far Aretino had outstripped the men of his time in the art of intelligent criticism.

And these standards were applied—they were more than just theories. The commentaries on Boccaccio and Petrarch were innumerable, as were also the translations of the classics, such as that of Livy by Nardi, of the *Rhetoric* and the *Aeneid* by Caro, of the *Metamorphoses* by Anguillara, and of Tacitus by Davanzati. Grammars and rhetorics were all of a stamp, from Bembo as far as Buommattei, who was called "Messer Ripieno," indeed, as far as Corticelli. These imitations, nay, counterfeits of the classics in an artificial style, attracted the stoutest of the minds, even Guicciardini's. And the number of academies increased, with the strangest names imaginable; their day of bacchanals was ended, and all that took place in them now was empty chattering and disputations on grammar. Not that there were no eccentrics, people who sought for fame by the opposite methods: for instance, there was Lando, who said that Boccaccio was an idiot and Aristotle a "stupid donkey," and invited the attention of the public with his *Paradossi.*

In the first half of the century the liberty, even the licence, in writing had thrown an element of vivacity, charm, mordacity, lubricity, in fact, of the writer's own personality, into the middle of this uniform and pedantic literature. Opposite the classical writer was the adventurer.

The last of these adventurers of literature was Benvenuto Cellini, who died in 1571. An extremely rich nature, genial and uncultivated, Cellini is a compendium of the Italian of that period unmodified by culture. There is something of Michelangelo in his nature and something of Aretino, fused together; or rather, he is the rough, primitive, homespun material that produced both Aretino and Michelangelo.

He was a pleasing and conscientious artist; art was his god, his morality, his law, his right. He thought that an artist like himself was above the law, that "men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, do not require to be bound by the laws." And

he wandered from court to court, seeking adventures, armed with a rapier and a musket, and argued with his weapons as well as with his tongue, which was no less deadly in its thrusts. If he happened to meet his enemy he ran him through without waiting to argue; and if the man died, then the worse for him, for "one does not stab by agreement." When he was thrown into prison he thought it an "infamy," and lamented that they had done him "a villainous wrong." And he was as bigoted as a lay-sister and as superstitious as a brigand. He believed in miracles, in devils, and in incantations, and when he happened to have need of God and the saints he remembered their existence, chanted psalms and prayers, and went on pilgrimages. Of moral sense he had none; right and wrong were the same to him, and he often boasted of crimes he had not committed. A liar, a braggart, audacious, impudent, gossiping, dissolute, overbearing, beneath his false appearance of independence he was really the servant of whosoever paid him. And with it all he was extremely pleased with himself, and felt that he was the equal of any one, with the exception only of the "very divine" Michelangelo, as he called him. Extremely robust physically and richly endowed with inner life, this knight errant dictated his own biography, painting himself freely with all those fine characteristics we have mentioned, never doubting for a moment that he was raising a monument of glory to himself. These qualities spring out from his pages spontaneously, with the vivacity of natural forces, with a literary style as clear-cut and decided as the chiselling of his statues.

In the second half of the century this rich, licentious life was suppressed, and disappeared beneath the heaviness of the academies and the Council of Trent. Nothing was left but irritations, little excitements, accusations, slanders, storms in teacups on the subject of grammar, in short, the grossest, the most pedantic part of that life. At the time that England had her Shakespeare, and that Rabelais and Montaigne, filled with Italian reminiscences, were foreshadowing the Great Century

of France; at the time that Cervantes was writing his *Don Quixote* and Camoëns his *Lusiadas*, Italian critics were writing the *Avvertimenti grammaticali*, the *Dialoghi sull' amore platonico*, *Sulla rettorica*, *Sulla storia*, *Sulla vita attiva e contemplativa*, and were searching for the heroic poem and not finding it.

II

Into the middle of these little preoccupations and niggardly affairs came the *Gerusalemme liberata—Jerusalem Delivered.*

So Italy after all was to have her heroic poem, the poem that was "something similar" to the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, and the critics should have been satisfied. Young Pellegrino announced the good news to the blast of trumpets, with the enthusiasm of his years.

The *Jerusalem* stumbled into a world no longer poetical, but critical. Feeling for art was exhausted, and inspiration and spontaneity in composing and in judging were spoiled by reasonings founded on conceptions of criticism acknowledged by every one and looked upon as Holy Writ. Ariosto had sat down to write as his inner self dictated, and never looked beyond his subject. His subject had become a living, real world to him, with its own kind of existence and its own rules. But Tasso, like Dante, was a critic before ever he was a poet, and was faced by a whole ready-made school of poetry. What he looked at was not his subject, but certain ends and preoccupations and examples, and the writings of Horace and Aristotle and Homer and Virgil. He was a prodigy of learning even at eighteen; he knew Plato and Aristotle, and was able to develop philosophical and rhetorical theses quite wonderfully. He wrote his *Rinaldo;* and having learnt the *simplex et unum*, he aimed at unity of action and simplicity of composition, and asked the public to forgive him for it. But the public, accustomed as it was to the broad and splendid dimensions of the *Orlando* and the *Amadigi*, found the fare rather meagre and made a wry face at it. So he put

aside the idea of writing a chivalric poem, a "romance," as they called it, and decided to present Italy with the heroic poem that every one was looking for. He hesitated over the choice of subject, for he had four or five ready at hand to choose from. He is supposed to have left the choice in the end to Duke Alfonso, his Maecenas. Anyway, he began the *Jerusalem*. He wanted his poem to be "regular," as they called it—according to rules. The subject was suited to the times, being religious and cosmopolitan, and lending itself to the introduction of a hero from the House of Este; like Ariosto, the author could pay his court to the Duke. He measured the distances and proportions with infinite pains, so as to preserve the unity and simplicity of the plot, taking care that his world should have a natural and credible air. He gave it a serious action, making it the centre of the poem to which everything converged, and he made the pious Goffredo (Godfrey) a real protagonist, a real leader and king in the modern sense. He abstained from the usual knights errant, and centred the plot not in the spirit of adventure, but in the action of heavenly and infernal forces, as Homer did. He brought the supernatural down to the human, making it explainable and almost allegorical, and nothing more than the mere outward part of instincts and passions. He saw to it that the characters were all of them noble, and he excluded everything that was in any way vulgar, grotesque, or comic, and from the first to the last line he blew the trumpet. He gave a smaller part than was usual to chance and to brute force, and a greater importance to mind, to moral force, to science, as we see in his duels and battles. He wanted his story to seem like history, like reality. He often consulted with the critics, and he gave them his poem to read canto by canto, and changed and corrected it, as docile as could be. Among these critics whose advice he asked was Speron Speroni.

As we have seen, he wished to create a serious heroic poem, imbued with the spirit of religion, and as far as possible historical and near to the truth, in short, plausible, in which the

marvellous could all be explained by the laws of Nature; and at the same time he wished the events to be linked so coherently and so naturally as to make them nearly logical. This was the classical idea, which he aimed to realize. We can read it all in his writings on the heroic poem and on poetry, in which he shows that he knew his subject better than the critics.

The poem was received in the spirit in which he had composed it. Read at first in bits, when it came out as a whole, incorrect and published without the author's knowledge, it stirred up a wasps' nest. The critics fought it with the author's weapons. "If you wanted to write a religious poem," said Antoniano, "you should have given us a poem that could have been put into the hands even of nuns." The pious men—the men who set the tone at that time—were shocked at those amours described so voluptuously, in spite of the fact that poor Tasso had begged forgiveness from the star-crowned Muse, "high in Heaven 'mid choirs celestial." So, in the hope of silencing his critics, he constructed a detailed allegory to be tacked onto it, which was to make these profane delights innocuous. As a work of art the poem was carefully examined: the critics looked at it minutely, at its composition, its sound, its language, and even its grammar; in short, they judged it by the complete standard of criticism of that time. And they decided that the composition was faulty, especially in the episode of Olindo and Sofronia, who pass out of the story halfway and are never heard of again. They judged that the real and serious action was limited to a few cantos; that the rest was merely a tissue of adventures and episodes, not necessarily linked to the main action; that the author courted the ear by artificial and pretentious means; that the language was "impure," the wording lacking in propriety and not sufficiently exact as to grammar. Endless comparisons were made between it and the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, and the heroic poem and its rules were discussed with futilities and subtleties. The *Jerusalem* was compared in the strangest ways with the *Orlando*, some of the critics standing by the former, some by

the latter. Idle Italy was kept busy for quite a time with these disputes. All that they led to was a further darkening of poetical feeling; the art of criticism was not advanced by a single step, but was left in its quagmire. Among the many pamphlets that appeared on the subject there was one that deserves attention. It was written by a youth who was called to great destinies: Galileo Galilei. He discussed the *Jerusalem* with a great deal of sense and taste, and a right feeling for art.

A considerable share in the dispute was taken by the Accademia della Crusca. And we can well understand it. Tasso's language was wanting in that special Tuscan flavour, that indefinable something of purity and naturalness combined with liveliness and grace, that is so delightful. But Salviati made the accusation pedantic, talking like a pedagogue, and putting his finger on the full stops and commas. His accusation was so exaggerated that he roused the other side to an enthusiastic defence, and the book became more notorious than ever and more in demand. At the present day, when literary works are received in such silence and so indifferently by the public, an author would think himself a lucky man to attract such attention. But Tasso fell ill from the vexation of it, almost as though the attacks had been personal; and he met his critics as enemies. But his worst enemy was in fact himself. He retaliated, but with a bad conscience, because the standards the critics used against him were really his own standards, and he felt that at bottom it was he who was in the wrong. And then it was that the unfortunate idea occurred to him of rewriting the poem and placating the critics. The result was the *Gerusalemme conquistata—Jerusalem Conquered.* In the reconstructed poem he made the language pure, and he obeyed the rules of grammar: the "arms" ceased to be "piteous," but without becoming "pious." The "captain" was turned into a "sovereign knight," the "grand sepulchre" was cut out altogether, and the "*io ti perdono,*" those sublime words, were turned into the prosaic "*perdòn io.*" There is hardly a change that is not unfortunate, second-hand, and

done in cold blood. Tasso the poet had merged into Tasso the critic, the grammarian, the linguist, and with that row of terrible critics facing him. He changed even the music of it, the turns of expression by which he had courted the ear, and made the form more grave, more solemn—with the result that the poem is cold and insipid. But the thing that suffered most severely was the plot: he cut out Olindo and Sofronia, and replaced them by a tiresome military review. He cut out Rinaldo, too, as being a reminiscence of chivalry, and replaced him with a Riccardo, a name connected with the Crusades in history. Riccardo is put in as a sort of Achilles, with a character called Ruperto as his Patroclus. And he changed Argante into Ettore, son of the king, who was now Ducalto instead of Aladino. He made Suleiman into a Mezenzio and presented him with a son, so that he could imitate Virgil in his death. And he cut out the concluding stories of Armida and of Erminia, changing the latter into Nicea. He brought the Egyptians sooner on the scene, and increased the number of military encounters to fill up the space left empty by the shortened episodes or the ones he had cut out altogether. He thought that in doing these things he was increasing the unity and simplicity of the action and making the unfolding of the plot more coherent and logical, and was giving the poem a more historical and truer colouring. But the public thought differently: nothing could persuade them to forget Armida, Rinaldo, Erminia, Sofronia, the most universally known and most dearly loved of Tasso's creations. What they did forget was the *Jerusalem Conquered*, which is no longer read by any one.

Tasso's poetical ideal is fundamentally the same as Dante's. His aim is to "adorn the truth in flowing song," just as Dante aimed at "telling the truth under fabulous and ornate speaking." Tasso's way of looking at religion is the same, too; he sees it as the struggle between reason and passion. In Dante passion and reason are Hell and Paradise; in Tasso they are God and Lucifer, and their agents on earth are Armida and the heavenly

guide of Ubaldo and Carlo. The whole plot is centred in this antagonism, the common meeting-ground in literature of all the Italian poets. Tasso's Armida is only Boiardo's and Ariosto's Angelica, with the difference, however, that Boiardo swamps his conception in the immensity of his canvas, and Ariosto laughs at his with gusto, whereas Tasso makes it the very centre of his tale. This, which the critics called an "episode," is the real conception of his poem. Homer sings the wrath of Achilles, that is to say, he sings not reason but passion; for Zeus is not reason, but is the necessity of things, is fate. Virgil's conception approaches more nearly to Christianity, as when he snatches the pious Aeneas from Dido's arms. (Poetically, however, the person who interests us most is not the pious Aeneas but the deserted Dido.) In the Christian legend of the loss of Paradise and the sin of Adam we have an epic subject in which life breaks out in all the violence of its instincts and its forces. In the passion and death of Christ poetical interest reaches the highest tragic effect possible, because the subject is the martyrdom of truth. In Dante this conception, taken in its logical completeness, produces the abstraction of Paradise and the intrusion of allegory, just as in Tasso it produces the abstraction of Goffredo. These poets confused the really poetic, which consists in the depiction of life, with theology or philosophy, which is a mental or intellectual abstraction of life. Ariosto gets out of it very well because his subject is the madness of Orlando; and when the time comes to give him back his reason he resolves the situation in a comic and piquant manner by sending Astolfo to go and fish for it in the kingdom of the moon. But Tasso was aiming at restoring the conception in its seriousness, and in aiming at that mental perfection, he gives us the unhappy construction of Goffredo and the cold allegory of the heavenly woman.

He is not less astray in his conception of the epic. His whole mind is centred on historical truth, verisimilitude or logical connection, and on a certain even and sustained dignity. And

what he fails to see is that all these things, after all, are merely the external tissues of life, its mechanism—that they are little more than the skeleton of the material, its shape. And here his criticism stops, and when the poet in him died, leaving only the critic, he attached an exaggerated importance to these abstract and superficial ideas, and miserably spoiled his work. His *Jerusalem Conquered* is only the skeleton of all that rich living thing, but the skeleton being better joined and better connected and better mechanized than the other, he thought it the more perfect of the two.

But Tasso, like Dante, was a poet and had a true inspiration, and the spontaneity of the poet atoned in great part for the artifices of the critic.

Torquato Tasso, educated by the Jesuits in Naples, lived the early years of his manhood in Rome, at the time when the excitement of the Council of Trent was already subsiding. He was a sincere, believing Christian, but at the same time was full of fantasies, chivalrous, sentimental, and thoroughly saturated with every form of Italian culture. His nature was torn in two; the pagan and the Catholic were striving for mastery—Ariosto and the Council of Trent. His mother had died when he was hardly more than a boy, his father was far away, he was tormented by relatives, and his property was confiscated; but through all the ills of life and even in direst poverty, he never forgot that he was a gentleman. He served in courts, but felt himself a free man; he lived among vice and baseness, but remained honest; he asked for favours, but held his head erect, had the air of a man who is superior to it all, and made his demands in the name of the highest principles of human dignity.

He has a certain likeness to Petrarch. Both were poets of transition, illustrious invalids, who suffered in their hearts the pain of two worlds that they could not reconcile. The muse of transition is melancholy. But Petrarch's melancholy was superficial; it remained in the imagination and did not penetrate his life. It was a melancholy not wanting in sweetness: a melan-

choly that poured itself out and grew calm in study, and held him contemplative and tranquil until his old age. But with Tasso melancholy was a deeper thing; the pain was not merely in the imagination but in the heart itself, sensitive, impressionable, tender, tearful, and it sank into the whole of his life. All of his ideas were serious to him, whether religious or philosophical or moral or poetical, and he brought his character into line with them. Enthusiastic to the point of hallucination, he lost his sense of reality and proportion in the world of his intellect, where the loftiness and honesty of his soul held him high above ordinary humanity. He was wanting in that instinctive flair for men, that practical understanding of life, which we find so often in mediocrities. His imagination was never calm for a moment, but was always in a state of travail, and it coloured and changed his existence, not only in his poetry but in his private life as a man. It is enough to picture him in the *Cinquecento* and in one of its courts to realize that tragedy was inevitable. After the abandon, the confidence, the expansiveness, of first youth came the whole retinue of sadness: disillusion, diffidence, self-centredness, melancholy, black moods, hallucination; a state fluctuating between sanity and madness, and which not only led others but even himself to believe that he was not quite sane. Instead of doctors and medicines the thing he needed was a calm life in some place of quiet seclusion, with his books, and with a mother beside him, or a sister, or friends made intelligent by affection. What he got was prison and the sterile pity of men. He vainly implored the princes of Italy, one after the other, to liberate him. When at last he was free, it is true that he had a sister and a friend, who were able to relieve his ills. But they were unable to cure them; his imagination had been disordered too long. And when the first smile of fortune came to him, the day he was crowned as a poet proved to be the day of his death.

Look for a moment into the faces of Petrarch and Tasso. Both are absorbed and abstracted, with eyes looking into space, without expression, for really they are looking into their hearts. But

Petrarch's face has the idyllic, reposeful look of a man who has already thought and is satisfied with his thought, whereas Tasso's face has the elegiac and troubled look of a man who is seeking but not finding. And neither the one nor the other has the marked, energetic features of Dante.

Tasso, like Petrarch, was wanting in strength. No question here of Olympic calm, of resolute will; his character was not the heroic kind, but was lyrical. His nature was subjective, like Petrarch's, who created the universe from himself.

If Tasso had been born in the Middle Ages he would have been a saint. But born as he was in the midst of hypocritical scepticism and contradictory culture, he was torn by hesitations and scruples, and was not even clear himself as to whether he was a heretic or a Catholic. He was a more cruel inquisitor to himself than the tribunal of the Inquisition. As a poet he began very close to Ariosto with his *Rinaldo*. And in *Jerusalem Delivered* he felt that he was still too near to Ariosto. Tormented by critical and religious scruples, he wrote his *Jerusalem Conquered*, the "true Jerusalem," as he called it, the "heavenly Jerusalem." And even then he was not content, and wrote his *Sette giornate della creazione* (*Seven Days of Creation*).

If the movement in Italy of religious renewal had been a serious thing, the *Jerusalem* no doubt would have been the poem of that new world, and would have breathed the spirit that we feel in the *Messiah* or in *Paradise Lost*. But the movement was only superficial, was a formal thing; it was due more to the exigencies and sentiments of politics than to real convictions: and this is shown in the *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Tasso was not original as a thinker; not once did he cast a free glance on the formidable problems of life. Though in regard to learning and erudition he was equalled by few men in those days, he was not a thinker. The religious world of his poems is stationary and preconceived, not produced by his brain. And it is the same with his criticism and philosophy: he learned them thoroughly and grasped them well, and he expounds and

discourses with all the correct forms and arguments. But he had never examined them at their source and foundation, had never consumed a part of his inmost being in the effort to fathom them. He knew nothing of Copernicus, and so far as we know was quite outside of and knew nothing at all about that mighty movement of ideas which even then was changing the face of Europe and luring the noblest minds of Italy into dangerous speculations. Facing him, intellectually, were certain Columns of Hercules, which stopped his going further. And when, in spite of himself, he did dare to look further, he turned back terrified, and ran to confess it to his Father Inquisitor, as though he had tasted of forbidden fruit. His religion was a fact outside of his mind, a complexity of doctrines to be believed in but not to be examined, and a complexity of forms to be observed. But in his mind at the same time was a literary and philosophic culture not connected in any way with religion: Aristotle and Plato, Homer and Virgil, Petrarch and Ariosto, and later Dante. And his character had that special type of loyalty and hauteur which is the attribute of a great gentleman who is more at his ease among chivalric types than among evangelical ones. In his life there is a poetry martyred by reality. It was a life idealized in love, in religion, in science, and in conduct, brought to a long martyrdom, and crowned by an early death. It was one of the noblest incarnations of the Italian spirit; high poetical material, which is waiting to be released from the marble in which Goethe has enclosed it, so that the statue may become a man once more.

Then what kind of a thing is the religion of the *Jerusalem?* It is a religion in the Italian manner, dogmatic, historical, and formal: it has the letter, but not the spirit. Its Christians believe, and confess themselves, and go in processions: this is the varnish. Then what are the foundations? The foundations are a chivalric, fantastic, romantic, voluptuous world, which goes to mass, and crosses itself. Religion is only an accessory of the poem, not its spirit, as it was in Milton or in Klopstock. Fundamentally, it is the same thing that had been taking shape from

Boccaccio onwards; a thing halfway between the fantastic and the idyllic, with a new outer covering of seriousness, reality, and religion.

In the *Jerusalem Delivered* the complete type of Christian hero is Goffredo, a rigid character—abstract, all of a piece. The most intimate thing about Goffredo, namely, his dream, is pure imitation of the pagan, a reminiscence of the dream of Scipio. The religious conception is centred in Armida, who is concupiscence, or the senses, and in Ubaldo, who is the voice of the heavenly woman, or reason. But, as Petrarch says, "reason speaks and the senses bite," and the effective person, poetically, is Armida. And reason uses a rhetoric that is more pagan than Christian, and is more at home with Seneca and Virgil than with the Bible. Reason speaks, but Armida acts, surrounded by arts and allurements. And here the author is on his own ground and plunges deep into Ariostian profane and idyllic fantasies, and imagines that he is making these fantasies religious by bringing Ubaldo's immortal golden wand and his rhetoric to bear on them Rinaldo, the convert, is not clear as a personality, because what he is and what he becomes is not developed in his consciousness and seems hardly to be his own doing, but is only caused by the bad or good powers that are fighting for his soul. The drama is all on the outside, and is very inferior to Dante's confession of faith, which is penetrated by the religious spirit. As to the rest, Rinaldo is a reminiscence of Ariosto's Rinaldo or Orlando, but in miniature, while Argante is a reminiscence of Rodomonte, but more serious of face. In the second poem Rinaldo (changed into Riccardo) becomes a sort of Achilles, Sveno (changed into Ruperto) becomes a reminiscence of Patroclus, Solimano becomes a Mezenzio, and Argante an Ettore. They are all of them classical or chivalric reminiscences; the earlier are fresher and more alive, because they are nearer to the times, and are still echoing in the Italian spirit.

Tasso was vaguely conscious that his poem on paper was not so truly in keeping with the religious type as when it was still

in his mind and unwritten. And in the *Jerusalem Conquered* he tried to make this right. Actually what he did was to accentuate an allegory here and there, dilute the dream of Goffredo, add a subterranean journey very meagre in conception and form to the lovely description of the voyage beyond the ocean (the one and only modern inspiration of the poem, and worthy of Camoëns), and add an anterior story of the Crusades, painted in Goffredo's tent. The poem was made heavier, but not more religious, because religion is not a question of dogma, nor of history, nor of forms, but a thing of the spirit. And the religious spirit is not to be imposed on anything by force of will, any more than is any other phenomenon of the inner life.

Tasso wanted this poem to be serious. But his means to keep it serious were negative and mechanical. On the one hand they consisted in abstaining from everything that was Ariostian in the sense of being plebeian or comic, and on the other in making the plot more logical and more simple than Ariosto's, on the classical model. And he felt that he had not succeeded. So when he rewrote the *Jerusalem*, he had recourse to colours that were still more sombre, and tried to perfect his machinery still further. He cast the characters all in the same mould; in endeavouring to make the life more serious he succeeded in making it monotonous and poor. He was looking for seriousness of life in times of transition that were swaying between contradictory tendencies, without aim or dignity; he was looking for the heroic at a time when spontaneity and simplicity, the two essential conditions of every true greatness, were simply not there. His seriousness, like his religion, is superficial and literary.

Above everything else, he wanted his poem to have an air of credibility and reality. Therefore he founded it on history, he worked hard to be precise in his names and places, and to connect his plot by credible incidents. Like a sculptor he enlarged his characters in such right proportions as to make them appear like real people; he kept the miracles of physical strength within reasonable bounds; and he carefully refrained from depending

for his effects on strength or courage by itself, but laid stress on experience and on wisdom, on ability and skill. When he rewrote the *Jerusalem* he gave even greater importance to these things, and made the poem even more exact in regard to geography and history. In his critical and artistic tendencies we see a foreshadowing of that historical and realistic school which developed later. But in Tasso these tendencies were only intellectual and critical, and were out of tune with the conditions of the Italian spirit of that time, a spirit still in the stage of being purely fantastical, romantic, and subjective. He lacked the power to get out of himself; he had not the divine self-oblivion of Ariosto. So he does not reach to the inner life of history; he barely grasps its material and superficial side. The thing that lives beneath it is always himself. He looked for the epic, but what he found was the lyric; he looked for the true and the real, but what he found was the fantastic; he looked for history, but what he met with was his own soul.

The *Jerusalem Conquered*, which is even more severe and regular in its construction than the *Jerusalem Delivered*, was his last supreme attempt at creating the poetical world at which he was aiming. He felt he had fallen very far short of his ideal in the first *Jerusalem*, so he intended to base the new version on the seriousness of a living plot taken from reality, caught in its historical truth, and animated by the spirit of religion. But the thing remained an intention; it foreshadowed a new poetry, but remained itself a skeleton. With substance added to it, and flesh and colouring, it was later to appear to the world as *I promessi sposi.*

In Tasso, as in Dante, this intentional world that is forced into a foundation foreign to it seems out of place. As in Petrarch, there is a world of old and new elements not reconciled, the first in process of changing, the second in process of formation. Externally the poem is extremely well constructed and the linking is very skilful. But the harmony is only mechanical, is only in the intellect. In the second *Jerusalem* the mechanism is

brought to perfection. But beneath the mechanism we feel a want of cohesion; we feel that though the separate parts of the poem are very much alive, they somehow or other fail to form a harmonious whole. And the episodes—of Olindo and Sofronia, Rinaldo and Armida, Clorinda and Erminia—are the only parts of the poem that are alive today with the common people, that court of poetry from which there is no appeal. But what the critics describe as "episodes" are really not episodes at all, but on the contrary are the very foundations of the story, its poetic substance. The poem, under the outer varnish of religion and history, is in its very essence a romantic and fantastic work, in keeping with the nature of the author and with that of the times he lived in.

For a people who have not the understanding or practical knowledge of life, and do not take it seriously, some little time is needed before they can leave the fantastic behind them. The superstitious lower classes and the idle and pleasure-loving bourgeoisie had their lives coloured by stories of marvellous adventures, by romance, by extraordinary combinations of chance and of supernatural forces. Tasso himself was a romantic, and completely unsuited to the exigencies of practical life, which he disliked exceedingly. His journey in the Abruzzi dressed as a peasant, and his presenting himself to his sister in that disguise, and her not recognizing him, and the tender scene that follows—what else is this but a romance? And if we think of the impression made on him by Ariosto and the *Amadigi*, and the great vogue for romance at that time, and the predilection of the public for romantic works, we can see how completely natural it was that the first thing which came out of his brain should have been the *Rinaldo*, and how natural too that romance should have persisted to the end, in spite of all his intentions, religious, historical, and classical. His *Jerusalem* is fundamentally a fantastic romance in the manner of Ariosto, with an Angelica who robs Orlando of his wits, and an Astolfo who goes a fantastic journey to get them back for him. In the *Jerusalem*

Armida makes Rinaldo fall in love with her, and Ubaldo crosses the ocean to cure him with the mirror of reason. Armida, like Angelica, is a witch, and an instrument of the powers of Hell, but both of them are first and foremost women, and their womanly charms and cajoleries are quite as dangerous as their magic. Armida, like Angelica, attracts the Christian knights like a magnet, and keeps them away from the battlefield. And Tasso used the Ariostian device of introducing Discord: the death of Gernando, the voluntary exile of Rinaldo, and the captivity of Argillano are all of them caused by Discord in the camp. The few adventures in Tasso, centred in the leading characters, Armida and Rinaldo, like the numberless adventures in Ariosto, are all of them caused by the passions' being inflamed by false appearances, and being allowed to escape from the curb of reason. The enchanted wood, which reminds us of Dante's wood, is the wood of errors and passions and vain appearances, and the Christians, before they can enter into Jerusalem, must first break loose from these enchantments, that is to say, must purge themselves of the passions. It is Dante's conception again—the allegorical conception traditional in Italian poetry, which had been mislaid for a moment among the confusions of Boiardo's and Ariosto's adventures, and was now put back into its place by Tasso with an outer appearance of seriousness that does not succeed in wiping out the Ariostian imprint, the romantic character that Boiardo and Ariosto had given it. And around this centre of fantasy are numberless battles and duels—an argument that is always more appreciated in proportion as the military sense of a country is less developed. Italians browsed on imaginary battles, and were the least warlike people in Europe. In vain do we scour this fantastic world for some sense of the historical and the real, though this is what the poet was aiming at. And the dearest feelings in life are absent from it: the love of wife, or of family, or of friend, or of country, or the innermost sense of religion: not a single image do we find of a serious, simple life. Gildippe and Odoardo are cold, and the "piety"

of Goffredo and the "wisdom" of Raimondo are words. We are told of the friendship of Sveno and Rinaldo, but do not feel it. His only chord is love, and it is often artificial and rhetorical, as in the wailings of Tancredi and Armida, and in Erminia's struggle between honour and love. We could find no clearer evidence of how frivolous and meagre was the foundation of Italian life at that time than these unsuccessful attempts of Tasso to achieve the seriousness he was aiming at. Whether he likes it or not, he remains Ariostian, and far behind his model. He has none of the naturalness, simplicity, vein, facility, and brio of Ariosto—the great qualities that come from strength. The romantic life, so rich in situations, so artistic in its shades of colours, so alive with movements and harmonies, and so objective and clear that it forces us to believe in it in despite of our common sense, had vanished for ever.

Tasso takes this romantic foundation and on it he erects a new world of poetry; and here is his creation, here it is that he develops his great qualities. It is a lyrical, subjective, and musical world, a reflection of his Petrarchan soul; and, to put it briefly, it is a sentimental world.

The feeling in Tasso is idyllic and elegiac, a feeling that finds its sweetest and most delicate notes in Nature and in man. This type of sentiment had already shown itself at the beginning of the Renaissance in Politian and Pontano, but had been shelved and mislaid for the moment in the great pursuit of tales and comedies and romances. It was the form in which a tired society had found its repose. When public and private life had lost their seriousness, people had looked to life in the country as a refuge, in the same way that tired men had hoped to find peace in monasteries. And then came the foreign invasion, with its train of agitations and disorders. And when the struggle had subsided, and Italy was Spanish and papal, with liberty of thought and action lost and every high aim in life gone, we find the idyll reappearing in Italy, more powerful than ever. The idyll became the outstanding expression of Italian decadence. It was the

only living form among so many others that were purely literary.

The Italian idyll is not an imitation, but is an original creation of the spirit. The thing that Tasso affirms has already been announced by Petrarch: the sweet musing amid a thousand notes of Nature. The soul, sunk into itself, is pervaded by melancholy, and inclined to tenderness; we feel its presence and its accent in that musing. Nature itself becomes musical, acquires a sensibility, and together with its images sends forth notes and voices and murmurs of the inner life. The feminine part of man is uppermost: grace, sweetness, pity, tenderness, sensibility, voluptuousness, and tears—the whole collection of lovable qualities that are known as "sentimental." Nations, like individuals, when they begin to be decadent become excitable and moody and sentimental. It is not the sentiment aroused by things, which is healthy and good, but the sentiment that comes from an oversensitive and tearful soul. Nature and peoples like these are wanting in the epic strength to arrive at reality, and this feminine part of them is a tissue of tender and soft illusions, in which the soul diffuses its sensibility. So the sentimental is essentially lyrical and subjective. It is an inner process, and we feel the work of the spirit: an indescribable something of the manufactured, the thing not seen in the naturalness and simplicity of its existence, but become a phantasm and a conception of the spirit.

Tasso was looking for the heroic, the serious, the real, the historical, the classical, and he wore himself out till the end of his life in his efforts to find these things. He would have become a Trissino, except that Nature had made him a poet, the unconscious poet of a lyrical and sentimental world, which followed on the world of Ariosto. And he was completely fitted for this function both as man and as poet. As a man he was fantastic, passionate, melancholy, of perfect sincerity and good faith. As a poet he was composed of music and spirit, and was full of pleasing fancies and yet had feeling. His imagination was not

shut into itself and bounded by itself as we find in the poets from Boccaccio to Ariosto, but was penetrated by languors, laments, ideas, and sighs, and goes straight to the heart. For instance, Ariosto says:

In sí dolci atti, in sí dolci lamenti,
che parea ad ascoltar fermare i
venti.

In such sweet acts, in such sweet laments, that the winds seemed to stop to listen to them.

The feeling has hardly been announced before it is dissolved in a fantastic image. Tasso says:

In queste voci languide risuona
un non so che di flebile e soave,
ch' al cor gli scende ed ogni
sdegno ammorza,
e gli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia
e sforza.

In that faintly sounding voice there is something of the soft and the gentle, which sinks into the heart and quenches all feeling of disdain and makes him want to weep, and forces the tears to his eyes.

In the Ariostian form there is a largeness that is not affected by the emotion and which finds its appeasement not in the particular, but in the whole: it is the quality of strength. In Tasso there is impressionability, which disturbs the equilibrium and serenity of the mind, and holds it tightly down to the emotion; the image becomes liquefied, becomes an indefinite something impossible to fix—the announcer of the image that is dying away and the emotion that is rising:

E un non so che confuso instilla
al core
di pietá, di spavento e di dolore.

Instilling a vague something into the heart, of pity, of fear, of sorrow.

Even in the fierce transports of battles the prevailing note is still elegiac, as in the octave: "*Giace il cavallo al suo signore appresso*"—"The steed lies stretched near his master." Even when the thing he is describing is death, he succeeds better in the elegiac than in the heroic. Aladino, who in falling bites the earth over which he had reigned, is grotesque. Solimano, who

gemito non spande,
né atto fa se non altero e grande,

does not utter a groan nor perform a single act that is not great and grand,

is indefinite. Argante dies like Capaneus, but the form is full of conceits, and yet vague, and the violent words and expressions, like "haughtiness," "formidable," "ferocity," present nothing perceptible to the imagination. The idea remains in the intellect, instead of merging into art. But Dudone, Lesbino, the sons of Latino, and Gildippe and Odoardo, in whom the characteristic notes are grace and sweetness, are precise, in fact, are pictures. It is the same with the death of Clorinda, a Petrarchan inspiration with touches of Dante in it. Clorinda is Beatrice at the point at which she seems to say, "I am at peace." But she is Beatrice shorn of all the splendours of her divinity; the sun is not darkened, the earth does not tremble, and the angels do not pour down like a rain of manna from Heaven. Tasso's religion was timid: he was faced by the mocking smile of the century, masked badly when under the eye of the Inquisitor. The religious element is used as a poetic machine, like mythology. Take, for instance, that juxtaposition of the angel of Tortosa and Pluto. It is the mechanism of all the Italian epics, insipid because conventional and not meditated upon in its depths. Tasso's angels are the commonplaces of literature, and it is the same with his Pluto: if he is outwardly more imposing, mentally he is extremely superficial, and speaks like a teacher of rhetoric. The active and interesting rôle is given to magic, which was still in vogue at that time, and provided Tasso with his element of the marvellous. The death of Clorinda is not a transfiguration like the death of Beatrice, but comes nearer to the elegiac and tenderly sad death of Laura, in whose lovely face "death seemed exceeding fair." Here all is precise and perceptible; the plastic is fused with the sentimental, idyllic repose with sadness; and the result is a mute and solemn concentration of pitifulness, without a describable note, as it sounds in that image, so fan-

tastic and yet so human and true and simple, because it answers to the true likeness and feelings of a sorrowful soul:

in lei converso
sembra per la pietate il cielo e il sole.

Heaven and the sun seemed changed because of their pity for her.

The same Petrarchan inspiration is in the last words of Sofronia:

"*Mira il ciel com' è bello, e mira il sole*
Che a sé par che n' inviti e ne console."

"Behold the heaven, how beautiful they are, and the sun that seems to comfort us and invite us there."

This is a lyrical movement that reminds us of other and similar images in Dante and in Petrarch. But with Tasso it is accompanied by a sort of pedantic tone when he wants to show us a development that is purely doctrinal and religious, as in the first words of Sofronia, which are rather like the loving reproof of a father confessor to a man condemned to death, or Peter the Hermit's words to Tancredi, which have the tone of a sermon. The candid, noble soul of Tasso is more felt in his Petrarchan and Platonic imitations than in what he draws from the doctrinal and traditional foundations of religion. Sofronia when she lectures Olindo reminds us of Beatrice when she reproves Dante, more sharply still. But Beatrice was in her character; Beatrice was herself the epic of that century; there was the saint in her, and the woman, and even the doctor of theology. But Sofronia is rigid, unvarying, an artificial construction standing alone in a world that is foreign to her, and for that very reason exaggerated in her religious colouring, beginning with that "virgin of already mature virginity" to end in that extremely ugly:

. . . ella non schiva,
poi che seco non muor, che seco viva.

. . . as she had nearly died with him she no longer shrinks to live with him.

In this heroine, who is a martyr of the faith, we have nothing of the saint, nor any of the ecstasies and ardours of the other world, yet nothing of the woman with her grace and sweetness. She is purely and entirely an intellectual creature, a Christian conception, mixed with pagan and Platonic reminiscences. The author when he conceived her was thinking of Euryalus and Nisus, of Beatrice and Laura. Sofronia remained in his intellect, and had not life enough in her to pierce into his consciousness and imagination and become a living thing, intimately felt. It is what happens when the consciousness and imagination are already occupied with something else and do not preserve the conceptions of the intellect in their virginity. If it is true that Tasso had Leonora d'Este in his mind when he conceived Sofronia, it would help to explain the artificiality and hardness of this creation. Sofronia is the least alive and the least interesting of Tasso's women, and has never been a favourite with the people. But Sofronia is humanized by the womanish Olindo, in an episode in which Sofronia takes the man's rôle. Olindo becomes a hero through love, as many another has become a hero through fear. Olindo's virtue is not strength, which was a quality foreign to the times and even to Tasso himself, and which we feel so well in that sublime, "*Me me, adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum*"—"Me, me, I who did it, turn the sword on me"—which here is imitated upside down and rhetorically. The character of this diffident lover, "barely seen, or barely noticed, or barely welcomed," who is shown to the readers in an artificial and subtle form, is the echo of Tasso himself, a foreshadowing of Tancredi, the stamp of that time and of that poet, the elegiac turned almost into moaning, the idyllic pushed to voluptuousness. The real hero is Tancredi, who is Tasso himself in miniature: a lyrical and subjective personality, touched, like Hamlet, by the breath of more modern times. He is a gentleman, that is to say, he is chivalrous in the noblest, most delicate sense of the word, and is valiant and skilful rather than gigantic physically; and melancholy, absorbed, mournful, kind, dedi-

cated to an unhappy love. Clorinda is a Camilla, baptized: a traditional Virgilian character, who at the moment of death becomes Dantesque and Petrarchan. A mute creature, she becomes articulate and human in death, like Beatrice and Laura. Her apparition to Tancredi reminds us of Laura's to Petrarch, and is one of the happiest of the imitations. The poetical development of woman was not advanced a step by Clorinda; she is merely a reminiscence of Petrarch. To find the poetical ideal of woman perfectly realized, in all its complexity of amiable qualities, we must look for it not in the women, but in the men —in Petrarch and Tasso themselves, who were feminine characters (taking the word of course in its highest sense), and in Tancredi, the lovable, immortal creation of Tasso. It is said that man in his decadence inclines towards the womanly, and becomes excitable, impressionable, melancholy. The same can be said of peoples. The Italian spirit makes its last poetic appearance among the languors and laments of the idyll and the elegy, becoming sensitive and delicate and musical. Tasso's genius is in his sentiment; it is this which makes him pierce below the surface of Ariosto and draw the first notes of his soul from the depths beneath it. Thus man is no longer on the surface; he bows his head and looks into his heart. Even Argante has his moment of sublime withdrawal when he gazes at the fallen Jerusalem, like the poet when he gazes at the ruins of Carthage, or when in the immensity of the ocean he conceives and understands Columbus. Solimano is shown to us weeping, and Tancredi in his vainglory: here is the originality and the creation of the great poet. The inwardness of life, whose very memory had been lost after Dante and Petrarch, has come back again.

Together with the elegiac we get the idyllic. Its purest, most idealized image is the love-stricken Erminia, who soothes her cares and turmoils in the repose of the country. This scene is one of the most interesting in Italian poetry. When Erminia is heroic she is only comic, and Erminia discoursing on love and

honour is cold and academic; but Erminia abandoned to love has exquisite moments of lyricism, as, for instance: *"Oh belle agli occhi miei tende latine!"*—"How lovely ye look to mine eyes, ye Latin tents!"

Her soul has the melancholy and thoughtful imprint of Tasso: a sort of sweetness and delicacy of fibre that keeps her far from despair, and attunes her heart to the peace and solitude of the country, the picture of which is one of the most finished in Italian poetry. Erminia wandering in the fields with her lambs, all alone with the thoughts of her love, pensive and musing and tearful, exhales her sorrows in a musical sweetness whose secret is less in the images themselves than in the cadence of the wording. Reminiscences of Petrarch and poetical commonplaces are set to a new music, mysterious, with a quality in its melody impossible to define. A translator could render the actual sense, but never, never the music of these octaves. The poet's soul is not in the things, but in the sound of the things, for the sake of which sound he sometimes sacrifices even rightness of language, precision, restraint, and other qualities of style in which Petrarch, his inspirer, is so admirable. But nothing is gained by analyzing this charm, for it is not a mechanical thing, but is an indefinable quality of sentiment, which comes from the soul and reaches the soul.

This idyllic quality is not to be found in this or that scene, but is the substance itself of the poem, its inner meaning. The basic ideal of the poem is the triumph of virtue over pleasure, or of reason over the passions. One side of the basis is intellectual and allegorical, showing itself practically in exhortations to God, such as:

Signor, non sotto l' ombra in piaggia molle,
tra fonti e fior, tra ninfe e tra sirene,
ma in cima all' erto e faticosco colle,
della virtú riposto è il nostro bene.

O Lord, our blessing does not consist in soft shades or dreamy shores among nymphs and sirens and flowing springs and flowers, but is placed on the top of the steep and arduous hill of virtue.

Facing virtue is pleasure, and here it is that all the idyllic faculties of the poet are developed. In Erminia the idyllic idea is the peace of the country, which turns pain into sweet melancholy. Here the idyllic idea is the pleasure of lovely Nature pushed to voluptuousness and effeminacy, idleness of soul contrasted with virtue and glory: this the poet closes with the motto, "*Quel che piace, ei lice*"—"If it pleases, it is permissible"—a translation of Dante's "*libito fe' lecito.*" This idea is developed in the canto of the nymph and the canto of the bird, which are real hymns to pleasure. "*Solo chi segue ciò che piace è saggio*"—"He alone is wise who follows pleasure."

So perfect is the first of these cantos in its naturalness and simplicity that even the severe Galilei gave in to it, saying that Tasso had come near to the divineness of Ariosto. The other canto is founded on the conception that is handled so often by Lorenzo and Politian: "Let us love while we may, for life is short." Even the image is taken from Politian; it is the description of the rose, which Ariosto uses too. But whereas in Politian there is the pure feeling for beauty, here the feeling developed is sentimental, elegiac—not the beauty of the rose, but the shortness of its life. And the result is an immortal canto, pierced by pleasure and pain, whose whole is a sensuousness intensified by tender images, with pain and death made the instruments of pleasure and love. The protagonist of this idyllic world is Armida; in fact, the idyllic world is actually of her making, for Armida is a witch of pleasure, and has created it. Armida and Rinaldo remind us of Alcina and Ruggiero, and even the conception of the warrior kept idle away from the fighting goes back to Achilles in Scyros, just as the idea of sensual love changing men into beasts is all of it to be found in the witch Circe. Every nation has fragments in its poetry of this struggle between virtue and pleasure. Tasso with a profound feeling for the poetic makes Armida the victim of her own magic: the witch in her is conquered by the woman. Just as Cupid ends by being in love with Psyche, or in other words from being divine be-

comes human, Armida ends by being a woman, forgetting Idraotte and Hell and her mission, and putting her magic to the service of her love. So Armida is much more interesting than Alcina, and has a new significance. She is the last magical apparition in poetry, an apparition penetrated by man and by Nature. She is the supernatural overcome and dissolved by the strongest laws of Nature. She is woman issued from the womb of Platonism and allegory, and revealing her womanly instincts in all the fullness of earthly life.

Woman had already appeared in Angelica. But Angelica's story ends at that point, whereas Armida's story begins at it. Angelica, ending her adventures in the idyllic prose of her marriage with a "poor infantryman," is saluted and politely dismissed by the poet with his little ironical smile. The conception, taken up again by Tasso, becomes an interesting story of a woman, in which the scene and scenario are provided by the magic. So the witch Armida is the last witch in poetry, and is also the most interesting, because of the clearness and truth of her life as a woman. Even today she is more alive among the people than Alcina, Angelica, Olimpia, or Dido, for she unites the splendours of magic with all the truth of a poor heart of a woman. The change is shown in that last saying of hers taken from the Madonna, "Behold thy handmaid!" an ending full of significance: much is forgiven her because she loved much. It is love that kills the witch in her and makes her a woman. The transformation is much more poetical than the shield of Ubaldo and the "heavenly woman." We are much less interested in Rinaldo in his conversion than in Armida in her transfiguration, because the conversion is produced by external, supernatural forces, while the transfiguration is the logical result of inward and natural movements.

In Erminia and Armida woman is completed, no longer woman as she came from the minds of Dante and Petrarch (of whom there are traces in Sofronia and Clorinda), and no longer divine or heroic or tragic, but something more human, more

idyllic and elegiac. Erminia's strength is in her weakness. Without country or family, and alone on the earth, she lives because she loves, and she acts because she loves: but her real acts are her inner effusions, her visions, ecstasies, illusions, and her laments and tears, a whole lyrical world diffused in melancholy sweetness among waves of musical sound. Erminia, the shepherdess, is the mother of every one of those Phyllises and Amaryllises who came later, but very much changed from their model. Nor in all the idyllic women of Boccaccio, Politian, Molza, Sannazaro, is there one who comes near her. In Armida is developed the whole romance of a woman's love, with its voluptuousness, its sensual ardours, its furies and jealousies and hates. No one had ever painted woman so alive as this, or depicted her with so fine an analysis, in the ardour and fragility of her resolutions and in all her contradictions. Her tongue says, "I hate," while her heart answers, "I love"; her hand shoots the arrow, and her heart curses her hand: "*e, mentre ella saetta, Amor lei piaga*"—"and even while she arrows, Cupid pierces her heart." It will be said that all this is neither heroic nor tragic. But that is precisely the reason why these women are so alive; they are daughters not of the intellect but of the soul, with the stamp of the poet and his century on their faces.

The idyllic world, created by Armida, is an enchanted palace and an enchanted garden, in other words is the lovely Nature of the country made artistic, changed by art into an instrument of voluptuousness, so that it "seems to imitate its imitator." In the *Odyssey*, in the *Georgics*, in the *Stanze* and in the gardens of Ariosto, lovely Nature is chiefly sylvan or idyllic, with its human ideal centred in the shepherd's life; in the Golden Age we find the same images. In Italian classical poetry Nature is usually shown as green fields, with flowers and trees, with the smile of the spring, and cool shades and rippling streams and gentle breezes: a picture adorned by art with its statues and intaglios. The conception of Nature becomes larger in the century of Columbus and Copernicus; we feel it in the immensity

of the ocean, from which Tasso takes some fine inspirations. But at the end of the voyage, when he brings us to the Fortunate Isles where Armida is, he falls back on the old usual picture—and gives it its last finishing touches of perfection. It is a collection of everything most charming and most graceful that the imagination of the poets from Homer to Ariosto had conceived, with the last touches of refinement and art added to it, gathered together as in a lovely bunch of flowers. Just as Dante created a supernatural Nature, so does Tasso catch a Nature beyond Nature—an enchanted Nature, a paradise of voluptuousness: not Nature fixed in the living truth of its existence, but Nature modified by art, worked upon and changed by the artist, with his own ends and his own means. The artist is Armida, the mistress of attractions and artifices, who has surrounded herself with a meretricious and voluptuous Nature created by herself. Tasso, whose musical feeling was so highly developed, achieves this metamorphosis of classical Nature most beautifully, bringing to it all the fineness of his spirit.

He even gives us an enchanted wood, that is, an artificial wood, a wood that exists for a reason outside of itself. In the romantic literature of chivalry enchantment, like Nature, was always arbitrary, was nothing but extraordinary combinations of appearances, which awaken curiosity and wonder. But magic, as Tasso shows it, is reasonable, we can understand it: it is Nature touched up by art and used for a definite end. His enchanted wood, like his enchanted garden and palace, is the work of an artist who poses it himself and for his own purposes. The conception of the enchanted wood is not new; it is the well-known wood of false appearances, the wood of error, of the passions. But the thing that is very original in Tasso is his treatment of it. The wood is himself in miniature, the whole of his world of elegy and idyll, condensed and emphasized. Erminia and Armida, Tancredi and Rinaldo, all of Tasso's creations and the whole of his poetic soul, are fused together in that wood—

all that is tenderest in elegy and all that is softest in the idyll, and in their notes of sweetest music.

The *Jerusalem* is a true poetical world, the offspring of sentiment; we have sentiment in its every shade, from the innermost melancholy of the heart to the extremes of softness and voluptuousness of the southern nature. Tasso's genius is Neapolitan, and has not the grace and liveliness of the Tuscan, nor the decision and clearness of the Lombards, so admirable in Ariosto; but he is rich in the feeling for music and song, the gentle musing of the soul among the softest waves of music, melancholy yet voluptuous, which we find among the impressionable and contemplative peoples of the South.

This world of sentiment is also a world of "*concetti*"—"conceits." Tasso, like Petrarch, was readier to dress up an old repertory than to create a new one. An extremely learned man, his poetic material is full of reminiscences; it is not gathered from the world in which he lived, but through books. He works on work already done, refining and heightening the images and conceits. It is a "work in tarsia," as Galilei says of it. Looking for his effects not in the whole, but in the parts, and making each small part into a world of itself, fined down and emphasized, the joints become loosened and the period dissolved, and a sort of parallelism comes out of it; conceits and images put two by two and face to face, so that each throws the other into relief. The basis of this parallelism is antithesis (taken of course in a very wide sense); in other words, it is a sort of harmony that is born from the putting of similar and dissimilar objects opposite to each other, as here:

Molto egli oprò col senno e con la mano,
molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto:
e invan l' inferno a lui s' oppose, e invano
s' armò d' Asia e di Libia il popol misto.

Much did he do both in council and in the field: and much did he suffer in the glorious victory.

Hell opposed him in vain, and in vain did the peoples of Asia, allied with Libya, take arms against him.

That "*molto*" and that "*invano*" are the refrain of a *cantilena* enclosed within itself and exhausted in the expression of a comparison between two things. Naturally, as the poetic effect has to be gained from these connections of dissimilar things, the intellect has a larger share in the work than is desirable in a poet, and the thing becomes over-refined and "*concettoso*," [1] as in this:

Oh di par con la man luci spietate!
essa le piaghe fe', voi le mirate.

O eyes that matched the hand in cruelty! the hand dealt the wounds, the eyes looked at them.

This parallelism, founded on the refrain of words and the bringing together of things and the strangeness of their connections, is not an accident, but is the basic characteristic of the form, with more or less noticeable degrees. It is not merely a question of the thoughts, but even of the images, as in the lines:

. . . e par che porte
lo spavento negli occhi e in man la morte.

. . . and he seems to carry fright in his eyes and death in his hand.

His imagination when it contemplates has a schoolmaster permanently at its side, who analyzes and distinguishes with logical exactness, for example:

Sparsa è d' armi la terra, e l' armi sparte
di sangue, e il sangue col sudor si mesce.

The ground is strewn with arms, the arms are covered with blood, the blood is mixed with sweat.

The poet is too much given to the *stacco* (contrast) and the *rilievo* (relief), to giving a significance even to the insignificant, and to looking for his significance in connections that are purely intellectual, even when the meaning is most clear and the affections most violently excited, as in the lines:

O sasso amato ed onorato tanto,
che dentro hai le mie fiamme e fuori il pianto!

O stone so loved and honoured, that hath my flames within and my tears outside!

[1] The form whose outward mechanism he calls "*parlare disgiunto*," "disjointed speaking."

When Tancredi languishes and Armida rages, they do it to a play of words and thoughts. Armida, when driven to suicide by despair, makes a very ingenious little speech to her weapons, and ends with:

"Sani piaga di stral piaga d' amore,
e sia la morte medicina al core."

"Let the wound of arrow cure the wound of love, and let death restore the heart."

This is what was called the "tinsel of Tasso," meaning his manner—the manner of subjective poets in general: an artificial form of showing things, in which the thing is less important than the way it is looked at. In Tasso's case the form is not the thing, but the spirit, with its attitudes easily classified in their outward characteristics, and become manner or habit as in Petrarchism, or Marinism. The peculiarity of this manner being a *cantilena*, short and shut into itself, whose value is not only in the rest of the clause, but in itself, the singing and musical element is developed with sonorous emphasis, a never-ending, monotonous sound of trumpets, with pauses and trills and repeats, with a kind of overtone as of a person proclaiming instead of speaking. Tasso's poetry cannot be recited simply, as is quite possible with many passages of Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto; it must be declaimed. It has an "*Arma virumque cano*" from beginning to end—an excited, high-strung note, as of a person in a chronic state of exaltation. The result is a choice of resounding words, a redundancy of epithets and adverbs, and a conventional nobility of expression, with poverty in the wording, phrases, construction, and gradations. Of course it is accompanied by rhetoric, which means keeping to generalities and endowing commonplaces and conceits with life by giving them a warmth entirely of the imagination, amid a crackling of apostrophes, hypotheses, interrogations, and exclamations. This occurs more especially when Tasso is aiming at the force of excited passions, as in the laments of Tancredi and the rages of Armida. This is the "manner" of Tasso. But into this manner

comes the powerful breath of true feeling, so that he often comes out with words that in their energy are full of simplicity. Clorinda's last speech has a "Yes" and a "No" fighting together—"to the body, 'No,' to the soul, 'Yes' "—but except for this one blemish what depths of feeling are in that speech, and how simple is that feeling! If we take away from Petrarch and from Tasso this breath of true feeling, what remains to them? Just manner—just Petrarchism and Marinism, the corpses of the two poets.

The *Jerusalem* is not an exterior world, developed in its organic and traditional elements, like the world of Dante or Ariosto. It aimed at being heroic, but is really an interior and subjective world, elegiac and idyllic, the echo of the languors, the ecstasies, and the laments of a noble, contemplative, musical soul. The only exterior world that existed in those days was the world of Nature— of Copernicus and Columbus, of science and reality. Even in Tasso there is a flash of it, revealing historical, realistic, and scientific intentions, which foreshadow a literary world of the future. Italy had no exterior world, nor was worthy to have one. She had lost her place on the earth, and had lost the national aim for her activity, and was forced to the prosaic repetition of a life that she had ceased to understand or to feel. So Italian literature sank more and more into being conventional form separated from life, a play of the mind without seriousness; essentially frivolous and rhetorical even when outwardly most heroic and most serious. And the unconscious martyr of this tragedy was Torquato Tasso. He was the poet of that time of transition: a poet of reminiscences and presentiments, swaying between the world of chivalry and the world of history; romantic and fantastic; torn between the needs of his poetry and his strict logic, his realistic intentions and his classical models; moving restlessly in a contradictory world without ever finding a harmonious and reconciling centre; as much torn in two and unquiet and contrite in his poetical world as in his daily life. Miserable plaything of his heart and imag-

ination—there was his martyrdom and his glory. Looking for an exterior and epic world in a worn-out repertory, he threw his own self into it—the whole of his ideality, his sincerity, his melancholy, his chivalry, and it was there that he found his immortality. We feel in Tasso the tragedy of the Italian decadence. Poetry before dying sang its funeral song in this poet, and created Tancredi, the foreshadowing of a new poetry—when Italy should be worthy to have it.

CHAPTER XVIII

MARINO

This lyrical world, which we have seen in the *Jerusalem* mixed with other elements, appears in all its exquisite purity of elegy and lyric in the *Aminta*. It is here that Tasso meets at last with the real world that was echoing in his spirit, and he brings it to great perfection.

But the *Aminta* is not really a pastoral play, nor even a play at all. In spite of the pastoral names of the characters and its outer appearances of drama, it is really a lyrical poem—more a dramatized narrative than actually a representation—and the same can be said of the rest of these so-called "pastoral plays" of Italy. We might mention the *Virginia* of Accolti, which Shakespeare brought into fame by imitating it.[1] It is really a tale, enlarged into a comedy of the romantic type that prevailed in Italy at that time, with the part of a buffoon added. The buffoon is Ruffo, a vulgar creature, who is there merely to throw into relief the noble and chivalrous natures of Virginia and the Prince of Salerno, the chief figures of the play. The strangest events are piled on each other with magic rapidity, just outlined and no more; they are really excuses for monologues and *capitoli*, in which the sentiments of the characters come out together with the narrative. Of the same type are the eclogues or pastoral comedies, which existed even in Boiardo's day, and were subsequently brought to a certain degree of excellence of plot and mechanism in the *Sacrificio* of Beccari, the *Aretusa* of

[1] *All's Well That Ends Well.* Translator.

Lollio, and the *Sfortunato* of Argenti. They began with the simplicity of Homer and Virgil, but later developed into serious plays; they were known merely as "*favole boscherecce*" ("woodland tales") and also as "pastoral comedies."

In the *Aminta* the action takes place outside of the theatre, and is described by characters who have looked on at it or have taken part in it, together with the impressions and passions it aroused in them. The interest of the play is entirely in the narrative, which is developed lyrically, and punctuated by choruses who sing the apotheosis of the pastoral life and love: "If it pleases, it is permissible." The motive is lyrical, and is developed from idyllic feelings rather than from characters and events. It abounds in lively descriptions, soliloquies, comparisons, maxims, and impassioned movements. The play is pervaded as a whole by a musical sweetness, extremely graceful and delicate, that makes even the tears voluptuous. The plot is simple, as is also the style; the style, as it were, has a contempt for style that looks like carelessness, but really is the finest art, so that it gains in naturalness without losing in elegance. The simplicity of treatment gives a pastoral appearance to a world composed of graces and conceits. It is a refined world, in which the simplicity itself is a refinement. To the men of the day it was perfection—a miracle—and certainly there never was a production of art more finely worked out.

Tasso also attempted classical tragedy, and wrote his *Torrismondo,* in imitation of the *Oedipus Tyrannus.* But Italy no longer had the strength to produce either the heroic or the tragic, and the only thing that is alive in this play is the thing that was still alive in the poet and his times—the elegiac element, especially in the choruses. In the *Jerusalem* Tasso's contemporaries thought they possessed at last the heroic poem; but they were not very well satisfied with the *Torrismondo;* they were still waiting for the classical tragedy.

A few of its sonnets and canzoni have survived—the effusions of a tender, idyllic soul. It is useless to look in them for serious

passion; they have the same old repertory of conceits and forms, with subtle refinements. For instance, describing lovely woman, this is what he says:

Ché del latte la strada
ha nel candido seno,
e l' oro delle stelle ha nel bel crine,
ne' lumi ha la rugiada.

Who hath the Milky Way in her white bosom, and the gold of the stars in her lovely hair, and the dew in her orbs.

And this is how he tells of his pain:

Fonti profondi son d' amare vene
quelli ond' io porto sparso il seno e 'l volto;
è 'nfinito il dolor, che dentro accolto
si sparge in caldo pianto e si mantene:
né scema una giammai di tante pene,
perch' il mio core in dolorose stille
le versi a mille a mille.

Deep founts from bitter veins are these which I have spilled on my breast and my face; and infinite is the pain that has gathered inside my heart and is now flowing outwards in hot tears, and continues to flow: and of all these pains not one grows less, though my heart is pouring them out in thousands and thousands of bitter drops.

The feelings of the heart are petrified in the abstraction of a thousand personifications, such as Love, Pity, Fame, Time, Jealousy, and in the icy coldness of Platonic doctrines and Petrarchan forms.

His prose works can be imagined: extremely learned, and hideous with examples and quotations, in a grave style, sustained in movement but not stately, and glittering with high-flown sentiments. When it happens that he expresses the movements of his soul simply and directly, as now and then he does in his letters, he reveals the lofty type of feeling that belongs to chivalry, and the sentiments of a man who was never anything but a great gentleman, even in the direst poverty and dependence. When he is speculative, as in the *Dialoghi,* we feel

him to be shut into abstract and formal questions, and completely out of touch with life as it is. There was one book that he had shut deliberately—the book of free investigation. In his young days the author of the *Rinaldo* had been given to furtive and disorderly love-affairs, and worse still, he had caught the disease of philosophizing. The great controversy of that day was the question as to which was the higher, faith and religion, or will and intellect. According to Tasso the new philosophers had reinstated the intellect, and had proved it impossible for a man to believe what his intellect denied. Engulfed in this stream of philosophy, he ceased to believe in the Incarnation or the immortality of the soul. Afterwards, at the court of Ferrara, when he had repented and confessed and was filled with religious zeal, his enemies traded on these habits and opinions of his youth. He made his religion tally with his philosophy by the subtle reasoning that many things do exist which cannot be explained by the intellect, and that the truths of religion are true, though the intellect has not yet reached the point of being able to explain them. So he strikes us as learned and erudite rather than philosophic. He remained apart from all that active movement of intellect around Nature and man which was seething even in Italy. He was nervous about speaking naturally and openly, and always added that if he had said anything that was not pious or not Catholic it was to be taken as not said. He hated the Lutherans with a deadly hatred, suspected the "modern" philosophers, retreated into the ancient philosophy as into a refuge, and was especially fond of Plato, the author most in tune with his contemplative, religious nature. Of his doubts, his anxieties, his inner intellectual life, not a single thought, not a cry, has come down to us. Here was the soul of a St. Augustine or a Pascal, but crystallized by the inquisitorial atmosphere of the day and by the classical forms. Among the most interesting of his dialogues is the one that goes by the name of Minturno—a Neapolitan writer, who among other works wrote a *Poetica*. In this he investigates the nature of the beautiful, confuting the

ordinary definitions and arriving at the conclusion that the beautiful is the angelic nature, or the soul "in so far as it purifies itself"—the conception, in short, of his *Jerusalem.* Tasso, as we see, confuses beauty with truth and moral perfection. He has a glimpse of the ideal, but fails to seize it; and the nearer he approaches to his conception of beauty, the further he gets from poetry, as in the *Jerusalem Conquered* and in the *Sette giornate.* The dialogue is Platonic in conception and movement, but without the grace and the freshness of the divine Plato.

The century had begun with the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro, and it ended with the *Arcadia* of Guarini, which is called the *Pastor fido.* The idyll, which had been shoved aside by the fashionable chivalry, had recovered its strength and was master of the field, and was developing in dramatic form.

The idyllic and the comic, together with the romantic, were the living types of literature of that day—were the types of poetry that Italy still preserved. The tragic, like the heroic, was imitation. But the comic and the idyllic had in part broken free from the classical forms, and were growing bolder.

Comedy, which had developed through endless tales and comic works, was moving away from the old conventional basis of Terence and Plautus, and was developing in new and living ways. The authors of comedies had of course to please their audiences, therefore they inclined to the forms of the people, even to their language, writing either in a mixture of Italian and dialect or else in dialect altogether. The Neapolitan farces were already approaching this type. Beolco, or Ruzzante, who was known as "the very famous," wrote plays on these lines. It was the fashion to give the actors an outline of the story—the plot and no more—as in the ballets, while the language was left to the actors to improvise, as with the *novellieri* of old times. Strolling companies of rhapsodists and improvisators spread through the whole of Italy, and later as far as Paris and London, carrying a repertory that Shakespeare and Molière drew upon for many of their subjects, plots, and situations. There was a common

fund of inventions, and also a fund of fixed and predetermined types of characters, who appeared in masks (or sometimes without masks), such as Pantaloon, Brighella, Harlequin, Pulcinella, the Doctor from Bologna (*il Dottore bolognese*), the Capitan Spavento or Capitan Matamoros, the muddle-headed servant, and so on. This type of comedy, which has much in common with the *atellanae* of ancient Rome, was known as "*commedia a soggetto*"—"comedy of subject"—nothing of the play being written down beforehand except the subject. Many of the actors were authors too. The performance often began with an "erudite" comedy, and then, to amuse the public, a comedy "of art" or "of subject" was improvised. This popular repertory was founded chiefly on love-intrigues, and on the strangest combinations of circumstances, with conventionalized incidental parts, such as the fool, the comic lover, the rake, the pedant, the pander, the usurer; Aretino's comedies were much on these lines. Here in the Italian theatre are to be found the secrets of Italian life and character, more than in all the classical imitations put together. A history of the comedy and the tale in all their forms would be extremely instructive. And what precious material it would give us for a history of Italian society! Flaminio Scala has left us a rich repertory of dramatized subjects in his *Cinquanta giornate*. Both as author and as actor Scala was quite as famous as the "most famous" Ruzzante and Andrea Calmo, the "wonder and miracle of the stage," and Flaminio was the actor-manager of the comic company that opened the first Italian theatre in Paris, in 1577, in the reign of Henry III. His wife was Orsola, the famous actress, less famous, however, than Isabella of Padua, the wife of the Francesco Andreini who created the rôle of Capitan Spavento. Isabella was eulogized by Tasso, by Castelvetro, by Campeggi and by Chiabrera. She died at Lyons, and on her tomb was engraved: "*Musis amica et artis scaenicae caput*"—"Friend of the muses and the chief ornament of the stage." Equal to her in fame and genius was Vincenza Armani of Venice, who took the part of Chloris in the pastoral

plays, and was also a writer. The rôle of the "Doctor" was made famous by Graziano, and the great interpreter of Harlequin was Giovanni Ganassa of Bergamo, who introduced the comedy of art into Spain in 1570. It had already been brought to Paris and London by Flaminio. The Roscius of the century was Verato of Ferrara, eulogized by Tasso and also by Guarini, who gave Verato's name to an apology for his drama. The comedy of art was fundamentally the old "erudite" comedy removed from the hands of the academicians and freshened by the life of the people—the same thing, but handled by writers who had less learning, yet a greater knowledge of the theatre, and who were more in touch with the tastes of the public. So its pace was quicker and livelier, and it was enriched by the ready wit of the improvisators and by dialect. But in avoiding pedantry it fell into the other extreme, and ended in the indecent buffooneries of the Harlequins. Nothing at all has come down to us of the comedy of art except its skeleton. A creation that is only improvised is doomed necessarily to die with its own generation.

Side by side with the comic and the romantic there was a development of the idyllic, and the more society was artificial and refined, the more strong and vigorous became the development of the idyll. Its theme was honour opposed to love, or the city opposed to the farm, or the laws of society opposed to the laws of Nature; and of course love, or Nature, was always the winner. Happiness was thought to be an ideal thing, to be looked for beyond the travails and agitations of real life, in a state of repose and tranquillity of soul. The life of the country, with the beauties of Nature, the life of simple enjoyments with spontaneity and ingenuity of feeling, was the natural counterpart of the life of convention; we feel it in the *Aminta* and in Erminia as "the shepherd." The fact that the poetical ideal was a thing outside of society and only to be found in a pastoral world is a proof of how prosaic and empty of ideals was the ordinary life of the day. Poetry, chased away by so much that was prosaic, fled to the fields, as to a last refuge. It

was to the country that Politian, Pontano, Tasso, and all the men of value of that day went for their inspirations. While the lower classes were fed on the comedy of art, the favourite amusement of the courts was the pastoral play, with its chastened language and its ideal of virtue that had no connection with life as it was. While comedy grew even coarser and more plebeian, the pastoral play became more and more of a courtly affair; the simple world of Nature was depicted with a refinement adapted to the noble princesses and their like who were the audience. We have already seen this refinement in the *Aminta;* in the *Pastor fido* it is more conspicuous still. Giambattista Guarini was a courtier by nature and a poet by circumstance; Tasso was the opposite—a courtier from necessity, but a poet by instinct. Guarini was noble by birth, and was rich; he was tied to the life of courts only by his restless, ambitious nature. Moving continually from court to court, and always disappointed, he was always running into some new disappointment. A man of intelligence and unusual culture, with a wide experience of life and of men, he was extremely clear of mind and extremely active. He had been a student with Tasso at Padua, and at Ferrara became his rival; when Tasso was thrown into prison he became court poet in his place. Disgusted in his turn with the Estes, he retired to one of his beautiful villas, where he conceived and wrote his *Pastor fido,* a play that was acclaimed with enthusiasm by all Italy. Like Tasso, he had literary intentions. His idea was to write a tragi-comedy, a mixture of the tragic and the comic; and he wanted a large and rich framework on which a large action could be grafted. But the critics, who held to the *simplex et unum,* considered this to be heresy; they were unable to conceive of a work of art except as completely tragic or completely comic. So the old literary discussions came to life again—the polemics that from Castelvetro to Caro set so many academies in a flutter. Guarini put up an excellent defence in his *Apologia* and showed that he knew very well what he was about. The Spanish theatre may possibly have

influenced his ideas. But nothing could ever be expounded in those days without quoting the classics, so he defended his mixture of tragic and comic action and his mixture of characters by citing Aristotle, and Terence's *Andria*. And today he is lauded for the very things that at the time were thought so sinful! People declare now that he glimpsed the modern drama, indeed, not only glimpsed it but conceived it with the clearness of a modern critic. The conception that stands out clearly in his *Apologia* is that the duty of poetry is to represent life as it is, in all its mixtures and in all its developments. But what in Shakespeare and Calderon was a true and living feeling for art, developed from a rich, full, inner, and national life, in Guarini was nothing more than an intellectual and isolated vision, the mental process of a critic instead of the deep feeling of an artist. Guarini conceived drama at a time when Italy was lacking in every condition necessary to drama, especially in the one essential condition, which is a true and serious inner life. Guarini's criticism does honour to the Italian intellect, which was then at the flower of its development, but at the same time it reveals a decadence in poetry.

The *Pastor fido*, if we look at its mechanism and technical execution, is the thing of greatest perfection that poetry could show at that time. It has two actions that interpenetrate each other in a completely natural way and are wonderfully grafted into each other; the characters are well conceived and well drawn, and their peculiarities are perfectly fused. The surface is smoothed to the last degree of elegance, and the verse is easy and clear and musical. In construction and technical skill this little poem is a jewel; it has everything that clearness of intellect and polish of style and wording can give. As in the *Aminta*, the conception is the triumph of Nature. Nature seems to be at war with Fate; but in the end the whole thing is cleared up by the usual scene in which the characters discover that they are related to each other in some unsuspected way. The poem is really an apotheosis of the shepherd's life and of the Golden

Age, as opposed to the corruptions and agitations of the city; the quiet shepherd's life is often invoked with longing by the characters in the throes of their passions. It has invocations and prayers and moral and religious maxims in abundance, but at bottom it is pagan and profane: in short, its substance is naturalism. Condemned, forbidden as sinful, Nature at the end of its long struggle is shown as nothing less than a law of Fate. The last note is *Omnia vincit amor:* love reconciled with fate and become virtue, and the present the more delightful for the past having been so painful:

Quello è vero gioire,
che nasce da virtú dopo il soffrire.

Joy, to be really joy, must be born from virtue after suffering.

But virtue is only a word; the thing that matters is amorous enjoyment under forms so voluptuous that Bellarmino declared that Guarini's book had done more harm than even the Lutherans. The plot is the triumph of Nature. Corisca and the satyr provide the plebeian and comic elements: the former is woman corrupted by the city, and the latter is the ignorance and grossness of the natural life with its bad instincts. The two together are the poetic machinery that connects the events and brings the catastrophe. The central figures are Mirtillo and Amarilli, who are in love, but without hope, for Amarilli is betrothed to Silvio. Silvio, like the Silvia of the *Aminta,* is given up to hunting, and his heart is closed to love. He is loved by Dorinda, again without hope. So he is loved without hope by Dorinda and betrothed without hope to Amarilli. Mirtillo and Amarilli are condemned to death through a trick of Corisca's and the satyr's lust. Silvio sees Dorinda in the forest, disguised, takes her for a wolf, and wounds her. The play ends with the softening of Silvio's heart and his marrying Dorinda, while Mirtillo turns out to be the real Silvio, son of Montano, and the person who ought by rights to have been betrothed to Amarilli. So Nature is victorious, and the events are in keeping with the oracle's

prophecies. And Nature and destiny, gods and men, are all of them happy. This work certainly has the ingredients of a play, and the critics called it a play because of the grafting of the action, the mixed characterization, and the rôle given to Destiny, in conformity with Greek tragedy. These are things neither to be praised nor to be blamed in themselves, and which may or may not be parts of a play: in a literary work it is not the outer conditions of its content that matter, but its form, its life.

The *Pastor fido* is as little a play as the *Aminta*, in fact, is a reflection, a reminiscence, of the *Aminta*. Both are really lyrical poems, with narrative, description, and song, but not representation. The situations are all developed off-stage; what we get on the stage is their lyrical echo. The characters appear in turn, and with no apparent reason why the one should come first or the other second. And they tell us their woes. They speak, but they never do anything, and the monologues and narratives are never-ending. They have done things and they intend to do other things, and they tell us what they have done and what they intend to do, adding what they think about it all and what they feel. The plot is an excuse for lyrical effusions. There are a great many choruses, though each person is already a chorus in himself, because he does not act, but only talks, considers, gives vent to his pain and his joy. Guarini has dramatic intelligence, as we see from the scene between the satyr and Corisca, and also from the scene between the wounded Dorinda and Silvio. What he lacks is the seriousness of a dramatic world. His is nothing more than a mechanized artificial production, born of intellectual combinations. Neither he nor any of the writers of that day was capable of producing an epic or dramatic world: there was no epic in Italy, and no drama.

Guarini felt his Arcadia as little as Ariosto had felt his chivalry—neither the one nor the other was serious to its author. But Ariosto laughed at his world, whereas Guarini treated his seriously, like Tasso. The result is a lyrical world

under the cloak of drama, just as Tasso's is a lyrical world under the cloak of the heroic. The century was empty of passion and action and conscience, though the Council of Trent had created the appearance of these things. "This century," says Guarini, "is a century of appearances, and one goes about the whole of the year with a mask on one's face." And Guarini was masked, like the rest; he was one with his century, not beyond nor above it. All that remained in Italy was the worship of literature. And literature meant elegant forms; it was considered to be beautiful discourse. Literature provided the flavouring for the soft life of the courts, for the festivals and pomps and idyllic idleness. And this is exactly what Guarini provides—fine lyrical and musical discourses, with a soft, luscious aria running through them. This is the inner life of both the *Pastor fido* and the *Aminta*. To savour it we must put aside all thought of the drama with its complications of plot and complexity of character or of destiny, and consider it as a lyrical work.

But Guarini is far behind Tasso as a poet. He is wanting in the inspiration, the melancholy, the concentration of fantasy, the profound sentiment, of Tasso. He is always talking about love, but he does not feel it. And neither does he feel the pastoral life, nor has he any wish for that solitude and idyllic peace—Guarini, whose mind was always busy with the least poetic of thoughts, with worldly ambition and money-getting. The highest things of life were all in his mind, things such as virtue, religion, destiny, but none were in his consciousness; or, to put it better, Guarini was without a consciousness, if by consciousness we mean that inner furnace in which the powers of the soul are fused and refined, each modifying the other, the furnace that forges the philosopher, the poet, the statesman, the great citizen—in other words, the centre of life, which alone can generate life. And this centre of life being absent in Guarini, he had imagination but not fantasy, had wit but not sentiment, had a musical ear but not the harmony that pierces to the soul.

He strikes us as potentially a great poet, who failed because his inner forces were not welded together. He wrote with the admirable sense of construction of a consummate artist, but not from the soul like a poet. We can say of his work what the chorus says of Corisca's wig—that it is a "corpse of gold." He is like a sun that does not warm; he flatters the ear and the senses but not a trace of him stays in the soul. His characters, decked in their gold and purple, are not alive, not even Mirtillo and Amarilli.

And yet how magnificent it all is! What a marvel of construction! In that age of great constructors Guarini was the greatest of them all, with Caro and Monti as seconds. His wealth of imagination spreads like a brilliant rainbow in its pomp of colouring. There is no conception too complicated for his clear and acute mind to pierce to the bottom of it with liveliness and ease. His lines and colours and conceptions seem a single thing—to have been born together—so that he is soft and malleable and charming and elegant. If his poetry has any sentiment at all, it is sensuality refined, the poetry of lechery. His world is the same as Tasso's, with the same qualities. But Guarini, the rival of Tasso, exaggerates his rival's peculiarities, thinking to improve on him. His world is the world of courts, and reflects the culture of that day. And what Tasso showed with his melancholy and his hesitations and contradictions, Guarini shows impudently, waving it like a banner. Guarini's is really the naturalism of Boccaccio in its latest form, that is, naturalism purged and chastened and wrapped in the cloak of morality and religion—in short, naturalism as sanctioned by the authorities, "masked," as Guarini himself would have put it. But licentiousness alone is not poetry, and nudity soon ceases to be alluring and becomes disgusting. When sensuality has grown dull it needs to be roused by imagination and wit. The Platonic poets were fond of descanting on the eyes; Guarini's favourite material is the kiss. The game of kissing had already been touched on by Tasso, but with Guarini it becomes an exces-

sively voluptuous affair. And from Guarini onwards the stolen kiss is a commonplace of Arcadia. And what endless *refinements* on the kiss! Just listen to Guarini:

. . . quello è morto bacio a cui
la baciata beltá bacio non rende.
Ma i colpi di due labbra innamorate,
quando a ferir si va bocca con bocca . . .
son veri baci, ove con giuste voglie
tanto si dona altrui quanto si toglie.
Baci pur bocca curiosa e scaltra
o seno o fronte o mano: unqua non fia
che parte alcuna in bella donna baci,
che baciatrice sia,
se non la bocca, ove l' un' alma e l' altra
corre e si bacia anch' ella, e con vivaci
spiriti pellegrini
dá vita al bel tesoro
de' bacianti rubini:
sicché parlan tra loro
quegli animati e spiritosi baci
gran cose in picciol suono. . . .
Tal gioia amando prova, anzi tal vita
alma con alma unita:
e son come d' amor baci baciati
gl' incontri di due cori amanti amati.

When the kissed beauty does not return the kiss, then the kiss is nothing but a dead thing. But the kiss in which two loving mouths rush eagerly to wound each other with love is a true kiss . . . where both the lovers with equal desire give back as much as they steal. A kiss given from curiosity, or with cunning, may fall on a bosom, or a forehead, or a hand, but never on any part of a beautiful woman that is capable of kissing back again.

But when the kiss is on her lips then soul runs to meet soul, and each kisses the other with exquisite ardour. The lover warms those lovely kissing rubies into life; and those burning, living kisses speak to each other and say great things with small sound. . . . And when a soul is joined to a soul there is such a feeling of joy, or rather such an awakening of life from loving, that the meeting of two loving and loved hearts is like a kissed kiss of love.

Splendid poetry, in which the spirit is as refined in its conceptions as the sensual imagination in its colouring. It is not life caught in action, but is the life of lyricism—life narrated, described, put into maxims. And Corisca and the satyr and the

chorus all of them make dissertations, and give their opinions on things and people. The poet's subtle mind gets hold of connections of the most ingenious kind, and his imagination encloses them in the happiest lines. Speaking of kisses, here is a saying of Amarilli's on the subject:

Bocca baciata a forza,
se 'l bacio sputa, ogni vergogna
ammorza.

When a mouth is kissed by force, if it spits out the kiss, all the shame of it is removed.

Guarini's great facility does him wrong. Every situation is turned into an abstract theme, a background for the precious embroidery of his imagination. Discourses, dialogues, or monologues are nothing but songs, in which a sentiment is developed with numberless variations, as though it were nothing more lively than an abstraction of the mind. But song in Guarini is often stripped of the majesty and solemnity of Petrarch, and made elegiac and idyllic, even outwardly, and is given to us broken, interspersed with little verses and rhymes in short periods, charming and languorous and melodious, in fact, very like the madrigal, the affected, gallant form in which Guarini excelled. The little songs sung by the nymphs who flit round Amarilli in their game of blind-man's-buff are lovely examples of it.

So the century closes with a very magnificent show of literary progress. Its inner life is naturalism in open rebellion against asceticism. The idyll, the comedy, and the romance are developing, with Petrarchism and classicism still attached to them like dead branches of literature. The new life began with Boccaccio, the synthetic portrait of his century, in whom comedy, the idyll, and the romance made their first appearance. The idyll in Boccaccio was shown as the tranquil repose of the soul in the lap of Nature—the new ideal of happiness that was taking the place of the old unquiet ideal of the ascetics. The idyll attained to perfection in the *Stanze,* and its murmurs made themselves heard through all the fantastic adventures of Ariosto. The idyll was the feeling for living Nature and lovely forms,

breaking free from the bonds of the supernatural. The idyll, in a word, was naturalism, not as yet humanism. And it was bringing art nearer to Nature. Art, in design, outline, and the drawing of the human form, became more and more excellent, until at last it reached perfection, so that the miracles of the *Cinquecento* in art and poetry were born. The poet of comedy was Boccaccio, who embodied the laugh of the new generation and the parody of the past as to religion, ethics, and doctrines, in novels, *capitoli*, and comedies. An exceedingly copious literature flowed from this source, and developed—a buffoonish, ironical, licentious, humorous literature. But comedy, being utterly devoid of affirmation, indeed being nothing more than indifference and scepticism, had all the signs of dissolution. This moral depravity found its brazen expression in the comedies of Aretino, and at last the literature of Italy became utterly superficial and mere frivolity. The inner life of the day was so completely empty of flavour and interest, and the practical life was so completely wanting in seriousness, that people were glad to sink themselves into romances, at the same time laughing at romance with the understanding of ripe intelligence, knowing it to be only a game and a pastime. We find this situation in its highest degree of artistic beauty in the harmonious world of Ariosto. It was dissolved by the humour of Folengo. At last, when the licence in literature and habits had reached its ultimate expression, people began to think of a remedy, and then, suddenly, came the Platonic and ascetic reaction. And with the attempt to force an affirmation into the Italian consciousness and an ideal into literature, the idyll came back again, the idyll, the ideal of naturalism. Among all those religious, moral, and Platonic conceptions naturalism was the only force that had life in it. Literature became religious, moral, epic, and tragic in appearance. But how little serious these tendencies were is shown by the pomp of the wise maxims, the lusciousness of the colouring, and the over-refinement of the conceptions. Beneath this surface was really a lyrical, idyllic

world, extremely seductive in its colouring. Naturalism, condemned in theory, in practice was the real and organic life of literature. Its forms, though less licentious than before, were more affectedly elegant, and more voluptuous. The feelings of this period of transition, both in their contradictions and in their sincerity, are reflected in the lofty soul of Tasso; those mournful, elegiac, voluptuous, harmonious sounds are its echo, are the last rays shed by poetry as it set. With Guarini we have the idyll in all its nudity, in spite of his pomp of moral maxims and his Platonic intentions. The idyll becomes the leading motive of the new generation of poets. The *Seicento* is not a premise, it is a conclusion.

Italian literature was as fashionable now in Europe as French literature had been, and before it the Provençal literature; indeed, as regards technique, Italian had arrived at perfection. Even the poorest of Italian writers was perfectly correct as to grammar, was severely logical in his connections, and had a quicker pace than before. At a time when the other literatures were only in process of formation, Italian literature was already formed. Italy was crowded with poets and prose-writers of every kind, while critics, rhetoricians, grammarians, professors, academicians, sprouted like weeds. The Italy of the seventeenth century was quite unconscious of her decadence, and considered herself, and was universally considered, to be the very perfection of culture: no country ever dreamed for a moment of disputing her preëminence. The rest of Europe borrowed its ideas and forms from the tales, epics, and comedies of Italy.

People are fond of saying that a great literary change took place and developed in the *Seicento*, and they support it by the fact that every one was looking for novelty. But this very wish for novelty is in itself a proof that literature was already fixed and had finished its circle. When a literature is beginning to develop, there is no need to look for novelties; they spring up everywhere of their own accord, for everything is fresh.

People in that day were looking for novelties because they felt that the repertory and forms of their literature were exhausted, were traditionalized, were mechanical. As early as the beginning of the century the forms of literature had provided the comic material in the *Secchia rapita* and in the *Scherno degli dèi*—comic poems which make fun of the mythological and epic forms. The authors, Tassoni and Bracciolini, had nothing positive in their spirit, therefore their forms are dead, and ridiculous. And we search in vain for anything else that was alive in their consciousness and their century. Their comedy falls into the void and is tasteless. *Don Quixote*, on the contrary, is eternally fresh, because the spirit of chivalry in it melts into the image of a new society placed side by side with the old, rendering it comic by its presence. Tassoni makes fun even of the lyrical forms of Petrarch, and abuses not only Petrarchism, but Petrarch himself. He speaks in the name of simplicity, of good sense, of credibility; every conceit and refinement is distasteful to him. But his criticism falls into the void, because the idea of simple living, the feeling for the true and the real, were things that did not exist in that century. In Tassoni's consciousness there was only an abstraction of the intellect. Nature had given him taste, but the world in which it could have expressed itself was non-existent. So writers like Tassoni, and later Redi, who wrote in a simple and natural way, are dull, in spite of certain vivacities and certain graces of style that we find in both. They were wanting in inner life, and the outward life of their day was utterly stupid, when it was not pretentious. Of Tassoni has survived this portrait of the Count of Culagna:

Filosofo, poeta e bacchettone,
che era fuor de' perigli un Sacripante,
ma ne' perigli un pezzo di polmone.

A philosopher, a poet and a hypocrite; in safety a Sacripante (bully), but in danger a rabbit.

I say the "portrait," advisedly, because the count when we get him in action is as faint and insipid as the rest. Redi has

left us the *Bacco in Toscana,* with bacchantes who remind us of the *Orfeo.* It is pleasant reading; it has verve, is warmly imaginative, and is natural in movement, and its lines are handled with art. But not only was literature exhausted in its forms and its content, so also were religious, moral, and political life, though they were serious in outward appearance. The seriousness was servile and made-to-order—it was the way to get on in life. History has condemned, and justly, those works which are servile, flowery, and adulatory, while posterity has remembered with gratitude the works that have a breath of free thought in them, because even when we cannot admire the work as literature, we are forced to admire the man who wrote it. In the works of criticism of that day the writer is less than the man, for the criticism is negative, is not the result of realizing a new society, but only of resistance, opposition. It is true that criticism was negative in the sixteenth century, but the negation was universal, was agreed to by all amid the laughter of all, was more than the solitary thought of artists. Remembering this, we are able to understand Berni, and the *Mandragola,* and the satire of Ariosto, and the comedies of Aretino, and the chivalrous, ironic, and humorous poems: it explains them all. Though science may be solitary, art by its very nature must take its material from a plastic, living world; it must voice something that is alive. The negation of the *Cinquecento* was free, admitted, invited, applauded. The author was in sympathy with his readers, and beneath the negation, and in spite of it, there existed the consciousness of a new world; men were conscious of a renewal, of the resurrection of a world of art and of Nature that followed the barbarism of the Middle Ages. And even Dante was backed by his century, and fused its different aspects into a plastic world, indeed, into the *real* world of the Middle Ages, which was the other world. In the *Seicento* there was nothing in existence but a hypocritical, inquisitorial world in which religious and social life were outside of the consciousness, mechanized and immobilized into fixed inviolable forms. Art

was exhausted and was pining away for want of a free world about it. If any one wishes to grasp the difference between the centuries, let him read the *Ragguagli di Parnaso* of Traiano Boccalini, the daring commentator of Tacitus, who was stabbed to death by a Spaniard. Boccalini's *Parnassus*, which followed the worlds of Dante and Ariosto, has no seriousness at all. It is only an excuse, a setting for the thoughts, irritations, quibbles, allusions, and allegories of the writer, with no unity or centre other than its whimsicality; it is a thing of separate atoms without life or inner cohesion. At that time there did not exist a serious world in which criticism could be embodied, so criticism was scattered into the air in maxims, exhortations, preachings, discourses, in declamations and rhetorical generalities, most venomous when least artistic—works like the *Satire* of Salvator Rosa, which have been saved from oblivion by the masculine energy of a sincere mind full of verve. This writer's soul warmed his imagination, and the result was novelty of expression and pictorial forms expressed in felicitous wording.

Never was a century so fond of the trumpet as this very unheroic century. There were writers who followed in the steps of Tasso; for instance, Graziani in his *Conquisto di Granata.* Chiabrera wrote the *Foresto*, the *Gotiade*, the *Firenze*, the *Amadeide*, and the *Ruggiero*—all of them heroic poems—and he turned out more than twenty-two small poems on profane subjects and fourteen on religious subjects. Villifranchi, Stigliani, and others sang of the discovery of America, and even Tassoni started a work on this subject in his *Oceano*, but wisely changed his mind, and with a clearer understanding of his tendencies wrote his *Secchia rapita*, a parody of the heroic forms. Not a single one of these heroic poems has come down to us. They were written on every subject imaginable—sacred, profane, chivalric, heroic, mythological. The subject was a question of the caprice of individuals, for the century was empty of a theme of its own. There was the new and extremely popular subject of the discovery of America, which inspired Tasso in his

voyage to the Fortunate Islands, the most pleasing of his creations. But writers treated this subject with the usual classical impedimenta; the New World was turned into a tired and musty reminiscence of a poetical world already decrepit.

The heroic world of that century had been fabricated by the Council of Trent. It was the Catholic world brought back again. In poetry we find it in the wars with the Turks, showing Italy as victorious more by the grace of God than by her own virtue. It was the old argument of the chivalric poems, which had been dissolved in the buffoonery of Pulci and the irony of Ariosto, and later was purged and ennobled by Tasso. It was now the official note of the century. Its poet was Gabriello Chiabrera. He had had his schooling in Rome, was educated by the Jesuits, and was guided by Speron Speroni. With his head full of Latin and Greek texts and the poetical arts, he retired to his native Savona and turned out poetry indefatigably till the age of eighty-six, amid the eulogies of princes and of the literati. In three volumes of his lyrics we barely meet with a single thought or image that stops us and makes us think; though his subjects are everything that is noble and affecting, they never move us or uplift us. There was hardly an event of importance that Chiabrera did not celebrate, such as the victories of the Tuscan galleys over pirates, the battle of Lepanto, the fights of the Venetians in Greece. His books are full of eulogies of princes and great captains, but especially of saints, such as Peter, Paul, Cecilia, Mary Magdalen, Stephen, Agatha, and others, from the Virgin downwards, interspersed with satires of heretics like Luther, Calvin, and Beza, satires that are real personal invectives. Naturally there are love-affairs too—abstract themes in which we recognize the beginnings of all those Amaryllises and Chloes and Phyllises who later were to invade Arcadia. If ever he is stuck for a living argument, he turns his talent to abstract generalities, like winter, the stars, Mucius Scaevola, the rape of Proserpine, the deluge, Goliath, Judith, and so on, like a schoolboy writing compositions. And he writes canzoni and

canzonette, dithyrambs and epitaphs, sonnets and poems, in every form and with every content. Now he sings of the hero, now of the fallen favourite, and he is equally at home with the trumpet, the zither, the lyre, and the shepherd's reed—or at aping Pindar or Anacreon. The princely festivals kept him in work, for he supplied them with woodland tales and musical dramas. But his writings have always the same stamp; the most moving and living subjects are treated with the same indifference as a story about Proserpine or Charon. He never sinks himself deep in his subject, exploring its hidden depths, but rambles about in descriptions of mythological events, with the generalities of rhetoric, and he is empty and cold. When he wishes to praise St. Francis, he treats us to a dissertation on love of money. He has no pictorial talent or impulse of feeling or imagination, no exaltation, no lyrical enthusiasm. The *Vite* of Cavalca have more poetry than the whole of Chiabrera's characters put together—those Magdalens, Lucias, Stephens, and Sebastians, each more vapid than the last. Dante with a stroke of the pen fixes St. Stephen in our minds much better than Chiabrera in his seven verses and with his sacred and profane reminiscences. Fra Iacopone makes us feel the Virgin in a few lines, but we look for her in vain in the hundred that Chiabrera dedicates to her. The martydrom of St. Sebastian is an extremely pitiful subject, but in the hands of Chiabrera it is only bombastic and coldly rhetorical. When he is not insipid he is pretentious. For instance, he exhorts the Muses to sing the pierced saint, and this is what he says:

Tendete, arciere d' ammirabil canto,
musici dardi al saettato santo.

O archers of admirable song,
point your musical arrows at the
piercèd saint.

He takes his material from the whole of the heroic, moral, and religious world of Christianity. But the spirit of Christianity did not exist at that time in Italy, and not all the edicts of the Council of Trent could provide it. Religious literature was a fashion more than a feeling; the spirit was not in it. The forms were

classical and literary, and the content was a matter of indifference. If we ask what moved and interested Chiabrera, the answer is, "Nothing," because there was nothing in his consciousness—neither faith, nor morality, nor country, nor love, nor art, though all these subjects are treated in his works. He was an excellent man, sincerely pious and honest, and kindly and tranquil by nature. But if a poetical content is to be really poetic, it needs to be something more than a thing of tradition and habit; it needs to be a passion, a thing that will stimulate the poet's imagination and lead him to meditation. Chiabrera had one passion only; he was indifferent to content, but had a love of forms. I say "forms" instead of "form," for he had none of the feeling for beauty and form that made the artists of Italy great in the *Cinquecento*. He was wanting in the two qualities that are indispensable to a poet and an artist—faith in his content and feeling for form. He had only a mediocre sense of music, that sense which Nature bestows so easily on Italians: his weaving of rhymes and sounds is not happy, and now and then he breaks into discords and harshnesses. His fixed idea was to discover a new world, like Columbus, and his contemporaries thought he had done so—indeed, Urban wrote on his tomb: "*Novos orbes poëticos invenit*"—"He discovered new worlds of poetry." It is true that new poetical worlds existed at that time; they were the worlds of Camoëns, Cervantes, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Milton. But inner life was non-existent in Italy, so that people looked for novelty in the forms. And the Latin world being already exhausted, Chiabrera set himself to look for novelty in the Greek world: "*Thebanos modos fidibus hetruscis adaptare primus docuit*," says Urban—"He first taught how to adapt the Theban modes to Tuscan lyres." These "Theban modes" were the strophes, antistrophes, and epodes, the arranging of words in an out-of-the-way manner, artificial constructions, and a sort of commonplace and abstract morality, with sober and simple colouring. They were mechanical forms and purely imitative, not born from any inner feeling. Nothing could

possibly be further from the beauty, purity, grace, and simplicity of the Greeks than the work of Chiabrera, and often his simplicity is aridity, his candour is vulgarity, and his grace is fatiguing. The ways and forms that in the Greeks are natural and charming in Chiabrera are affected and pretentious. Look at his dithyrambics. And he is oftener pretty than heroic. If any one at all reads him at the present day, it is for some of his *canzonette*. But even here, if we remember the *Aminta*, we shall think these *canzonette* very poor. Gravina too aimed at Greek simplicity, as a remedy for the inflation and pretension of the century. But by dint of being simple he became vapid and ordinary. The fact is, the Greek imitation, which followed on Latinizing, was only a natural development of a purely literary and mechanical phenomenon, and was not the result of any inner life of the poets or of the century.

Another heroic poet was the senator, Vincenzo Filicaia, whose canzoni on the liberation of Vienna have survived. Filicaia is always ready to be prophetic, and has all the symptoms of a holy frenzy. Instead of talking he seems to be chanting, indeed shrieking, with clenched fists and rolling eyes and convulsive gestures. Exclamations, interrogations, repetitions, are thrown together with a noisy booming of sounds and phrases. This is pompous rhetoric posing as life—he had no feeling for the real. Yet all the same he has qualities that put him among the second-rate poets; he has warmth of imagination, an ear for music, and no mean skill in the handling of verse.

And Chiabrera and Filicaia were patriotic poets. Chiabrera deplores the soft life of the Italian soldiers, or as he puts it, the "prettiness" of the Italians:

E dove
calzar potrassi una gentil scarpetta,
un calcagnetto sí polito? . . .
Lungo fôra a narrar come son gai

How shall the pretty shoe fit such a polished little heel? . . . It would be a long affair to describe the gay embroideries on their breeches and the ornate rows

per trapunto i calzoni, e come ornate
per entro la casacca, in varie guise
serpeggiando sen van bottonature.
Splendono soppannati i ferraiuoli
bizzarramente; e sulla coscia manca,
tutti d' argento arabescati e d' oro,
ridono gli elsi della bella spada.

of buttons that twist and turn on their coats.

Long mantles fantastically lined shine out magnificently; and on the left thigh glitters the hilt of a splendid sword all arabesqued in silver and gold.

And Filicaia has left us the famous line: "*Deh, fossi tu men bella, o almen piú forte!*"—"Ah! If thou wert only less beautiful—or at least more strong!"

But patriotism was quite as superficial a feeling to these poets as religion, and was only a theme for sonnets and canzoni, as in the *Vendemmie* and the *Lodi di Cristina*. When Filicaia asks Italy where her arm is and why she is using that of others, and reminds her that every foreigner is now her enemy and was once her servant, we know him to be thousands of miles from reality, and only to be playing with the idea of an Italy of tradition and reminiscence that he did not feel; we know that his marvellings and furies are not serious even to himself, and his words are merely ebullitions and rhetoric. His contemporaries were the same; they admired that splendid sonnet, which he threw out in a breath among the thousand splendours of a warm imagination, as they admired a fine sermon while doing the very opposite of what the preacher or the Bible told them.

Such was the moral, religious, and national life of the Italy of that day: a traditional world, come back into fashion and helped by the wish to get on, observed in its outward appearances, and resounding with words, but not felt, not meditated upon, not discussed or renewed, not challenged or defended; not reality and not ideality—in other words, not practised in daily life, nor in the aim or tendency of life. The worm gnawing at society was spiritual idleness, complete indifference, under the customary religious and ethical forms, which just because they were nothing but forms or appearance were pompous

and theatrical. This passivity was the natural result of an authoritative theocracy suspicious of everything that resembled discussion. The inner life of Italy was exhausted and stagnant; she remained untouched by the movement of ideas and things from which the young nations of Europe were arising. From now onwards she was cut off from the modern world, and was more like a museum than a society of living men.

And literature was in the same image, empty of ideas and feeling, a play of forms, an outer shell. Italian writers continued to rummage in the old classical storehouse, and to revolve round the same thoughts and the same forms. The Greek vintage had hardly been sipped before it was spilt to right and left, giving a certain look of novelty to the literary forms. The repertory that had come into circulation in the long life of Italian poetry was now habitual and had ceased to be effective. And there was no strength to renew the content. So every one was busy sharpening, subtilizing, embroidering, mannerizing, and colouring this stale old world, which no longer had a message. The less the content was alive, the more subtle, sonorous, and pretentious were the forms. A sort of theatricality arose, with a great exaggeration and abundance of words, and a cheap heroism in religion, patriotism, and morals, with nothing behind it. The finest specimen of this rhetorical heroism is the *Fortuna* of Guidi, who manages to make even Dante's Fortune absurd and blustering—so utterly lost was the feeling for truth and simplicity. And it led to that precious and flowery manner which we saw in Aretino when his subject did not interest him sufficiently. Among the least spoilt of the minds of that day was Chiabrera, yet listen to his epitaph on Raphael:

Per abbellir le immagini dipinte,
alle vive imitar pose tal cura,
che, a belle far le vere sue, Natura
oggi vuole imitar le costui finte.

So greatly did he beautify the images he painted in his imitating of life, that Nature, today, when she wants to beautify her real things, tries to imitate his pretended ones.

And not only were the conceptions precious, but the forms as well. Writers went out of their way to look for the most obsolete ways of saying the simplest things. Here is an example of these precious forms, taken from Guidi's *Fortuna:*

Questa è la man che fabbricò sul Gange
i regni agl' indi, e sull' Oronte avvolse
le regie bende dell' Assiria ai crini;
pose le gemme a Babilonia in fronte,
recò sul Tigri le corone al Perso,
espose al piè di Macedonia i troni.

This is the hand that built the kingdom of the Indus on the Ganges and twisted the royal fillet in the hair of Assyria on the Orontes; and placed the gems on the forehead of Babylon, and brought the crowns of Persia to the Tigris, and displayed the thrones at the feet of Macedonia.

For preciosity and affectation one of the worst offenders is the writer Lemene; and for coquettishness and floweriness we give the palm to Giovambattista Zappi. To see the type in its degeneration we must go to Frugoni, the most empty and pretentious of them all.

This sight of a people expending the whole of its activity for several generations on questions of form, and aiming at nothing but words for their own sakes, apart from content, is very instructive. And what of Florence? What of the mother of Dante, of Michelangelo, of Machiavelli? Listen to Filicaia praising her:

Qui del puro natio dolce idioma
l' oro s' affina, e se non è a' dí nostri
spenta la gloria de' toscani inchiostri,
forse invidia ne avranno Atene e Roma. . . .
Qui d' ogni voce il peso, il senso, il suono
a rigoroso esame ognor si chiama,
e il reo si purga e si trasceglie il buono.

Here the gold of the pure native idiom is refined; and if the glory of Tuscan writing is not extinguished in this our day it may well come to pass that Athens and Rome will be envious of it. . . .

Here each separate word is called to a rigorous examination: in its weight, its sense, and its sound; and the inferior words are suppressed and the good are re-

Onde l' alto lavor fregia e ricama
la gran maestra del parlar, che trono
erge a se stessa ed a se stessa è fama.

tained. The great mistress of words is raising up a throne to herself and building her own fame, by beautifying and embroidering work of high value.

So Florence was the great mistress of words; her realm and her glory were words. And this being so, it was natural enough that men of talent, deeming the words to be old and insipid, tried to adorn them, to sharpen them, to decorate them, or, as Filicaia puts it, to "beautify and embroider" them. And nobody seems to have realized that all this polish on the surface, with so great an emptiness beneath it, was the last form of decadence. Therefore Pindars and Anacreons were swarming, and poets of every type were springing to life in every corner of Italy, and the academies were keeping pace with them, never doubting for a moment that they were the cream of the academies of Europe, though completely ignorant of culture beyond Italy.

This explains the fact that Arcadia was able to acquire the importance of a great event, so that it could monopolize and fill the mind of the public for several decades. Extremely learned and extremely grave men played parts like boys among the stage shepherds and shepherdesses, and dictated the laws of the academies as solemnly as if they were the Twelve Tables. They imagined that to restore poetry and good taste it was enough to observe a few rules; they sent for doctor after doctor—when the patient was already dead! The Arcadians, who have become proverbial as people who were learned and yet frivolous, in trying to counteract the heroic threw themselves into the pastoral, as though by removing life from the town into the fields among shepherds they could find that naturalness and simplicity which is not a question of a writer's material, but of his soul. They were arid, insipid, mincing, affected, and false.

The king of that century, the supreme master of words, was

the Cavaliere Marino, the person who was honoured, fêted, pensioned, and held to be the highest perfection of all poets, ancient or modern—and not by the ordinary public alone, but by all the cream of the illustrious men of that time. He is supposed to have corrupted the century. It would be truer to say that the century corrupted him, or rather, that there was no corrupter and no one corrupted. The century was what it was, and could not have been different: it was the necessary consequence of no less necessary premises. And Marino was the intellect of the century—in fact, was the century itself, in its greatest force and clearness of expression. He had a copious and quick imagination, great facility of conception, an ear for music, inexhaustible riches in ways and forms, no depth of seriousness in conception or feeling, and no faith at all in any content whatsoever. The problem for him, as for every one else of his time, was not "what," but "how." He inherited a repertory that was old and exhausted, and already polished and perfumed by the two poets of his youth, Tasso and Guarini. And he polished and perfumed it still more, helped by his fertile imagination and the great facility of his vein. Moral and religious ideas were the fashion; Murtola wrote his *Mondo creato* and Campeggi his *Lagrime della Vergine*. Marino wrote his *Strage degl' innocenti*, and wrapped even his erotic poems in allegory. But life at bottom was materialistic, pleasure-loving, vulgar, gossipy; under the outer appearances of religion was materialism in its grossest form. Marino's early poems, like his youth, had been openly obscene, and when he was older and more mature, instead of trying to reform the obscenity he reformed the appearance of it, wrapping his erotic furies in the mantle of allegory.

A very usual conception in poetry is the idea of a man being brutalized by sensual love and redeemed by reason—the story of Circe and Ulysses. It figures prominently in the romantic and heroic poetry of Italy, and inspired both Dante and Petrarch. The Circes of Italian literature are Angelica, Alcina,

Armida, with their gardens and their castles and their magic journeys through space. In the *Jerusalem Delivered* the most interesting of all the episodes, indeed the basic conception of the poem, is the story of Armida. But in Tasso it is not a conception by itself, standing alone; it is wedged among religious and heroic elements. With Marino it becomes a poem in itself, becomes the *Adone*.

Naturalism in Italian poetry appeared for the first time in the *Amorosa visione*, and for the last time in the *Adone*. The two poems are very similar in conception. Love, the generative principle, is the heart of the world, is the crown of Nature and of art. The circle of life begins with love, and ends with love. The union of Venus and Adonis though spiritual is also corporeal, is the coupling of the divine with the human. Sensual love runs through the whole of Nature and the whole of Heaven and earth. In the theological Paradise of Dante body is resolved into spirit; in the mythological Paradise of Marino the spirit finds its perfection and its life in sensual love. But a tragic sense is added to this earthly comedy. Man is mortal, and his pleasures are trifling and fleeting; and the poem ends with the death of Adonis, with the Immortals lamenting around him.

The poem is founded on sensual love, which is shown to us in all its varying degrees in the Garden of Delights—one of those many gardens of love which had already been sung by Politian, Ariosto, and Tasso. Here the garden is subdivided into five lesser gardens, corresponding with the five senses, so that a considerable part of the poem is merely a description of the gardens. In the Garden of Touch, Adonis reaches the extreme of delight, is wafted to Heaven and attains to felicity. Marino's Heaven, or Paradise, is limited to the moon. The seat of Art is Mercury, and the seat of Love itself is Venus. Marino's Heaven of Love has stages much like the Heaven of the *Amorosa visione*. But in the *Adone* the triumph of love is short, for Adonis dies, killed by the jealousy of Mars, before Venus has had time to

make him immortal; the last cantos tell of his death, mourned by Venus and the other gods, and of his obsequies.

Needless to say, these ideas and combinations have not the smallest real or intrinsic value for Marino, but are only poetical material like any other. He enriches them with a great supply of mythological fables, an aid in developing his poetic possibilities —the usual machinery of the fantastic in Italian love-poems. Conceptions and passions are shown by insipid personifications, such as Love, Art, Nature, Philosophy, Jealousy, Riches, and other allegorical figures—insipid because utterly empty of deep significance, and wanting in the seriousness of real life. What Marino gives us is only the skeleton of Italian poetry, decorated with certain ingenious episodes of his own in order to pay court to the princely families of Italy, or to the royal house of France. But the thing is nothing but a skeleton, which not a single breath of life is allowed to reach. We are simply not able to be interested in it, for only a thing with life in it can interest any one. Not a single character arrests attention or leaves a trace on our memory, and there is no situation either lyrical or dramatic with any value to it. Life is materialized or allegorized, and is quite external, is made of accidental events and exterior likenesses and diversities; and since exterior likenesses and contrasts are infinite, connections of ideas arise that are quite as arbitrary as the things themselves—ideas that are true in relation to this or that appearance, but are only false and ridiculous in relation to life as a whole. We have heard how the rose is described by Politian, Ariosto, and Tasso, soberly, with just a few details that throw a light on the rose and make it stand out in its personality, and which do not falsify its character.

Well, now let us listen to Marino describing the rose:

Rosa, riso d' amor, del ciel fattura,
rosa, del sangue mio fatta vermiglia,

O Rose, smile of love, the work of Heaven, Rose made red with my blood, paragon of the world and ornament of nature, virgin

pregio del mondo e fregio di natura,
della Terra e del Sol vergine figlia,
d' ogni ninfa e pastor delizia e cura,
onor de l' odorifera famiglia;
tu tien d' ogni beltá le palme prime,
sopra il vulgo de' fior donna sublime.

daughter of the Earth and the Sun, delight and care of every nymph and shepherd, and pride of the perfumed family, O Rose, thou holdest the palm for very beauty, O sublime mistress over the common herd of flowers.

Quasi in bel trono imperadrice altera
siedi colá su la nativa sponda;
turba d' aure vezzosa e lusinghiera
ti corteggia d' intorno e ti seconda;
e di guardie pungenti armata schiera
ti difende per tutto e ti circonda.
E tu, fastosa del tuo regio vanto
porti d' òr la corona e d' ostro il manto.

Thou art seated on thy native shore like a proud empress on a beautiful throne; charming and seductive breezes are courting thee and ministering to thee; and troops of soldiers armed with stings are all around thee in the air defending thee: and thou, magnificent in all the pomp of thy regal glory, art wearing a golden crown and a royal mantle.

Porpora de' giardin, pompa de' prati,
gemma di primavera, occhio d' aprile,
di te le grazie e gli amoretti alati
son ghirlanda a la chioma, al sen monile.
Tu, qualor torna agli alimenti usati
ape leggiadra o zeffiro gentile,
dái lor da bere in tazza di rubini
rugiadosi licori e cristallini.

Purple of gardens, pride of the meadows, jewel of spring, eye of April, all the graces of Nature and the little wingèd loves are the garland for thy hair, the necklace for thy bosom; and when the nimble bee or the gentle breeze returns to thee for its accustomed nourishment, thou dost give it dewy and crystalline liquids to drink from a ruby cup.

Non superbisca ambizioso il sole
di trionfar fra le minori stelle,
ché ancor tu fra i ligustri e le viole

Let not the sun be unduly proud and lofty because he lords it over the lesser stars, for thou too, thou superb and beautiful one, dost display thy pomps among jasmine

scopri le pompe tue superbe e belle.
Tu sei, con tue bellezze uniche e sole,
splendor di queste piagge, egli di quelle:
egli nel cerchio suo, tu nel tuo stelo,
tu sole in terra ed egli rosa in cielo.
E ben saran tra voi conformi voglie:
di te fia 'l sole, e tu del sole amante.
Ei de le insegne tue, de le tue spoglie
l' aurora vestirá nel suo levante;
tu spiegherai ne' crini e ne le foglie
la sua livrea dorata e fiammeggiante;
e per ritrarlo ed imitarlo a pieno,
porterai sempre un picciol sole in seno.

and violets: thou with thine own and unique beauties art the splendour of these lands, just as the sun is the splendour of his; he in his circle, thou in thine: thou the sun of the earth and he the rose of Heaven.

And no doubt you love each other equally; no doubt the sun is thy lover and thou his. And he shall clothe the dawn in thy colours and thy draperies as she rises from her couch; and thou shalt display his flaming livery and gold in thy locks and in thy leaves. And that thou mayest reflect and imitate him to the full, for the whole of thy life thou shalt carry a little sun in thy breast.

It is evident that there is no feeling for Nature here, nor a clear impression of the rose. What the poem gives us is abstract and arbitrary combinations of the mind derived from accidental and external likenesses, which adulterate and falsify the natural forms and create abnormal entities that exist in the mind and nowhere else. The pastoral life in poetry had already been embroidered by Tasso. But Tasso's embroideries, though a little overdone, at any rate had not falsified the things and the feelings. In the *Adone* we have a pastoral scene that is an effort at imitating the scene of Erminia as "the shepherd," and it ends like this:

Lunge da' fasti ambiziosi e vani,
m' è scettro il mio baston, porpora il vello,

Far from pretentious and vain pomps, for sceptre I have a crook, for purple a fleece, for ambrosia

ambrosia il latte, a cui le proprie mani
scusano coppa e nettare il ruscello;
son ministri i bifolci, amici i cani,
sergente il toro e cortigian l' agnello,
musici gli augelletti e l' aure e l' onde,
piume l' erbette e padiglion le fronde.

I have milk, which I drink from my hands instead of from a cup, and for nectar I have the streamlet: for ministers I have the peasants, for friends my dogs. The bull is my constable, and the lamb my courtier; for music I have the little birds and the breezes and the river wavelets; and the soft grass is my feathery bed and the leafy trees my pavilion.

Quintessences and subtleties like these are what Marino describes in a letter to Claudio Achillini, as "riches of precious conceptions"! And he thinks that poetry cannot possibly be good without them; they are the chief virtues of poetry:

É del poeta il fin la maraviglia:
parlo dell' eccellente e non del goffo;
chi non sa far stupir, vada alla striglia.

The duty of a poet is to awaken marvel: I speak of course of the superior poets, not the clumsy ones. Those poets who have not the skill to astound had better take to currycombing horses.

But the novelty and strangeness were certainly not in the repertory. The repertory was very old indeed, was a dishing-up of elements and motives become blunted from use. The thing that was polished and renewed was the scene, the spectacle. It was old, like the repertory, but was shown to the public with a new coat of paint and varnish. And the paint and varnish were not the result of a deep plumbing of the poet's personality, but of purely subjective combinations born from random likeness and contrasts, such as are extremely apt to fall into the paradoxical and the ridiculous. It is they that provide the element of astonishment which Marino held to be the chief, the necessary, virtue of poetry. And not only the things—the gardens, the fields, the flowers, and so on—were combined artificially, but also the allegorical personifications, such as Jealousy and Love, and also the acts—for instance, the laughs and the kisses.

Marino confessed to the habit of keeping a commonplace book, in which he copied down under different headings whatever he found of most pungent and arresting in the Greek, Latin, Italian, and even Spanish poets. And he took these treasures of precious conceptions and concentrated them. But it would be wrong to think of Marino as nothing better than a cold imitator and collector. When he finds himself in the middle of these treasures his pulse begins to beat, his life is quickened, his imagination is inflamed, and gets to work and helps his spirit, and the combinations become images, the images find their fulfilment in the ease and brio of the sounds. At times the sense of the poem fades out, but never the musical wave—never the song, the *cantilena:*

Adone, Adone, o bell' Adon, tu giaci,
né senti i miei sospir, né miri il pianto.
O bell' Adone, o caro Adon, tu taci,
né rispondi a colei ch' amasti tanto!

Adonis, Adonis, O lovely Adonis, thou liest here and dost not hear my sighs nor see my tears. O lovely Adonis, O loved Adonis, thou art silent, and dost not answer me; me, whom thou lovest so dearly.

Lasciami, lascia imporporare i baci,
anima cara, in questo sangue alquanto;
arresta il volo, aspetta tanto almeno
che 'l mio spirto immortal ti mora in seno.

O my dearest soul, let me, let me stain my kisses purple in thy blood; O stay thy flight but a little, wait but a little while; wait till my deathless spirit shall die on thy breast.

Italian poetry in the last moments of its life had ceased to be action, or even narrative; it had become, as it were, the spectacle vocalized, description resembling song, amid a crackling of conceptions and the lustre of images, and all the sonority of musical phrases and cadences, and all the seduction of variations. Its ideal form was the idyll, a conventional, mythological, and amorous life, gladdened by the happy smiles of sky and

earth. The *Adone* is an idyll—disguised in the usual mythological mechanism, like the *Orfeo* and the *Proserpina*. Another idyll of Marino's is the *Pastorella*, which is extremely fresh and modern in colouring, and soaked with an ardent sensuality. Any one who remembers the *Pastorella* of Guido Cavalcanti, so sober and so simple, will realize to what depths of affectation poetry had fallen in the development and solving of these lyrical situations. But sensuality at least was a living thing, indeed, the only thing that was alive in those poets of the *Seicento:* sensuality exhaled in tenderness, voluptuousness, gallantries, and sweetness.

It was a conventional ideal, and was utterly empty. Some of the writers were better than others, but in essence all were the same. All have the same character—an absence of real life, a complete inner idleness, a lyrical exaltation in words not felt by the soul, the grossest naturalism under the veil of piety smelling of the sacristy, staleness and insignificance posing as being pompous and solemn, inertia joined to the absurd and the paradoxical, and always that trivial, superficial way of approaching things. In a word, here is surface without substance, and a surface, moreover, that is falsified by artificial connections, the word being cut away from the idea and turned into empty sound.

And the same characteristics are to be found in a greater or lesser degree in all of the forms of writing: in the tragedies, comedies, poems, idylls, canzoni, discourses, prefaces, panegyrics, sermons, epistles—in verse and also in prose.

The Marino of prose was Daniello Bartoli, an extremely ingenious writer, unsurpassed in the invention of periods and phrases in a style that is precious and at the same time flowery. Bartoli had travelled practically everywhere on earth, and was the author of thousands of descriptions and narrations. And yet the seeing of all these things seems never to have brightened his impressions. He never manages to rise above the abstract rhetorician and moralist. His head is filled with mythology and

the Scriptures, he is rich in words and phrases that cover the whole of the knowledge of that time, and he is a brilliant colourist. He is conscious of being able to say everything well, therefore imagines that he is able to say everything. Nature and man are for him only a stimulus, an excuse for displaying his erudition and his gift for words—and there his seriousness ends. Extraneous to all the tremendous movement of European culture and to all the struggles of thought, he stagnates in his classicalism and Catholicism taken from the schools and never whetted by his intellect. His brain is as idle as his heart. His mind is entirely absorbed in the technical and mechanical part of expression, and he treats the Italian language as though it were Latin or Greek, a dead language, already fixed, one, moreover, that he knows thoroughly. He scourges the pedantic writers with his "*Torto e dritto del non si può*"—"The rights and wrongs of 'Thou shalt not.'" He avoids the overniceties of the Tuscans, quoting the reply made to some envoys who were pleading (speaking in the Tuscan manner) for a subsidy to repair their bridge:

Qualor, talor, e quinci e quindi, e guari:
rifate il ponte co' vostri danari.

Whensoever, peradventure, hence, thence, and but little: go and rebuild the bridge with your own money.

Bartoli's language, so quick, coloured, elegant, and fertile in expression, has the stamp of the classic Italian language that was already so noticeable in Tasso, and is found in Guarini, Marino, and practically all of the writers of the seventeenth century. The spoken language of Tuscany had gained but little footing even with cultured men in Tuscany, and remained stationary in the mouths of the lower classes. In Bartoli the classical language, as regards form and grammar, attains to a high degree of excellence; his words are numerous and well chosen, his constructions are regular, and his conjunctions and musical rhythms are handled with neatness and finish. He enjoys writing

minutely—anatomizing, describing, parading the wealth of the dictionary. For instance, he describes snails at great length with endless details, and finishes like this:

"First of all, you have those that are dressed in a plain drab, then the ones that are clothed in silver, in white, in milky colour, in a sort of grey, blackish, mulberry, purple, yellow, bronze, gilt, scarlet, vermilion. And then there are those with mantles like doges with long stripes and bands of many colours arranged in a pattern; and with some the stripes are lengthways, with some they are crossways, with others are straight, with others again are in a graceful waving pattern. But some of them are really marvels; their shells seem almost like a work in tarsia, with small bits of different colours curiously arranged; and some like the mosaic of a chess-board, with black and white squares, excellently formed in their pattern, the black and white very sharply divided where they touch, and without any blending; as sharp and divided as though they were alabaster and touchstone, tightly joined. Most of them are painted freakishly, or with marks like granules, or with drops or spots; others are lightly touched in here and there with certain very delicate smears of brilliant red, or else vermilion or gold, or greeny-blue or crimson; others with little quoits, or lightly scattered with small disks, or else dotted ever so faintly; others are veined like marble with the art that is not of art but of Nature; or are sprinkled with blood-red so that they look like jasper."

And he keeps up this pace for quite a time. The imagination is lost among all these riches; and as everything is thrown into relief, it follows that nothing is thrown into relief. And where is the feeling for art or for Nature? Let us think for a minute of Aretino's description of the Venetian sky, which seems actually to tremble, to quiver, so intense are the inner impressions and movements of the soul. And Bartoli is wanting even in the feeling for man; from so many affecting situations and so many portraits of ideal or historical personages, nothing has survived. For instance, he went to the Holy Land, and we can imagine what a crowd of impressions and emotions the sight of that sacred land must have aroused in so good a Christian as Bartoli. He begins:

Tears of sorrow, mingled with kisses of pious affection, are due to this venerable ground which we tread, not as inquisitive sightseers, but in the attitude of devout pilgrims, and with naked feet.

And we wait for the ecstatic ardours of the pilgrim. But the ardours begin with Pliny and end with Lucan, with interludes of cold, rhetorical amplifications.

The same culture and the same content are given us by Padre Segneri. All he cared for in literature was the purely literary task of ornamenting and dressing up commonplaces with quotations, examples, comparisons, and rhetorical figures, so of course he is feeble, trivial, commonplace, and tattling. The exordium of his sermon on Paradise, which begins "*Al cielo, al cielo!*" is praised by many. The conception is this: The best that life on earth can offer us is imperfect, so let us aim at Heaven. We know the earth and have tried it, so how can we possibly bear to stay in it? So, "To Heaven, to Heaven!" Now the first part of this argument had no need to be demonstrated, for no one questioned it. Yet this is precisely the point where Segneri sticks, weaving his choicest embroideries on this commonplace. And if he had really felt that misery of earth and those joys of Heaven, his colours would certainly have had novelty, freshness, depth. But the whole thing is nothing but a literary game to him, an exercise in rhetoric. The conception is a commonplace, and so are the accessories. He has none of the definite aim of the preacher to persuade or convert, no faith, no missionary fervour, no piety. He has no love for men, nor is he working to save them, nor to help them. His brain is furnished with a religious, moral doctrine, ready-made and inherited, not wrestled with and conquered by sweat and toil, and he has great erudition, both sacred and profane. But nothing moves in him, everything is fixed and in its place. His work is entirely exterior, in the handling of his theme, in the distribution of the different degrees of eloquence, and in the lights and shades and the colouring. However, to do him justice, we must add that he never bores us, though he often tires us—which is praise of a kind,

if negative. He keeps us in a state of wonder with a crescendo of surprises, and alert, and asking what is coming next—he can even be joking and childish for our benefit. And we must give him the credit of being correct as a writer, not falling into the eccentricities of Panigarola, or into the mawkishness and affectations of the writers who came after him.

We can now look back in literature and follow the path traversed by the writers from Boccaccio onwards. Boccaccio was a reaction to asceticism, a reaction negative and idyllic. All the comic forms, from the caricature of Boccaccio to the humour of Folengo, are characterized by negation, to be dissolved at last in the impudent cynicism of Pietro Aretino. The essence of the tales, the comedies, the *capitoli*, the romantic poems, is always negation. It started as simple negation but ended as sensuality, as pure materialism. Side by side with negation was the idyll: a withdrawal of the soul from theological abstractions and political agitations into the simple and quiet life of the country and Nature, but naturalism spiritualized by the feeling for form or beauty that led to the miracles of poetry and painting of that era. Grace, elegance, finish, measure, and harmony, in the whole and in the parts, are the stamp of this Golden Age. But eating at the heart of literature were the germs of dissolution, the tendency to be academic and literary and classical, the want of a serious content, and the segregation of literature from all the great questions, moral, political, and social, that were exciting and rejuvenating a great part of Europe. Art having arrived at this state of perfection, it needed a new content to transform it, to put blood into it. And if only the reaction of the Council of Trent had been able to provide this new content, it would have been welcome; Italy would have had a serious renewal in religion and literature. But the renewal was only in the forms, not in the consciousness. Even the reformers themselves worked without real seriousness, had no deep consciousness of their mission—as any one must see who studies the history of the Council of Trent at all adequately—let us not say in Sarpi, but

in Pallavicino himself—Pallavicino, the caressing, affected voice of those reforming fathers. So the national character of Italy was reduced to its last perversion. The idea that in order to save one's soul it was sufficient to go to mass and wear a scapula, and that the absolution of the father confessor was enough to wash away every sin except the sin of beginning it again, gave the Italian lower classes that grotesque stamp of baseness, immorality, and bigotry which is still to be found even today in many districts. As to the upper classes, their life was a lie, a display of religious and moral feelings that were not rooted in the consciousness. And the same with literature. What before had been only its tendency became its definite form. It was rhetoric; in short, it was a lie; it was the pompous expression of conventional sentiments. The pious Tasso took the new content seriously, and dreamed of a heroic and literary world, but that world was wrecked by the idyllic and the fantastic. Beneath the scapula of the brigand beat the same heart as before, and beneath those pompous forms was the lyrical, fantastic, idyllic naturalism of the old content, unvanquished: so the *Armida* became the *Adone*, and the *Aminta* became the *Pastor fido*. In spite of such a number of lives of saints and religious plays, and all the heroic and moral and patriotic lyrics, the only thing that really lived was naturalism—the sort of musical intoxication of the senses that makes the Neapolitan boatman of today sing the Armida stanzas and the erotic verses of Marino. Every one felt that the world of literature was old and exhausted, and wanted to renew it, but every one failed to see that the thing which needed renewal above everything else was the Italian consciousness. So they rubbed up their brains and inflated their wording, and instead of being new were bizarre. Effort was centred in the sounds, and at last the literary world, segregated from life and emptied of serious aim, became a mere academic and rhetorical exercise.

Words merely as words, an end in themselves—this was the character of the literary or academic form. In the preceding

century it had a sort of Ciceronian, Boccaccian air. Now, being the essence itself of literature, it takes on a precious air, an ostentation of strangeness, a striving after subtlety in the conception or in the turn of the sentences—we quoted some examples from Pietro Aretino. Every writer of this time, even the most simple of them, has a touch of Aretino. And when the effort at preciosity seemed too fatiguing, they sank without more ado into wordiness and phrase-making, the style known as "flowery." These were the two forms of decadence in literature: Pietro Aretino, as we saw, had traces of both of them. In the literary academies they held the field absolutely. And the members of these academies burnt incense to themselves, applauded themselves, and conferred immortality on themselves. We have the "Ardent Ones," the "Prompt Ones," the "Intrepid Ones," the "Olympics," the "Galley Slaves," the "Stunned Ones," the "Insipid Ones," the "Obtuse Ones," the "Bewildered Ones." They acquired an artificial importance: many of their members were raised into great men, like Salvini, who was a learned man, but with gifts in no way proportionate to his fame. The crown of this frivolous literature was the riddles, the acrostics, the anagrams, and similar games for idle minds.

Though words merely as words can be made to exist artificially for a time in academies, they can never be a literature for the people. Words when they are used for expressing ideas are extremely powerful, especially when they come from the soul, and set in motion all the faculties of the reader's soul. But words that are empty sounds are dull and tiresome—sight, colours, music, gestures, are more effective. We can see why the makers of words, in spite of their wit and elegance, had only a small circle of influence, which moreover grew smaller and smaller, whereas the actors, the musicians, the singers, became extremely popular both in Italy and out of it. We can well imagine that the public preferred the comedies *a soggetto*, in which the conventional, old, monotonous foundation was reinvigorated by the improvised sallies of the actors and the clever mimicry,

to the academic plays of Fagiuoli. On the other hand, there was a great development in the song-like element in language, which was already so conspicuous in Tasso, Guarini, and Marino. The first requirement of verse and prose alike was sonority, melody; and writers composed their periods as if to the sound of music, as though a wave of melody were floating in their ears. A part of the rhetoric was declamation, a solemn, harmonious way of reciting. Words were no longer ideas, but were sounds, and they were often recited with meanings opposite their own, for the sake of the sound. We noticed this musical tendency of the new literature in Petrarch and Boccaccio, but with them it was part of their ideas and images, was in harmony with the rest; now it was the element to which everything else was subordinated. And things having reached this point, we can well understand that literature was dying from inanition—from want of blood and warmth. At last, being no longer anything but sound, it was replaced by music and by song, which attain these same effects, but more quickly and more vigorously. So in spite of the great supply of academic literature the popular form was musical drama, in which acting, scenery, songs, and music combined were able to work on the imagination more potently than insipid words, vacuous sonority, which had sunk into a mere accessory. Literature was dying, and music was being born.

It is true that music and poetry had never been separated. Lyrics, whether sacred or profane, were both sung and played, as well as the varieties of popular canzoni. In the theatre the choruses and interludes were not spoken, but sung. But later, when the drama became so completely insipid, and words so effete, the public ceased to be interested in the play, and cared only for the music. So instead of only a portion of the play's being sung, the whole of it was sung. And when music alone was not found to be enough, other and more effective means were resorted to for working on the senses and the imagination —magnificent and varied scenic effects, fantastic combinations of plot, and allegorical and mythological machinery. The fruit

of this corruption and dissolution of literature was musical drama or "opera," the form that was destined to so splendid a future.

The first type of musical drama was the *Orfeo*. Tasso and Marino and Guarini were all of them writers of musical drama, and the lyrical poetry of the *Seicento* was largely musical drama. Those *canzonette*, and all those languors of Phyllis and Amaryllis, were the preludes to Metastasio. The trills, the cadences, the variations, the balancing, the symmetries, the repeats, the whole apparatus of musical melody, were appearing in poetry. And words, being music and nothing else, had lost their reason for existing, and retired from the field, giving place to music and to song.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NEW SCIENCE

LITERATURE could never rise again till the national consciousness rose again. It had lived splendidly as negation, but the splendour had closed with Folengo and Aretino. When the movement of negation was arrested by the Council of Trent there arose a hypocritical and rhetorical affirmation, which barely concealed negation in one of the most harmful of its forms—indifference. In the utter stagnation of public and private life at that period the only thing that was really alive in literature was a soft idyllic lyricism, which dissolved at last into musical drama, making way for music.

But besides the negative movement there was also the affirmative movement of Machiavelli, the first reconstruction of consciousness, the new world as opposed to asceticism, the world discovered and illustrated by science. And it was here in this new world that literature was to look for its content, its motive, and its novelty. To accept it or to fight it was the same. The thing it needed at whatever cost was a faith: to struggle, poetize, live, and die for that faith.

The beginnings were favourable. Together with the new literature there had arisen a philosophical agitation in the universities and academies, an agitation independent of the reforming Catholic theology, or, to be more exact, in disguised opposition to the theology and the Aristotelianism that were still dominant in the schools. The preachers of this new doctrine were known as the "modern philosophers" or the "new philosophers"—we

saw how Tasso came under their influence in his youth. One of these new philosophers who were proclaiming the autonomy of reason and its independence of every authority of theologian or philosopher, disputing above all against Aristotle, was Bernadino Telesio, of the Academy of Cosenza, an academy already conspicuous for its tendency to the investigation of natural facts, and to free philosophizing, apart from the abstractions and forms of scholasticism. Others of these "new men," as Bacon called them, were Patrizi and Mario Nizzoli of Modena, who fought Aristotle and Plato equally, and shunned the scholastic jargon; it was they whom Leibnitz described as "*exemplum dictionis philosophae reformatae*"—"examples of the diction of the reformed philosophy." The new men abused their opponents as "pedants," and alternated insults with argumentations, as was usual in that day. This new form of philosophizing was based on the independence of philosophy in the face of faith and authority, the use of the experimental method, and the reinstatement of matter or Nature, cleansed of the dross of the supernatural and of everything connected with faith, by means of investigation. Philosophy and literature were moving forward at the same pace: Machiavelli and Ariosto were meeting on the same ground, each with his own means; the irony of Ariosto had its comment in the logic of Machiavelli.

As regards negation the new philosophy went too far; it rejected not only the pope but Catholicism, and not only Catholicism but Christianity, and not only Christianity but the life beyond the grave, and not only the life beyond the grave but even God. Not, as we have seen, that these things were denied in word or openly; on the contrary, the language used was full of oratorical precautions and was very obsequious indeed, more especially in Machiavelli, who handled it with the greatest mastery. Respectfully, with humble words and low obeisances, the things of religion were put aside as belonging to the priests, while their place was filled by the World, Nature, the Force of Things, Country, Glory—different elements with different ends.

At bottom it was humanism and naturalism, supported by reason and experience, taking their place in the world. This great movement of the spirit, which heralds the dawn of modern times, and so well deserves its name of "the Renewal," was most developed of all in the intellect of Italians. All the ideas of the Middle Ages, religious, political, and moral, were in part weakened and in part completely cancelled from the minds of Italians of culture, even of the priests, even of the popes, while the public indifference found its expression in the irony, the cynicism, and the humour of the literature. Now negation like this and universal indifference could of course never have produced a social and political organism; far from pointing to a new formation it was a symptom of near dissolution. In Italy the negation was not the outcome of strong affirmation, as with the Protestant reformers. The Reformation was provoked by the sight of the paganism and materialism of the Roman court; it was caused by a powerful religious and moral sentiment, supported by political feelings and interests.

The Reformation succeeded because its aims were concrete and limited, and also for the reason that it was rooted in the religious and moral feelings of the cultured classes. Moreover, the reformers, in fighting the pope and supporting the princes against the emperor, had known how to sink their private ambitions and interests. But in Italy the negation was purely intellectual; and the more the conclusions of the intellect were absolute, the weaker were the will and the power to accomplish them. The gap between real and ideal was too vast; even the veriest Utopia fell short of the advanced position reached by the intellect. So conclusions remained academic, and themes were merely rhetorical, with now and then some solitary investigation, amid the public indifference. Even the audacious ideas of Machiavelli went unnoticed. It is true that liberty of thought was not inscribed in the laws, but it existed in fact; Italians could philosophize freely and hold disputations on whatever subject they pleased, with only the risk of arousing the envy

of rivals, who now and then incited the pope against the new men. There is hardly a doubt that if the movement in Italy had been allowed to develop unhindered it would have stayed within the limits of social and political questions and in the middle ideas more near to reality, which Machiavelli, the most practical and positive of the new men, had already outlined. And Italians perhaps would have gained that *patria* he dreamed of, and a civil education of soul and body, and a national Church with a religion purged of the absurd and grotesque part of it that renders it contemptible to men of culture. But just at that moment came the foreign invasion, and Italy was to lose her political independence, and all her liberty of thought.

The victory won by the Reformation in various countries of Europe made the governors of Italy suspicious and uneasy, with the result that a fierce persecution was launched against the new men, whether heretics or philosophers, but most of all against the heretics, as being the more dangerous. Italians had the Council of Trent, and the Inquisition, and what was even worse, had the emasculated and hypocritical education by the Jesuits. The most daring of the thinkers went into exile; and there arose a new generation with a greater appearance of correctness and with a doctrine imposed officially that it was wiser not to dispute. "To save appearances" was the motto, and it sufficed. The result was a sceptical, sensual, indifferent society, rhetorical in its forms, and insipid at its base, with a literature to match. The orators and poets were extremely partial to lofty themes, such as patriotism, religion, virtue, education, generosity, pushing them to the last point of exaggerated heroism, for they had no connection at all with the seriousness and practice of life. But in spite of everything the movement of the intellect continued. Neither the Inquisition with its terrors, nor later the Jesuits with their wiles could arrest completely a movement that was rooted in a natural development of Italian life. But they were able to delay it considerably, so that more than a century was needed for it to gain a social importance.

There were men of learning with the reaction too. The difference was in this. In the men of the reaction speculative vigour and intellectual activity were suspended; the whole work of the mind was turned on the forms and accidents rather than on the substance, which was also the case with the literati. But the men of the opposition were engaged in a serious intellectual progress, and were moved by faith and spurred by passionate feeling. The victory, of course, was entirely with the reaction; the whole of the forces of society were solidly behind it, whereas the others, chased as they were from the schools and academies and curbed by the Inquisition and the censor and prevented from expanding, were the tiniest minority, so small as to be barely noticeable in that vast social movement. So the reaction was deprived of the struggle that is necessary for the sharpening of intellect and the quickening of feeling, and remained Arcadian and stationary. Activity of intellect and ardour of faith were the privilege of the opposition. Whenever in the literature of that day we light on a movement of the intellect, we invariably find the opposition, in a greater or lesser degree, and often involuntary and barely realized by the writer himself. A history of that Italian opposition has still to be worthily written. Yet there were our fathers, there was beating the heart of Italy, there were the germs of the new life. Italian life was dying from an empty consciousness, and the history of this Italian opposition is nothing else at bottom than the slow reconstruction of the national consciousness. It was empty of everything—of God, of country, of family, of humanity, of civilization. It was empty even of negation, which is life of a kind; and worse, there was even a pompous simulation of the noblest sentiments, with utter indifference beneath it. So in looking for men of consciousness in that Italy of Arcadia—for men, that is, who had life in them, for men who had faith and conviction and love of humanity and of right, and zeal for truth and for knowledge —we must turn to those "new men" of Bacon, those first saints

of the modern world, the men who carried in their breasts a new Italy and a new literature.

The first to meet us is the great figure of Giordano Bruno. He began as a poet, and an ardent admirer of the poet Tansillo. Being well endowed with wit and imagination, he had all that was required at that time for the making of a poet; Tansillo himself had no more, nor later Marino, nor the other lyrists of the *Seicento*. But Bruno had weightier faculties, which found their nourishment in his philosophical studies. He had vision—the thing that is known as "intuition," a faculty that none can deny except the people who happen to be without it. And he possessed in a marked degree the synthetic faculty; the faculty, that is, of being able to look at things from a lofty height and to seek the one in the different. He was less strong in analysis; instead of the patience and sagacity of investigation he reveals a sophistical acuteness that makes him the last of the scholastics in argumentation and the precursor of the Marinists in colouring. He uses imagination to help out analysis, skipping the middle ideas, allowing his fancy to outstrip his vision, and trying to divine the things that were impossible to arrive at by cognition in that stage of its development: often his ideas are images and his speculations fantasies and allegories. He had a god in his breast, the stirring, agitating god that every genius has felt within him. The god of Bruno was philosophical, but crossed and confused by poetic forms that obscured his vision and inclined him to construct the world for himself rather than to speculate on its construction. We can well imagine the vivid impression made on his mind by philosophical studies. His culture was wide and serious; he knew the Greek philosophers intimately, but was also at home with the thinkers of his day; above all he admired the "divine" Cusano, and Telesio he reverenced. His favourite philosopher of all was Pythagoras; he affirms that Plato was jealous of him. To a man of his poetic, contemplative nature, Aristotle was of course bound to be

repugnant in the highest degree; he speaks of him with hatred, almost in the tone of a personal enemy. What must the feelings of this youth be as to the whole of that scholastico-theologico-Aristotelian edifice, scrapped by the new men but still erect in the schools, the basis of a corrupt, hypocritical society? The first movement of his spirit was negative and polemical, a denial of the accepted opinions of his day, combined with a bitter contempt for the customs and institutions of society. Persecutions were rife at that time; the best intellects were leaving the country; the Inquisition was in force. The actual circumstances of Bruno's leaving his convent and going into exile are unknown. But indeed very little was needed in that day for a person to be branded a heretic; we have only to remember the terrors of the unfortunate Tasso. And Bruno was not only a friar but a Dominican friar. He fled to Geneva, where he met with a pope more intolerant even than the Pope of Rome. He fled to Toulouse, and to Lyons, and to Paris. In Paris he enjoyed a brief truce and published his first book. This was in 1582. He was about thirty at the time.

And what was this first book? It was a comedy—*Il candelaio* (*The Candle-bearer*). He wrote it as a vent for his poetic and literary gifts. The scene is laid in Naples; the material is the vulgar ordinary society of the day; the conception is the eternal war between the dupes and the sharpers, the spirit is that of the deepest contempt and dislike of society, and the form is cynical. It has the basis, in fact, of Italian comedy from Boccaccio to Aretino. There is only the difference that the others, and especially Aretino, are in the very thick of the world they have created, whereas Bruno is detached from his, and above it. He calls himself "*accademico di nulla accademia, detto il Fastidito*"—"an academician of no academy at all, known as the Disgusted One." In the classical era of the academies his claim to glory is the fact that he is not academic. The key to his mind is that word "disgusted." Society no longer inspired him

with anger, but only with disgust; he felt that he had nothing to do with it, and was above it. Here is what he says of himself:

The author, if ever you should see him, has a bewildered look on his face, as of a man who is forever contemplating the pains of Hell . . . if he laughs it is only because others are laughing. As a rule you will see him disgusted, restive, and strange.

He saw the world as a game of empty appearances, leading to nothing. The moral of his comedy is this: there is "nothing secure anywhere; there is plenty of trafficking and much that is wrong, little that is beautiful and nothing that is good." What interest could the scene of the world possess to a man who before he ever begins his comedy can reflect like this?

Time takes away everything, and gives everything. All things change, nothing is annihilated. One thing only exists that can never change. Only the One is eternal and abides eternally One, the Same, and Identical. With this philosophy my mind is enlarged and my intellect magnified.

But unfortunately the thing that is not enlarged is his sense of poetry. Poetry is exactly the opposite; poetry is the giving of value to even the smallest phenomena of life. A man made on this pattern was intended from the beginning to speculate on the One, the Same, and the Identical, but not to make works of art. He never goes down into his world, but is always outside of it, seeing it in its generalities. This is his picture of the lover:

You will see in a lover sighs, tears, listlessness, tremblings, dreams, surliness, and a heart roasted in the fire of love; and pensiveness, absent-mindedness, cholers, melancholy, envy, quarrels, the hoping least when desiring most.

And he keeps it up; throwing together the commonplaces of rhetoric and the phrases in vogue at that time:

And you will meet with . . . "my heart, my blessing, my life, my sweet wound," and "death, god, divinity, hillock, repose, hope, fount, spirit, star of sunset," and "a lovely sun which never sets to my soul"; and you will meet with "cruel hand which has the keys of my heart,"

and "my enemy and sweet warrior," and "the target of all my thoughts," and "beautiful are my own loves but not those of others."

He is giving us the old phraseology of the Petrarchists, but is bored with it, so is serving it at random. We feel the critic, but not the comic poet who lives in his own creations and takes joy from them. Even the title, *Il candelaio,* leads him to the philosophical conclusion that the candle he bears is destined to illumine the "shadows of the ideas." He constructs his comic world in the same way that he constructs his universe, looking at the appearances, the essence, and the generality. For instance:

Here in front of your eyes are sluggard princes, feeble frames, empty thoughts, idle hopes, breaking of hearts, uncovering of cords, false surmises, madnesses, poetic frenzies, disordered fancies, wanderings of mind, unbridled faith, senseless cares, fitful studies, sowings out of their season, and the glorious fruits of madness.

His bent of mind prevents him from individualizing, as would an artist; what he does is to generalize. And he throws together things that are essentially different (for in the greatest differences he always finds the Same and the One) and profound antitheses, similitudes, and synonyms, and all with a brio and novelty of connections that show us the extraordinary acuteness of his mind. In reading Bruno we are plunged forward into the full *Seicento* and are able to guess at Marino and Achillini. Here is a period to his lady:

O thou, the tiller of the field of my soul, when thou hast broken the hardness of the glebe and hast softened the soil with divine water drawn from the fount of thy spirit, so that the dusty veil brought by the wind of fickleness may no longer trouble the eyes of this person or of that, thou dost quench the thirst of my intellect.

It might almost be one of those periods which Pietro Aretino threw on the market. And the same faults are in the play itself. The characters are all of them conceived in the abstract, so are stiff and crude, without shades or half-lights; and the cynical nudity with which he presents them is accentuated by the lan-

guage, which is rough and careless—a botched Italian mixed with Neapolitanisms and Latinisms.

The chief characters of the comedy (who are three simpletons, and are all of them fooled and punished) embrace life in the three most salient of its forms, namely, literature, science, and love, in their comic degeneration—literature as pedantry, science as imposture, and love as bestiality. The best-conceived of the three is the pedant, who in the end is beaten and robbed. And this same pedant of the comedy, under different names, continues his appearance in the philosophical works of Bruno, and in fact is a substantial part of them. Bruno's speculations are developed in the form of dialogue; and facing the philosophical speculations there is always the Aristotelian pedant, representative of common sense or the opinions of the crowd; he plays the part of buffoon and is shown as extremely solemn and magisterial to give an added point to the fun. But besides this leaning of Bruno to the comic he has also a leaning to the literary, the allegorical, and the fantastic, which inclines him to envelop his concepts in images and inventions, as for instance in his *Asino cillenico* and *Spaccio della bestia trionfante.* In these he has something of the air of Lucian, while in the other, more severely philosophical dialogues, he inclines towards Plato. The dialogue *Degli eroici furori* reminds us of Dante's *Vita Nuova;* it is a string of sonnets, each accompanied by its own commentary, which sets forth in general terms a doctrine on enthusiasm and inspiration. Bruno's content is in great part new, but his literary forms are not a part of the content and its actual fruit, but are only hung onto it; they are used-up forms, corrupted by age, so are wanting in grace and inner warmth. The only reason that we are not disgusted and bored by them lies in the acute mind and intellectual activity of the writer, who never allows us to stagnate but is always surprising us afresh with his salty wit and sharp thrusts, and with antitheses, conceits, and finesses, which are the bad taste of men of talent. Yet this man, enveloped as he was in the old and exhausted

forms of tradition (the forms that pointed to a near dissolution of Italian literature), in his philosophical speculations was as free as air. And he constructed a new content, which later was to generate a new criticism and a new literature. The most explicit condemnation of Bruno's literary forms and prejudices is Bruno's philosophy.

It is not the intention here to analyze his philosophical system: this is a history of literature and not of philosophy. But all the same one cannot avoid some mention of ideas and tendencies that had a decisive influence on human progress.

In the early writings of Bruno, which are all in Latin, we meet with the youth who is standing on the threshold of the world of cognitions and is trying to summarize them and construct the encyclopaedic tree. It had already been attempted by Raymond Lully as an aid to memory. Bruno makes over the work of Lully, establishing categories and distinctions, mnemonic notes or general ideas, around which he groups the particular ideas, such as "sky," "tree," "wood," and so forth. He calls these notes "seals," to which he adds the "*sigillus sigillorum*," that is, the primary ideas from which the others derive. So great was his enthusiasm for this "Lullian architecture" (the title of one of his works) that he calls it the "art of arts," declaring that he found in it "*quidquid per logicam, metaphysicam, cabalam, naturalem magiam, artes magnas atque breves theoretice inquiritur*"—"whatever inquires into the great and the lesser arts by means of logic, metaphysics, the cabbala, natural magic." But all he had attained to as yet was the mechanism of science; for categories and distributions under headings and according to material are nothing but formal and arbitrary distinctions, and resemble one of those dictionaries done into categories as an aid to memory. But the ordinary person thinks them immensely important, for he imagines that if once he has learnt these categories he will have mastered all the sciences. It is said that when Bruno was in Paris a number of people hung around him in hope of picking up the secret of becoming doctors

in a few months, and afterwards bore him a grudge for their disillusionment; and in fact this enmity of the common people is supposed to have been the reason for his flight from Paris and his going to London.

In London he continued his Lullian studies and published his *Explicatio triginta sigillorum*, with a preface entitled "*Recens et completa ars reminiscendi.*" These mechanical and formal studies already reveal an organic principle, which announces the great thinker. In the crucible of his speculative mind the art of remembering is transformed into a real art of thinking—into a logic that is also an ontology. Philosophers are recommended to read his work *De umbris idearum*, which he published in Paris in 1582, because here they will find the germ of the ideas that were fermenting in his brain. Among those strange mnemonics is developed this very capital concept: that the series of the intellectual world corresponds to the series of the natural world, because the beginning of spirit and of Nature is one, and thought and being are one; and that therefore to think is to figure within ourselves what Nature represents outside of ourselves—to copy within ourselves the writings of Nature. To think is to see, and the organ of thought is the inner eye, which is denied to the inept. So logic is not an argumentation but a contemplation, an intellectual intuition not of the ideas, which are in God and a substance outside of cognition, but of the shadows or reflections of the ideas in the senses and in the reason. Bruno speaks with a contempt equal to Dante's of the vulgar who are lacking in the inner light, the vision of the true and the good reflected in the reason and in Nature; and he prefaces his book with the protest:

Umbra profunda sumus, ne nos vexetis, inepti;	In this deep shade trouble us not, ye fools;
non vos, sed doctos tam grave quaerit opus:	Not you, but wise folk, so weighty a need requires:

which in plain English is simply: "If you don't see it, the worse for you, but keep away and don't bother me."

In this new concept of Bruno's science was renewed in its substance and its method. The theologico-philosophical dualism of the Middle Ages, the dualism that led to the political dualism of pope and emperor, is replaced by an absolute unity. And the mechanical formalism of the scholastico-Aristotelian School is replaced by an organic method, or in other words by a method derived from the essence itself of science. This concept was the keynote to Bruno's speculation.

In London he sustained a disputation on the system of Copernicus, which he narrates at length, and very comically, in the *Cena delle ceneri*, the *Supper on the Evening of Ash Wednesday*. Later he developed his ideas more amply in the dialogue of the *Causa, principia e una*, and in the other on the *Infinitum, universum e mundus*, which were published in London in 1584. These three books are his metaphysics.

In Bruno's speculation the thing that strikes us first is the rehabilitation, or rather the glorification, of matter, of the matter that had been condemned as sin. Bruno was clearly conscious of what he was doing; for he puts the current opinions on the subject of matter into the mouth of the Aristotelian pedant. The pedant here is Polinnio, and this is the description of him:

> He is one of those men who will make you a fine construction, or produce an elegant little epistle, or filch a beautiful phrase from the cook-shop of Cicero, bringing Demosthenes to life again, and Tully and Sallust. He is an Argus whom nothing escapes—not a syllable nor an expression. . . . The speeches are all examined and discussed, with: "These savour, for instance, of a poet, these of a court writer, these of an orator; this one is grave, this other is light, that is sublime, that other is *humile dicendi genus;* this oration has a harsh sound, and would have been better written in the manner that I will show you. This is an infantile writer with but small love for antiquity, *non redolet arpinatem, desipit Latium.* Now here again is an expression that is not Tuscan, it has not been taken from Boccaccio, Petrarch, and the other authors of proved merit. . . ." And having triumphed like this he is pleased with himself, being always particularly pleased with his own words: he is a Jupiter looking from a height on the lives of

other men and speculating benignantly on their conditions: these men are subject, alas! to so many errors, to so many calamities, so many miseries, so many useless fatigues. There is only himself who is happy, who is living the celestial life; more especially when contemplating his own divinity in the mirror of a scrapbook, a dictionary, a *Calepino*, a lexicon, a *Cornucopia*, a Nizzolio. . . . If he happens to laugh he calls himself Democritus; if he happens to complain he calls himself Heraclitus; if he disputes he calls himself Chrysippus; if he discourses he calls himself Aristotle; if he conjures up chimeras he calls himself Plato; if he construes Virgil he is himself a Maro. Here he corrects Achilles, approves Aeneas, reproves Hector, and cries out against Pyrrhus, condoles with Priam, argues against Turnus, excuses Dido, commends Hecate, and finally, while "*verbum verbo reddit*," threading his way through outlandish synonyms, "*nihil divinum a se alienum putat.*" So haughtily does he step from his professor's rostrum that any one would think him a man who has ordered the heavens, regulated senates, subdued armies, and reformed worlds, and who is prevented only by the corrupt times from doing in fact what now he is doing with opinions. *O tempora, O mores!* How rare are those who comprehend the nature of the participles, of the adverbs, of the conjunctions!

If Polinnio were as true and alive when he speaks as he is in this portrait he would be immortal. But the artist in Bruno is inferior to the critic, and Polinnio discoursing is inferior to Polinnio described with such felicitous, sarcastic humour. He knows by heart everything that has ever been written on the subject of matter; and all by himself, "*ita, inquam, solus ut minime omnium solus*"—"Thus, said I, alone, as least of all alone"—as though standing on his professor's rostrum, he pours us out a lesson, or rather, as he says of it himself, a "nervous oration."

So matter, which is declared by the prince of the Peripatetics . . . not less than by the divine Plato and others to be "now chaos, now *hyle* or *silva*, or power or mass or aptitude, now *privationi admixtum*, now *peccati causa*, now *ad maleficium ordinata*, now *per se non ens*, then *per se non scibile*, now *per analogiam ad formam cognoscibile*, then *tabula rosa*, now *indepictum*, then *subiectum*, now *substratum*, then *substerniculum*, now *campus*, then *infinitum*, now *indeterminatum*, then

prope nihil, now *neque quid, neque quale, neque quantum, tandem . . .* is called 'a woman': *tandem, inquam, ut una complectantur omnia vocula . . . 'foemina' dicitur.*" [1]

Well, this despised matter, this thing that Polinnio contemptuously calls "a woman," "the cause of sin," the *tabula rasa*, and the *prope nihil*, and the *neque quid, neque quale, neque quantum*, is proclaimed by Bruno to be immortal and infinite. Forms pass; but matter is immutable in its substance:

In Nature the forms vary infinitely and succeed each other: but matter is always the same matter. That which was the seed becomes the plant; the plant becomes corn in the ear; the corn, bread; the bread, bile; bile, blood; blood again seed, an embryo, a man, a corpse, earth, stone, or other thing, and so through natural forms. So of necessity a thing must exist that in itself is not stone, nor earth, nor corpse, nor man, nor embryo, nor blood, but which from being blood becomes embryo, and receives the being of an embryo, and after it has been embryo, receives the being of a man, making itself into a man.

Forms pass and matter remains, so Democritus and the Epicureans declare that "whatever is not body is nothing; therefore they would convince us that matter alone is the substance of things, that matter is the divine essence, and that the forms are nothing but accidental dispositions of matter, as the Cyrenaics, Cynics, and Stoics maintain." And Bruno had begun with this same opinion, an opinion widely shared by many of his contemporaries, especially among physicians. This doctrine appears to him to be "fundamentally more in keeping with Nature than those of Aristotle." So Bruno began as a materialist pure and simple. But when he came to consider the question "more maturely," as he puts it, he was unable any longer to confuse the active power of everything with the passive power of everything, the active power of everything, which makes, with the passive power of everything, which is made—form with matter. So he came to the conclusion that in Nature there are two substances, the one being form and the other matter—the

[1] Scholastic terms.

"power to make," and the "power to be made." So it follows that in the scale of things "there is one intellect, and one only, which gives being to everything, which the Pythagoreans . . . called the 'giver of forms'; one sole and formal principle, which creates itself and gives life to everything, and is also called by the Pythagoreans the 'fount of forms,' a material from which everything is made, and everything is formed, which is called by all the 'receptacle of forms.'"

In regard to the intellect, "the first and excellent principle," "we can know nothing except by means of vestiges," intellect being divine substance, infinite, and far removed from those effects which are the ultimate limits of the course of our discursive faculty.[2] So God must be left to faith and revelation; and according to theology and to all the reformed philosophies, the wish to rush into definitions of things that are above the sphere of our intelligence, is a characteristic of profane and turbulent spirits. God "is all that can be"; in God power and act are the same thing, absolute possibility, absolute act. Man is what he is able to be, but he is not everything that can be. The being Who is everything that can be is One Who includes everything within Himself. He is everything that is, and everything that can be; He is the being in Whose existence is included every being. In God every power and every act is fulfilled, united and one; in other things they are only explicate, dispersed, and multiplied. God is the power of powers, the act of acts, the life of lives, the soul of souls, the being of beings. So Bruno calls the Revealer "He Who is," and the "First," the "Very New," for "neither is He old, nor yet new," and says of Him: "*Sicut tenebrae eius, ita et lumen eius*"—"As is His light, so is His shadow." Being absolute act and absolute power, He can never be grasped by the intellect unless by negation: He cannot be understood, neither in so far as He can

[2] Many of the words and phrases in this discussion of Bruno's philosophy are his own, but quotation marks are generally omitted, as they confuse the text.—Translator.

be all, nor in so far as He is all. So it follows that the highest principle is excluded from the sphere of philosophy. Bruno, in constructing the world, renounces the highest contemplation, which is above Nature, which to him who does not believe is impossible and null. The people who are not illumined by supernatural light judge everything to be body, either simple, like the ether, or else composite, like the stars; and they do not seek for divinity outside of the infinite world and the infinite things, but within these. This is the only difference between the "faithful theologian," and the "true philosopher." And Bruno concludes: "I believe you have understood what I wished to say." The Middle Ages were based on the supernatural and the extra-mundane; as "faithful theologian" Bruno admits this basis; but as "true philosopher" he looks for divinity not outside the world but within it. It is really, at bottom, the completest negation possible of asceticism and the Middle Ages.

Leaving aside the contemplation of the first principle, there are two substances: form which makes and matter from which it is made, the two constituent principles of things.

Form in its absoluteness is the "soul of the world," whose "most real, proper, potential part" is the universal intellect. Just as our intellect produces the rational species, so the intellect or soul of the world produces the natural species, and fills up everything and illumines the universe. As Virgil says, "*totamque infusa per artus, Mens agitat molem et toto se corpore miscet*"—"I . . . now tremble at each breath of wind, by every sound am stirred." This intellect which the Platonists called the "maker of the world," and Bruno calls "*artefice interno*"—"the inner artificer"—which "infuses and brings something of itself into matter . . . produces the All." It is the universal and substantial form innate in matter, because it does not work around matter and outside of it but shapes matter from within, "just as the seed or root from within sends forth the stem, and the stem the branches, the branches the formed twigs, and these the buds; from these the flowers and fruit are

formed, figured, and patterned from within." Nature works from the centre, as it were, of its subject or matter. So form, if as efficient cause it is extrinsic to matter, because it is "not part of the thing produced," in regard to the act of its operation is intrinsic, because it operates in the breast of matter. It is cause; in other words, it is outside of things; but at the same time it is principle, that is to say, is innate in things. It is not a question of creation, but of generation, or, as Bruno puts it, of "explication."

Form is in everything, everything has soul: to live is to have form, to have soul. All things are alive. If life exists in all things, then soul is the form of all things: it presides over matter, it rules in the composites, it takes effect in the composition and consistency of the parts. So form is immortal and one, not less than matter. But, according to the diversity of the dispositions of matter, and according to the faculty of the active and passive principles of matter, it produces different figurations. These figurations are exterior forms, which are the only ones that vary and are annulled, "because they are not things themselves but are only pertaining to things; they are not substances but are only accidents or circumstances of the substances." As the poet puts it: "Everything changes, nothing dies," and as Solomon says: "The thing that has been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new under the sun." Vain therefore are the terrors of death, and still more vain are the terrors of the "insatiable Charon, who steals away from us, or empoisons, all that is sweetest in our lives."

Machiavelli had already spoken of a "spirit of the world," immortal and immutable, the maker of history in accordance with the laws that compose it. In Bruno's speculations this spirit of history becomes the "maker of the world," his "inner artificer of the world."

Facing absolute form is absolute matter, meaning matter in itself, distinct from form. Just as form by itself excludes every

conception of matter, so matter by itself excludes every conception of form. Matter is "shapeless," it is a passive power; "pure, naked, without action, without virtue or perfection," "*prope nihil*": it is the indifferent, the One and the Same, the all and the nothing. And precisely for the reason that form is in everything, it is in nothing singly. And because it is in nothing singly it is not body; it "has no dimensions," is indivisible, subject to corporeal and incorporeal things. If it had certain dimensions, a certain being, a certain figuration, certain differences, it would not be absolute.

But form and matter in their absoluteness, as having lives of their own, extrinsic one to the other, are not real but are vocal and nominal distinctions; they are logical and intellectual distinctions, because "the intellect is dividing that which in Nature is undivided," which was the vice of Aristotle and the scholastics, who populated the world with logical entities, almost as though these entities were substances. On many occasions Bruno makes fun of philosophers of this type, who multiply the entities, even imagining "Socrateity," to be the essence of Socrates, and "woodeneity" the essence of wood. This distinction between logical entities and real entities is in itself a great advance. Not that the logical distinctions are devoid of importance; they are a series that corresponds to the series of things, are the generalities of Nature. The mistake is to consider them as living or real, believing, for example, that form and matter are two substances, distinct from each other, just because we can, and in fact we must, conceive of them as distinct.

In Nature or reality form and matter are a single substance. The one is implied in the other; if you postulate one, you postulate the other. There is no such thing as form as distinct from matter; form existing by itself is a logical abstraction. And similarly matter that is empty and formless is an abstraction: matter may be likened to "a pregnant woman, who has the germ of life in her womb." There is no form that does not contain in itself "a something of matter," and there is no matter that

does not contain in itself its formal or divine principle. Bruno says: "The entity which logically is divided into that which is and that which can be, physically is undivided, united, and one." So power is coincident with act, and matter with form. Jupiter, "the essence from which everything has its being," is "intimately" in everything; "from which it follows that all things are in each thing, and everything is one."

Therefore matter is not nothing, is not "*prope nihil*," as Aristotle declares it. Matter, on the contrary, contains within itself every form that exists, and produces it from its womb by the work of Nature; and Nature is the "internal power or maker: if it were external, it would be artificial." If the formal principle were external one would be able to say of it that "it did not contain within itself any form or act whatsoever." But it contains them all; it expels them all from its womb. So matter is not "that in which things are made," but "that from which every natural species produces itself." Bruno places Moses with the Pythagoreans, Anaxagoras, and Democritus when he says, "Let the earth produce its animals," almost as though he were saying, "Let matter produce them." So the "forms" and "entelechies" of Aristotle and the fantastic ideas of Plato, the ideal seals separate from matter are worse than monsters; they are "chimeras and vain fantasies." The fount of actuality is matter; it is not only power but is act; it is always and forever the same and immutable, eternally static. Matter itself does not change; matter is the thing around which, and within which, there is change. The composition of matter changes, but not matter itself. It is stupid to say that matter desires to have form. How can "the fount of forms" desire what it contains already in itself? No one desires what he already possesses. And therefore, in death, we are wrong to say that form vanishes or leaves matter behind it; we ought rather to say that matter is rejecting that particular form, to take on itself another form. Poor Gervasio, who has the part of ordinary opinions or common sense in the dialogue, when he sees not only the Aristo-

telian opinions of Polinnio smashed up, but so much else too, breaks out with, "And now not only are the castles of Polinnio knocked down, but the castles of others than Polinnio."

Individuals are innumerable, yet everything is one; and to know this unity is the scope and aim of all the natural philosophies and contemplations; not attaining to the supreme principle, which is above speculation, but to the supreme monad, or atom, or unity, the soul of the world, the act of everything, the power of everything, everything in everything.

This unique substance is "the universe, one, infinite, immobile." It is not matter because it is not figured, nor capable of figuration: neither is it form, because it does not give shape or figure to a particular substance, because it is everything, the greatest, the one, the universe. It is so much form that it is not form; it is so much matter that it is not matter; it is so much soul that it is not soul. It is everything indifferently and yet is one; for the universe is one. In this substance everything is centre; the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere. But it is also true that the circumference is everywhere, and the centre is nowhere. There is no vacuum, for everything is full. It is that which can be body, and that which can contain something, and in whose breast the atoms are. So the universe is of infinite dimensions and the worlds are innumerable. The final cause of the world is perfection; and the infinite worlds correspond to the infinite grades of perfection; they are like unto great animals, with their organs and their development; and one of them is the earth. To contain these innumerable worlds an infinite space is required, the etherial region; the worlds move in this region, so are not fixed or nailed. It is useless to seek an external force that moves them, because all are moved by an inner principle, which is their own soul.

The starting-point of Bruno's philosophy is a noticeable reaction against the supernatural and the extra-mundane. He rejects the world of the Middle Ages, populated by universals: he rejects it in the name of Nature. God himself, says Bruno, if

He is not Nature, is the nature of Nature: if He is not the soul of the world, He is the soul of the soul of the world; and in that case He is a question for faith, not a part of cognition. So the basis of his doctrine is the *intrinsicality* of the formal or divine principle in Nature. Each individual person possesses God within himself; and the true and the good are shining within us not by means of spiritual light, but by a natural light. It is naturalism reacting against the supernatural.

People who are illumined from above by supernatural light, as for instance the prophets, he describes as "asses" or "ignoramuses." In his *Asino cillenico* he makes an ironical panegyric on people of that type. Between the people who are illumined by supernatural light and those who are illumined by natural light, or in other words, who perceive things by their own virtue and not by the virtue of others, there is the same difference that exists "between the ass that carries the sacraments and the holy things themselves." The former are vases or instruments, whereas the latter are active and efficient principles; the former have a greater dignity because they contain the Divinity, the latter are worthy in themselves, and are themselves divine. The condition of faith he calls "asininity": if a person believes, he need not know. And the reward of asininity is life eternal.

He breaks out humorously:

> Try, try to be asses, you who are men. . . . [Thus], devout and patient, [you will be] companions of the angelic choirs. . . . And you who are asses already . . . study, plan, and endeavour always to proceed . . . from good to better, so that you may arrive . . . at last at that dignity which is attained not by knowledge and effort, however great . . . but by faith. If . . . you continue to be such . . . you will find yourselves written in the Book of Life, and will obtain grace in the Church Militant, and glory in the Church Triumphant, in which God lives and reigns throughout all the ages.

And to end this facetious outburst he gives us a "very pious" sonnet in praise of asses, with the conception that the "great Lord wants to make them triumphant." And not only is the ass

triumphant, but idleness also, because eternal happiness is won not by "science," nor by "works," but by "faith." And *otium*, idleness, too has its panegyric; the following syllogism is a specimen of it:

The gods are gods because they are very happy; the happy are happy because they have no care nor labour; those who do not move nor change have no care nor labour; the majority of these are idle: and therefore the gods are gods because they are idle.

A syllogism with a great deal of sense in it, if we pierce beneath its frivolous surface. Momo, the divine censor, is puzzled by it; he says that "having learnt his logic from Aristotle he has not learnt to answer arguments *in quarta figura*." Idleness, as is natural, makes a eulogy on the Golden Age, its own particular realm, and quotes the lovely lines of Tasso:

legge aurea e felice,
che Natura scolpí: "s' ei piace, ei lice."

The golden and happy law that Nature engraved: "*Si libet, licet.*"

And he winds up with the following exhortation:

Lasciate l' ombre, ed abbracciate il vero,
non cangiate il presente col futuro.
Voi siete il veltro che nel rio trabocca,
mentre l' ombra desia di quel c' ha in bocca.
Aviso non fu mai di saggio e scaltro,
perder un ben per acquistarne un altro.
A che cercate sí lungi diviso,
se in voi stessi trovate il paradiso?

Leave the shadows and embrace the substance; change not the present for the future. You are like the dog in the fable that let the meat fall into the river while he desired the shadow of that which he held in his mouth. It was never yet the counsel of a wise or shrewd person to lose one good in order to get another. Why do you go so far off to search for a Paradise when you have found a Paradise in yourselves?

Idleness and ignorance belong to the ascetic monastic life, as Bruno knew from his own experience. He makes one of his characters say to Jupiter:

"[Liberty] . . . when it is idle is certain to be quarrelsome and vain; just as the eye that does not see is vain, and the hand that does

not handle is vain. . . . Men in the . . . Golden Age, because of their idleness of mind, were not more virtuous than the beasts are now, and perhaps were more stupid than many of the beasts of today."

Bruno rejects that life of idleness (which was known as "golden" but which he calls "empty") and never mentions it without an air of scoffing. He pursues the supernatural with ridicule of both its principles and its consequences.

According to the morals of Bruno natural light is given to the soul by divine love, or the formal principle inherent in matter, which beautifies matter. To love matter *qua* matter is stupid and vulgar. He quarrels with Petrarch and the Petrarchans for praising women for idleness and display of wit. He says that in the same way that others "sang the praises of the fly, the scarab, the donkey, Silenus, Priapus, the poets of our day are aping them when they sing as they do of chamber-pots, bagpipers, beans, beds, lies, dishonour, ovens, hammers, famine, the plague." The object of heroic love is the divine and the formal: the divine beauty "is first communicated to souls . . . and from them, or rather through them, to the bodies. A true affection is the one that loves the body or corporeal beauty only in so far as it is an indication of the beauty of the spirit. Indeed, the thing that leads us to love the body is a certain spirituality that we see in it, which is known as 'beauty.' This beauty is not a question of major or minor dimensions, nor of this or that colour or shape, but rather of a certain harmony or accord between the parts and the colours." Love awakens in the soul the natural light or intellectual vision, the light of the intellect, and holds it in a state of contemplation or abstraction, so that it seems to be insane or frenzied, as though possessed by the divine spirit. This madness is not ordinary insanity, but a divine frenzy, by which the soul is converted, like Actaeon, into the thing it is seeking: it is seeking God, and so it becomes God. And having brought the divine to life within itself, there is no need to look for it outside of itself. So it is truly said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us; and the divine dwells in man

by reason of the intellectual vision. Not every one is gifted with this vision, for not every one has heroic love; men as a rule are governed by the imagination, which holds them to inferior things, instead of being governed by the mind, which raises them to sublime things. The ordinary man conceives of love in his own image,

fanciullo il credi, perché poco intendi;
perché ratto ti cangi, ei par fugace;
per esser orbo tu, lo chiami cieco.

calling him a child, because thou thyself hast little understanding; changing easily thyself, thou think'st him fugitive; being blind thyself, thou call'st him blind.

Heroic love is the quality of superior natures, of men who are called "insane" not because they do not know, but because they "super-know"—they know more than the ordinary person, and reach up higher by reason of their greater intellect.

So divine vision or contemplation is not idle and extrinsic, as with the mystics and ascetics: God is in us, and to possess God is to possess ourselves. And God does not come to us from the outside, but is given to us by the force of the intellect and the will, acting reciprocally one on the other. The intellect, aroused by love, acquires the power of vision, and contemplates; and the will is made vigorous by the contemplation and is doubled in strength. It is the concept expressed by Bruno in the formula, "I will to will." Contemplation is resolved in action. So life is not ignorance and not idleness, but is "intelligence and the mediating act of love." It is really the Dantesque formula reintegrated here by Bruno: the formula, "to understand and to act." The greater the contrarieties and necessities of life, the intenser grows the will. Because love, being the union and friendship of opposites, seeks concord in contrast. Mind is unity; imagination is movement, is diversity; and between the two is the rational faculty, composed of all things, in which the one concurs with the multitudinous, the same with the diverse, the moving with the static, the inferior with the superior. In the same way that the gods, after passing into lower and alien forms,

were wont to return to being gods, impelled by the feeling of their own nobility, so the frenzied and heroic man, raising himself on the wings of intellect to the divine beauty and goodness he has conceived within himself, discards his lower form of subject, and attains to divinity:

Da suggetto piú vil divegno un dio. . . .
Mi cangio in Dio da cosa inferiore.

From vilest subject I become a god. . . . From being an inferior thing I change myself into God.

To "change oneself into God" means the raising of oneself from the multitudinous to the One, from the diverse to the Same, from the individual to the universal, from forms that change to forms that are permanent, to seeing and desiring all in the One. Or, to put it into ordinary language, it means that God is truth and goodness written within us, and made visible by natural light; and to seek and to possess this truth is moral perfection, is the aim of life.

We have already noted that Bruno does not offer us a concordant and definitive system. Philosophy in Bruno is still in its state of fermentation. It has the vacillations of a man of the new times who yet is living in the past, and on the past. He fights the supernatural, but his natural light, his "*mens tuens*," his intellectual intuition, has a confused reminiscence of it. He contemplates God in the infinity of Nature, but is not able to disentangle himself from the extra-mundane God, and does not know what to do with this God who has stayed in his consciousness and is not in agreement with his speculations. At times this God is truth and substance and man is his shadow: "*Umbra profunda sumus.*" At times this God is inherent in Nature, or "if He is not Nature, He is the nature of Nature." In his mind there is a confusion of Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche. He fights scholasticism, but has kept a considerable number of its habits. He hates the mystics, and yet (if we are to judge by certain passages of his works) he is more mystical than a

Church Father. He rejects imagination—but has all its vices and all its forms. There is a want of harmony in his content and in his form. So there is nothing strange in the fact that even today philosophers are in violent disagreement as to the meaning of his system.

An immensely interesting subject of study is this inner history of Bruno's spirit—in its distinctions and subtleties, and in the oscillations of its development; here, in fact, is the true biography of the man. Nothing is more dramatic than the inner life of a great man: in his struggles with early education, with masters, with studies, with the times, with prejudices, in his imitations, reluctances, and resistances. A soul that is truly great will conquer in that struggle: his best-beloved tendencies, the things that give him his character and physiognomy, will stand out all the more strongly and clearly for that struggle. This physiognomy of Bruno we must look for in his waverings.

Above everything else he had the religious feeling, and in a marked degree. He had the feeling of the infinite, of the divine, which belongs inherently to contemplative natures. To read Bruno is to be conscious of a nearness to God. No need to ask whether God exists, or what He is; we feel Him within us, and close to us, in our consciousness and our nature. "God is more intimate to thee than thou art to thyself." But all religions, if we think of them, are nothing but the divine in different forms. And Bruno, looking at the question from this aspect, has left us a very notable analysis of religions, ancient and modern. Every noble nature has this love of the divine, this "heroic madness." And it gives us the power not only to seek for God as truth, but also to realize Him as goodness. Here is the root of science and morals.

These conceptions are not new: similar ideas are to be found in the Scriptures and the Church Fathers. But the spirit of them is new. In Bruno not only do "the heavens declare the glory of God," but the heavens are themselves divine by their own virtue, by their own intrinsic divineness. It is the rehabilitation

of matter or of Nature. No longer is Nature the enemy of the spirit, and execrated; Nature is divine, is the "*genitura di Dio*" —"the generation of God." It is the finite or concrete appearing in the infinite, and endowing it with reality, giving it a real existence. Or, as we should put it today, it is the living and knowable God who is taking the place of the abstract and solitary God. In Bruno the universe, eternal and infinite, is the life or the history of God.

This is the thing which was known as the "naturalism" of Bruno, or rather, of the century. It was the natural progress of the spirit from the abstractions of scholasticism or as Bruno puts it, "from beliefs and fantasies," seeking its basis in the concrete and the finite. It was the first cry of Nature discovering itself and proclaiming itself to be divine essence, one and the same with the Divinity. "Unity," says Bruno, "is both the generated and the generating, the producer and the produced." So great is his enthusiasm for divine Nature that he says:

> [The heroic soul] sees the amphitrite, the source of all the numbers and of all the species, and of all the reasons, which is the monad, the real essence of the being of all things; or, if he does not see it in its essence and in absolute light, he sees it in its seed, which is like unto it, which is its image; because, from the monad that is God, proceeds the monad that is Nature, the universe, the world, in which God is mirrored and contemplates His image;

in other words, the world in which God is understood and made intelligible.

This vision of God, the privilege of heroic souls, has nothing to do with supernatural light, or with faith or grace, or with ecstasy, or with anything else that is poured on the soul from without. God, made knowable in the world, becomes a matter for cognition, and the soul achieves its union with God by an act of its energy, by intrinsic virtue. The vision is intellectual; its organ is the mind, in which God or Truth is revealed as "in His own and living seat," to those who seek Him "with the reformed intellect and will," who seek Him, that is, by science.

Bruno's love of the divine, pushed to the point of "heroic madness," links him with the mystics. The literary naturalism of that age was simply materialism, which dissolved into licence and cynicism, to sink at last into deadening idyllic idleness, more harmful even than the ascetic idleness. The naturalism of Bruno, on the contrary, is not the divine materialized, but is matter deified. Matter in itself is vulgar, bestial; its sole value is in being divine. Its divineness is not infused or intrinsic, but is inherent and connatural. To seek it and make it effective is the worthy aim of life. And it is only revealed to those who seek it and conquer it by the work of the mind, illumined by heroic love. It is this that distinguishes vulgar souls from heroic souls. Many are called but few are chosen. "Many gaze attentively, few see." Bruno often speaks with so warm a religious fervour and so high and mystical an exaltation that he seems like a Dante or a Bonaventura.

But the mystics were merely contemplatives, whereas with Bruno there was no contemplation without action; and there was no action without contemplation. Pure contemplation is idleness; to contemplate is to act. Here we feel the man who is emerging from the convent and passing into militant life.

Folengo came out of his cloister denying God and spitting in the face of society; he was the last expression of a sceptical and materialistic century. In Bruno too there is satire and irony in plenty; he too has a negative and polemical side, developed with power and with wealth of imagination. But when it comes to speculation this negative side of him vanishes. His aim is entirely positive: his aim is to restore God to man, to restore the religious feeling and consciousness. What Savonarola attempted through faith and enthusiasm, Bruno attempts through science. He does not accept God as He is given to him by religion, nor does he lean upon faith, for he is not a believer. He wants to seek God and to find Him for himself, with the work of his own intellect, and the eye of the mind. And the God whom he finds, and whose infinite presence he feels in himself and

in the infinite worlds, and in every living being from the greatest to the least, instead of remaining as an abstract truth in his intellect, sinks deep into his consciousness and pervades the whole of his being—his intellect, his will, his feelings, and his love. He begins as an unbeliever; he ends as a believer. But his "credo" was generated and formed in his own spirit, not given to him from without. Nor did it seem too much even to perish at the stake for it in the prime of his manhood. Every one knows the words he spoke to his judges: "You who sentence me are in greater fear than I who am condemned." It would seem that his greatest sin in the eyes of the Church was his belief in the multiplicity of worlds, if we are to judge by the vicious irony of Caspar Schoppe: "Burnt at the stake, he perished miserably; and he is gone, I suppose, to recount in those other worlds imagined by himself the way in which Romans treat the blasphemous and impious."

Once more one must insist on the religious and enthusiastic quality, or as he puts it himself, the "heroic" quality of Bruno's philosophy, which makes us see him as a saint of science. How often has tired humanity, weary of revolving in infinite variety, experienced the longing to return to the All and to the One, to the Absolute, and there to seek God, and has been met by the colossal figure of Bruno on the threshold of the modern world!

So little stir did the burning of Bruno create in Italy that it has often been put in doubt altogether. Not a vestige of his work remained in Italy; his executioners may be said to have burnt his memory when they burnt his body. Even in Europe the traces of his teaching were faint. Ideas and doctrines developed with such violent and sudden energy that the figure of the great precursor was enveloped and obscured by the storm. Bruno, like Dante, had to await his resurrection. At last, after a long work of analysis, synthesis reappeared; and Jacobi and Schelling, feeling their spiritual kinship with the great Italian, reinstated him.

In Bruno we have the synthesis, as yet inorganic, of modern science, with all its salient characteristics: the tendency to free investigation, the autonomy and competence of reason, the vision of the truth by means of intellectual activity, the forbidding of fantasies and blind beliefs and abstractions, the tendency to a nearer and more intimate approach to Nature or the real. The word "tendency" I use advisedly, because in Bruno's character imagination and feeling superabounded, and robbed him of the harmonious calm of contemplation that is necessary for the organizing faculty, and robbed him of that patience of observation and analysis without which the most splendid speculations of the philosopher must remain but barren generalities.

In regard to his synthesis, his conceptions (which are expounded at length and with a great deal of variety in his Latin and Italian works) glitter like points of light in modern speculations. Traces of him are found in Descartes, in Spinoza, in Leibnitz, later in Schelling and in Hegel, and in the materialists of the present day. We have the abstract and extra-mundane God made visible and knowable in infinite Nature, and the unity and sameness of beings, the eternity and infinity of the universe in its perennial metempsychosis of forms, and the feeling of the soul or universal life, the infinite perfectibility of the forms in their transformations, the intrinsic productivity of matter, and the dynamic action of Nature in its combinations, liberty as distinct from free will and represented as the effectuation of the divine or of the law, and morality, and glorification of work. If I were forced to summarize the world of Bruno in a single formula I should call it the modern world still in the stage of fermentation.

II

Rome burned Bruno; Paris burned Vanini. Their slayers called them atheists. Yet never was God a more serious thing than in the breasts of these men. "Let us go to our deaths like philosophers," said Vanini as he approached the stake. And

they were known as "innovators," a title of shame that has since become the title of their glory.

In 1599 Bruno was already in the hands of the Inquisition, and Campanella was in the hands of the Spaniards. In the opening year of the seventeenth century Bruno was burned at the stake and Campanella was tortured. Thus was a century finished and another begun. "Ass that you are," said friends and enemies alike to Campanella, "you do not know how to live; you do not speak in the name of God." And for emblem he took a bell with "*Non tacebo*"—"I will not be silent"—engraved on it. And Bruno said of himself: "I am the guard who watches over sluggish, dreaming souls." So the new science was arising like a new religion, with its faith and its martyrs. "A philosopher is mocked at by all, as though he were stupid and sacrilegious; he is pursued by Inquisitors and made into a spectacle for the vulgar: this then is the wealth of philosophers and this the wage they receive," said Pomponazzi from his own experience. And yet these new men, derided and persecuted as they were, believed invincibly in the triumph of their doctrines. Telesio chose as the emblem of his academy a crescent moon with the motto, "*Donec totum impleat orbum*"—"Until the whole circle shall be complete." Bruno, persecuted by his century, said, "To die in one century makes one to live in all of the centuries to come." Campanella compared the philosopher with Christ, saying that on the third day he would break the stone and rise again. And character was on a level with intellect; behind the philosopher was the man.

Telesio is described by Bacon as "the first of the new men," though the novelty was already a century old. Telesio, who had studied at Padua, at Milan, at Rome, and been professor at Naples, when tired of struggles and persecutions decided to retire to his native Cosenza, and carried with him the motto of Italian thought, which was "natural philosophy"—the philosophy based on experience and observation. His merit lies in having wielded a serious intellectual influence on his fellow

citizens and in having founded under the name of "academy" a real school of philosophy. He is one with Machiavelli in following observation and Nature and refusing all else. "Human knowledge," he said, "when it has once observed everything that presents itself to the senses and has grasped everything that can be deduced by analogies of sensible perceptions, will have arrived at the highest point it can grasp." Sincere, modest, not especially remarkable as to intellect, but a thinker of extreme integrity and sanity of judgment, he contributed to science more by his method and language than by his doctrine. And in fact the great and useful novelty at that time was the method. The highest praise of Telesio has been spoken by Campanella in these words: "Telesio, in writing, made use of the real philosophical style, condensing the truth of Nature into significant words; and he valued a man more for his wisdom than for his wordiness." Telesio's aim was to rescue thought from the slavery of the "tyrant of intellects," who was Aristotle, and to bring it into direct communication with Nature—the aim that Campanella has expressed so concisely in his famous sonnet:

Telesio, il telo della tua faretra
uccide, de' sofisti in mezzo al campo,
degl' ingegni il tiranno senza scampo:
libertá dolce alla veritá impetra.

Telesio, with the unerring arrow from thy quiver thou dost kill the tyrant of intellects in the midst of his sophists, and givest liberty to truth.

The undertaking was far from a light one. The whole collection of learned mediocrities was against it in a block—that whole ensemble of men and institutions which Aretino had described as "pedantry"; such men as Bruno's Polinnio, supported by the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits. And they often fell back on the argument of the stake, prison, or exile. To utter a new thing was a crime. It was a crime in the eyes of the Church, or even in the eyes of the princes, so suspicious had the princes grown of any novelty whatsoever in the schools. Yet faith in a renewal was universal; and the motto chosen by Telesio's disci-

ple Montano for his compendium of the master's doctrine was "*Renovabitur*"—"Renewal will come." People till then had done their thinking with the brains of others, but the new men wanted to think with their own brains. This, in fact, was the movement. So little could its flow be stopped that novelty issued even from the monasteries. It was in a monastery that the rebellious spirit of Bruno was formed in strong, liberal studies. It was in a little monastery in Calabria that the mind of Campanella was educated to liberty. Having quickly exhausted the studies of the schools and become master of his mind, he devoured at random whatever books he could find. To grow learned is quickly achieved in solitude, and he absorbed an immensity of knowledge in the whole range of learning. His idol was Telesio, the great innovator; his aversion was Aristotle with the whole troop of his followers; like Bruno he preferred the ancient Greek philosophers, especially Pythagoras. When he arrived at Cosenza, his monks, who knew the man they had to deal with, refused to allow him to see or to hear Telesio—which only served to inflame his desire and his love. The day that Telesio died, the young monk who was destined to continue his teachings was seen in the church beside the bier. And the men of Cosenza, when they heard him dispute, declared that the spirit of Telesio had passed into him. The Telesian school, or the "reforming school," as it was called, surrounded him: there were Bombino and Montano and Gaieta, whom he eulogized together with the master. His first work was a reply to an attack on Telesio made by a Neapolitan called Marta. Having come to Naples to attend to the printing of this book, he attracted attention by his ardour in disputation, his quickness and presence of mind, his frank statement of opinions, and the immensity of his learning. People were astonished at his vast learning in letters, knowing that he had never been taught them; and his enemies declared that he had acquired it through magic, through the cabbala, through the occult sciences that were the fruit of solitary studies. Telesian opinions had but poor success in Naples;

the good Telesio himself had been driven from the city by the enmities he found there. Even Porta was none too popular there, and was forced to win forgiveness for his philosophy by his comedies. Campanella, as was natural, became intimate with the author of the *Magia naturale* and the *Fisionomia.* They disputed together, and read and discussed their works together. A fruit of this intimacy was the *De sensu rerum* of Campanella, and later his *De investigatione.* Here he establishes the road by which one arrives at "reasoning by the senses alone and by the things that we know through the senses": in other words, the experimental method, the basis of natural philosophy. We see in it the influence of Telesio, of Porta, and of the whole of the reforming school of the day.

Porta could be tolerated in Naples, for not only was he a man of good social position and highly esteemed, but he was also a man of wit and extremely amiable. But Campanella, as the envious said of him, did not know how to live. He was all of a piece in character, blunt and vehement, a man without polish, audacious in thought and in speech. He got himself heartily disliked by many, including the friars of his own convent, who could not forgive him his hatred of Aristotle. Like Bruno he came out of his cloister, and soon afterwards left Naples itself and moved to Rome, and later to Florence, with a new metaphysics already outlined in his brain. In Florence destiny had decreed that he should meet with the other great thinker of his time, Galileo Galilei.

On February the fifteenth, 1564, three days before the death of Michelangelo, Galileo was born in Pisa. At the beginning of his career everything smiled on him. Each of his inventions was greeted by a storm of enthusiasm: his inventions of measuring time by the pendulum, of the thermometer, of the geometrical compass, of the telescope. With the help of this last potent instrument he commenced his speculations in astronomy, which renewed the faces of the biblical and Ptolemaic heavens. Many of the facts that Bruno had divined became certainties—

as certain as the things that we can see or touch. His *Sidereus nuntius* seemed quite as marvellous as the voyage of Columbus. His rapid series of discoveries of the mountains of the moon, the phases of Venus and Mars, the spots on the sun, the satellites of Jupiter, were so extraordinary and wonderful that they stirred to activity even those indolent minds that for so long had been cradled in romances and literary obscenities. The last defences of public opinion were at last giving way before natural philosophy. It had ceased to be a question of hypothesis or of abstract opinions: the facts were there, and spoke for themselves, and spoke in a louder voice than the syllogisms of the theologians and the scholastics. The "effectual thing" of Machiavelli, the "natural light" of Bruno, the "experimental method" of Telesio, the "sweet liberty for truth" of Campanella, are all of them summarized in the splendid words of Galileo: "Oh, vile cowardice of servile intellects, enslaved with their own consent!" But the good Simplicio, the Aristotelian pedant, like Bruno's Polinnio is perplexed. "But in case we recede from Aristotle," he says, "whom then shall we have for our guide in philosophy?"

And Galileo answers him quietly: "Only the blind require a guide. . . . The man that hath eyes in his head and in his mind, those should he use as his guide." The supernatural light, the occult sciences, the mysteries and miracles of religion, were fading away like mists before the splendour of the natural light of the eye and of the mind: magic, astrology, alchemy, and the cabbala seemed poor and ordinary things when compared with the miracles of the telescope. Columbus and Galileo were presenting the world with a new earth and a new Heaven. On the ruins of the occult sciences were rising the new sciences of astronomy, geography, geometry, physics, optics, mechanics, anatomy. And all this was natural philosophy, naturalism. "Philosophy," said Galileo, "is written in the immense book of Nature," and Campanella said, stupendously: "The world is the book in which the eternal Sense wrote its own thoughts."

Campanella was younger than Galileo by four years. They met in Florence. Galileo was already famous, in the good graces of the court, and a professor; as a philosopher his conception of the universe and of science was clear, complete, and detailed. Campanella, though conscious himself of his genius, was nobody at all; as a philosopher his conceptions were many and daring and unbounded; as a man he had more the air of an adventurer seeking his fortune than that of a calm and reposeful sage of science. He tried for a chair at the university. But the authorities knew nothing about him, so the Grand Duke wrote for information to the Father Superior of San Domenico, who replied: "I have received an account of the father Fra Tommaso Campanella that is rather different from the report made to your Highness . . . I will put his value and sufficiency to the proof." Campanella failed to get his chair: not even the support of Galileo could outweigh the ire of the Dominicans. The reason is given us by Baccio Valori:

> In Rome they are trying at present to prohibit the philosophy of Telesio, giving as a reason that it is prejudicial to the scholastic philosophy founded on Aristotle; and he [Campanella], having spoken against this philosophy, runs some risk from the said school, and peradventure because of the most formidable of his concepts, which truly are lofty and new.

But Campanella, who was twenty-four at the time, was in no wise crushed. He retorted with a new defence of Telesio. He had already written a treatise with the title *De sphaera Aristarchi*, maintaining the Copernican theory of the mobility of the earth, and was pondering a work on universal science with the title *De universitate rerum*, which later took shape as the *Philosophia realis*. He certainly must have thought Galileo a wonderfully modest man in his aims, abstaining as he did from the whole field of theology and metaphysics, and from all attempts at universal construction, and limiting his work to the exploration of Nature in its particulars. We find Campanella writing to him: "Truly one cannot philosophize without a real and verified

system of the construction of the worlds, and this we expect from you. For everything has been put so much in doubt that we no longer know if speaking is speaking." He looked to Galileo to provide a reform of astronomy and pure mathematics, a real natural philosophy. "To begin with," he says, "write that this philosophy is Italian, in part taken from Philolaus and in part from Timaeus, and that Copernicus stole it from the above-named persons and from his master the Ferrarese; for it is a great shame that we Italians should be beaten by nations who were turned by us from barbarism to domesticity." But Galileo kept to his road. He too had his thoughts and hypotheses; but he considered that the real natural philosopher should keep to the things that are true incontestably, and should abstain from the merely probable. He replied that "for the sake of a hundred or more propositions of natural things he had no desire to discredit and to lose the merit of the ten or twelve he had discovered, and knew by demonstration to be true." Here we have Florentine wisdom and Neapolitan imagination facing each other, or rather, we have Tuscan culture and southern culture in collision: Tuscan culture, complete and rounded and mature and entirely positive; and southern culture, young and speculative, with all the impatience and superabundance of life that characterize youth. In Galileo we feel Machiavelli; in Campanella, Bruno.

And we feel it too in their styles. Any one who reads the letters, treatises, and dialogues of Galileo will at once be conscious of the stamp of Tuscan culture in its maturity: a style compounded of matter and of thoughts, free from pretension and mannerism, in that precise and direct form which is the last perfection of prose. Though conforming to the servile habits of the times, he is never servile; moreover, his bowings and scrapings are done with so great a dignity and simplicity that he seems the superior of his patrons. His writing is simple and severe, the writing of a man intent on substance and indifferent to elegance and ornaments. If he uses exaggerations and literary

artifice it is because he is lacking in the necessary strength of character to depart from the conventional form that was demanded of writers. Wrapped in that flowery and monotonous phrascology are new and daring conceptions presented in the form petrified by use; yet select, chastened, and clear, the perfection of taste. In Bruno and Campanella, on the contrary, the form is faulty, rough and unequal, without a definite physiognomy; yet, with its sudden changes and jumps, alive and moving, born from the subject itself. Galileo is more like a beautiful lake than a river with its flow; form and content are not an organic whole; the form is taken from tradition and is often exterior and wanting in inner life. But in Bruno and Campanella we have a mobile language, still in process of formation, with new and modern elements. There are pages of Bruno that might easily have been written yesterday.

But Florentine wisdom and Florentine imagination were equally suspect in the eyes of the Church and of Spain: the book of Nature was forbidden literature; whoever dared to read in that book was a heretic and an atheist. The first to be entangled was Campanella. He had been wandering in Venice, in Bologna, in Padua, in Rome, with his bundle of manuscripts, and forever writing and writing, for himself and for others, in verse and in prose, in Latin and in Italian—treatises, orations, discourses, disputations. At Bologna they stole his manuscripts. But what did it matter? He wrote them anew, and developed them further, with a vein that never ran dry. Having fallen under suspicion in Rome, he returned to Naples and went to take breath at Stilo, hoping for some rest in his native place. "But that befell me," he says, "which was written by Solomon: 'When a man shall have finished then shall he begin, and when he shall sit himself down to rest, then shall he toil.'" It was precisely at Stilo that his woes began. Caught in a conspiracy, he was accused of treason, and taken to Naples, where he was put in prison. Acquitted of this charge, he was accused of another, because, as he says, "those iniquitous people were

not looking for a crime but only to make me seem to be a criminal." Questioned as to how he had come by his knowledge of letters, having never been taught them, he replied, "I have consumed more oil at midnight than you have wine." He was accused of having written *De tribus impostoribus, Mose, Christo et Mahumed,* a book that was published a full thirty years before ever he was born. And he was accused of wanting to found a republic with the aid of the Turks, and of being a heretic, and of holding dangerous doctrines, and of not believing in God. It was in vain that he wrote his *Disputa antiluterana:* he was condemned by Rome and by Spain as a heretic and a rebel and was kept in prison for twenty-seven years and put to the torture seven times:

> My veins and arteries were broken and my bones were cracked on the wooden horse . . . full six pounds of my blood was drunk by the earth . . . it was six months before I recovered . . . I was buried in a hole without light or air, but with only stench and damp, and perpetual night and cold.

Here is the sad inventory he made of his woes, after twelve years of this torment:

Sei e sei anni che 'n pena dispenso
l' afflizion d' ogni senso,
le membra sette volte tormentate,
le bestemmie e le favole de' sciocchi,
il sol negato agli occhi,
i nervi stratti, l' ossa scontinuate,
le polpe lacerate,
i guai dove mi corco,
li ferri, il sangue sparso e 'l timor crudo
e 'l cibo poco e sporco.

Six and six years I have spent in pain, with my every sense afflicted, and my limbs tortured seven times, and compelled to listen to the blasphemies and lies of fools; and the sun denied to my eyes, my nerves stretched, my bones disjointed, my flesh torn; with nastiness where I lie, with iron chains hung on me, with blood flowing, and with cruel fear, and with little to eat and filthy at that.

And in the midst of his sufferings he wrote and wrote, without ceasing, in verse and in prose.

The times were darkening for thinkers. Copernicus, being a

man of the greatest piety whose studies were limited to mathematics, had been well regarded by the Church. He was not a philosopher but a mathematician, as Bruno said of him—Bruno, who with his free, speculative mind had known how to make such a terrible use of that system. But the Copernican system till now had been presented as a pure hypothesis and an explanation of natural and heavenly phenomena, and philosophers in mentioning it had always been careful to add "*salva la fede.*" For eighty years the book, which was dedicated to Paul III, was regarded as innocuous. But now that the doctrine was spreading so rapidly, supported as it was by Bruno, Campanella, and Galileo, and also by Descartes, who was preparing a mathematical demonstration of it, the work was seen to be heretical, and was put on the *Index*, it being easier to excommunicate it than to confute it. Descartes hushed up his demonstration: and poor Galileo after torture and imprisonment was made to confess that: "*Terra stat et in aeternum stabit*"—"The earth stands still and will forever stand still"—even though his conscience answered, "*Eppur si muove*"—"And yet it moves." His writings on the mobility of the earth he sent to the Grand Duke, with the following words, which exactly portray the attitude of mind of that day:

> In that I know how much it behoves me to obey, and to believe in, the judgment of my superiors, who are guided by higher cognitions than my own—cognitions to which my low intelligence is not able to arrive unaided—I desire to tell you that I consider this present writing that I send you, the writing, namely, which is based on the mobility of the earth, or rather, which is one of the arguments that I advanced in support of the said mobility, I consider it, I say, to be merely a poem, or a dream, and as such I beg your Highness to receive it.

And elsewhere he calls it a "chimera," a "mathematical caprice," and conceals the truth, as though it were a crime and a shame. News of the accusation and trial got through to Campanella in his prison, and in the midst of his torments he composed the apologia of Galileo.

It was granted to Galileo to live in solitude, at the same Arcetri where Guicciardini had retired before him. He lost his sight through sorrow and illness, and died in 1642, the very year in which Newton was born. The following year his pupil Torricelli invented the barometer. Three years earlier Campanella had died in France, where he had taken refuge and was able to publish his philosophy.

Galileo died in the arms of his disciples. His discoveries and observations had given an extraordinary impulse to science, and a whole school of natural philosophers had sprung up around him, with men like Castelli, Cavalieri, Torricelli, Borelli, Viviani—men who were illustrious not only as scientists, but also for the literary value of their writings. The new world had appeared —the world of which Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon had been the misunderstood and persecuted forerunners: Galileo had taken up the banner with better fortune. And Italy, already the mistress of Europe in letters and art, became the first in positive science, or as they called it then, "natural philosophy." Foreigners came to Italy to study it. It was here that Copernicus learned of the movement of the earth. It was here that Harvey learned of the circulation of the blood. It was here that the Accademia del Cimento (Academy of Experiments) arose, in which Nature was studied "*probando e reprobando*" —"by testing and retesting." It was here that geography, astronomy, anatomy, medicine, botany, optics, mechanics, geometry, algebra, had their first cultivators and propagators. Writers deserving mention, among others, are Francesco Redi, in whom the Tuscan language, finished and shut into itself, made its last appearance, and Lorenzo Magalotti, who wrote with a limpidity approaching the modern form.

With Campanella the case was different. Like Bruno he was a naturalist and believed that philosophy could be founded only on facts. Galileo, arguing from this premise, had deduced that the first thing to do was to study the facts. Natural, moral, social,

and economic facts were so scarce at that time and the lacunae in the positive sciences were so many and great that to philosophize was really synonymous with fashioning a world after the manner of the Greeks, by the divining imagination, and getting as a result the hypothetical and the probable rather than the certain and the true. This, said Galileo, is not science. And yet it is clear that even the natural philosophers had a certain idea of the world. The fact that they placed the foundations of science in observation, detaching them from beliefs and fantasies, was in itself the bringing within sight of an entirely new metaphysical world. It was naturalism, it was Nature made the centre of gravity of the knowable at the expense of the abstract God; or, to put it in the language of that day, it was God made visible and knowable in Nature, an intimate and living God. This and nothing else was the meaning of that movement which was drawing intellects away from scholastic abstractions and leading them to investigate natural facts. All that Bruno and Campanella did was to endow that movement with metaphysical consciousness and make it the foundation of a philosophy. If Galileo was necessary, Bruno and Campanella were not less so. A new world was arising, a new philosophy was appearing on the horizon in its first fluctuating outline. It was not science itself, but the prelude to science, the poetic and provisionary synthesis that preceded the long period of analysis; the divination or presentiment of the ultimate synthesis that was later to be the crown of science. This first provisionary synthesis is given us by Bruno and Campanella, with their ardent feeling for the ancient Greek philosophers, with whom they had much in common.

Their synthesis is full of contradictions, and is not organic. The contradictions are even greater in Campanella than in Bruno. In Campanella we have a mixture of everything—of the occult sciences and the positive sciences, of supernaturalism and naturalism, of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, of tradition and rebellion, of absolutism and liberty, of Catholicism and

rationalism. Like Bruno he struggled against beliefs and fantasies—yet never was a writer so incurably addicted to dogmatizing and imagining as Campanella. Like Bruno he did not eliminate nor analyze, but brought into action the whole of the material before him. Like Bruno he had faith in his own genius and worked with the ardour of a special vocation. Both he and Bruno were conscious of an inevitable force drawing them to lofty regions, to the infinite, the divine—at the risk of losing themselves. It is the feeling expressed in the following sublime sonnet attributed to Bruno:

Poi che spiegate ho l' ali al bel desio,
quanto piú sott' il piè l' aria mi scorgo,
piú le veloci penne all' aria porgo,
e spreggio il mondo e verso il ciel m' invio.
Né del figliuol di Dedalo il fin rio
fa che giú pieghi, anzi via piú risorgo:
ch' i' cadrò morto a terra, ben m' accorgo;
ma qual vita pareggia al morir mio?
La voce del mio cor per l' aria sento:
—Ove mi porti, temerario? China,
ché raro è senza duol tropp' ardimento.—
—Non temer—rispond' io—l' alta ruina:
fendi sicur le nubi, e muor' contento,
se il ciel sí illustre morte ne destina.

Since I have stretched my wings to my beautiful desire, the more I feel the air beneath my feet the more I spread my wings to fly upwards through the ether. The sad fate of Daedalus's son does not warn me to turn downwards; nay, I rise but higher and ever higher. Full well do I know that in the end I must fall to the earth and die. But where is the life that could compare with that death of mine? Out in the air I hear the voice of my heart saying: "Whither dost thou carry me, thou fearless one? Turn downwards; such over-boldness is sure to end in suffering."

But I answer: "Fear not, though utter ruin should come to thee. Hold to the clouds, and if thou die be happy that Heaven has destined thee to so glorious a death."

Campanella like Bruno was a poet, and was moved by that same vocation. He calls himself "a light in the universal darkness,"

"a fashioner of a new world," "a Prometheus who wrests the sacred fire from Jupiter":

Con vanni in terra oppressi al ciel men' volo,
in mesta carne d' animo giocondo;
e, se talor m' abbassa il grave pondo,
l' ale pur m' alzan sopra il duro suolo.

With wings oppressed on earth I soar towards Heaven, with joyous mind shut into a heavy body; it is true that the weight of my flesh drags me downward at times, but my wings unfailingly raise me again in flight, high above the hard earth.

The feeling that a new world was dawning for humanity was extremely alive in Campanella, and he saw it in its ultimate terms as a revival of the Golden Age, as the coming of the "Kingdom" of the paternoster, the coming of the divine to earth, the world of peace and justice that Dante and so many a noble soul had sighed for. Whereas Bruno remains among metaphysical generalities, Campanella embraces the whole universe, in all the greatest variety of its aspects, and has left us an outline of the ideal world that he hoped for on earth.

In Campanella's system, interwoven and combined but not fused, there are traces of all the roads that have since been taken by modern philosophy. He starts with the consciousness of self, the "I think, therefore I am," the basis of the Cartesian system. Consciousness of self is the only innate, occult cognition; the other cognitions are acquired through the senses. Here he develops the sensationalism of Telesio, not only as method but also as content. Everything has life; the world itself is "a living animal, great and perfect." Everything contains the divine Trinity, the three principles or "primalities," as he calls them, which are power, knowledge, and love. Everything that is can have being; it loves its being, and loves it because it knows it, has a certain acquaintance with it. So everything has sense. Even the spirit is flesh. The animal has the power of thinking as the man has; it even has the faculty of the universal. Here are the germs of Locke and of modern sensationalism in general. But there is

one faculty that is possessed by man alone—religious feeling. When the body is formed the soul enters it, coming "from the hands of God like a maiden," as Dante has it. The soul is the faculty of the divine, or, as we should call it today, of the Absolute. It is this which enables us to contemplate God. This faculty is not reason nor dialectics, nor is it even discourse nor any process at all of the intellect (which has a share in the "mind" or vision of Bruno) but is intuitive; it is ecstasy, faith, a bridge to revelation and theology; it is an effort to reconcile the Middle Ages with the modern world. Here we have the dawn of the modern philosophy of the Absolute in its twofold development of Rationalism and Neo-Catholicism. All the ideas and all the tendencies that even today are agitating the minds of men were fermenting in the brain of Campanella.

Like Bruno he was lacking in the sense of the real and the natural; and moreover he was lacking in the sense of psychology, notwithstanding the fact that he frequently spoke of consciousness and experience and made them the basis of his philosophy. What he possessed, on the contrary, was that species of second sight which is the special gift of superior men. But he never looked at it clearly, nor understood it, nor trained it, but confused it with ecstasy and with pure intuition, with the result that it threw him into the arms of theology, the supernatural, and the occult sciences. In his breast there were two men at grips with each other—the man of St. Thomas and the man of Telesio; he worked and worked to bring them into harmony, and never succeeded, and wore himself out in the effort. All he contrived to do was to emphasize the contrast. So his method was still the scholastic method loaded with abstract arguments; and his philosophy, starting from Telesio, ended in St. Thomas. And while waiting for Galileo to provide a construction of the world he believed provisionally in astronomy and in magic: and today the spiritualists and magnetists claim Campanella as their precursor.

In his applications we have the same man. The world is the

act of the will of God, an act in conformity with the plan or idea of God, and therefore in conformity with reason. So the world is ruled by God, and the instrument of God on earth is the pope, with the emperor as his arm. Here we are back with St. Thomas, in pure mediaevalism, earlier even than Machiavelli and Dante, because the lay element is made subordinate to the Church. We can well imagine his dislike of Machiavelli. He describes him as "a man who was utterly devoid of science and philosophy; a mere historian or empiricist," who wanted religion to be an instrument of the state. And he never notices that he, Campanella, is more Machiavellian than Machiavelli himself. For of all writers on the subject he is the one who pushes the extinction of the individual and the omnipotence of the state in its double form, ecclesiastical and lay, to their furthest point. Campanella was the apostle of the system of absolute monarchy, which was developing in Spain and France with the support of the papacy. But he makes a condition: absolute monarchy shall be the arm of the papacy, the executive power of the pope. It is the old mediaeval picture with strengthened colours. Here is what he says to Philip: "Let all the kings and the whole of the earth be subject to you, provided that you be verily the 'Catholic' king, the first of the Church's subjects." This was the charter of alliance between the throne and the altar. Italy had lost her world-dominion, and had lost it forever, for the past was past: but she still had the papacy in her bosom, and by means of the papacy would continue to govern the world.

And where, we ask, does the individual come in this system? The answer is, Nowhere. The individual has duties but not rights: not even the right to choose his wife, nor to bring up his children as he likes, nor to gather together a property, nor to eat, to sleep, or to live as he likes, nor to judge opinions, nor to discuss, accept, or reject them. Rights belong to society and therefore to the pope and the emperor. The result is communism: society is absolute, the individual passively obedient. But always, if we come to think of it, at the bottom of all these the-

ories of universal and absolute monarchy there is communism; it is the natural result when unity is abstract and placed in a will outside of humanity, with the various and multiple kept at a distance instead of being contained within it. In this unity every particular is shipwrecked—the individual, the family, the nation. Now this is precisely Campanella's philosophy, his "city of the sun," his revival of the Golden Age. But Campanella was a reformer, so if the picture is old, the spirit that informs it is new. The pope must be sovereign, but he must also be reason, and not only in name but in fact, because the world is governed by reason. God is eternal knowledge, so His sovereign on earth must be the wisest of men. The person who really rules is the one with knowledge. So the real sovereign is science; and the aim of science is the progress and betterment of man. He marvels at the study brought to the breeding of horses and cattle, while the human race is left to the mercy of chance and individual caprice. He has faith in the improvement of man, not only morally but also physically, by means of science applied by a wise and paternal government. The social, political, ethical, and economic measures he suggests are a first sketch of the various branches of the social sciences of today, confused as yet, but guided by natural rectitude and by common sense. He says that he is looking at things in their origin and purity "as Plato and the Stoics did" and not in their degeneration "as Aristotle and Machiavelli did." And living ideas spring out to meet us—Utopias, hypotheses, hopes, aphorisms—which are partly real presentiments and divinations of the new world.

From the fact that his head was crammed with so many plans and novelties we judge that he was not so very delighted with society as it was. He accepts its institutions, but only provided that they are altered and adapted as instruments for the betterment of man. He wants the papacy and also the monarchy to be progressive: it is clear that Philip of Spain had little inducement to pull out of prison such a dangerous ally, a second Marquis of Posa.

Facing his element of reconstruction there is, as we see, a negative element, the criticism of society as it was. His darts are aimed at the sophists, hypocrites, and tyrants, the falsifiers of the "three eminent things," which are wisdom, power, and love. He says:

Io nacqui a debellar tre mali estremi,
tirannide, sofismi, ipocrisia . . .
che nel cieco amor proprio, figlio degno
d' ignoranza, radice e fomento hanno:
dunque a diveller l' ignoranza io vegno.

I was born to subdue three extreme ills: tyranny, sophistry and hypocrisy . . . rooted in blind self-love, the worthy offsprings of ignorance, they foment and increase: I am here to root up ignorance.

And the same conception is the basis of a magnificent sonnet on the history of the world, a history shaped by the love of self:

Credulo, il proprio amor fe' l' uom pensare
non aver gli elementi né le stelle
(benché fusser di noi piú forti e belle)
senso ed amor, ma sol per noi girare:
poi tutte genti barbare ed ignare,
fuor che la nostra, e Dio non mirar quelle:
poi il restringemmo a que' di nostre celle:
sé solo al fine ognun venne ad amare,
e, per non travagliarsi, il saper schiva:
poi, visto il mondo a' suoi voti diverso,
nega la provvidenza o che Dio viva.

The man who is fooled by love of self thinks that the elements and the stars (though stronger and more beautiful than we) have neither feeling nor love, and move merely for our benefit: and he thinks that all the nations are barbarous and ignorant except his own nation, and that God does not look on them. And from caring only for kith and kin he ends by caring only for himself.

So as not to be fatigued he avoids all thinking and knowledge; and finding that the world is little to his taste he denies Providence and denies God. He mistakes craftiness for wisdom; and perverse by nature and wishing to rule over others, he makes

Qui stima senno le astuzie: e perverso,
per dominar fra nuovi dèi, poi arriva
a predicarsi autor dell' universo.

new gods for himself; and he ends by preaching that he himself is the creator of the universe.

Since he believes that the ills of the world are all of them derived from ignorance, we can well understand his enthusiasm for science and its mission. To him the wise man is unconquerable; even though slain he is still victorious:

S' e' vive, perdi, e, s' e' muore, esce un lampo
di deitá dal corpo per te scisso,
che le tenebre tue non han piú scampo.

If he lives thou losest; if he dies, from every limb that thou hast mangled will shine the lights of a godhead; and thy darkness will seek in vain to hide itself.

The wise man's fame and glory are only increased by his sufferings, and after his death he will be worshipped as a saint. No matter if he is born of lowly parentage or an obscure country: it is he himself who makes his destiny glorious, he is illustrious in his own right. And the more he is trampled on the more he rises again:

E il fuoco, piú soffiato, piú s' accende:
poi vola in alto e di stelle s' infiora.

The more you blow on the fire the more it burns, and the flames fly upward and blossom into stars.

The wise man is as old as the world:

Ben seimila anni in tutto 'l mondo io vissi:
fede ne fan le istorie delle genti,
ch' io manifesto agli uomini presenti
co' libri filosofici ch' io scrissi.

A full six thousand years have I lived on earth; as is proved by the histories of nations long dead, which I have interpreted for the men of this day in the philosophical books that I wrote.

The world is a theatre in which the souls, disguised in their earthly bodies,

di scena in scena van, di coro in coro:

pass from scene to scene, from chorus to chorus, and clothe them-

si veston di letizia e di martoro,
dal comico fatal libro ordinate.

selves in the motley of joy and pain, just as Fate, the comic playwright, orders them.

In this universal comedy man is often swayed more by chance than by reason,

ché gli empi spesso fûr canonizzati,
gli santi uccisi, e gli peggior tra noi
principi finti contro i veri armati.

for they often canonize the wicked and slay the saint, and spurious princes take arms against the real ones.

The true princes are the wise:

Neron fu re per sorte in apparenza,
Socrate per natura in veritate. . . .
Non nasce l' uom con la corona in testa,
come il re delle bestie.

Nero was king merely by chance and outward appearances, but Socrates was king by nature, and in truth. . . . Man is not born with the crown already on his head, like the king of beasts.

It is only the wise who make the world endurable:

Se a' lupi i savi, che 'l mondo riprende,
fosser d' accordo, e' tutto bestia fôra.

The world rebukes the wise, but if they too were like wolves there would be nothing but brute beasts everywhere.

True nobility is not a question of blood nor of wealth:

In noi dal senno e dal valor riceve
esser la nobiltade, e frutta e cresce
col ben oprare.

True nobility is born from valour and wisdom, and it fructifies and increases by good actions.

The wise man is the king, the nobleman; the wise man is free. The people remain slaves through their ignorance.

Il popolo è una bestia varia e grossa,
ch' ignora le sue forze. . . .
Tutto è suo, quanto sta fra cielo e terra,

The people is an unstable and gross beast, ignorant of its powers. . . .

It possesses everything between Heaven and earth, but does not

ma nol conosce; e se qualche persona
di ciò l' avvisa, e' l' uccide ed atterra.

know it; and when a person ventures to tell it so it beats him to the earth and kills him.

This glorification of science is joined to an active feeling for the divine; in fact science is the divine itself; the eternal knowledge that communicates to Nature its three attributes or primalities, which are power, wisdom, and goodness, and whose badge is beauty. Such was Nature in the Golden Age, and such will it be again:

Se fu nel mondo l' aurea etá felice,
ben essere potrá piú ch' una volta;
ché si ravviva ogni cosa sepolta,
tornando 'l giro ov' ebbe la radice. . . .
Se in fatti di mio e tuo sia il mondo privo
nell' util, nel giocondo e nell' onesto,
cangiarsi in paradiso il veggo e scrivo;
e 'l cieco amore in occhiuto e modesto,
l' astuzia ed ignoranza in saper vivo,
e 'n fratellanza l' imperio funesto.

If the world was happy once in the Golden Age, we can well hope that that age will return; for buried things return unfailingly to life as the wheel comes round again. If only pleasure, honour, and utility could exist without the "thine" and the "mine" the world would be Paradise indeed. And I see the world like this and I declare it to you. And blind love shall be changed to honest love with open eyes, and cunning and ignorance shall be changed into living knowledge, and baneful tyranny shall be changed to fraternity.

The basis of the Golden Age is fraternity and equality—the love of self replaced by the love of all:

. . . chi all' amor del comun Padre ascende,
tutti gli uomini stima per fratelli,
e con Dio di lor beni gioia prende.
Buon Francesco, che i pesci anche e gli uccelli
"frati" appelli: oh beato chi ciò intende!

. . . to the man who is able truly to love our common Father every man he meets is his brother, and he rejoices with God in his brother's happiness. How good was Francis, who called even the birds and fishes his brothers! Ah! blessed is he who understands him!

To call it by a modern name, this is "Christian democracy." What he wants is a return to the primitive Church of Linus and Calixtus, to the pure evangelical times that Dante had sighed for, the times when Christians broke their bread together in charity and none was rich and none was poor, and nobody talked of "mine" and "thine." Looking at things in their purity and not in their degeneration, he dreams that the world will "return in its circuit to the place where it began": he envisages progress as a return to the good old times. Bruno, as we have seen, misprizes the Golden Age and the state of innocence, and prefers virtue: innocence to Bruno is ignorance, and his "virtue" is knowledge, but knowledge produced by free individual activity and not infused knowledge communicated from without. In Bruno's system liberty is real and substantial; man is to advance through liberty. In Campanella and Bruno, those great Italian philosophers, we have the beginnings of the two roads taken by the modern mind: we have Rationalism and Neo-Catholicism. Bruno turns his back on the past; Campanella endeavours to change the past into a lever for progress.

While waiting for the Golden Age he sees the world in its degeneration, thanks to the tyrants, sophists, and hypocrites. And with the sophists he classes the poets, the sowers of lies:

In superbia il valor, la santitate
passò in ipocrisia, le gentilezze
in cerimonie, e 'l senno in sottigliezze,
l' amor in zelo, e 'n liscio la beltade,
mercé vostra, poeti, che cantate
finti eroi, infami ardor, bugie e sciocchezze,
non le virtú, gli arcani e le grandezze
di Dio, come facea la prisca etate.

Valour is turned into arrogance, holiness into hypocrisy, gentle kindness into empty ceremonial, wisdom into subtlety, love into appetite, beauty into paint and adornment—thanks to you, O poets, to you who sing the praises of imagined heroes and infamous lusts and lies and stupidities, instead of singing of the virtues, the mysteries, and the grandeurs of God, like the bards of old.

And he scolds them for sticking in the marsh of legends, when they ought to be singing of Columbus and the high deeds of the

moderns. He has no love for empty subjects, which he considers to be dulling to the intellect. If a thing is lovely it is good; everything is lovely when it is useful and suitable, and is ugly when it is useless and unsuitable, and grows more and more tiresome:

Il bianco, che del nero è ognor piú bello,
piú brutto è nel capello . . .
pur bello appar, se prudenza rassembra.
Belle in Socrate son le strane membra,
note d' ingegno nuovo; ma in Aglauro
sarian laide: e negli occhi, il color giallo,
di morbo indicio e brutto, è bel nell' auro,
ch' ivi dinota finezza e non fallo.

White is lovelier than black; yet white in hair is not lovelier but uglier than black . . . yet white hair is beautiful when it speaks of prudence. The features of Socrates, though strange and ugly, are beautiful because they speak of a new intelligence; while on the face of Aglaurus they would be ugly. Yellow in the eyes is a sign of illness, and so is ugly; but yellow in gold is beautiful because it speaks of fineness, and not of alloy.

Here are distinct glimpses of the new criticism, the return to substance, to things, the change from the outward to the inward. Campanella himself is an example of it, writing as he does of new and lofty things with complete disregard of form. His nervous, vibrating poetry, with its high reliefs, and its sap and "stuff," and its roughness and sharpness, is at the opposite pole of creation from the vapid, sophisticated, mincing literature that Marino brought into fashion.

Campanella was the author of endless volumes, and on every sort of subject. Not a single department of knowledge is absent from his work; natural science, occult science, theology, metaphysics, astronomy, physics, physiology, they are all of them there. It is an adumbration of the encyclopaedia, a first attempt at constructing the tree of knowledge. Wherever he turns his eyes he sees, or half-sees, something that is new. Remarkable above all is the interest he takes in the education and welfare of the masses. Science till then had been aristocratic, religious,

political, on the heights, concerned more with the social mechanism than with the betterment of man. But here we have a definite tendency in the other direction: political changes are only good in so far as they tend to the education and welfare of the biggest class. Campanella's finest conceptions are found in this field: the reform of taxation, for instance, the taxation of that day which pressed with a crushing weight on the workman and peasant but lightly on the citizen and burgher, while the nobles escaped it completely. He advocates a tax on luxuries and pleasures. Other measures he proposes are the foundation of homes for the sick and the infirm and for the children of soldiers; gratuitous loans for the poor, without security; people's banks; work for all; equality before the law; a uniform coinage; and also the encouragement of national industries, which he declares "are more profitable than mines." With his last breath he appeals to the men of that day to cease from abstract discussions and theological subtleties, the malady of the times, and to turn their thoughts to history and to geography and to the study of the real for the betterment of social conditions. The first business of the philosopher, he says, is to compose a history of facts. Here indeed is the new society definitely rising on the ruins of the feudal system—a complete social renewal, based on the profound conception that every movement of society to be lasting must be "made first with the tongue, and then with the sword," or, in other words, that nothing permanent can be founded on might, unless it is preceded and accompanied by thought.

III

The same breath of freedom was blowing from Venice. Already the centre of letters and culture with Pietro Bembo, Venice was now the Italian centre of the movement for free thought. The materialistic school of Padua was celebrated. And the same independence was developing in politics. From Venice came the free voice of Paolo Paruta to Italy in her servitude.

Ever since the time of Machiavelli political pamphlets had sprung up like weeds, with names like *Tesoro politico*, *Principe regnante*, *Segretario*, *Chiave del gabinetto*, *Ambasciatore*, *Ragion di Stato*, in which political commonplaces are jumbled together at random with undigested erudition. The sorriest events of history are justified—dreadful events like the massacre of the eve of St. Bartholomew and the massacres of the Duke of Alva. Yet the authors one and all abuse Machiavelli—abuse him while stealing his concepts. A writer worthy of notice among others is Botero, the author of the *Ragion di Stato*, who fights Machiavelli but follows his precepts, applying them against the innovators and heretics. This book is a real code for conservatives. To Botero everything is right just as it is; the only danger to be guarded against is change. He was born in 1540, the same year as Paolo Paruta, the author who is nearest to Machiavelli in spirit and in doctrine. At the time when Italy was dozing contentedly between absolute papacy and absolute Spain, and the absolute monarchies were being formed in Europe, this Venetian historian says that if liberty is removed then everything else that is good becomes worthless; that lacking liberty virtue itself becomes idle and poor; that the real sovereign is the law; that whoever commits the government of a city into the keeping of the law commends it to a god, but whoever gives it into the hands of a man leaves it in the care of a wild beast; and that his ideal of happiness is to be born and to live in a free city. In his *Discorsi politici* we feel the successor of Machiavelli and the precursor of Montesquieu, the practical sense of the Venetian and the acumen of the Florentine.

In Paruta's nature political feeling was opposed by religious feeling; reason and faith were engaged in an endless struggle without hope of conciliation. This unresolved contradiction is the reason for a sort of middle condition of spirit we find in him; it was this that prevented the stamp of originality and sureness that characterized the new men. Now and then in his *Soliloquio* we have glimpses of the same inner torments that embit-

tered Tasso. Paruta regarded the papal-Spanish despotism, on which the Catholic revival was founded, as a menace to Venetian liberties; and he watched the movement in Germany not without a certain hope for its success, thinking it might balance the power of Spain and of the pope. Paruta's state of mind was far from unusual in Venice at that time of transition. The Venetians were good Catholics; but they were jealous of their liberties and averse to the Curia, and still more so to the Jesuits, who had already made themselves feared by their able meddling in politics; and they were not prepared to accept as gospel every single pronouncement of the Church, especially in questions of discipline. With tendencies such as these the souls of Venice would seem to have been soil ready prepared for the Reformation; and no doubt the Lutherans when they fixed on Venice as their base of operations for the diffusion of schism in Italy were not without hope of converting the Venetians. Many were the treatises and pamphlets for and against the Reformation. The Inquisition was unable to stop the disputations, for Venice was a difficult city, and the Church was obliged to go warily in dealing with her. Mixed with these questions of religion were questions of jurisdiction between the papacy and the Venetian government, because of which Paul V did not hesitate to launch an interdict on the whole city, with results the very opposite from what he had intended, for it only served to enhance and intensify the struggle.

The central figure of the whole of this movement for liberty was Paolo Sarpi, a friend of Galileo and of Giambattista della Porta and a thinker of the same school. Supremely versed in theology and philosophy and in canon law, he was equally proficient in the natural sciences—in physics, astronomy, architecture, geometry, algebra, mechanics, anatomy: he is supposed to have discovered the circulation of the blood. He did not speculate on the universe like Bruno and Campanella, nor was he an inventor like Galileo, but mixed with the life of his day. His cognitions were weapons ready and sharpened for the political

struggle, to be used for his country. He chose his arms rather with the acuteness of the politician than with the ardour of the philosopher and reformer. His aim was practical rather than purely philosophical and scientific; he worked for definite results. Like the Protestants he aimed at enlisting the princes in the struggle, maintaining their independence of the ecclesiastical powers. Continuing the ideas of Dante and Machiavelli, he denied that the pope had any power whatsoever over the princes; one of his aims, in fact, was to bring the clergy back under common law, exactly like ordinary citizens. To emancipate and secularize the State, and to ensure its liberty in face of the Roman court, was the common ground on which princes and reformers met. With great good sense Paolo Sarpi kept to these limits, and with a clearness and firmness of aim that is rare indeed in Italian writers. A man of unusually lively intellect and breadth of culture, he keeps his thoughts to himself; the only ideas he allows himself to show to his readers are those which bear directly on the actual questions of his day. Avoiding extremes of conceptions and forms, he writes with a moderation that is infinitely more telling than open violence; he cuts to the quick with such a sweetly simple and ingenuous air that he seems to be caressing you Five separate times they tried to murder him; in the end, when he felt the assassin's blade in his flesh, he remarked: "I know that dagger of the Roman Curia!"

His *Storia del concilio di Trento* is the work of greatest seriousness that had yet been written in Italy. The Council of Trent was the basis of the Catholic revival, or rather, of the Catholic reaction, and of the claims of the Roman court. Here had been established and consecrated the absolute power of the pope and his supremacy over the lay power, and the jurisdictional rights of the Church—those very rights which the Curia and the Jesuits were endeavouring to enforce in the European states, to the anger of the Protestants and the Catholic princes alike. It was the Middle Ages revived, modernized on the surface and more correct and presentable in appearance, but the Middle Ages

none the less. To write a history of that Council and to expose its worldliness—to expose, that is, the worldly aims, feelings, and interests that made those decrees possible and allowed those violent and extreme opinions to prevail—was to attack the evil at its root. This was the task for which Sarpi girded himself. And it was only by holding his feelings in check and avoiding violent ideas and expressions and wilful alterations or mutilations of fact that he was able to accomplish it. His strength lay in moderation and sincerity. But Sarpi was moderate and sincere not merely from political artfulness, but also from natural probity, and from the seriousness of a historian and a man of letters. History to Sarpi was more than a political instrument: it was a sacred office, which he dared not prostitute to contemporary passions, and he approached his work with every sort of study and investigation. He wanted to write an impartial history with the gravity and sincerity of a true historian, and the interest of the book lies precisely in the fact that he succeeded only more or less: for his likes and prejudices, and his political aims, and his personal opinions, break into the book at every point and make themselves felt. The partiality is not intentional, nor a question of the facts; it lies in the new spirit that penetrates everywhere, not merely into the doctrinal generalities, but even into the definite political and ethical conclusions. He acknowledges no authority whatsoever: he studies everything, and he listens to everything, but the person who finally decides is himself. His only authority is in his own mind. His ideal is the primitive evangelical Church, set free from every temporal question and concerned with nothing but spiritual questions. Above all he objects to the hierarchy, which he describes as "born of papal ambitions and of the ignorance of the princes." But not for a moment does our good Fra Paolo Sarpi consider himself less a Catholic for these opinions: he thinks himself every whit as Catholic as the pope himself; indeed, it is really he who is the Catholic, aiming as he does at restoring the Church to its early state of sincerity and goodness and at rendering

possible that reconciliation between the different sects which the Council ought to have procured but in fact prevented. He calls the Council "the *Iliad* of the century," from the number of ills that sprang from it, and he says that its work is not a reformation but a "deformation." What he means by "reformation" can be glimpsed from the ideas he attributes to the good Pope Adrian VI, whom he describes as "a man of Germanic blood and therefore sincere, who did not treat with arts or for hidden ends" and who confessed that the mischief of the Church had all of it arisen from the Court of Rome and the usurping acts and abuses of the clergy; and who promised a full reform, "even at the cost of denuding himself utterly of temporal power, and if need be, returning to the state of life of the apostles."

Marvellous in this book is the harmony between form and content. The basic conception of the content is this: in the same way that truth is in the substance of things and not in their accidents and appearances, so the essence of religion is in works and not in the observance of forms, or in the concessions and favours of popes; and similarly the thing of importance in confession is not the diligent recital of sins but the resolve to do better. It is the spirit of Machiavelli, Bruno, Campanella, Galileo, which here in this history is penetrating even into the forms of literature. Form here is nothing of itself, for it is nothing but the content, denuded as it is of every trace of the rhetorical or fantastic. Never was a style so completely unlike the literature in vogue. A writer in the fashionable manner was Pallavicino, the cardinal commissioned by the Curia to produce a history of the Council to confute Sarpi's. Here, for example, is a sentence from Pallavicino: "The fire of rebellion can only be quenched by the ice of terror and the rain of blood." Even when saying a thing so ferocious as this he still remembers about form, and casts around for suitable metaphors; form in this sentence is not expression, but an obstacle to expression. How could a feeling of gravity be produced by polished artificial wording like this? Yet a sentiment so dreadful and one in which

the whole Inquisition was rooted demands that an impression of gravity should be made. Now Sarpi says the very same thing; but with Sarpi the form is imbued with an energy and a precision of colouring that gives us the thing in its cruelty and at the same time in its reasonableness: thing, feeling, and idea are given us in one. We get it in a speech made by Adrian VI to the German princes. This is how he puts it:

"If you cannot with gentleness bring back Martin and his followers to the right road, you must take to severe remedies and to fire, to remove the dead limbs from the body."

In Pallavicino there is vanity of form with indifference to content. In Sarpi, on the contrary, there is indifference to form and seriousness of content; his form is the content itself in its significance and impression. His mind is set too high to descend to the blandishments and tricks of literature. What we get in him is a deep and living absorption in his subject, with clearness of intellect joined to an extraordinary vigour of analysis; and a feeling for moderation and proportion that pins him down to the real and the actual. If we add his absolute mastery of material, his knowledge of the inmost secrets of the human heart, his clear intuition of his century and the society in which he lived, in its moods, in its tendencies, in its ambitions, we shall cease to wonder how a prose so serious and positive could arise in that day. From his habit of looking at the core of things and not at the surface is born a prose of solid structure and living logic, wonderfully precise and thrown into relief, but at the same time hard and rough. It is the defect of his qualities. He is wanting in that last touch of fineness which comes from grace, from elegance, from the musical qualities. Moreover, he is not a Tuscan, and his ear is more accustomed to the gravity of Latin than to the liveliness of native dialect.

Machiavelli, Bruno, Campanella, Galileo, Sarpi, were not solitary figures; they were the result of the new times. These men were the greater planets, but all around them were hosts

of other free men, inspired by the same spirit. And what did they want? To seek for reality behind the appearance, as Machiavelli said; to seek for the spirit beyond the forms, as the Reformation said; to seek for the real and the positive, and not in books but in the direct study of things, as Galileo said; to seek for the One in the many, the divine in nature, as Bruno and Campanella said. The formula varies, but the conception is the same. All were seeking the same thing. Their pace was unequal; many had moved too far ahead, while others were still halfway, but their road was the same road. Their aim was to clear away those forms grown dense through superstition and imagination and to look at things unveiled, in their substance and reality. The negative part of the movement was the war against Aristotle and the scholastics; the war against the "human intrusions" of the Church and ecclesiastical forms; the war against symbols, fantasies, dogmas, and everything supernatural. The positive side was the search for the real, in method and content; the direct study of man and Nature by means of the intellect, with experience and observation as its basis. What Sarpi did was to change the scene of the struggle, to remove it from the heights of philosophical generalities and bring it down into the midst of political interests, where he could gain the support of the princes and the peoples. And this is the reason he inspired such fear and wielded such influence.

IV

If the Catholic restoration had been a real and reasonable restoration, if it had been, in fact, a reconciliation—as Sarpi had wanted it and Campanella had woven it in fancy—the Church no doubt would have absorbed the new movement in so far as was practicable and compatible. But history is not made with "ifs" and "buts" and conjectures, but with facts. And the facts are these. The movement at that time was still in its early, instinctive stage, violent and contradictory, while the Church

was influenced less by religious feelings and convictions than by worldly and political interests. So the restoration declared itself as an open reaction. And no other writer grasped these morbid conditions with so clear a consciousness as Paolo Sarpi. We will give some bits from his description of the work of the Council:

"The people will no longer endure canonical punishments, because the old fervour has died down, so the custom has fallen into disuse. . . . This present age is different from the ages of the past, in which every decision of the Church was received without questioning. At the present day every person imagines that he is able to judge questions for himself and to examine reasons for himself. . . . The remedy proposed is certainly suited to the malady, but would prove too strong a medicine for the enfeebled body, and instead of curing it would bring it to death. Instead of winning back Germany, Italy herself would be lost, while Germany would be more estranged than before."

These are the words of Cardinal Pucci, who spoke to dissuade Adrian VI from trying to root out the new ideas by means of penances and to restore the Golden Age of the primitive Church, in which, as he says,

"the prelates had absolute authority over the faithful if only for the reason that they kept them busy with continual penances; whereas now, on account of the idleness they are left in, they want to be freed from the yoke of obedience."

Cardinal Fra Tommaso of Gaeta agreed with the pope:

"The reason that the German people give ear to Martin when he preaches Christian liberty is the fact that they are sunk in idleness; if only they were curbed with penances they would cease to think of this novelty."

But besides this revival of penances the excellent Adrian wanted a serious, a real, reform, even if it led to the losing of temporal power. But Cardinal Soderino argued against him:

"The idea of confounding and uprooting the Lutherans by reforming the habits of the courts is a hopeless proposition; in fact, it would act the other way round and would improve the Lutherans' position con-

siderably. For the people in the mass judge by events; and if once they were shown by the making of the aforesaid reforms that some of the censures on the papal government were right and just, they would argue at once that the other innovations proposed were right and just too. . . . In human affairs the granting of requests invariably leads to the making of other requests and to the people's imagining that they are right in making them. . . . There is nothing so dangerous to a government as to change its mode of governing. The safest course to pursue is to follow in the steps of the holy popes. . . . Never yet was a heresy quenched by the making of reforms, but only by means of crusades and by inciting the princes and peoples to uproot it forcibly."

This good Cardinal is ready to admit that everything is not perfect; but he advises leaving the bad things alone for fear of putting wind into the enemy's sails. But the best of all his reasons, and certainly the most effective, he reserves for the last:

"No reform could be made without notably diminishing the revenues of the Church. For the Church has four fountains: the first of them temporal, the rents of the ecclesiastical state, and the other three spiritual, indulgences, dispensations, and appointments to benefices; and if one of these fountains were stopped it follows that a quarter of the revenues would be stopped."

In the end Adrian decided that he would make his reforms gradually, a step at a time; to which the Germans answered mockingly that a century would pass between each of those steps of his. Well, we can imagine the effect of these revelations of Paolo Sarpi on the men of that day, revelations that showed so clearly the worldly and political motives of the Catholic restoration.

The restoration, being as it was an open reaction, was founded on ideas and tendencies the exact opposite from those of the new men. The former proclaimed the incompetence of human reason; the latter proclaimed its independence and power. The former walked with pure faith, with the poor in spirit and the simple of heart; the latter exalted culture and science. The former took their stand on revelation and bowed to the authority of Aristotle, the scholastics, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church;

the latter took their stand on experience and observation. The former subtilized on the attributes of God and on the doctrines of grace and predestination; the latter took man and Nature as the centre of their studies. The new men wanted to strip the Church of temporality altogether and to simplify the forms of religion and worship. The others, on the contrary, insisted that the forms of religion should be kept exactly as they were, leaving untouched even the absurd and grotesque parts of them. Not only would they not renounce the temporal power, but also they aimed at increasing the influence of the papacy and the number of its states, basing their demands on the absolute power of the pope not only in matters spiritual but also in matters temporal. The motto "*Aut sint ut sunt, aut non sint,*" sufficed for them: To live exactly like that, or to die.

In ordinary circumstances a reaction so blind as this must soon have ended. The reason it endured as it did was the tenacious ability of the Jesuits, the pope's militia. Having crushed the open rebellion with the terrors of the Inquisition, the Jesuits had embarked on a campaign of conquest of the wills and consciences of the people, and they brought to this task a knowledge of human nature and of their own century that made them the worthy successors of the Medici in politics. Convinced that the person with the greatest knowledge will be the person to rule the world, they cultivated learning, and by sheer force of will they maintained the leading place that the clergy had held in culture. Unable to root out the whole of the new, they accepted the surface of it, and presented society with a new dress in order better to preserve the old foundations. Adopting the airs of liberal, cultured men, they shook the scholastic dust from their habits and behaved more like laymen than like friars, thinking that the laity could best be conquered with lay weapons. Established as the friends and patrons of the literati and the promoters of culture, they opened schools and colleges and gathered the education and the training of the young into their hands. So as better to imitate the laity they even had their own little theatres and

comedies and academies. But if the surface was the same, the spirit was different. Where the aim of the new men was to draw attention from the outside to the inside, from the accidents and accessories to the substance, from the forms to the spirit, the Jesuits' aim was to cultivate the memory, and to feed the imagination and senses rather than the intellect, to keep the attention on the surface of things. They thought that by surrounding the mind with so many empiric cognitions they would inure it to emptiness and passivity. The result was a mediocre, surface culture that was more like erudition than like science. But it suited the weak fibre of the many, who were delighted with that easy smattering of knowledge which gave them the air of modernity and of belonging to the century, and so cheaply, too. So the Jesuits came into fashion; and the ill humours of the century were vented on the other religious orders, who were accused of being obstinately set against the new. The reason for the great success of the Jesuits was the fact that they lowered science to the level of men, instead of raising men to the heights of science. The masses they left in their ignorance, while to the other classes they gave that half-education which is worse than ignorance. Similarly, being unable to raise men to the purity of the Gospel, they lowered the Gospel to the weakness of men, constructing a code of morals in keeping with the century—a code riddled with loopholes and plastered with casuistry and distinctions: a compromise between conscience and vice, or as they called it then, a "double conscience." And there arose the doctrine called "probabilism": the authority of a "weighty doctor" makes an opinion "probable." And this probable opinion is sufficient to justify any action, however sinful: a confessor has not the power to refuse absolution to a penitent, if the latter has acted on a probable opinion. A judge, says a doctor, has the right to decide an action in favour of a personal friend, even though against his conscience, if he acts on a probable opinion. A physician, says another of these doctors, has the right to administer a medicine that he believes will do harm, if he acts on a probable opinion.

All that they ask—though merely as a precaution—is that the person concerned shall avoid provoking a scandal; not, they add, that the thing is wrong in itself, but that scandal might be harmful.

This lax morality was favoured by another theory—that of the "*directio intentionis*"—"the direction of intention"—formulated thus: An action bad in itself becomes good if the end it serves is good. It is the old maxim of the end justifying the means, but here it is applied not only to political life but also to private life. For instance, it is not a sin to drown a heretical boy in a river in order to baptize him: the body is killed, but the soul is saved. It is not a sin for a man to murder a woman who has sold him her honour, provided that he has reason to fear that if the fact were known his reputation would suffer.

And lastly we have the doctrine of "*reservatio et restrictio mentalis*"—"mental reservation." An oath is not binding if the words are used in a double sense, the person interpreting them in his own way, or adding under his breath a word or two that changes their meaning. It is not a lie, says a doctor, to use words with a double meaning that the speaker understands in one sense, and the hearer in the opposite sense. It is not a lie to say what is false if the speaker interprets the words differently in his mind. For instance, if you have murdered your father, you can say frankly, "I have not murdered him," provided that you think in your own mind of some other person whom you have not murdered, or that you add some mental reservation such as, "I certainly did not murder him before he was born." A very useful adroitness, says the doctor, for it allows us to hide what we wish to hide without telling a lie.

So you see how many loopholes existed! There were loopholes of every type and adapted to every occasion. If we read the books of these doctors we shall learn how not to go to mass now and then without sinning; or how to leave church in the middle of the service without sinning; or how to talk in church without sinning; or how to go to church for the purpose of look-

ing at women with carnal desires without sinning. If you have committed some serious sin but want your confessor to continue to think well of you, all you need do is to change your confessor; and if the thought of confessing this sin weighs on your mind, then confess it with words of double meaning, or make a general confession, jumbling this particular sin among a lot of old ones, so that it may not be noticed.

Any one can see why, with this facile science, and this still more facile morality, the Jesuits were popular and had a large following. Teachers, confessors, missionaries, writers, men of the world and men of the Church, they knew their century and they ruled it; and they maintained their rule with the energy and logic of their will. To such heights did they rise at last that the princes were jealous of them, and at times even the popes were suspicious of them. Basing their teaching on the duty of passive obedience, on the principle that man is "*perinde ac cadaver*"—"exactly like a corpse"—in face of his betters, it was they who established the absolute monarchies. But they wanted the papacy to rule the princes, and the Jesuits to rule the papacy.

The princes defended themselves and attacked in their turn, and looked for support even in the new ideas. Thus Paolo Sarpi defended the liberties of Venice. As the spiritual weapons had fallen in prestige and the princes had attained to that power which the fiefs and communes had lacked, the fight promised to be unequal; so the Jesuits (without of course neglecting the spiritual arm) worked in the main like a political body, handling their worldly weapons with a tenacity equal to their adroitness. Adopting the airs of democrats, they made their appeal to the people against the princes. As early as 1562 Lainez, the second General of the Jesuits, maintained in the Council of Trent that the laws of the Church were from God, but that society had the right to choose its government for itself. And Cardinal Bellarmino maintains that political power is from God; but divine right is not the possession of individuals, but of society

as a whole, and consequently there is no good reason why one person or many should rule the others; that monarchies, aristocracies, republics, and the other forms of government have been invented by man himself; and that the peoples therefore have the right to change the forms of their governments if a legitimate reason arises, as the Romans did. So here we have the dawning of the "sovereignty of the people" and the "right of insurrection." Mariana, a Spaniard who wrote under Philip III, the monarch who kept Campanella in the prisons of Naples, was in favour of monarchy, on the condition that the king obeyed a senate composed of his best citizens. He refused to admit the principle of hereditary rights, saying that they had sprung from "the excessive power of kings and the servility of peoples," and had been the cause of a number of ills. What could be more preposterous than to "commit the fate of a people into the hands of babies still in the cradle, or else to the caprices of a woman"? A king who offended against the rights of peoples and despised religion was like unto a wild beast and "any person had the right to lay hands on him." The succession should never be changed without the people's consent, because "the right of government is given to the monarch by the people." The monarch receives his power from the people, therefore "is not the lord of the state or of separate individuals, but a first magistrate, paid by the citizens." The king cannot of himself impose taxes, or pass laws, or choose a successor, for things such as these affect not only himself but the people. The monarch is subject to the laws, and in the event of transgressing the laws can be deposed, or can even be punished with death. Such were the answers made by the Jesuits to the princes. But they were weapons with a double edge. The princes, arguing on the same lines, could declare that if the rights of government lay with the citizens as a whole and not with individuals, then the rights of government in the Church must lie with the faithful as a whole or with the Council, and not with the pope; and that the faithful as a whole could depose the pope or could even punish him with

death, which disposes of the conception of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. The fact is, the Jesuits wanted it both ways: they wanted to be republicans for the State and absolutists for the Church; and if the truth must be told they were republicans with a view to defeating the princes, and absolutists with a view to getting power in the Church. Not that I mean to say that the Jesuit writers wrote in bad faith; a large number, and especially Mariana, were sincere, believing, and patriotic men: I am speaking of the Jesuit leaders, who were less religious than political.

They say that the Jesuits corrupted and weakened the people. That is just as unfair as to say that Marino corrupted taste. The Jesuits were cause and effect. They were Catholicism modernized, adapted as far as was possible to the new times in order to preserve its fundamentals; they were the intellect that follows faith and imagination and trusts to the arts of government instead of to passion and violence. They were intellect pushed to its last degree of depravity, sophistical, and of the *Seicento.* They were the fruit of the same spirit that brought Machiavelli on the world's stage. The Jesuits therefore were a progress, in the sense that they were a natural result of history. Their responsibility lies in this: that, finding weakness and ignorance in the century, instead of working to correct it, of working, that is, for the betterment of man, they fostered this weakness and ignorance and on it they climbed to power. And they made the mistake of all reactionaries. They wanted a culture licensed by superiors and confined to the few. And when culture, breaking its dykes, spread to the many, their reign ended.

That culture was spreading in Italy was evident. And not in the exact and natural sciences merely (a field in which the Jesuits had proved themselves extremely able, following as they did the life opened by Galileo) but also in the field of the historical and social sciences. From the oversupply of gold that followed the discovery of America and the consequent monetary crisis came the first works on economics: the *Discorso sopra le*

monete e la vera proporzione fra l' oro e l' argento of Gaspare Scaruffi, who agreed with Campanella in favouring a uniform coinage; and the treatise on the *Cause che possono fare abbondare i regni di oro e d' argento* of Antonio Serra of Cosenza, who wrote it in the Vicaria while a prisoner on the charge of favouring Campanella. Treatises on jurisprudence were appearing in increasing numbers, especially in the second half of the century. Alberico Gentile in his book *De iure belli* points forward to Grotius, and Alessandro Turamini, who wrote *De legibus*, comes near him in speculative power. As interpreters of Roman law Alciato, Averani, Fabro, and Farinaccio are worthy of note; and Carlo Sigonio—the "great" Sigonio, as Vico calls him—and Panciroli, the master of Tasso, were the founders of the history of law.

Chronological works of no mean value were published by Allacci, Riccioli, and Vecchietti; and histories of Venice, Naples, Piedmont, and Pisa were written by Nani, Garzoni, Summonte, Capecelatro, Tesauro, and Roncioni: works that are more like chronicles than histories, vulgar in feeling and in style. A movement in archaeology had arisen, with Rome, naturally, as its centre. Fabretti of Urbino published the *Acquidotti romani* and the *Colonna traiana* and four hundred and thirty inscriptions in eight series, with learned comments attached. Compilations and miscellanies became more and more numerous—works like the *Indice di tutt' i libri di dritto pontificio e cesareo* by Zilioli, and the treatise *Iuris universi* by Ziletti. And publications for diffusing knowledge, such as annals, journals, libraries, and catalogues, were started. Vittorio Siri launched his *Mercurio politico*, and the *Memorie recondite*, and Avogadro his *Mercurio veridico*. In 1688 Mazzari started in Rome the *Giornale de' letterati*, and Cinelli the *Biblioteca volante*, a sort of periodical report of current literature. Add to these the *Annali* of Baronio, the *Vite dei papi e cardinali* of Ciacconio, the *Storia generale de' concili* of Monsignor Battaglini, the *Storia delle eresie* of Bernini, the *Napoli sacra* of Cesare Caracciolo,

the *Sicilia sacra* of Pirro, catalogues of bishops and facts concerning them, and the *Miscellanea Italica erudita* of Padre Roberti, the *Bibliotheca selecta* and the *Apparatus sacer* of the Jesuit Possevino, and the *Mappamondo storico* of Padre Foresti, a first attempt at universal history, which was later continued by Apostolo Zeno. Add accounts of journeys, like the *Descrizione della Moscovia* by Possevino, the *Viaggi* of Careri of Naples, who made a tour of the world by land in 1698; the *Relazione* of Zani of Bologna, who travelled in Muscovy; the *Lettere* of Negri da Ravenna, who went to the North Cape, and the description of the Indies by Sassetti of Florence, who was the first person to bring news of the Sanscrit language. People were beginning to have a wider knowledge of the earth and of the inhabitants of foreign lands. From Pietro Maffei of Bergamo came the *Indie orientali*, a work in elegant Latin; from Falletti of Ferrara the *Lega di Smalcalda;* from Bentivoglio the *Guerre di Fiandra,* written in a falsely elegant and artificial language; from Davila the *Guerre civili di Francia,* written in a simple style that is really negligence; and from Padre Strada the *Cose belgiche,* a prolix work. It was an empirical culture, and purely erudite. But every one took part in it, laymen and clergy, the new men and the old, and especially the Jesuits. There was little thought in it, but there were a great many facts and from many sources. Culture had gained in breadth but had lost in depth.

Any one looking at the Italy of that day with plebeian eyes must have called it a happy land. Revolutions and wars had ceased; the fullness of peace had descended; the soul was quiet; the brain was at rest. Little things had the proportions of great events: where England had Cromwell, Italy had Masaniello. While Europe was moving forward without her, and outside of her, among wars and revolutions in which the new civilization was elaborated and hastened, Italy was reclining contentedly in that sweet idyllic idleness which her poets sang in their soft verses. From the wars of Germany had come liberty of conscience; from the English revolution had come political liberty;

from the civil wars in France had arisen that powerful unity whose fruit was the golden century; the monarchy of Charles V and of Philip II had set out to destroy the Dutch nationality. And Italy looked on at these great events without grasping their significance. Davila and Bentivoglio made use of them to pick out intrigues and curious small events, the theatrical part of them. Yet the actors in these great events were some of them Italians: Catherine of Medici, for instance, Mazarin, Eugene of Savoy, and Montecuccoli, whose treatise on war is one of the most serious works of that day.

In Europe the world was fighting not only with the sword but with the pen; men were aroused and absorbed by questions of the most abstract nature; and new problems and solutions flashed like sparks from flint. The fermentation of ideas and things was general. The thing that had fermented in the solitary brains of Bruno and Campanella, wavering and contradictory, had become definite thought—thought strengthened by passionate feeling, refined by the struggle, and ready to be applied in a great arena among many echoes, applied, moreover, with the clearness and precision of outline of a thing already materialized. In Bacon and Descartes this clearness is complete; these are the men in whom the modern world discarded the last traces of scholasticism and mysticism and of presuppositions, and affirmed itself in clear and definite forms. So the true fathers of the modern world and of the new science are Galileo, Bacon, and Descartes. The method that Galileo had applied to the natural sciences in the hands of Bacon becomes the universal and absolute method, the path of truth in all its applications. The syllogism flees before induction, the supernatural before experience. Descartes with his "*De omnibus dubitandum*"—"Everything must be doubted"—summarizes the negative side of the movement, robbing authority and tradition of all their value; and with his "*Cogito, ergo sum*"—"I think, therefore I am"—he places the first stone of the new construction by beginning affirmation. Descartes is one with the Reformation in basing con-

sciousness on individual understanding. In the same way that Galileo establishes the natural world on facts Descartes establishes the metaphysical world on a single fact, the fact that "I think." So outward experience becomes reinforced by inner experience, by psychological analysis. The entity, which hitherto in philosophy had been the primary fact, here is a product of consciousness, an "*ergo*." The criterion of truth is the evidence of the senses, is consciousness, is the inner sense. Descartes, who was a mathematician, introduced the geometrical form into philosophy; he believed that if only the metaphysical world could be endowed with a form it would acquire that clarity and distinctness which distinguished the mathematical world. It was an illusion; but it served to get rid definitely and forever of the scholastic forms, and to open the way for that natural form of ordinary speech which Machiavelli had used, and which Descartes himself uses in his admirable *Method*. These ideas were not new in Italy, being common property to all of the new men. But, swamped in that vast and immature synthesis, they had no echo, and were sterile. They were arranged, detached, thrown into relief, formulated with clearness and energy; and they seemed a revelation. On the other hand, Descartes took care not to break with religion and to insist on the spiritual nature of the soul and its distinctness from the body—the basis of the Christian doctrine—even to the point of declaring that he was less certain of the existence of the body than of the existence of the soul. Moreover, with his "innate ideas" he left an opening for theology and the supernatural to enter by. So here for the first time was a new philosophy, which seemed to be reconcilable with religion, at a time when owing to the infancy of criticism and of consciousness it was difficult to weigh all its conclusions. So the philosophical reform, like the religious reform, had a great success; because the really effective reforms are the ones least far from the past and from the actual state of the spirits of men. Add its superficiality, its extreme clearness, its easily understandable form, the fact that

it presented the masses with a small number of ideas clearly formulated: it already revealed the vulgarizing, popularizing spirit of the French. Its natural consequence was this: Man returned into the lap of Nature and became a part of the history of Nature. Granted that philosophy had its basis in consciousness, the preliminary condition of all metaphysics became the study of consciousness or of psychological facts, in the same way that the preliminary condition of every cosmology became the study of Nature. The world was emerging from the abstractions of universals and was entering on a serious study of man and Nature, the study of the real. This was the modest, conclusive way that Galileo had taken: the way that had led to the great progress in the positive sciences. The same procedure that Galileo had applied to natural philosophy Descartes now applied to metaphysics; he freed it from the dross of the supernatural, the fantastic, and the hypothetical and rooted it firmly in experience and observation. But psychological facts were as yet too scarce and too superficial for a solution of the metaphysical problems to be drawn from them; and Europe was still too young, and was too much soaked in theology and metaphysics and mysteries and the occult sciences, to have the patience to study the data of problems before starting to solve them. The "innate ideas" and "vortices" of Spinoza, the "preestablished harmony" of Leibnitz, were only hypothetical and provisionary theodicies, which satisfied modern thought left to itself, and were a witness to its speculative vigour. But the impulse had been given, and in the midst of these imaginings was progressing the natural history of the human intellect, the science of man. The *Meditations* of Descartes, that marvellous chapter of Malebranche on the imagination and the passions, the *Pensées* of Pascal, in which man in the presence of himself feels that he is still an enigma, were the prelude to the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* of John Locke, the heir of Bacon, a man whose greatness was only equalled by his modesty. In Locke the Cartesian reform had its last expression, its point

of arrival. Here philosophy had its Galileo, and attained to the goal of its renewal, the goal toward which the new men had moved hampered by so many obstacles. Here it acquired its positive basis, founded on experience and observation—on the "effectual thing," as Machiavelli had said, with "natural light," as Bruno had said, and "reading in the book of Nature," as Campanella had said. Scholastic and geometrical forms went crumbling to the ground together; philosophy emerged from its age of heroes and entered on its age of men. The old oracular language gave place to popular forms, with the result that languages became refined. Simplicity, clarity, order, and naturalness became the qualities essential to form, a first and stupendous example being Locke's *Essay*. Thus philosophy, in its diverging line, from theology had arrived at last at the purely sensible, with the motto, "There is nothing in the intellect that has not already existed in the senses." And it was not a question of an abstract conception standing alone; the new spirit had made itself felt in every branch of the knowable, and now, as a last result, was appearing in philosophy. The new, emancipating spirit had penetrated even into morals, which was breaking away from divine or ecclesiastical precepts and was looking for its basis in the nature of man; and not of man the product of society, but of man in his state of nature, in the integrity and virginity of his being. So a natural law appeared, in the same way that a natural philosophy had appeared; and Grotius, Hobbes, and Pufendorf came on the scene. And just as Campanella, Sarpi, and the others had wanted to restore the primitive Church in its purity, and had attacked the subsequent changes of the popes as falsifications, the new philosophers wanted to restore primitive man in his natural state, and attacked the social institutions that disagreed with their ideal. The religious movement became a political and social movement: the idea was one and the same, and it was sufficiently strong to spread to the field of politics. A spirit of criticism and investigation arises, a spirit that utterly rejects authority and tradition, and makes

its scepticism felt as to facts and principles that until now have been held as indisputable, as axioms. Bayle is there, with his irony and his doubts about everything. As Locke realized the "*Cogito,*" so Bayle realized the "*De omnibus dubitandum.*" And whoever compares his *Dictionnaire* with the *Raccolte* of the Italians will see where the life was and where the death was.

And Italy? What was Italy doing in face of this colossal movement of things and ideas? She was creating Arcadia. This was the real production of Italy's individual and moral existence. Her poets were singing of the Golden Age, and in the prevailing nullity of daily life were fabricating abstract themes and insipid amours of shepherds and shepherdesses. Her men of science, shutting their eyes to the world of their day, were busy with the world of the ancients and were scrutinizing the relics of Rome and Athens from every possible angle. Ideas being fixed and settled and no longer disputable, they busied themselves with facts, and unable to be authors, they were interpreters, commentators, men of erudition. Literature and science were Arcadian. And the central figure of all this world of Arcadia was Christina of Sweden. Incapable, poor woman, of understanding the great events in which her Gustavus and her Charles had taken so large a part, she had fled to Rome with her valuables. And she felt so happy in Rome with all those Arcadians, becoming their patroness, while they in sweet exchange called her the "divine" and the "immortal." Happy Christina! and happy Italy!

The inferior grade of intellect of the Italians was a well-known fact in learned Europe, and the papal-Spanish misgovernment was blamed for it. The Italians themselves had awakened to a sense of their decadence. Having lost the habit of thinking with their own brains, they thought with the brains of others and seized on ideas from Europe and went begging for a word of praise from foreigners. It was the time when Jean Leclerc was publishing his *Bibliothèque*, a sort of periodical catalogue raisonné of current works: and great was the joy of

an Italian who was given a line in this journal. A knowledge of French was almost common, and Latin was vanishing before it. It is true that in Italy there did exist a movement of importation; but it was very slow, hindered as it was by so many obstacles, and strongly opposed in the schools and academies, where Suarez and Alvarez were enthroned amid interpreters and commentators. The *Physics* of Descartes arrived in Naples when the author had been dead seventy years and the work was already forgotten in France; his *Method* and *Meditations* had not even been heard of. Grotius was being passed about by a few. The mere names of Spinoza and Hobbes brought a shudder. Of Locke there was a vague rumour. And yet there were certainly signs that a new spirit was abroad; that vague, indefinable something, that need for the new which heralds the return of life. The brain was preparing to awaken from its long sleep. The Cartesians were getting their posts in the schools with their "noisy methods," as Vico puts it, with their promise of a safe and easy science. The syllogisms, entities, and sorites were vanishing; and definitions, axioms, problems, theorems, scholia, were coming in their place, the "*quod erat demonstrandum*" was ousting the "*ergo*." The new men were calling the Peripatetics "pedants," while the latter were retorting by calling the new men "charlatans." It is always so; the old is "pedantry," the new is "charlatanry." And, after all, there is some truth in it. The old, decrepit and stagnant as it is, has a touch of the pedant, while the new in its youthful exaggeration has a touch of the charlatan: each has its weak spot, which the keen and impassioned eye of the enemy is bound to find out.

In Italy there were no results of the Cartesian reform that could be called serious scientific progress; that is always the case when a science is imported and is not the fruit of a slow elaboration of the national spirit. It was useful in diffusing the new ideas. Driven from Italy by the stake, exile, torture, and the dagger, these could now return in safety under the label of "Christian ideas." The reform, which was known as "Cartesian

Platonism," had the air of reblessing religion in the name of philosophy. The Inquisition, confused as it was by the rapid whirl of ideas at that time and preoccupied with its declared enemy, Spinoza, permitted the new Plato, who at least kept his hands off the Christian dogmas, to slip in. The Aristotelians appealed to the Inquisition, but the new men retorted by declaring Aristotle to be the enemy of religion. So the movement started once more in Italy, if not with the open permission, at least with the tolerance, of Rome And its form was Arcadian—limited to abstractions and respectful to institutions. It was a surface movement, but it spread, it inured the minds of Italy to the thought of novelty, it crushed the Aristotelians, and it sank into the minds of the new generation, linking them with Europe and preparing the way for the coming change in the national spirit.

The serious scientific movement was flowing from the place where it had been arrested—from the womb itself of Italian erudition. The study of the past had become a sort of gymnasium, as it were, in which the intellect was recovering its strength. The collections were giving place to illustrations. And here was developing too a spirit of inquiry, of observation, of comparison, which was leading, as was natural, to doubts and discussions. Even the men of erudition were pursued by the new spirit among their monuments of antiquity. But the men of erudition were no longer erudite and nothing more, they were critics. Whereas criticism in Europe was being born of free examination and rebellion, and was heretical, in Italy it was part of Arcadia, was an exercise of the intellect on the past; and it was left in peace. In Europe the critic was Bayle; in Italy the critic was Muratori. His vast and diligent collections are typical of this period. There was his *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, and the *Antiquitates medii aevi*, and the *Annali d' Italia*, and the *Novus thesaurus inscriptionum*. Similar works were the

Verona illustrata and the *Storia diplomatica* of Scipione Maffei, and the *Illustrazioni* of Fabretti. Science was still erudition, and from the midst of the erudition criticism was developing. It was not as yet philosophy, but it had got as far as being good sense, strengthened by patient research and observation. Muratori comes extremely near to Galileo for his positive, unassuming mind and his just criterion. And he too dared: he dared to oppose the temporal power, and he dared to warn the Italians against the errors and illusions of fantasy. That he escaped punishment was due to the intelligent tolerance of Benedict XIV, the pope who said that "one does not forbid the works of great men," and that the question of temporal power was "not an affair of dogma, nor yet of discipline." Even Maffei was thought an unbeliever by Tartarotti because he refused to believe in magic; and Padre Concina considered him a heretic because he wrote *De' teatri antichi e moderni.* But the excellent Pope decided that "theatres should not be abolished, but people should certainly endeavour to keep the performances as honest and clean as possible." Papal Italy was more popish than the pope.

Another of the Arcadians was Gian Vincenzo Gravina, who was deeply immersed in Greece and Rome, in the papacy and the empire, and was up to his neck in texts and commentaries, with his back turned on Europe. Dogmatic and absolute, he was not much given to discussing; he pronounced, in a monotonous leaden style. In Gravina we have the old type of Italian pedant, smothered by the weight of his learning, not original nor inspired and as poor in feeling as in imagination. Yet all the same when we read Gravina we do get the feeling of the century nearing its end. He is already an advance on the merely learned man who collects and discusses texts; he is already the critic who makes use of history and philosophy to illustrate jurisprudence, and rises to a conception of law, and searches in law for the generative principle. Even his *Ragion poetica,* if it does not reveal any taste or feeling for art (which is not his fault), is

more than a book of pure erudition, for it contains reflections of a general nature.

Another of the men of talent of that day was Francesco Bianchini of Verona. And what does Bianchini think of? He thinks of the Assyrians, of the Medes and the Trojans. He does more than collect, he thinks; he scrutinizes, compares, judges, surmises, quibbles, and constructs. To Bianchini the remains of antiquity are not dead: they speak, they illustrate chronology and history. And by means of these remains he establishes dates, epochs, customs, thoughts, symbols, and he reconstructs the prehistoric world. In this geology of history the facts and the men vacillate, are subtilized, become fables, and the fables become ideas. Bianchini's *Storia* was published in 1697, when Vico was twenty-nine.

As we see, erudition was giving birth to criticism. The historic sense and the philosophic sense were awakening in Italy. And they were awakening not among the living things, but among the dead, in the study of the past. This was the special feature of Italy's advance in science. The few who were engaged with the present at their own risk were eccentrics. One of these crack-brained writers was Gregorio Leti of Milan, who brought to light the scandals of the age in a style that has ceased to be Italian without managing to be European. Another was Ferrante Pallavicino, who wrote the *Corriere svaligiato*, a species of general satire with something for every one. In the prevailing vanity of mind writers wasted their intellect on grotesque arguments, and in forms that seemed to be ingenious but in fact were dull, a *seicentismo* of Arcadia. The canon Garzoni was writing his *Teatro de' cervelli mondani*, and his *Ospedale de' pazzi incurabili*, his *Sinagoga degl' ignoranti*, and his *Serraglio degli stupori del mondo:* books that resemble academic discourses, crammed as they are with indigestible erudition, less solid than curious. Books like these were the disease of Italy; they showed a verbose, pedantic culture utterly lacking in seriousness of aims or of means. The most famous of these learned men—and there

were many of them—was Anton Maria Salvini, a writer heavy of brain, poor in heart and imagination: empty of life. And he tried to translate Homer!

And in the midst of all this erudition Vico was growing to manhood. He studied his philosophy in Suarez, his grammar in Alvarez, and his law in Vulteius. Appointed to the post of tutor in the Rocca family, in Vatolla, a little village in the Cilento, he studied for nine years in the convent library; his mind was formed in solitude, like Campanella's. When his tutorship expired, he came back to Naples. He was now a man of learning—as learned as was possible to an Italian of that time, and there were numbers of learned men in Italy, even among the Jesuits. It was the time of Muratori, of Fontanini, of the Abate Conti, of Maffei, of Salvini, and also of the "very learned and very erudite" Lionardo of Capua, and the "very Latin" Tommaso Cornelio: these are Vico's names for them. Profoundly learned in the Greek and Latin worlds, in Plato and Aristotle, and in all the series of their interpreters down to his day, he also admired that Graeco-Latin world in the sixteenth century, the world of the ancients as it lived again in writers such as Ficino, Pico, Matteo Acquaviva, Patrizi, Piccolomini, Mazzoni. And he was thoroughly versed in literature, in archaeology, in jurisprudence. The Middle Ages had reached him with scholasticism and Aristotle, and the *Cinquecento* with Plato and Cicero. Of the current events of Europe he knew as much as it was possible to know in Italy. He was a learned man of the renewal, who had shaken the dust of the Middle Ages from his feet, and was looking for life and truth in the world of the ancients. His knowledge was erudition; his form of thought was Latin; his ordinary content was Roman law. A lawyer without clients, he was a man of letters and also a teacher, to earn his bread. Gone were the good old days of Pietro Aretino: a literato who was not a teacher was likely to go poor and naked, like Philosophy. So he went from house to house giving lessons; and he wrote canzoni, dissertations and orations, and lives, to suit the events of the mo-

ment, or by request. Having made the acquaintance of a certain Don Giuseppe Lucina, "a man of immense learning in Greek, Latin, and Tuscan lore and in all the genera of human knowledge," he was presented in turn to Don Niccolò Caravita, a chief advocate, a man renowned as "a great encourager of literati."

Partly through merit, and partly through influence, Vico was appointed to the university chair of rhetoric at Naples. From 1688 to 1744 his life was ordinary and simple: the ordinary academic existence of an Italian savant who had been formed in the libraries and outside of real life, whose thoughts and interests were confined to Italy. The movement in Europe reached him through his library, and reached him moreover in a form intensely repugnant to his studies and his character. He met with it first in the physics of Gassendi, and next in the physics of Boyle, and next in the physics of Descartes. "But why do they call it a 'novelty'?" thought our learned man. "It has all been said before by Epicurus and Lucretius." And the better to grasp Gassendi he set himself to study Lucretius. But the novelty was gaining ground. "Physics," said the new generation, "must be physics, mechanics; no longer scholastic knowledge, but Euclid, experiments, mathematics. Metaphysics should be left to the friars." And what did Vico do? Vico reacted; he looked for physics not in mechanics and experiments but in his erudite studies. In the vast range of his culture the positive studies had barely a place. Of mathematics he knew nothing at all except Euclid; he considered that mathematics was suited to "minute intelligences," and was "not conformable to minds made universal by metaphysics." So he looked for his physics not in mathematics or the experimental sciences, but in the treasures of his erudition; he found it in the "numbers" of Pythagoras, in the "points" of Zeno, in the "divine ideas" of Plato, in the "most ancient wisdom of Italy." While Europe had its Newton and its Leibnitz, in Naples they were printing *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia—The Most Ancient Wisdom of Italy*. There were two cultures, two scientific worlds, in collision; there was

the world of creative thought, which was making modern history; there was the world of critical thought, which was meditating on past history. When Vico, after being shut into his past erudition and segregated in his library from the world of the living, returned to Naples, he was astonished at the changes. When he left it the mania had been physics; when he returned it was metaphysics. The new mania had sprung from the *Meditations* and the *Method* of Descartes. And Vico was disgusted with a city that could change its opinions from one day to another "as though opinions were fashions in clothes." He felt himself a stranger in the city, and stayed there only a short time, a stranger and unknown. He saw the new movement through the veil of his studies and his preconceived ideas.

That atomical physics of Descartes could lead, in his opinion, to nothing but atheism and the morals of pleasure. He accused it of a false position, because its starting-point, the atom, was matter already formed, was a thing begun and not a beginning; and he set himself to look for the beginning before the atom, in the numbers and in the points. The spirit of Bruno and Campanella was in him. He felt himself the fellow citizen of Pythagoras, a disciple of the ancient wisdom of Italy. As to the geometrical method, he refused to accept it as a universal panacea: it was good in certain cases, and could be used without all that pomp of exterior forms in which he saw pretension and charlatanry. The "*Cogito*" he dismissed as being as little serious as the atom. Like the atom it was a thing already begun and was not a beginning: it gave phenomena, it did not give science. Descartes he judged to be a man of great presumption, and something of an impostor, and that *Method* of his, by which science was made to disappear, and then was suddenly made to reappear by a wave of the magic wand of the "*Cogito*," was nothing but a rhetorical artifice. That "*De omnibus dubitandum*" shocked him; and the Cartesian sweep of the past and contempt for the whole of tradition and authority and erudition wounded him in his studious habits, in his beliefs, and in his intellectual

life. And he fought hard to defend himself, as a man will fight a highwayman who demands his money or his life. The spread of culture and the increasing number of books angered him, and those noisy "abbreviated" methods and the superficiality of studies joined to such very audacious judgments were repugnant to him; he did not see that they were only the natural phenomena of every time of transition, when an era is dying and another is being born. Inured to profound and severe studies, and to thinking with the deeply learned and writing for the deeply learned, he disliked that tendency to popularize science and diffuse superficial and wrong ideas rapidly; and he blamed the printing-press. He was proud of belonging to no party at all. Yet here precisely was his weak spot. Placed between two centuries, two different worlds that were aiming their parting blows at each other, he belonged to neither one nor the other; and he objected to them both. He was too advanced to stand with the Aristotelians and the Jesuits and the men of erudition, and he was not sufficiently advanced to stand with the others. The former threw doubt on his erudition, and condemned his etymology as rash, while the latter poured ridicule on his "metaphysical points." He was a party composed of himself.

His was the serene and lofty mind that discerns gaps, contradictions, and exaggerations, but as yet it was a mind that lacked its instrument. He was a solitary thinker without disciples, and he stood by himself, apart from the interests and passionate feelings of the times; and in the fervour of that struggle which was raging around him he was barely noticed, and had no influence. If behind the critic had been the man; if he had possessed a touch of the missionary and apostolic spirit of Bruno and Campanella, he would have fallen a victim to one party or the other. But he was just an inoffensive philosopher, entirely absorbed in university, home, and study. The war he waged was on books, not on men; to persons he was always extremely respectful. And his crotchets were all in the high regions of philosophy and erudition, where few could follow him. So

he was left in peace among his clouds. The world esteemed him for his learning, and revered him for his piety and goodness. Conscious of his isolation and dissatisfied with it, he continued to stay in it, glad that "he had never served a master by whose word he would have sworn" and blessing "those forests, in which, guided by his own good genius alone, the greater part of his studies had been made." The Latin language was falling into disfavour: he stopped his Greek and his Tuscan and devoted himself to Latin. The French language was coming into favour; he refused to learn French. Literature was tending to modernism; he attacked that modern literature, saying that it was "not . . . inspired by Greek wisdom . . . nor invigorated by Roman greatness." In medicine he stood with Galen against the moderns; the moderns, he said, had become sceptical "through the frequent changes of system in physics." In law he stood with the ancient interpreters against the moderns. The talk of that day was all of the clearness of mathematics; Vico stayed among the mysteries of metaphysics. The watchword of that day was individual reason; Vico opposed that watchword with tradition and the voice of the human genus. Lionardo of Capua, Cornelio, Doria, and Calopreso were the progressive men; Vico was an out-and-out reactionary. For the first time in history European culture and Italian culture were meeting, the one the mistress, the other the handmaid. Vico resisted this meeting. Was it the vanity of the pedant? Or was it the pride of the great man? He resisted Descartes and Malebranche and Pascal and Grotius and Pufendorf and Locke. Pascal's *Pensées* he described as "scattered lights"; and Locke's *Essay* as the "metaphysics of the senses." He resisted these writers, but he studied them—and a good deal more than the innovators studied them. He resisted them like a man who feels their strength but refuses to let himself be conquered. He accepted the problems but fought the solutions, and looked for the latter in his own ways, by his own methods and his own studies. It was the resistance of Italian culture, refusing to be absorbed and steadfast

in the circle of its past. But it was the resistance, too, of a genius who while searching in the past finds the modern world; of a reactionary who by dint of looking backward and moving in his own paths, in the end finds himself in the van, in front of all those others who had gone before him. This was the resistance of Vico. He felt and believed himself to be an ancient, but really was a modern; and resisting the new spirit he received it into himself.

A great impression was made on him by Bacon. After Plato and Tacitus, Bacon was his man. That book of Bacon's, *De augumentis scientiarum*, inspired him to say, "Even Greece and Rome had not a Bacon." He found in Bacon the ideal sense of Plato and the practical sense of Tacitus, the *sapienza riposta* of the one and the *sapienza volgare* of the other. And Bacon had shown him new horizons. As a result of all his studies science was no longer a closed book: there was much to add to it, much to reform in it. He desired to take his part with the others in "the total that forms the universal republic of letters." He ceased to be merely an erudite man immovably fixed in the past: he was now an investigator; he had begun to criticize, doubt, examine, go deep; he was feeling the bite of the new spirit. Even in his studies on the ancient wisdom of Italy we are conscious of a disdain for "grammatical etymologies" and vulgar erudition; we feel the man who is starting on new roads and is sighting new horizons, the man who among the particulars is looking for the high generalities.

Later he was met by Grotius, who became his "fourth author." Grotius completed Bacon for him. He says that although Bacon "saw that all knowledge, human and divine, must be supplied in what it has not, and amended in what it has, yet in regard to the laws . . . he did not rise adequately from the cities to the universe and to the flow of all times, nor to the spread of all nations." In Grotius he found a universal law, in which "the whole of philosophy and theology is systematized." The commentator of Roman law felt himself raised to being its philos-

opher; with Grotius he searched for a philosophy of law. And he started a commentary of Grotius; then he remembered that Grotius was a heretic, and stopped.

The material of his culture was still the same: Roman law, Roman history, antiquity. His physics were Pythagorean; his metaphysics were Platonic, brought into line with his faith. The basis of his philosophy was the One, the entity, God. Everything proceeds from God and everything returns to God; it is the "*unum simplicissimum*" of Ficino. Man and Nature are the shadows, the phenomena, of God. Science is the knowledge of God, the "losing of oneself" in God. It is the God of Campanella, the Eternal Light, the Eternal Knowledge, with his primalities, "*nosce, velle, posse*"—"to know, to will, to be able." Up to this point Vico was still among commonplaces. His erudition and his philosophy were moving on parallel lines without meeting; there was no attrition; he was still the ascetic, the theologian, the Platonist, the Italian scholar of that day with his ordinary beliefs and culture.

Then suddenly, crashing violently into the middle of those beliefs and colliding with that culture, came Descartes: "Culture is valueless, the past must be scrapped. Give me matter and movement and I will make you the world. Science and knowledge are what give us the truth." Well, what of Vico? What of the physics of Vico? And the metaphysics of Vico? What of the "divine ideas" of Plato? And the "*simplicissimum*" of Ficino? And Roman law, history, tradition, philology, poetry, rhetoric, were they all to be scrapped? In the violent conflict of thought the powers of Vico developed. Emerging from the indefinite and the commonplace, he acquired a basis, a problem, an opponent. His erudition became spiritualized, his philosophy became concrete, and each was fulfilled in the other.

No longer wandering in accessories, he saw the basis of the enemy's doctrine and attacked it at once. His aim was to unseat Descartes, but with one and the same stroke he brought to the ground the whole of the new science. And not by going back

from it but by going ahead of it. His confutation of Descartes is complete, is the last word in criticism. But his criticism is more than negative; it is creative. His negation is resolved in a vaster affirmation, carrying along with it the new teachings as fragments of the truth and assigning to each the place that belongs to it. The new science, the science of the new men, finds its limits, and consequently its truth, in the *Scienza nuova* of Vico.

The new science, which had sprung from the religious and political struggles, was at open war with the past, and was fighting it in all its forms. Tradition, authority, and faith were its enemies, and it was looking for shelter in the power and independence of individual reason. The "universals," the "entities," the "quiddities," had disgusted it with metaphysics; it was looking for its basis in psychology, in consciousness. The supernatural and the supermundane offended its adult intelligence. Instead of supernaturalism it believed in the direct study of Nature; instead of the scholastic jargon it offered the precise language of mathematics. It no longer believed in the evidence of mysteries, the cabbala, the occult sciences, and the abstractions, but in the evidence of experience illumined by observation and in clear and distinct perception, the evidence of the senses. It was denouncing society in its corrupt state, and was preaching the virtues of man in his natural, primitive state, the nature of man, and it was drawing its principles of morality and law from this conception. This was the new science: it was naturalism, humanism, physics, psychology. And its standard-bearer was Descartes, masquerading as Plato.

Others were deceived, but not Vico. He tore the mask from Descartes' face: "After all, you are nothing but an Epicurean! Your physics is atomical, your metaphysics is sensational. Your *Treatise on the Passions of the Soul* is a thing more for doctors than for philosophers; you are a follower of the morals of pleasure." In his struggle with Descartes the question was widened; it touched in its essence the whole of the new movement. The movement itself was an abstraction, an empiric ide-

ology, empty idea and empty fact. The important thing was not to say, "I think" (a great novelty, indeed!), but to explain how thought came into being. Truth is a becoming, a thing "in the making." An idea is true when caught in its making. Thought is movement that goes from point to point, is idea that is being formed, is realized as Nature, and returns to being idea, and rethinks itself, reknows itself in the fact. So "*verum et factum*," "truth and fact," are convertible terms. Truth dwells in the fact; the fact is thought, is science. And history is a science. And in the same way that there is a logic for the movement of ideas there is also a logic for the movement of facts; an "eternal ideal history, on which the histories of all the nations pass."

So behold tradition, authority, and faith reblessed; and philology, history, poetry, mythology, and the whole of erudition put back into the bosom of science. History is shown to be as much the work of man as mathematics is the work of man. History is as much a science as mathematics is a science. History is the thought that makes what it thinks; it is the "metaphysics of the human mind," its "constancy," its process of formation according to the fixed laws of human thought. So it is based not in the consciousness of the individual, but in the consciousness of the human genus, the universal reason. Let the new philosophers talk as they like of remaking the world with their universal principles and laws. History is not to be made by philosophers, and the world is not to be remade by abstractions. To remake society it is not enough to condemn it: it must be studied and understood. And this precisely is the *Scienza nuova.*

But Vico was not content with laying the foundations: he put his hand to the building of it. Granted that history has its scientific "constancy" and is made from thought, then how is it made? What is the process of formation? The conception that history was a science was not new in Italian philosophy. Machiavelli had denied that history was made by divine arbitrariness and by chance, and had declared instead that it was made by "the force of things," by the eternal and immutable spirit of

history. And later there was Bruno, with his "universal intellect," his "reason that governs the world," a variation of the same conception. And Vico, as we saw, had taken his thread from Plato's "divine ideas." The important thing was not to put the problem, for it had already been put, but to find the laws of this spirit of history, "*probare per causas*," to generate history in the same way that mathematics is generated: to create a history of history, which was the same thing as creating a new science.

Vico discovers the modes of this ideal history "in the modifications of our own human mind"; he looks for its basis in the nature of man, twofold as it is, being made of spirit and of body. It is history treated psychologically. He begins by establishing a few psychological canons, describing them as "gifts" or "principles." The conception is as follows: Man as a natural being acts by instinct, under the pressure of his needs and interests and passions; and it is this, precisely, which makes him develop as a thinking being, as Mind, so that in the grossest and most bodily of his instincts there is a sort of veiled image, the sign of life. And this image becomes clearer in proportion as the mind develops, until thought is manifested in its true form as the work of reflection or philosophy. This, the natural course of individual life, is also the natural course or history of every nation, provided that no extraordinary event occurs to interrupt it or turn it aside, as, for instance, in the case of Numantia suppressed by the Romans just when it was flowering. So in nations there are three ages: the age of the gods, the age of the heroes, and the age of men. Previous to the age of the gods there is the savage state of mere barbarism, in which man is the servant of the body, and is "like unto a beast wandering in the great forest of the earth." Liberty comes "with the holding in check of the movements of concupiscence, which are things of the body, and the giving them another direction, which is a thing of the mind and is proper to man." In proportion as the mind unfolds and becomes intelligent, liberty is developed, and mind or "human-

ity" prevails. In the first reasonable or sociable age, the age of the gods, marriage and agriculture arose. "At the first thunderstorm after the flood" man, believing that the thunder was the voice of Jupiter, "bowed to a higher power; and all the human contrivances and all the objects that had come into use through necessity were believed to be gods." Then, renouncing promiscuous women, they had wives, and had children they knew to be their own, and had fixed dwellings. So families were formed; and they were ruled by the fathers with "*famigliari imperii ciclopici.*" And these fixed family centres were looked to as places of refuge; the weak and the oppressed fled to them for safety from savages and nomads, and afterwards remained with the families as clients or vassals. So the sphere of the family was widened, and it grew into the "Herculean republics" under social orders that were naturally better on account of the "heroic" virtues: piety towards the gods; prudence, or taking counsel of divine auspices; temperance, with chaste unions under divine auspices; strength, with the killing of savage beasts and the governing of territories; magnanimity, with the succouring of the weak and of those in peril.

In these early natural orders we have the beginnings of liberty and the first unfoldings of the mind. But very soon came corruption. The fathers, who were powerful by reason of the virtue and religion of their ancestors and the toil of their vassals, degenerated; they came out of the natural order, which is that of justice, violated the laws of protection and tutelage, and became tyrants. The vassals rebelled, and the fathers of families joined with their equals against them. And to pacify the vassals the fathers conceded them the first agrarian law, the bonitary tenure, reserving to themselves the "highest rule" or "rule of the family": on the "errant orders of nobles" and the "civil order" rose the first cities. The age of the gods ended; the age of the heroes began. In this age of the heroes religion was protected, and therefore the auspices and marriage; all law and all civil rights were contained in religion. Then, "with the development

of human minds" it occurred to the plebeians that they too were human and of the same nature as the patricians; and they asked for a share in the civil orders of the city and to be sovereign in the city. So the age of the heroes ended, and the age of men began—the age of equality, the age of the "popular republic," in which the ruler was the man superior by his own virtue and not by lofty birth. In the state of mind that followed it ceased to be necessary to have the "sense of religion" in order to do virtuous actions, for with the rise of philosophy virtues were understood "in their idea"; and even when men had not virtues, at least they were ashamed of having vices. So philosophy and eloquence were born; then the one was corrupted by the sceptics and the other by the sophists. With the corruption of the popular states came complete disorder, the uncurbed liberty of free peoples, the liberty that is more disastrous than the worst of tyrannies. Peoples who have fallen into chaos are either subdued by a monarch who takes the ordinances and the laws in his own hands and imposes them by force, or else they are enslaved by better nations through the "natural rights of the peoples," it being right and just that a person incapable of ruling himself shall be ruled by another who knows how to do it, and that the better nations shall rule the world. Or else, left to themselves, a crowd of individuals herded together in body but isolated in heart, and each thinking of his own caprice or pleasure, they begin to quarrel, and end in fighting desperately; the cities become ruined and return to being forests, and the forests become dens of human beasts, till in the course of the long centuries the "evil subtleties of malicious intellects shall have rusted away." With this "barbarism of reflection" comes a return to the savage state—to the "barbarism of sensation"—and a new history begins all over again with the same order, and travels the same course.

This is the eternal ideal history; the logic of history, which is applicable to all the particular histories. It is, at bottom, the history of the mind in its unfolding "from the state of

sensation in which it seems to be dispersed" to the "state of reflection in which it recognizes itself and affirms itself." The intellect arrives at truth, and in the process it creates history. Locke had his complement in Vico. The theory of knowledge had its counterpart in the theory of history. It was a new application of psychology. Human beings act as their impulses dictate and for their own aims, but "the results are superior to their aims"; the results are mental, are the successive progressions of the mind in the course of its development. So the passions and accidents and particular interests and aims of men are only the occasions and instruments of history, not history itself. The history that we find in Machiavelli and Hobbes is occasional history, not final history in its substance; it is true history, but is not complete; it is merely a part of the truth. Truth lies in totality, in the seeing "*cuncta ea, quae in re insunt, ad rem sunt affecta,*" the idea in the fullness of its content and its bearings.

Machiavelli, not less than Vico, was a profound observer of psychological facts. But he was a portraitist; he was not a metaphysician. Vico's psychology impinges on the regions of metaphysics, for it roughly outlines for the first time the new metaphysics which is founded not on the immobility of the entity looked at in its attributes, but on the entity in its movement or becoming; it is not description or demonstration, as with Aristotle or Plato, but is real drama, is the story of mind in the world. In this drama of the mind everything is explained, everything is given its place. War, conquest, tyranny, error, the passions, evil, pain, are all of them necessary facts and the instruments of progress. Each historical era is born, and lives, in the manner that belongs to it, in keeping with its own nature; it is this which results in the force of things, in the "*sapienza volgare*"—"the wisdom of the crowd"—of the human genus, the collective sense of the peoples, the collective force. It is not the individual who makes history, but the collective force; indeed, the most famous individuals are frequently noth-

ing but symbols or images, or as Vico puts it, the "poetical characters" of this force; as for instance Zoroaster, Hercules, Homer, Solon. We look for an individual, we find a people; we look for a fact, we find an idea. History is created by "arbitrary human choice regulated by the wisdom of the crowd."

It remained for Vico to demonstrate this ideal history; that is, it remained for him to produce the proofs that the particular histories are all of them regulated by a single flow of ideas and obedient to a single type. He could have looked for the proof *a priori* in the logic itself of the mind in its development. The mind develops in conformity with the laws of its nature, the laws of its becoming, its logic; and the thing that produces history is precisely this becoming. But when Vico had hardly done more than adumbrate the new metaphysics he suddenly stopped at the threshold, and went back to his erudition, and looked for the proof *a posteriori.* He consulted the various histories and searched in them all for its course, its system, and not only in the broad lines but in the smallest accidental events: a truly titanic work of Italian erudition and criticism. Burying himself in that "lumber of antiquity," he picked up the smallest fragments, gave life to them, "*intus legit*"—"read within"—and made them into whole bodies, reconstructing real history in the image of his ideal history. It is the world looked at from a new horizon, renewed by the light of criticism and philosophy. It is a work of great originality, carved in a powerful, lapidary, metaphorical form, like a law of the Twelve Tables.

Searching in the lumber for the proof of his "new science," he discovers new sciences by the way: language, mythology, poetry, jurisprudence, religion, cults, arts, customs, industries, commerce, are the sciences of his *Scienza.* Chronology, geography, physics, cosmology, astronomy, are all renewed by this new criticism. At every step we hear the triumphant cry of the great creator announcing a new discovery. The philosophy of humanity or of human ideas, the metaphysics of the human mind, which gives rise to a jurisprudence, an ethics, and a

politics of the human mind, has a corresponding logic, "*fas gentium*"—"the right of peoples"; a science of the expression of these ideas, the science of philology. So here we have a science of languages and myths and poetical forms, a language of the human genus, a theory of expression in the myths, in verses, in song, and in the arts. And science and theory being nothing else than the nature of things, and the nature of things being nothing else than the manner of their birth, the audacious man with his mind entirely freed from every accepted idea, and trusting solely to his own understanding, goes deep down into the origins of humanity, which have been spoiled, as he puts it, "by the double vanity of the nations and the learned." First we are shown the formation of societies, the beginnings of government, of laws, of customs, and of languages; we assist at the spectacle of history being born from the mind of humanity, and developing logically from "religions, marriages, and burials" its elements or principles, and developing under all forms, as government, as law, as custom, as religion, as art, as science, as fact, as speech. The author's immense erudition provides him with unlimited material; and he takes this material and interprets it, explains it, arranges it, and places it, according to the needs of his edifice. Audacious in etymologies, astute in interpretations and comparisons, extremely sure in his progressions and conclusions, he has the air of a person discovering new worlds at every step, while keeping the ordinary traditions and histories under his feet. It is a first history of humanity. It is a species of *Divine Comedy*, beginning as it does in the "great forest of the earth," passing through the Hell of the purely sensible, and continuing to realize itself step by step until it reaches the human age of reflection or philosophy. Bristling with myths, with etymologies, with symbols, with allegories, and pregnant with presentiments and divinations, it is not less great than the great "sacred poem" itself: it is the work of a fantasy excited by philosophical genius and fortified by erudition, and has all the physiognomy of a great revelation.

It is the *Divine Comedy* of science, the vast synthesis that summarizes the past and opens out the future, thickly encumbered still with the débris of the past, but penetrated by a new spirit. Platonic and Christian, the continuator of Ficino and Pico, one in spirit with Torquato Tasso, Vico was incapable of grasping the Reformation or the new times, but tried to make his philosophy agree with theology, and his erudition agree with philosophy; he tried to construct a social harmony like a providential harmony. His metaphysics has the earth beneath its feet and its eyes raised ecstatically to the eye of Providence, from which the rays of divine ideas pour down on him. He desires reason, but he desires authority too, and not, certainly, the authority of the "doctrinaires," but of the human genus. He desires faith and tradition; in fact, faith and tradition are the same to him as reason, are the "*sapienza volgare*" —the "wisdom of the crowd." This was the Vico formed in the convent library. But on entering the world of living men the new spirit seized on him, and in fighting Descartes he fell under the influence of Descartes: a genius is bound to be modified by contact with genius. Deeply absorbed in building his *Scienza*, he was influenced unconsciously by the "*De omnibus dubitandum*" and the "*Cogito.*" For instance, he says:

> . . . in meditating the principles of this Science we must begin by reducing ourselves to a state of the completest ignorance of all erudition, human and divine; approaching this quest we must imagine first that no such person as philosopher or philologist has ever existed: whoever wishes to profit by this science must bring himself first to this state of ignorance, so as to be able to meditate in peace, without being turned aside by the common anticipations, now grown old.

Golden words, which might easily be a paragraph from the *Method.* And in this Cartesian ignorance, which is the "sole truth," which is the truth that in the midst of so many doubts can never be doubted, and is therefore the "first truth of the aforesaid Science"? It is the human mind. It is the "*Cogito*"!

Because . . . the world of civilized nations . . . has been . . . made by men, its principles can only be found within the nature of our own human minds and in the strength of our own understanding.

Providence, and metaphysics, which looks to Providence, are only an antecedent, or as Vico puts it, an "anticipation"—a thing already agreed upon and not demonstrated. The real picture is the development of the human mind in its nature and in the order of its unfolding, the mind of the nations, the history of human ideas. Providence rules the world, assisting free will with its grace; but its results exceed the particular aims of men. The results of Providence are no longer miracles; they are human science, are the "clearing of ideas," the "unfolding of the mind." Vico, like Bruno, sings of Providence but narrates of man: it is no longer theology, but psychology. Providence and metaphysics are the background of the picture—are far away, like the sun and the sky. The picture itself is man and his light; his science is within himself, in his own mind. The foundations of this science are modern; Descartes is there with his scepticism and his "*Cogito.*" It is true that from time to time Vico spreads his wings to theology and metaphysics, moved by his high speculative genius; but Descartes is there all the same, and jerks him back to earth and pins him closely down to psychological facts. In his studies of the mental processes of individuals and peoples he comes out with remarks that are so profound, and at the same time so completely true, that we feel very clearly the contemporary of Malebranche, Pascal, and Locke, and also of Leibnitz, the philosopher who was nearest him in spirit. And he is modern not only in his foundations but even in his conclusions, showing as he does the victory of the new philosophers' principles in the picture he gives of the last development of the mind. The crown of his epic of history is the self-spiritualization of the forms, the triumph of philosophy or of the mind in its "reflection." It is the ending of aristocracies, and therefore of feuds and servitude; it is the bringing of liberty to all social classes; it is society made civilized and

humane through culture; it is theocracy and aristocracy conquered by democracy through the natural development of the mind. It is the affirmation and glorification of the new spirit.

And then, precisely at this point, Vico breaks loose from his century and returns to being the solitary thinker. Torn between the biblico-theological world of his library and the natural world of Descartes and Grotius, each as distinct from the other as two solids, and quite as impenetrable, and each excommunicating the other, he looks for repose of spirit in a higher world, in the mobilized, historical idea, and in a higher science, in criticism, in the idea analyzed and justified in the separate moments of its existence, in science removed from its rigid absolute dogmatism and mobilized together with its content. Criticism is the remaking by reflection of what the mind has made in its spontaneity. It is the mind "explained and made clear" and reflected in its work, in which it finds its true self in its identity and continuity: it is the consciousness of humanity. In this higher world of Vico's everything moves and everything is reconciled and justified. The principles that the new philosophers preached in an absolute sense, as being applicable to every time and in every place, and with which they damned the whole of the past, in Vico are shown as referring to the social conditions of certain times and of certain places. And he shows that the contrary principles are also true, for they governed the world in certain times and were found to be workable: they are "anticipations" or parts of the new principles. Therefore the criterion of truth is not the idea itself, but the idea as it is created or manifests itself in the history of the mind, in the common sense of the human genus, in the thing that he calls the "philosophy of authority." In this Vico was opposed by Plato and Grotius, by the past and the present. The disease of the century was precisely the damning of the past in the name of abstract principles, while the past was damning the present in the name of other abstract principles.

Vico was like a solitary student who suddenly comes down

into the street among men, and sees them with clenched fists ready to fight. These excited people would strike him as madmen, as people who ought to be shut up. And we can imagine his saying: "But *why* this rage against the past? Just because it did exist, we can be sure it had its reason for existing. And even supposing you were right that it was thoroughly bad, do you really imagine that the work of centuries can be destroyed in a moment by violence? Your principles! Do you really imagine that history is made by philosophers and from principles? Your reasoning! But what about the reasoning of others? They are men like yourselves and are as good at reasoning as you are. And surely, after all, a certain amount of respect is due to authority. By 'authority' I mean the authority of the human race; you are men, so are bound to believe in it. Just a little less of your reasoning, if you please, and a little common sense." And those fervent, impassioned men might have answered him: "Get away from us, get back to the clouds where you belong, get away from us living men whom you don't understand. What you know of the past is from books. But the past to us is real and alive; it is hurting and tormenting us at every turn; the past is our curse and was the curse of our fathers before us. Do you really expect us to listen patiently while you preach that because it has existed it has certainly had its reason for existing? Wait at least till we have killed this past that is burning and pricking us."

Vico remained alone in that fighting century. And afterwards, when the struggle was over, his image rose like a rainbow of peace over the combatants, and imparted the word of the new century: "criticism." Not dogmatism, and not scepticism, but criticism. Vico's history is a criticism of humanity. It is the living idea made history, and followed, comprehended, and justified in all the moments of its life, in all the moments of its never-ending pilgrimage. Principles, like individuals and societies, are born, and develop, and die; or rather (because nothing dies) they change, forever taking on forms that are more

in keeping with reason and mind, increasingly ideal. So progress is necessary, is innate in the mind, is its inevitability. To Vico the theory of progress was the promised land. He sees it, he formulates it, establishes it on its base, and follows it on its path, and he gets so near to it that he almost seems to be pointing to it with his finger. And then, when he is actually on its very borders, he turns his back on it, runs away from it, retires into the circle of his erudition, and stays there. He establishes the premises, but flees from the conclusions. And the reason is this: With all his profound knowledge of the world of antiquity Vico never contrived to explain to himself the Middle Ages, nor ever understood his own times. The vast religious and political agitation of his day he saw as a symptom of decadence, a disease that would develop to its crisis and vanish with the return of health. The man who dared to deny the existence of Homer had not the courage to apply his criticism to the myth of Adam or the stories of the Bible or the dogma of Providence or the mission of Christianity. So his picture has great shadows in it. We watch the modern consciousness lighting up the pagan world, audacious in denials and explanations. But on reaching the unquiet and impassioned world of the living he shut his eyes so as not to see it. Like many a thinker before him, he opened the great roads and established the great premises, and left his disciples to draw the easy conclusions. No more than Descartes did Vico guess to what formidable results his speculations would lead. Descartes would have rejected Spinoza and Locke as followers of his, and Vico would have rejected Condorcet, Herder, and Hegel. He was concerned with the ancients more than with the moderns, with the dead more than with the living, and the living overlooked him. They regarded his *Scienza* as the curious aberration of a savant; they did not see it as the profound meditation of a philosopher, nor did they take it seriously.

VI

Meanwhile the century was moving forward with an ever-quickening pace, deducing the conclusions of the premises laid down in the preceding century. Science was becoming a practical thing, was coming down into the midst of men. It had ceased to be investigation; it was applied and diffused. Form was emerging from the calm of science and becoming literary. The surviving remnants of Latin were fleeing before the rise of the vulgar tongues. Dissertations and treatises were giving place to memoirs, letters, narratives, articles, dialogues, anecdotes. Scholastic and geometrical forms were giving place to ordinary discourse, a form similar to the spoken word. Science was acquiring a conversational tone, as it were, the conversation of men of culture in elegant salons, even in the writers of greatest solemnity, such as Buffon and Montesquieu. As Vico would have put it, the "hidden wisdom" was turning into the "wisdom of the crowd"; it was coming down into the middle of life and acquiring the feelings and putting on the dress of life. At times it was amiable and witty, as in Fontenelle; at times it was limpid, flowing, and easy, as in Condillac and Helvetius; at times rhetorical and sentimental, as in Diderot. The "natural law" of Grotius had generated the *Contrat social;* society was being damned in the name of Nature, and the erudite dissertation of Grotius was raging in the ardent and impassioned form of Rousseau. The rather obstructed scepticism of Bayle, revealed among so many oratorical precautions, had widened into the sheer and joyous malice of Voltaire. Erudition and demonstration were ceasing to be weighty and were turning into pleasant and amiable common sense.

Science was becoming literature, and literature in its turn was changing too; it was no longer serene contemplation, but was a militant weapon pointed at the past. Tragedies, comedies, romances, histories, dialogues, were all of them militant. Thought was no longer in the lofty regions of speculation, but

had come down into the streets and was mixing with men, was spreading to the whole of society and being applied to all problems. Philosophy, art, criticism, philology, were machines of war, the most formidable of them all being the *Encyclopédie*. Condorcet proclaimed progress; Diderot proclaimed the ideal; Helvetius proclaimed Nature; Voltaire proclaimed the reign of common sense; Vattel proclaimed the right of resistance; Smith glorified free work; Blackstone revealed the English Magna Carta; Franklin announced the new "charter" to Europe. Society was a chaos; and the mission of philosophy was to bring light into it—to reduce it to order. A new consciousness was developing, a new faith. To reform, by the light of science, institutions, governments, laws, and customs was the ideal of every one, was the mission of philosophy. The same important position that had been given to the literati in the *Cinquecento* was now given to the philosophers. And the stronger the faith in this future formed by philosophy, the fiercer was the feeling against the present. Everything was wrong; and the whole of the wrong had been maliciously contrived by the priests and monarchs, trading on the ignorance of the peoples. "Superstition," "prejudice," "oppression": these were the words which summed up the past to the multitude. "Liberty, equality, fraternity among men": this was the motto that summed up the future. The scientific movement from the sixteenth century on acquired the simplicity of a catechism. Revolution was already in the air.

And what exactly was this revolution? It was the Renewal, which was shaking itself free from every wrapping, whether classical or theological, and was acquiring a consciousness of itself, was feeling itself to be modern times. It was free thought in rebellion against theology. It was Nature in rebellion against the forces of occultism, and looking for its basis in facts. It was man looking for his laws and his future in his own nature. It was a new force, the People, which was rising on the ruins of papacy and empire. It was a new class, the middle class,

which was looking for its place in society on the ruins of the clergy and the aristocracy. It was the new "charter," not given by human or divine concessions but found by man himself at the bottom of his own consciousness; the charter announced in that immortal work, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man.* It was liberty of thought, of speech, of property, of work; it was equality of rights and duties. It was the end of the ages of the gods and of the heroes and of feudalism, it was the dawning of that "age of men" which Vico described so admirably. The Middle Ages were coming to an end: the modern era was beginning.

And what kind of a thing exactly was that old society which still existed? At its head were the absolute papacy and the absolute monarchy, both of them claiming to exist by divine right, and cast in the same mould. The papacy had still its claim to universal dominion. But it was only a verbal claim, and it was conscious of lessened power. Nevertheless, the influence of the papacy was still felt through the Jesuits, and was vigorously maintaining its influence and jurisdiction in the various states. The pope as king governed in the same absolute way as did the rest of the monarchs. Absolutism reigned in Europe. What the Court of Rome had been in the sixteenth century all the courts were now: they were centres of indecorous habits, dissipation, and ignorance. The monasteries had declined in prestige and were spoken of as "dens of vice," and "asylums of idleness and ignorance." The clergy had increased in numbers and in wealth, but had sunk in culture and in public esteem. The bishops were flatterers in the courts but tyrants in their dioceses, where they reigned like feudal lords. The nobles, standing at the foot of the throne, had their feet on their vassals. Altar and throne rested on the clergy and nobles: for clergy and nobles there was liberty, there was law, but the rest of the people were things, or were less than things, were nothing at all. Rights were granted by pope and sovereign in the forms of investitures, immunities, exemptions, concessions. The laws were a chaos.

There were laws of every description; there were Roman laws, Longobard laws, canon laws, feudal laws, not to mention the laws of usage and custom. And the taxes were a chaos. There were taxes levied by the pope, and by the clergy, and by the barons, and by the king, under different names and different forms. The people were nothing but a material "*taillable et corvéable à merci*"—"subject to tax and corvée at the will of the one in power." There was no security for property or person, nor the slightest protection in the laws, nor the slightest guarantee of a just verdict; the procedure was secret, the punishments were arbitrary and disproportionate. There might be said of that old society what was already being said of the feudal properties: it was "mortmain": man, like the ground, was immobilized. Not only were territories stagnant, but brains as well.

And over against these privileged classes, crystallized by dogmatism, or in other words by a complex of ideas accepted by tradition and held to be above and beyond discussion, there was rising the scepticism of the bourgeoisie, which was casting doubt on everything and discussing everything. A large proportion of this class was composed of the type of people who had formerly constituted the Italian communes. It was the middle class, composed of such people as lawyers, doctors, architects, literati, artists, scientists, professors—people who had availed themselves of culture, who were no longer content with nominal representation and were demanding their place in society. And not only were these people affirming themselves as a class and demanding privileges for themselves, but also they were demanding liberty for every one, with equal rights and equal duties: they were speaking in the name of the people as a whole. And here precisely was the progress. But in point of fact the class predestined to benefit was their own class: in perfect good faith and speaking in the name of every one, they were working for themselves. Their weapon was scepticism. Faith and authority they fought with doubt and ex-

amination. Today it is the fashion to declaim against scepticism. Yet it should never be forgotten that it was scepticism which led to the freeing of human thought, and the cancelling of religious intolerance, credulity in science, and servility in politics.

This movement, which issued from the ranks of the middle classes, was not only popular, that is, common to all classes, but it was also cosmopolitan, or as we should call it today, "international." Its tone was human more than national; America and Europe were meeting in a language expressive of common hopes and common ideas: and Swiss, Dutchman, Frenchman, German, Englishman, seemed all of them to be natives of the same country and educated in the same ideas. The movement was universal in aim and content. It was reaching to all classes and to all nations. It was a question not only of religious, political, moral, and civil reform, but also of a radical change in all the economic conditions of society; it was the thing that today would be known as "social reform." In its flights of fancy it went as far as community of goods. It was the fruit of the unceasing work of three centuries, and it contained in idea or in germ the whole of the future history of the world for centuries to come. And yet, what was barely a beginning was considered to be the end. The men of the day thought that the whole program could easily be brought into effect in a moment.

The place where the movement had developed in its greatest energy and intensity, and in a form entirely cosmopolitan, was France. And the fact that the French language was widely known in Europe made its spread irresistible. In other nations it was only beginning to appear, and in its milder forms.

The most temperate form of this movement was the old struggle between papacy and empire, which was now a struggle for jurisdiction between the Court of Rome and the monarchies. Here the innovators were backed by the princes; they spread their new ideas under the aegis of the thrones. The jurisconsults stood by old tradition, with the princes, and defended the

rights of the princes against the Church with a learning and acuteness not wanting in sophistry. The jurisconsults were the liberals of that day; it was they who spread the new ideas to the cultured classes. In the opposite camp were the Jesuits, meddling, intolerant, bringing venom to the fight and widening its area. The Jesuits were the spur prodding the intellect. It was the same struggle of ideas in which Paolo Sarpi had formed himself; the struggle that had led to the *Lettres provinciales* of Pascal, to Jansenism, to the school of Port Royal, and to the Gallic liberties, the prelude to the movement in France that was now assuming such vast proportions. But in Italy the movement, launched with so great an ardour and breadth in the *Cinquecento*, had been arrested and changed in its nature by the reaction of the Council of Trent, and had remained in the form of a struggle for jurisdiction, a struggle of pope and princes. Thought in Italy was extremely advanced, but only among the few; there were solitary thinkers, but they remained without echo or a public. Yet the movement, though limited, was gaining ground, it was forming a real political party, and was backed by the whole of the middle classes. It was a cheap liberalism, a way to get on in the world, and to make money through the favours of princes, provided it kept within those limits. It attacked the Curia and the Jesuits, but it treated the pope and the Church with reverence. This was the stamp that culture had taken in Naples.

While the good Vico was letting his fancy soar to a history of the whole of humanity and was thinking such long, long thoughts, the jurisdictional struggle was being prosecuted fervently, especially by the eminent jurisconsults, such as Capasso, D'Andrea, Aulisio, Argento, and Pietro Giannone. The Jesuits were looking for support in the ignorance of the masses, and were pointing to these men as impious and enemies of the pope. Above all they were fierce against Pietro Giannone. So persistently did they incite the people against him that more than once his life was in danger. Excommunicated by the

Archbishop of Naples for having allowed his *Storia* to be printed without his permission, he fled to Vienna, nor dared to return even when the archbishop had been pronounced in the wrong and the ban had been lifted. The jurisconsults had maintained the argument that for the printing of a book the permission of the king was sufficient, and the prohibition of the Church was invalid, and that the excommunication had no foundation in the laws. So here we have free examination applied to the jurisdiction and the acts of the Church. But there was more beneath it; there was the lay spirit returning to life and the bourgeois spirit announcing itself. The middle class, backed by the princes (who themselves had a stake in the struggle) was making itself felt against the nobles, and still more against the clergy.

A fruit of this struggle was the *Storia civile del regno di Napoli* and later the *Triregno* by Pietro Giannone. So wide was the appeal of the *Storia,* chiefly on account of the jurisdictional question, which was a burning one in all the Catholic states, that the work was translated into several languages. Giannone dispenses with arguments and comes to the facts, describing the origins of the temporal power and tracing its growth and usurpations. The book is an indictment all the more formidable for the calmness of its tone. The author quietly proceeds with his facts, continually displaying his learning and applying it impartially. Not that he is never sarcastic or pungent; but he is careful to explain that his stings are aimed at the abuses and excesses and not at the institutions themselves. He has the air of being very respectful to institutions. The thing that stands out prominently is the universality of the Church, the communion of the faithful as a whole, till the episcopate arises as a usurper, to be absorbed in its turn by the papacy. The idea is this: that rights belong to the faithful as a whole. It is democracy applied to the Church. But the democratic conception is swamped by another, the conception that the princes as heads of the lay society have inherited their rights. So the people

vanish and Caesar appears on the scene, with the famous motto, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." The Jesuits maintained that rights belonged to the people and not to the princes; they played at being democrats to defend the papacy. The followers of Giannone, on the contrary, played at being democrats to fight the papacy. Both were inconsequent; the real conclusion was to be drawn by the people against papacy and absolute monarchy alike. Just think for a moment of the magnificent propaganda they were unconsciously making! For it was easy to draw the conclusion that if rights belonged to the people as a whole the legitimate form of government was democracy—government by the faithful as a whole and by the citizens as a whole. So the real master was popping out his head, saluting Jesuits and Giannone alike as his precursors, grateful to them both, to the Jesuits for working to undermine the absolute monarchy, and to Giannone for working to undermine the absolute papacy. As Vico would have put it, both of them were "instruments of Providence." And Providence was leading to results greater than they aimed at.

There had always been talk of the primitive age of the Church. The people thought of it confusedly as the Golden Age. And Dante, Machiavelli, Sarpi, and Campanella had pointed to those old evangelical times as being more in keeping with the purity of the Gospel. That was also the chief argument used by the heretics. In Giannone's book that primitive age of the Church is set down as detailed history, verified and described, moreover, no longer in Latin but in good plain Italian. He describes the first three centuries with his imagination turned toward the Church of his own day; writer and reader make the comparison, and illusions, confutations, epigrams, spring to life as the narrative proceeds. In the early days of the Church the hierarchy was simple; it consisted of bishops, priests, and deacons. And the priests instead of being the servants of the deacons were their senators, their councillors. There was no single person at the head of the Church; but only the synod, the

assembly of bishops. The law of the Church was the Holy Scriptures; and the measures adopted in the synods were mere regulations for the administration of the churches. There was no canon law,

> which later, with the long course of the years, became the rival of the civil law, and was manipulated by the Roman pontiffs till it presumed not only to compete with the civil laws but to tread them under its feet.

The Church had no jurisdiction: its justice was known as "*notio*," "*judicium*," "*audentia*," not as "*jurisdictio*," and was the censor of customs and of free will. The bishops were elected by clergy and people; and clergy and people had a share even in the election of priests and deacons. The Church was supported by voluntary offerings; it had nothing in the way of possessions or tithes; anything superfluous was given to the poor. Such was the Church in primitive times:

> But in the age less distant from our own we shall see it changed into monstrous and strange forms; when, no longer content with having changed the civil and temporal state of princes into so many forms, it even attempted to subject the empire completely to the priesthood.

The monks were few, and were solitary and religious. But corruption came immediately, and

> not without astonishment it will be seen how in these our provinces we have been able to germinate so many and various orders and such numerous and magnificent monasteries, which now occupy the greater part of the republic and our possessions, forming so important a body as to be able to alter the civil and temporal condition of this our kingdom.

In the same way that the Church had no *justitia contentiosa* it had no forum or territory; because things like these "do not depend upon the keys, nor are of divine right, but rather are matters of human and positive law, proceeding as they do chiefly from the concessions or the permission of the temporal princes, to whom alone God has given justice; for, as the psalmist says, 'Give the King Thy judgments, O God.'" Nor

had the Church the power to impose bodily punishments, or exile, and much less mutilation of limbs or death; and even in the gravest crimes of heresy it was the business of the princes to punish the criminals with temporal punishments. Moreover, in abuses of the Church it was the business of the princes to find the remedy, and to pass laws to curb the Church, especially in regard to temporal possessions, and the "Fathers of the Church," as for instance St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, "did not complain of these laws nor of the power of the princes to make them; and never did it pass through their minds that the immunity or freedom of the Church suffered thereby." Frederick II forbade the acquisition of property to churches, monasteries, houses of the Templars, or other religious places:

> But in the time of the princes of Anjou other maxims were introduced which taught that the princes had not the power to remedy these abuses, and held that the constitution of Frederick was impious and injurious to the immunity of the churches. So the old disorders returned. And if the matter had been kept within these bounds it would still have been endurable; but from then onwards we find the churches and monasteries abounding in so many lordships and riches that a little more and they would soon have swallowed the small residue left to the laity.

The temporal power "belonged to the State as a body," but the princes had won and obtained lordship in all the countries of the earth. And if the Roman pontiff and prelates of the Church have "temporal power," it is not

> as if it had sprung from temporal sovereignty and was one of the necessary appurtenances of the Church; on the contrary, it was acquired from time to time either by human titles, or else by concessions of princes or legitimate decrees, and *apostolico iure*—by apostolic right—as St. Bernard saith: "*Nec enim ille tibi dare, quod non habetat, potuit*" —"For neither could it give thee what it had not."

Living pictures like these of the primitive Church, put side by side with the pictures of the Church of that day, show us as if in perspective the whole process of history. This struggle between civil and canon law is shown to be the central point

of a vast web, a web that embraces the history of legislation as a whole, explained by the histories of the various governments and of political changes. Giannone was a contemporary of Vico, the younger by eight years. Yet neither of them mentions the other; they might never have heard of each other. But they worked on the same basis—the laws; and they arrived at the same conclusions, though the paths they took were different. One was the philosopher, the other the historian, of the civilized world. Both were indifferent lawyers but profound jurisconsults. Vico remained in the lofty regions of philosophical speculations and origins, and never came down to the particular interests and feelings of his contemporaries—and passed unnoticed. But Giannone, on the contrary, attacked the most delicate questions of that day—he was a fighter, moved by the same spirit as other fighters—so that his fame and influence were enormous. He speaks with daring, and moreover with that touch of banter which belonged to his century; the whole of his class and all the men of culture are behind him, and he knows it. Persecution made of him a hero, fixed him in the path he had taken, and pushed him to writing the *Triregno*, the most radical rejection of the papacy and of religious spirituality that could possibly be imagined (to judge by the extracts that survive, for the manuscript was buried in the archives of the Inquisition). This book strikes at the very root of Christianity. To curb the priests is no longer enough; he wanted to destroy the papacy and the link between man and Heaven. So he writes a history of the Kingdom of Heaven, not merely of the laws of the Church. His first subject is the centre of a vast picture; but his other book is the centre of a picture so vast as to embrace humanity itself. Its aim is to show the origin of the Church's dogmas, to describe their alterations and contraventions, to shake the faith in the dogma of the resurrection of man. The book is written with great erudition and subtlety. But ideas so radical as these, and hailing from Vienna and Geneva, could hardly be appreciated in Italy. Culture, it is true, had

developed the intellect, but character was still weak: even in Giannone the man was inferior to the writer. And persecution in that day was not so fierce as to provoke resistance to the point of martyrdom. There was a half-liberty, and a half-opposition. There was the liberalism of the middle classes aimed against the barons and the clergy, but favoured by the sovereign, and so, within certain limits, courtly and hypocritical; a liberalism with kid gloves, as we should put it today. The ideas of that time, and this particular type of opposition, are shown in the following extract from a Neapolitan writer of that day:

The just idea that the clergy were the ministers of the Kingdom of Heaven had exempted them from all the loads of the kingdom of earth; and the care of souls and divine worship given into their hands had brought them measureless goods and privileges in this world. Certainly it is not our intention to diminish in the smallest degree the good repute of the clergy among the people: those ministers of religion we respect from the bottom of our hearts. Religion is one of the first of the basic laws of the State, and the meaning of those laws should never be discussed by a mere citizen. It is the province of the sovereign to decide as to their uselessness or advantage. The supreme power to create the Church's ministers belongs to the sovereign alone; it is he who ordains or suspends their exercise, rites, and functions, or explains or veils the doctrines, or vindicates, alters, or annuls them, according to the light of his divinity given him by God, whose representative he is on earth. I say "divinity," for what else could possibly be the meaning of that "*Dei gratia rex*"—"King by the grace of God"? It is clear that the duty of the subject is merely to listen and to obey. But religion, and especially the true religion, demands that men should love one another, and desires that every people should possess the best of political and civil laws; and it requires its ministers to obey these laws. It is they who should set the example: the purity of the consciences of the peoples depends on the conduct of the clergy. But speaking openly from the heart, have they ever for centuries past shown any such example? Their personal immunities, their exemption from taxation, the jurisdictions that they have usurped, the immense properties they have taken by force, and the arrogant way in which they have always defended such usurpations and acquisitions, and the curious doctrines they have taught with this end in view, and such a number of other

privileges, rights, and interests—what are these at bottom but so many clear infractions of the political and civil laws? The clergy are much too reasonable to dispute an argument so patent. And after all, we are not speaking to the priests of Cybele or of Bacchus, and certainly not to the priests of Hume or Rousseau: we flatter ourselves that we are reasoning with the ministers of the true religion, and especially with those of Italy, who have nearly always distinguished themselves by the affability and gentleness of their character, as well as by their abhorrence of bigotry and intolerance. Yet in Italy there is not a county, a barony, or similar fief, nor a stable and fixed income, nor a comfortable and decorous dwelling-house which is set aside as a reward for a minister of State, or a president, or a councillor, or a general; though consider for a moment the numbers of secure and fat benefices and fixed rents, immune from sovereign taxes, that are given to priors, guardians, bishops, and abbots. And moreover these aforesaid clergy have dwellings so magnificent as to put the princely palaces in the shade. The friars are bound by a solemn oath to observe a greater poverty than the secular clergy, but have far outstripped them in accumulating riches, to the point that the others are left with barely the means of subsistence. How do they reconcile it with their conscience to occupy the chairs in the universities, the appointments in the law courts, the pulpits in the parishes, and even the posts for administering the affairs of private families? How, without blushing, can they practise as apothecaries, merchants, and bankers? So greatly have the clergy increased in numbers that the princes must either take measures to restrict them, or allow them to engulf the whole of the State. Why is it necessary that the smallest Italian village should be controlled by some fifty or sixty priests, not to mention the initiates of high rank? The great number of campaniles and convents in the cities shuts out the sun. There are cities with as many as twenty-five convents of friars or sisters of St. Dominic, seven colleges of Jesuits, and as many of Theatines, and about twenty or thirty monasteries of Franciscan friars, and a good fifty others of different religious orders of both the sexes, not to speak of some four or five hundred churches and chapels of minor importance; conversely, there are only thirty-six miserable parish buildings, and not a single astronomical observatory, nor an academy of painting, sculpture, or architecture, nor a school of surgery or agriculture, nor any school of the other arts and sciences; not a single good manufactory of cloth or linen, nor a library for the use of the public, nor a botanical garden, nor a museum of natural curiosities, nor an anatomical theatre, nor any care to cleanse the ports, nor to see that

the streets are decent and comfortable, or the inns respectable, or the cities properly lighted, nor any attempt to infuse life into commerce. Do the clergy think that they can enjoy the comforts of society forever without once discharging a single obligation to society? Do they think that the scales will dip forever in their favour, and that a just balance can never be hoped for?

A very lively portrait of that day, in ideas and in language. There is no mistaking the layman, the bourgeois, and the lawyer. The sovereign is infallible: the duty of the subject is merely "to hear and to obey." The writer respects religion; he has the greatest reverence for its ministers, and even caresses them. And yet, among all that sweetness, what blows he gives them! What he cannot forgive is the fact that the clergy are so rich, whereas he—that is, the others—has such narrow means. If only he—that is, the others—had a fief or two of his own, the thing might be bearable. And we see the results of culture. The comparison between the number of churches and convents and the neglect of science, the arts, the industries, and commerce, is extremely significant. The mind has progressed, the character has lagged behind; the mind is emancipated, the soul is servile. Such were the jurisconsults, the leaders of the liberal movement in that slightly grotesque form, halfway between insolence to the priests and servility to the sovereign. The jurisconsults, sensitive as they naturally were about the laws (not to mention the exigencies of their profession), must have wanted to fight against arbitrariness in the laity as well as in the clergy, and to promote a monarchy no longer absolute but constitutional, indeed liberal. This tendency is clear in Giannone: in adoring the Roman laws he adores the whole of the law and is inexorable towards arbitrariness. This is what he says of it:

From the earliest times of the Roman republic there was nothing more eagerly desired by the licentious youth of Rome than not to be governed by the laws, and for every question to be submitted to the king's decision; and this and none other is the reason that Livy reports: "*Regem hominem esse, a quo impetres, ubi ius, ubi inuria opus sit.* . . .

Leges rem surdam, inexorabilem esse." [3] . . . Sentiments which unfortunately are only too harmful and provocative of licence. . . . It would be better for the republic to have a superabundance of laws . . . than for every question to be brought to the magistrates for decision.

So the ecclesiastical question was widening; it was turning into a legal question and was fighting arbitrariness under all its forms. The usurpations of the clergy were fought as illegitimate, as actions contrary to the political and civil laws. And the arbitrary acts of the secular authorities and the arbitrary acts of the monarch were attacked with the rest. Much progress was made in this field. Not only were actions outside of the laws arbitrary, but even the laws themselves were arbitrary when they were not in keeping with justice and equity. Writers were beginning to take notice of the many confusions and abuses in the civil and criminal laws. And the princes allowed them their say: for the attacks were not against themselves nor their power, nor was it the form of government that was attacked; the princes in fact were the persons appealed to to remedy abuses. Giannone was right when he stated that the liberal movement in Italy was not the fruit of philosophy or "metaphysical reasons," but arose from a deep feeling for legality and justice. In the sixteenth century the slogan of the reformers had been "the corruption of customs"; in the eighteenth century it was the "injustice of the laws." In the sixteenth century the movement had been religious and ethical; now it was political; it was really the same movement as before, but developed in its premises and enlarged in its conclusions.

With Bruno, Campanella, and Vico it was still in great part speculative and theoretical, almost a Utopia. But with its spread to the cultured classes its aims and its means became concrete, chiefly through the work of the jurisconsults. Its aim was to fight ecclesiastical and feudal privilege in the name of equality, and to fight arbitrariness in the name of the law, and to fight the

[3] "The king is a man from whom you may secure relief when there is a question of a right or of a wrong. . . . Laws are deaf things, inexorable."

law in the name of justice and equity. And its instrument was the civil princedom, the lay, legal, reforming element; the innovators' hopes were centred in the princes. They developed their idea with immense erudition and with the greatest subtlety of interpretation and arguments, as men inured to forensic disputes. In Germany the movement was barely beginning, and was still in the lofty regions of speculation. In England the sensationalism of Locke had generated the scepticism of Hume; there had arisen a new speculation as to the human intellect, a philosophy of criticism of the intellect, of which Locke had written the history. Kant and afterwards Fichte concentrated their powers on these arduous problems; but they waited to plant the roots deeply before growing the trees; they worked at laying the basis of the future civilization of Germany. Not one of these philosophers except Locke had reached Italy, and even Locke only partially, in a translation mutilated by the censor. The movement as it was developing in Germany and England had the merest echo in Italy; in fact, it had difficulty in making its way at all, swamped as it was by the French importations. France was the great vulgarizer of the ideas of the preceding century, ideas now elaborated; no longer demonstration, but epilogue; no longer research, but formula; no longer speculation, but application. It was science already consolidated in its principles and turned into a catechism, and presented in a literary and popular form that insured its diffusion. Negation attained to its last degree of efficiency in the amiable irony of Voltaire, with so much good sense under all its malice. Affirmation attained to the precision of a catechism in Rousseau, who fought the conventional society of that day in the name of natural society, from which teaching the rights of man and universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the people were springing up. In Rousseau speculation had almost ceased to be philosophical, but was a sort of Bible—philosophy turned into feeling and gone down into the imagination. Montesquieu was raising the most difficult problems in politics and legislation in an in-

cisive form, which was rather condensed and formulated wisdom than actually science. These were the different centres around which were grouped the Encyclopaedists and a crowd of writers of different degrees of talent and culture, but all of them pronounced to be great men by their contemporaries. And soon there was not a cultivated person in Italy who was not reading them avidly.

The men who had formerly been known as liberals or new men or innovators, were now "philosophers," "philanthropists," and "*esprits forts.*" The philosophers were philanthropists or friends of men or humanitarians, and at the same time were free-thinkers or *esprits forts,* who in the name of reason or science condemned every one who thought differently from them or acted in a manner not approved by them. Their public acts were helped by the freemasons, who were acting in secret for the same ends and inspired by the same feelings. To emancipate thought and action from every exterior obstacle, whether religious or social, to equalize the classes before the law, and to provide for the education and welfare of the people, were the foundations of the new construction they were aiming at. And the philosophers thought they could effectuate the whole of this program merely by passing laws, as Solon had done, and Lycurgus, and Numa. They covered the sovereigns with blandishments, and pointed them out to the people as the instruments of Providence in the renewal of the world. And a public opinion was formed, with Paris as its centre and the philosophers as its voice. To conform to this public opinion and now and then to make some reform dictated by the philosophers, became a means of government with the princes; it was as easy and sure a means to fame and popularity as the protection of the literati had been in the *Cinquecento.*

And the real crime of that century, the violent attempt to destroy Polish nationality, was hidden by the flowers that the philosophers rained on the memories of Elizabeth, and of Catherine II, of Maria Theresa and Joseph II and Frederick II, the

flatterers and the flattered of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Raynal, and the Encyclopaedists. This is not saying, of course, that these monarchs were reformers entirely from calculation; to say such a thing would be a calumny on human nature. When a beneficent reform was in no way dangerous to their authority, but on the contrary was calculated to strengthen it, the princes made it gladly; they were pleased to combine the public good with their own advantage. And mixed with the self-interest there was the pleasant feeling that comes from a good action, and the enjoyment of being praised for it. And there was also some inner conviction, for the princes themselves were soaked in those ideas.

In Italy it was the same; in all the countries the princes were vying with each other in reforms: there were Charles III and Ferdinand IV, Maria Theresa and Joseph II, Leopold, Charles Emmanuel, and even Pope Ganganelli, who offered up the Jesuits as a holocaust to public opinion. In working to destroy the feudal, ecclesiastical, communal, and provincial privileges and to abolish the distinctions of class, the philosophers were backed by the princes; for the princes themselves had been fighting for a long time past for these very things, believing as they did that if local liberties and privileges could once be abolished their own power would be secured. So philosophy and absolute monarchy were working together. There was the same agreement on the questions of economic, administrative, and judicial reforms, such as the simplifying of taxes, the unification of the laws, the releasing of property, the promotion of industry, commerce, and agriculture, and the safeguarding of the life and property of citizens. The princes too were working for these things; some were ahead and others were behind, but all were moving in the same direction. They thought that if the clergy and nobles could be weakened, the guilds dissolved, and local resistance in general done away with, their power would be supreme, backed as it was by the bureaucracy and the army, the new machines that had taken the place of the old disjointed machines of the Middle Ages. And they never stopped to con-

sider to what conclusions they were being led, for if privileges in general were to be abolished, the most monstrous of all the privileges, absolute monarchy and divine right, must certainly be abolished with the rest; and if the arbitrary power of the priests and magistrates was to be curbed, the arbitrary government of the princes must be curbed too. It was unlikely that government by royal letters and personal decrees of the king would survive. Revolution must certainly have come, either sooner or later, even if France had not set the example. But no one foresaw it then; the princes continued happily with their reforms, and every one was perfectly convinced that it was enough to have "enlightened" ministers and "paternal" princes for society to be renewed pacifically and step by step. The writers (who were not prevented by the princes from writing, but in fact were encouraged and protected) abstained from abstract speculations, and attacked the most delicate and immediate problems of the day with the security that came from the applause of the public coupled with the benevolence of the princes, "the directors of public happiness." Beccaria says:

> The great monarchs, the benefactors of humanity, love that the truth be expounded by humble philosophers . . . and the present disorders are the satire and reproof of the past age and not of the present century and its legislators.

And Filangieri, with southern enthusiasm, concludes the second book of his *Scienza della legislazione* like this:

> The philosopher should not be the inventor of systems but the apostle of truth. To say that everything has already been said is the language of men who have not the power of producing a message, or else have not the courage. So long as the evils that afflict humanity are still uncured; so long as error and prejudice are allowed to perpetuate them; so long as the truth is limited to the few and the privileged, and concealed from the greater part of the human genus and from the kings, so long will it remain the duty of the philosopher to preach the truth, to sustain it, to promote it, and to illustrate it. Even if the lights he scatters are not useful in his own century and his own country, they will certainly be useful in another country and another century. Cit-

izen of every place and of every age, the philosopher has the whole of the universe for his country and earth itself for his school, and posterity will be his disciples.

Philosophy was already overpassed. It was now an antecedent, generally admitted and no longer demonstrated. The aim of the thinkers was not to create a philosophy or to invent a system. Their aim was an apostolate: to propagate and illustrate philosophy, to spread the truth, which till then had been limited to the privileged and the few. Truth was announced with the thunder of an oracle and the heat of faith, as the apostles had announced it. It was a new religion. God had come back among men. Consciousness had been born again; and the inner life of man had returned. And literature had been born again. The new science was no longer science: it was literature.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW LITERATURE

THE man who sums up and embodies this stage of transition between the old and the new literature is Metastasio. The old literature, being nothing now but a musical, singable form, had its last expression in musical drama. No longer an end, it was now a means; it was melody, and subservient to music. But it was not resigned to this secondary position; it wanted to retain its importance, to be literature still. Such was the last form of the old literature; and such, precisely, was Metastasio.

His life stretched from 1698 to 1782. He was adopted and educated by Vincenzo Gravina, who taught him the laws from their Roman sources with examples, and attempted to evolve an early philosophy of law. Gravina was the author of tragedies in the manner of Sophocles, and of a theory of art, which he published under the name of *Ragion poetica.* His aim was to bring art back to the simplicity of the Greeks, purging it of the corruption brought to it by science. This excellent man saw the disease, but not its cause and not its cure. None can deny that simplicity is the form of greatness—but of true, of unconscious, greatness, of greatness become natural. But the eighteenth century was incapable of this greatness, pretentious and mannered as it was without and empty within. To fight the mannerism Gravina suppressed the colour, replacing it by copies of moral and philosophical maxims. The intention was good; it seemed to be saying, "Things and not words." And this and nothing else

is the trend of the *Ragion poetica*. The substance of art is shown to be truth, but truth in its nakedness, not "truth disguised in soft verses." But unfortunately, in his efforts to be simple he ended by being arid. The theory of course was not new; it was the old theory of Dante, which Tasso had revived. But coming at a time when the whole effort of literature was centred in the making of phrases it *seemed* to be new.

Such were the ideas taught to the young Metastasio. Forbidden the reading of Tasso and the later poets, he was early grounded in Greek and Latin, and his mind was guided to a study of the law. Gravina saw himself living again in a Metastasio become jurisconsult and literato. But it happened that the boy was a born poet, and no sooner was Gravina in his grave than he threw himself greedily on the forbidden fruit, devouring the *Jerusalem Liberated*, the *Pastor fido*, the *Aminta*, and especially the *Adone*. Not that his earlier classical education was wasted; it had trained him to naturalness and simplicity, and had nourished him with good examples and solid learning. But left to himself there developed in the youth—as there does in every talented individual—a sense of the contemporary life. Gravina had seen him as a tragic playwright in the Greek style, or rather, in Gravina's style. But tragedy was not his vocation, and the author of the *Giustino* preferred Ovid to Sophocles and, following the mode of the day, entered Arcadia in triumph with the usual sonnets, *canzonette*, and idylls, whose obligatory heroes were Thyrsis, Phyllis, Chloë, Naïs, Irene, and Tityrus. His last work in the manner of Gravina was the *Sogno di gloria* (*Dream of Glory*), a cantata loaded with clichés and reminiscences of Dante and the classics. The *Ritorno della primavera* (*Return of Spring*), which he published a year later, in 1719, already shows traces of the *Aminta* and the *Adone*, which had easily sunk into that soul so open to harmonies and images. The favourite form of those times was the idyll—the repose and innocence of the life of the country contrasted with the life of society—as developed in Tasso, Guarini, and Marino: a sort

of inner equilibrium, a condition of peace and satisfaction, in which pain was present as a spice to pleasure. Arcadia, in endeavouring to reform taste, had pruned the idyll of the intellectual tension that was known as "*seicentismo*," leaving it a purely melodious effusion of the soul in blessed idleness, lulled by the softest cadences, partly voluptuous and partly elegiac—the thing that was known as "melody." But into this form so adapted by nature to receive it music was already penetrating: the canzone was turning into the *canzonetta*, the cantata, and the arietta, and the pastoral play was turning into musical drama. The rage of the moment was the *canzonette* of Rolli; but people were already disputing as to which made the better, Rolli or Metastasio. Having squandered Gravina's inheritance and finding Arcadia useless for providing bread, our hero remembered his master's advice, and started for Naples to study law. But Naples, then as now, was the home of music and of song, and our hero's harangues were cantatas and epithalamia. Instead of the usual sonnets and canzoni it was the custom now to celebrate marriages with cantatas and epithalamia and theatrical festivals, and Metastasio became the poet of marriages. Of his epithalamia three have come down to us: idyllic, mythological stories obviously imitated from Tasso and Marino. He sang the marriage of Antonio Pignatelli with Anna de' Sangro, evoking the loves of Venus and Mars, and intertwining the romance of the happy couple with the story of the god and goddess: Anna of course is Venus and Antonio is Mars. The poem describes a Mountain of Love, which recalls the garden of Armida, and makes use of the whole mythological repertory, with its worn-out images and concepts. Listen to his portrait of Anna:

Se in giro in liete danze il passo mena,
se tace o ride, o se favella o canta,
porta in ogni suo moto Amore accolto,
Pallade in seno e Citerea nel volto.

When she moves her feet in the joyous dance, or is silent, or laughs or speaks, or sings, there is always love in her every movement, and Pallas in her breast, and Cytherea in her face.

Vicino al lato suo siedono al paro
con la dolce consorte il genitore,
coppia gentil d' illustre sangue e chiaro,
vivi esempli di senno e di valore:
alme che prima in ciel si vagheggiâro,
e poi quaggiú le ricongiunse Amore:

Seated at her side is her father, with his gentle consort: a noble couple of illustrious blood, living examples of wisdom and valour, souls that loved first in Heaven and were reunited on earth by love.

e diêr tal frutto, che non vede il sole
piú nobil pianta e piú leggiadra prole.

And such was the marvellous fruit they bore that never shall the sun behold a more noble plant or more charming offspring.

Extremely rough and mediocre octaves, which nevertheless reveal a facility in verse and rhyme and considerable clarity. An octave pleasing in a way in its clarity and liveliness of colour is the one which shows us Anna singing:

La voce, pria nel molle petto accolta,
con maestra ragion spigne o sospende;
ora in rapide fughe e in groppi avvolta,
velocissimamente in alto ascende;
ora in placido corso e piú disciolta,
soavissimamente in giú discende;
i momenti misura, annoda e parte,
e talor sembra fallo, ed è tutt' arte.

Her voice, which first she had held in her soft bosom, she now gives out, or suspends, with masterly discrimination. Now it rises with extreme velocity in rapid runs or in groups of notes; now it falls more loosely in a placid course, and with the greatest sweetness. She measures the moments and unites the notes, and scatters them apart, and it all seems like an accident, yet it is all art.

Here he has left the usual generalities and is dealing with the living interest of particulars, and reveals a poet who is able to express whatever he wants to, and in the happiest ways. These epithalamia are really nothing but idylls, with the usual machinery of the idyll, such as Venus, Cupid, Diana, Minerva, and Vulcan. And even the early dramas, which were produced in

Naples, are nothing but idylls at bottom; as for instance the *Orti esperidi* (*Gardens of the Hesperides*), the *Galatea,* the *Endimione,* the *Angelica.* Let us glance a moment at the *Angelica.* Over against the protagonists Orlando and Angelica stand Tirsi (Thyrsis) and Licori (Lycoris), and we find the usual antagonism between the city and the country. The sharp-wittedness of Angelica is put in antithesis to the ingenuity of Licori, and the little plot that springs from this is pure comedy. And pervading the whole is a peace so idyllic as to be undisturbed even by the bursts of madness of Orlando. And even Orlando ends idyllically:

Torna, torna ad amarmi e ti perdono.
Aurette leggiere,
che intorno volate,
tacete, fermate,
ché torna il mio ben.

O love me, love me as before, and I will forgive you. Be silent, O gentle little breezes that are flitting around me; be silent, cease from your flitting, for my dear one is returning to me.

And Angelica, when she leaves those pleasant places forever, does it with this little arietta:

Io dico all' antro:—Addio!—
ma quello al pianto mio
sento che, mormorando:
—Addio!—risponde.
Sospiro, e i miei sospiri
ne' replicati giri
Zeffiro rende a me
da quelle fronde.

I say to the cavern, "Adieu!" and to my laments I hear it answering: "Adieu!" I sigh, and my sighs return to me on the breezes from the midst of that foliage.

The *canzonetta* of Licori, pervaded by a soft and gentle melancholy, is a purely melodic exhalation, an expression of feeling turning back on itself like a *ritornella:*

Ombre amene,
amiche piante,
il mio bene,
il caro amante
chi mi dice ove ne andò?

O pleasant shady places, O friendly plants, which of you will tell me where my dear, my true love has gone?

Zeffiretto lusinghiero,	O little flattering breezes, fly to
a lui vola messaggiero:	him with a message; tell him to
di' che torni, e che mi renda	come back to me, to give me back
quella pace che non ho.	that peace which I lack.

These are conceptions and images that were already clichés, without any literary value whatsoever, which were interesting only as melodic combinations. The effect is not in the idea, but in that song of two lovers at a certain distance and hidden by the foliage; for while Licori is looking for Tirsi, Tirsi is looking for Licori with the same melody:

La mia bella	Which of you will tell me where
pastorella,	my lovely little shepherdess is
chi mi dice ove ne andò?	gone?

And yet in the midst of this atmosphere, purely idyllic as it is, there is also somehow a hint of the comic, a dash of the lively and gay, as when Licori makes love to Orlando, with Tirsi as eavesdropper.

In Naples it happened that the Bulgarelli, the celebrated singer and actress who created the part of Venus in the *Gardens of the Hesperides,* became interested in Metastasio. By her he was initiated into all the mysteries of the theatre, while the great Maestro Porpora taught him music. This was Metastasio's second education, in keeping with his real vocation. Rome had made him an Arcadian; Naples made him a poet. Guided and inspired by the Bulgarelli he wrote *La Didone abbandonata* (*Dido Abandoned*) and leapt at once and forever into the hearts of the people, who classed him with Apostolo Zeno, the acknowledged monarch of all the writers, the *poeta Caesarea* or imperial poet at the Court of Vienna. Later Metastasio succeeded to the same office, proposed by Zeno himself. And he lived in Vienna in peace and comfort, the supreme sovereign of musical drama, and respected by all. His life was an idyll. And if this be happiness, then he lived in happiness till the advanced age of eighty-four. While still alive he was deified, being known as "the Divine."

If we look at its mechanism, the drama of Metastasio is constructed on the lines of Zeno's. But the mechanism here is merely a skeleton. Metastasio breathed into that skeleton the graces and charms of a joyous, harmonious life. Metastasio was the poet of musical drama, of which Zeno had been the architect.

Metastasio's fixed idea was to construct musical drama like tragedy; in other words to construct it in such a way that it would make its effects even if acted alone, without music. His fixed ambition was to leave the low regions of idyll and comedy and rise to the higher and nobler themes of tragedy—as though the loftiness of a play depended on its theme. We already see this ambition in the *Didone* and the *Catone in Utica.* Later he vied with the great Frenchmen; the *Clemenza di Tito* was written in rivalry to Corneille's *Cinna,* and the *Gioas,* to Racine's *Athalie.* Here he laid himself open to criticism, and disputes arose as to whether, and to what degree, his dramas were tragedies. And of course Aristotle was dragged into it, and the inevitable "dramatic unities." Metastasio entered the fight with his *Estratto dell' "Arte poetica" di Aristotile,* which argued indirectly in his own favour. So hampered was criticism still by its outer mechanism that people asked each other seriously whether a drama with only three acts to it *could* be a tragedy. To Metastasio it was little less than a degradation to be forced to descend from the high seat of a tragic poet and be classed among the writers of musical drama. It was a prejudice inherited from Gravina, for whom nothing had existed in drama but classical tragedy. Maffei's *Merope,* which was causing a commotion at the time, robbed our hero of his sleep, and the fame of Corneille and Racine darkened life for him. Among the critics were some who maintained that his dramas were real and genuine tragedies, as for instance Ranieri de' Calsabigi, the writer who was afterwards famous for his war with Alfieri on the question of the *Filippo.* And on the medal struck in his memory by the Martinez was the motto: "*Sophocli italo*"—"To the Italian Sophocles." But the public, who worshipped him,

persisted in calling his works not tragedies, and not musical dramas, but simply and purely "dramas." And the public was right. The works of Metastasio are poetry penetrated and transformed by music, which yet have their value in themselves as poetry alone. They are works of that period of transition which gave our "Sophocles" his special physiognomy. Later his plays were adjudged too musical to be dramas—this was the reaction of Alfieri; and were adjudged too literary to be music—this was the reaction of the two-act musical drama. We are forced to conclude that those dramas were imperfect, neither one thing nor the other, and that this was the reason they were abandoned by music and stifled by the new literature. It is the kind of thing that can easily happen when a man stands between two objects of desire without knowing clearly which of the two he wants most.

And yet, in their time those plays had a marvellous success, and even today produce their effects, in spite of the profound changes that have taken place in society. Every one knows the enthusiasm of Rousseau and the admiration of Voltaire for Metastasio. In Italy, the critics, after a short tussle, gave in to him, swept forward by the tide of the public adoration. Certain moments of his plays—moments at which the critics smile—arouse the emotions of the public even today and are applauded in the theatre. Never was a poet so loved by the people; never was there a writer who entered so intimately into the souls of the multitude. It is evident, then, that his dramas have an absolute value, superior to the passing moment, a value that even the dissolvent criticism of the nineteenth century has not destroyed.

The reason is this. That confused consciousness in Metastasio, that gap between the thing he aimed at and the thing he achieved, that poetry which has ceased to be poetry and is not yet music—all this is not a question of caprice, or of prejudice, or of pedantry, but is the very form itself of his genius and his time. The Metastasian drama is not an artificial construction like

the tragedies of Gravina or the poetry of Trissino, but is a composition filled to the brim with a rich and vivid life, which spontaneously produces results superior to the author's intentions. The part written by the author with intention, consciously, is not the merit of the work but its defect. And this was the part that critics and author wrangled over.

To savour the plays of Metastasio we must copy the people, and enjoy them uncritically—forget what the author intended to do and enjoy what he actually did. For even a critic, to enjoy a performance properly, should give himself up to his feelings, as the artist does.

Let us take the first of his dramas—the *Didone.* He intended a tragedy. What he did not grasp was the fact that neither he nor the society he lived in had the stuff for tragedy. So he studied the plot in Virgil, and also in Ovid. But imagine a tragedy in that age and written by that man!—a tragedy with the Bulgarelli as adviser, and Porpora as director, and Sarro as composer, and written for the same public that had applauded the *Angelica* and the *Orti esperidi,* and in the presence of his own soul, elegiac, idyllic, melodic, impressionable, and superficial, like his public! The work that resulted was of course not a tragedy—which was just as well, for a tragedy by Metastasio could only have proved a pedantic abortion. The work that resulted was a masterpiece, warm with the life around him, a work that even today is read with eagerness from beginning to end. The Dido of Virgil has faded out, the classical reminiscences have slipped into the background, conquered by the living impressions of the day. The Dido here is Tasso's Armida, set to music: instead of the Olympian and celestial woman we have the earthly woman as Tasso sketched her in the best beloved of his creations; the woman who exhausts the whole gamut of the most varied and animated feminine feelings, with her passion, her manias, and her furies. But Armida here is Armida with a difference: she has been crossed with the Bulgarelli, who inspired Metastasio with those comic movements that touched the impas-

sioned nature of his Dido, as for instance in the scene of jealousy that received such immense applause on the stage. Dido here has nothing of the classical, of Virgil or of Sophocles, but is wholly alive and contemporary. Her passion is certainly not simple nor measured; it is violent and uncurbed to the point of being indecorous. If the author in showing the passion of the woman had stressed at the same time the dignity of the queen, her love for her country and people, her piety—if he had made her, in short, not only a woman but also a heroine—he would have given us a dramatic and highly tragic contrast. But the heroine here is negligible and the woman is everything; the woman is ruled by a passion that becomes a madness of the heart, so cynical and shameless as to verge on the grotesque, descending the scale of life to the lowest comedy.

The good Pindemonte, in objecting to some of these comic passages, failed to see that in spite of the tragic forms the whole situation is substantially comic; and in fact if Aeneas had been able to patch up matters with his Dido the play with few alterations would have turned out a genuine comedy, and not an artificial comedy either—a living contemporary comedy taken direct from the very life of that day. Dido here is a woman conceived in the only way that it was possible to conceive her in those times. She is a Dido inspired by the Bulgarelli and by a public whose soul was like the poet's own, in spite of his intending (and believing) her to be a tragic character. But if any one had told Metastasio that the thing he had begotten was a comedy he would have felt it a blasphemy. The comic in the *Didone* lies in the ups and downs of passion, in the violent and impulsive movements of the heroine, in her unreasonableness carried to the point of absurdity, in the petty and vulgar intrigues more suited to an ordinary little woman than to a queen. And the whole was so completely right, so natural, so entirely alive, that the public laughed delightedly and applauded, as if saying: "How true!" The play was a triumph. Some of its lines have passed into proverbs, as for instance: "*Temerario! Che*

venga!"—"Rash man! but let him come," when Dido, who speaks it, has practically at that very moment declared: "*Mai piú non mi vedrá quell' alma rea*"—"Never again shall that perfidious soul behold me"; or: "*Passato è il tempo, Enea, che Dido a te pensò*"—"Past is the time, Aeneas, when Dido's thoughts were of thee." Her attack on Arbace almost at the moment of promising to marry him, her expulsion of Osmida and Selene in the blindness of her fury, her credulity, her pretences, and her acuteness are all of them comic, and the more so from being unintentional. Tempering the whole are the varied movements of an impressionable, impulsive soul, with disdainful tenderness and caressing threats. Beneath that royal mantle is an ordinary little woman, with something of Lisetta and something of Columbine. And the rest of the picture is in keeping. The boasting, posturing Iarba has a likeness to the bravo of popular comedy; Selene, who is the *Anna, soror mea,* plays the part of "victim" with great insipidity. And as for the pious Aeneas as *jeune premier,* he is comic in the extreme, especially when forced to play gooseberry to Dido and Iarba. The plot in itself partakes of low comedy, being full of the usual equivocal situations and unexpected encounters.

The *Didone* made the round of the Italian theatres. And wherever it went it pleased. Metastasio had divined his public, and had found his genre. His type of drama, tragic on the surface, but comic at bottom, fixes the life of Italy of that day in its greatest intimacy—the contrast of its grandiose exterior to its inner vacuity. The tragic in that day was not an elevation of the soul to lofty heights, but was simply a fountain of the marvellous that was so dear to the people, such as duels, suicides, and conflagrations. Here these magnificent appearances of fantastic life are led back to prosaic and vulgar reality by the comic —to little intrigues, gossipy love-affairs, petty irritations, and blusterings. To bring into harmony such widely different elements, to fuse together the fantastic, the real, the tragic, and the comic, would seem a miracle; yet here it is done with the live-

liest facility, and quite unconsciously, like life itself in its spontaneity. The illusion is perfect. We may think it an absurdity, yet there it is—fresh, young, vivacious, and harmonious—and it catches hold of us and carries us with it. Poor Metastasio, quite unconscious of the great miracle, defended his play with Aristotle and Horace. Today that life is condemned by reason and aesthetics alike as conventional and wanting in coherence. Yet here it is, immortally youthful, and merely answers, "I live." And if aesthetics fails to see it then the worse for aesthetics.

Metastasio had all the qualities necessary for producing that life. An excellent fellow and a good Christian, in his inner world there were all the virtues, in the traditional, habitual form that was the only form which was possible then. He was lacking in faith, in energy, and in loftiness of soul, so was lacking too in music and poetry. Such too had been Vico and Muratori: excellent people in their way, but wanting in the inner flame that warms the genius of philosopher and poet; idyllic characters who revered the image of a tranquil and prosaic society. In handling the greatest problems of society Vico kept always the unruffled calm of the scholar. We can sympathize with poetry for running away from society and taking refuge in the Golden Age and pastoral life. But no one can escape from the life that surrounds him. In that artificial life and peaceful society, country, religion, honour, love, and liberty in no wise disturbed the respose and equilibrium of the soul; and Metastasio, drawn by his intellect to tragedy, at heart was Arcadian—tender and languishing, the muse of Naïs and Thyrsis. Like Tasso he had great sensibility, and his tears came easily. But Tasso's sensibility was deep, whereas Metastasio's was superficial; it could ruffle that serene surface but could never disturb it. It would be wrong to describe it as melancholy, for melancholy implies a certain duration and consistency. The emotion in these plays arises from a sudden and inner movement, and vanishes as easily as it came. This want of depth and analysis is what keeps his world

idyllic; the emotion fixes and colours its movements without changing its character. For unless the idyllic is mixed with the elegiac it is apt to be tasteless. What we get here is an idyllic world gently traversed by an imagination wanting in inner seriousness and barely touched by a surface feeling; an imagination that joins and separates a crowd of incidents, endowing them with life and variety. The incidents seem like dreams, coming together and dispersing and vanishing; and so wonderfully clear and plastic are their feelings and images that we feel them to be part of ourselves. The poet in creating them is moved to tenderness, luxuriates in his tenderness, and loses the sense of reality:

Sogni e favole io fingo; e pure, in carte
mentre favole e sogni orno e disegno,
in lor, folle ch' io son, prendo tal parte,
che del mal, che inventai, piango e mi sdegno.

Dreams and fables I call into being. And even as I put them on paper and adorn them, so much do they become a part of myself that (foolish as I am!) I weep and rage at the ills I invent.

In the numberless comedies and novels of Italy any one wishing for dreams and fables had a bottomless quarry to draw from. Foreigners digged in it, and so did Metastasio. His aim was to surprise, to make a hit, with the help of his vast theatrical experience and his knowledge of his public. His quick, alert intelligence never loses sight of his goal, but leaps forward, eliminates space, suppresses, groups, and combines, and gets his effects by their suddenness. Being combinations purely of the theatre, they are wanting of course in inner seriousness, and often have the air of comic intrigues, with the entanglements and equivocal situations and parallelisms usual in comedies. Often the events are comic in themselves, being episodes of ordinary life seen from its gossipy and trivial angle. So the heroic (which is really idyllic) not seldom ends in the lowest regions

of the comic. It is Caesar fiddling and making love. Such was the poet Metastasio, and such was the age he belonged to: idyllic, elegiac, and comic—everyday life decked in heroic trappings, tickled by the feeling of elegy, and idealized in the idyll.

We can now understand the machinery of this drama. At the summit is the hero or heroine—Themistocles or Titus, Zenobia or Hypsipyle. And the hero has every perfection attributed to the Age of Gold. So heroic indeed is the hero that all who even come near him turn into heroes by contact, even to the minor characters. It was the usual story: the more unheroic the age, the more wildly heroic is its literature; for the heroism having no connection with life as it is, but existing only in the imagination, can be made as marvellous and astonishing for the public as the author chooses. The Metastasian hero, who is already divorced from ordinary life, offers his human feelings as a holocaust to virtue, like Abraham. We have Aeneas abandoning Dido to follow after glory, and Themistocles and Regulus going to their death for love of country, and Cato killing himself for love of liberty, Megacles offering his life for his friend, and Argennis offering hers for her lover. This power to stifle the human emotions that control the lives of ordinary persons was known as "generosity," or "magnanimity," or "force," or "greatness of soul"—as was also the pardoning of offences. It ought, by its nature, to be essentially tragic. But in Metastasio it contrives to be chiefly elegiac, and the feelings born from it are varied and passing and superficial, scattering and vanishing and leaving the sky cloudless. The generosity of the hero makes the others generous too; the heroism runs like a current through the characters, and all ends satisfactorily, all are heroic and all are happy. Rarely indeed does the emotion rise to tragedy; it is generally on the borders of the idyllic and elegiac. Virtue is not the duty of every one and a part of ordinary life, but is a thing of the theatre. And the events are arranged and exaggerated with a view to the greatest effect. The characters strut for-

ward and take their poses, and declaim heroically; they seem to be saying: "Listen! the miracle is coming!" Temistocle says:

Sentimi, o Serse;
Lisimaco, m' ascolta; udite, o voi,
popoli spettatori,
di Temistocle i sensi; e ognun ne
sia
testimonio e custode.

Hear me, Xerxes; and thou, Lysimachus; hear me, all ye people assembled thus, spectators, hear Themistocles and judge him truly.

We are shown the usual collision between heroism and Nature. The heroism lies in the splendour and pomp of the aphorisms, while Nature is revealed in the tender effusions of feeling. The two collide, with the victory sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other, to the growing surprise of the audience, as in the soliloquy of Tito. In the end nature and heroism are reconciled in a manner as strange and unexpected as the rest of the events. Tito causes Sesto (Sixtus) to be led into the arena, although he has already decided to pardon him. He is not content with being virtuous; he wants a spectacle, a surprise. To us of today this morality is only of the theatre, but to Metastasio and his contemporaries it was the conventional morality that people believed in theoretically and admired and applauded in much the spirit of the Roman dames when they applauded the gladiators dying for their *beaux yeux*. Titus was doing the thing that the audience admired. Only in an age wanting in seriousness and inner motives could contemporary society have penetrated like this into the heroic without discord—and moreover contemporary society in its vulgarest, most comic aspects. Take for instance the *Adriano*. Adriano, the conqueror of the Parthians and their proclaimed emperor, is in a tragic position. Betrothed to Sabina, he is in love with Emirena, his enemy's daughter, who in turn is in love with Farnaspe (Pharnaspes), a Persian captive. This situation, already sufficiently involved, is complicated in the highest degree by the introduction of another character, a certain Aquilio, the confidant of Adriano. Aquilio, being secretly in love with Sabina, foments the passion of Adriano for Emi-

rena. Emirena, to save her father from death, offers to marry Adriano. Sabina, seeing the generosity of Emirena, becomes generous too, and releases Adriano from his betrothal; Adriano, seeing the generosity of Sabina, becomes generous in his turn, and sets at liberty the father of Emirena, restores Emirena to Farnaspe, and marries Sabina. Every one is happy, and the chorus intones the praises of Adriano. Let us look however just a trifle deeper into these personages. Adriano is a good enough fellow, but is certainly not a hero. He is changeable, superficial, credulous, swayed by every impression—to put it plainly, a bit of a fool. Instead of leading the drama he is led by it. He is the sort of man who agrees with the last speaker. He is a hero only by circumstance, so little a hero indeed that he stops Emirena from kissing his hand because a new impression already has hold of him. Osroa (Osrhoes), the king of the Parthians, a character reminiscent of Iarba, is more of a hero. A patriot who sets fire to his own kingdom, who kills a stranger in mistake for Adriano, who is condemned to death, who implores his daughter to slay him, Osroa might really have been interesting if only he had had a chance—if author or public had been capable of the feeling of patriotism. As it is he is more of an adventurer than a hero, a stupid rash adventurer without the wit to adapt his means to his end. Even with passion at its height he stops to discuss and declaim. When his daughter refuses to kill him he reflects:

Non è ver che sia la morte
il peggior di tutt' i mali:
è un sollievo de' mortali
che son stanchi di soffrir.

'Tis false to say that death is the worst of ills; it is a solace to mortals who are tired of suffering.

Aquilio is an Iago in caricature—the low and stupid intriguer of comedy. Emirena and Farnaspe are both of them trivial characters, merely entangled in the events, passive people, emotionally poor, who are generous only on sudden impulse. Looking more deeply into this heroism, we understand why it slides so easily into the comic. Apparently in contrast to the mediocrity

of the century, it is really one with it, and could easily receive into its bosom the vulgarity and buffoonery of the society of its time—as for instance in the scene where Emirena pretends not to know her lover, and he stands before her nonplussed and looking like an idiot. Or the scene where Aquilio instructs Emirena in the arts of a courtesan, and she, armed cap-a-pie, shows him the portrait of a courtier. Or where Adriano is led by the nose by Osroa. Or Adriano's dismay when Sabina arrives from Rome unexpectedly. Or where Adriano swears: "Nevermore will I behold Emirena," and a servant announces, "Emirena comes." But in spite of the material's being comic, it is not developed in a comic manner or with comic intention, so nothing clashes. It is a portrait of contemporary society in its greatest intimacy, in all its vulgarity and mediocrity, but dressed in heroic clothes. If the author had really felt the heroic and depicted it seriously and profoundly, the mixture could never have been swallowed; or rather, to be more exact, there would have been no mixture. But our author conceived the heroic as his age conceived it. He wrote in perfect good faith; he did not feel what was low and trivial under the heroic apparatus, so he was perfectly attuned to the spirit and character of his public. At times he felt it obscurely, was not entirely satisfied, and had a try at something more elevated, as in the *Regolo* and the *Gioas*. But he never reached it: the old Adam is always there. And thank goodness that he never reached it! He would probably have altered his style and attempted artificial constructions alien to his nature. As it was he remained the original, the unforgettable artist of that very society of which he was a part.

That life, so absurd at its core, has all the illusions of reality on the surface. To probe into the feelings, develop the characters, graduate the situations, would have been to falsify it. Its very condition of existence is superficiality. We get the crises, but not the events that led to them. Situations and feelings are sprung on us suddenly; we are often jumped in a second from one extreme to the other. So fleeting and ephemeral are the

impressions that we fluctuate from moment to moment; our feelings merge into each other like stormy waves. This want of depth has been blamed on the music, as if music had the power to complete or develop or deepen sentiment. But in Metastasio the music is nothing but the prolongation or echo of the sentiment, the accompaniment of the poetry. The poetry is music and song in itself. As a rule what he gives us is a description of life, as we found it before in Guarini and Marino. Even in the grip of violent emotion the personages stop to describe and analyze—the characteristic of an adult society in which reflection and criticism follow on the heels of action. Moments so fearfully exciting that we should expect them to turn almost into delirium are suddenly checked by an analysis, a maxim, a comparison, a bit of psychology. When Licida (Lycidas) draws his sword to kill his assailant, he changes his mind and decides instead to kill himself, but stops again to dissect his feelings:

Rabbia, vendetta,
tenerezza, amicizia,
pentimento, pietá, vergogna, amore
mi trafiggono a gara. Ah chi mai vide
anima lacerata
da tanti affetti e sí contrari! Io stesso
non so come si possa
minacciando tremare, arder gelando,
piangere in mezzo all' ire,
bramar la morte e non saper morire.

Rage, revenge, tenderness, friendship, repentance, compassion, shame, love, in turn distract me; never was breast so torn by contending passions.

I marvel that one is able like this to tremble amidst threats, to burn while freezing, to weep tenderly while raging with anger, to long for death while refusing to die.

So the dramatic ends in a Petrarchan sonnet. Listen to Aristea describing herself to Megacle:

Caro, son tua cosí,
che per virtú d'amor
i moti del tuo cor
risento anch' io.

Dear, I am so much thine that every movement of thy heart is mine too.

Mi dolgo al tuo dolor,
gioisco al tuo gioir,
ed ogni tuo desir
diventa il mio.

Dost grieve? Then I grieve too.
Dost rejoice? Then I rejoice too.
Every desire of thine becomes mine.

Megacle, following his friend into misfortune, comes out with this fine comparison:

Come dell' oro il fuoco
scopre le masse impure,
scoprono le sventure
de' falsi amici il cor.

As the fire reveals the dross in the gold, so adversity reveals the heart of false friends.

These musical cadences, as soothing as the harp of David, refresh the soul and hold it in a state of equilibrium in the midst of such violent excitements. What makes them endurable is the fact that they are mixed with livelier movements, with impulsive spontaneous feeling, showing us life in the greatest variety of aspects. Argene, who defies death to save her lover and feels that she is lifted above herself as though possessed by a god, is sublime:

Fiamma ignota nell' alma mi scende;
sento il nume; m' inspira, m' accende,
di me stessa mi rende maggior.

An unknown flame pierces my soul; I feel within me a god who inspires and enflames me, who makes me greater than I am.

Ferri, bende, bipenni, ritorte,
pallid' ombre, compagne di morte,
già vi guardo, ma senza terror.

Cords, axes, chains, pale shadows of dead people, I can look at you now, and without fear.

Aristea's joy, approaching delirium, on beholding her lover again, goes straight to the heart. The song of Timante (Timanthes) when shown his child by its mother, is ineffably elegiac:

Misero pargoletto,
il tuo destin non sai.
Ah! non gli dite mai
qual era il genitor.

Poor little babe, thou dost not know thy fate! Ah! Never tell him who was his father.

Come in un punto, o Dio,
tutto cambiò d' aspetto!

O God, how changed is everything suddenly! Thou who wast

Voi foste il mio diletto, once my delight art now my
voi siete il mio terror. dread.

Some of these sayings, the tenderest, have passed into proverbs, as for instance: "*Nei giorni tuoi felici ricòrdati di me*"—"In thy happy days remember me."

This life, so wonderfully balanced between spontaneity and reflection, being superficial and exterior, is characterized by clarity, is visible and plastic. The most delicate shades of feeling, the most difficult concepts, are shown with extreme precision of outline, so are wanting in resonance. They please and satisfy the eye and hold it to the surface; they never lead it to the depths. This Metastasian clarity, so greatly praised and so popular (because the people of course adore the superficial), belongs to the last period of his life, when by dint of precision he had attained to the massiveness and density of marble. Here the old literature arrives at its last perfection. Transparency has gone; the expression now is nothing but itself and itself alone, assuaged by itself alone, like an infinite thing. This is a state of petrifaction, which today is known as "popular literature"—as if literature must always descend to the people, instead of raising the people to itself. Metastasio reveals a miraculous gift in it. That old form, before dying, was sending out its last splendours. In Metastasio clarity is not a dead surface; it is life on the surface, happy and satisfied in its own externality, with ease and quickness and a play of grace and brio. The period has lost its windings, the word has lost its convolutions; all here is smooth and flowing, as light and measured as a dance, as rhythmic as a song, as melodious as a piece of music. The impressions though vivid are ephemeral; they leave us happy, but empty, as after some brilliant festival that we enjoy at the time but forget at once.

The Metastasian world may seem as absurd to philosophy as the world it represented. But as art nothing could be truer. It has harmony, cohesion, and inward life. It is the fully matured portrait of a society ready to dissolve, whose institutions were

still heroic and feudal, but were empty now of the spirit that once had informed them; languid, thoughtless, effeminate, idyllic, elegiac, and plebeian. Look at it a moment. Powdered and perfumed, with its wig and its little jewelled sword, it is languid, pretty, sensitive as a woman, playing at love. And Metastasio, with his declamation and his *cantilena*, is its right accompanist. The word has ceased to have a message, but acquires a value in its trills and fugues, its basses and trebles. No longer idea, it is sound, softened by metre and lulled by rhyme, thinned out in those little lines, reduced to a sigh. It is poetry that is looking for its means outside of itself—looking for its motives and thoughts in music; poetry that is signing its own abdication, pronouncing its own death sentence. Soon Metastasio was judged by the masters of music too much of a poet. The public ceased to have use for words, and no longer asked what they said, but how they sounded, and even the words of Metastasio, so light and so rapid, could no longer be tolerated. The word became the musical note; and the new poets were Pergolese, Cimarosa, Paisiello. Thus ended the musical period of the old literature, begun in Tasso, developed in Guarini and Marino, and brought to its crisis by Pietro Metastasio. Now it had come to this: when Joseph II wanted a new opera written, first he commissioned the music, and when the music was written, then, and then only, would he say to his new Caesarean poet, the Abate Casti, "Here is the music; now write me the words for it."

II

In the womb of this old dissolving society the new society was laboriously taking shape. A sign of its power to develop was its waning interest in literary form, coupled with its desire for new impressions, which it was seeking in music and in song. The literato, once so important, had fallen in prestige; the new stars were Farinello, Caffarello, Piccinni, Iommelli. But literary form was improved by its contact with music. Music had com-

pelled it to shorten its periods, to reduce its ceremonial and solemnity, its adjectives, repetitions, paraphrases, synonyms, parallelisms, transpositions, its learned futilities in general. Ears accustomed to the quick progressions of music could no longer put up with the slow academic period and the rhetorical tirade; and if Metastasio was known as "the Divine" it was certainly not for his academic but for his musical qualities—his clarity, brio, and rapidity of expression. As the public was ceasing to follow literature, there was nothing left for literature but to follow the public; and the public was no longer academic, though numbers of academies still existed, from the Arcadian downwards. And culture was no longer centred in the court; the court had vanished, though the princes still surrounded themselves with actors and jugglers under the name of "poets." Culture had spread, the pleasures of the mind were more varied, phrases and periods no longer satisfied. On the scene had appeared the philosophers, the philanthropists, the jurisconsults, the lawyers, the scientists, the composers, and the singers. Words had acquired a value in the human throat and in the musical note; and the works of Beccaria or Galiani were pleasanter to read than the literary tomes. Even the name of "literato" had fallen out of fashion; the talk was all of "great minds" and "fine intellects": "Literato" had come to mean word-monger; and the word merely for the word's sake had gone down in the market. The word could recover its value only by transfusion of blood, by being wedded to ideas, by acquiring a content; this and nothing else was the meaning of that oft-quoted saying, "Things and not words."

Signs of this great renewal were already appearing in criticism. Cramped till now by mechanical rules and conventional forms, criticism was turning on its idols and smashing them. While the pope and the princes were fighting over jurisdiction, and while philosophers were fighting the past in ideas and institutions, the critics were fighting the old literature as "pedantry." Philosophers and critics had the same objective. Both

were fighting empty form—the philosophers in the social institutions, the critics in literary expression, though as yet without agreement.

Critics as well as philosophers were sustained and inspired by English, French, and German examples. Baretti had returned from London a Shakespeare enthusiast; and Algarotti, Bettinelli, Cesarotti, Beccaria, and Verri were in intimate contact with Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists. Locke, Condillac, and Dumarsais had widened the range of ideas, introducing a taste for "grammatica ragionata" and philosophical rhetoric; we see their mark very clearly in Beccaria's *Stile* and Cesarotti's *Filosofia delle lingue*. Certainly the writers of Italy, such as Crescimbeni, or Mazzucchelli, or Quadrio, or even Tiraboschi, the Muratori of that day, must have seemed very unexciting when compared with men like those just named, who claimed to have reduced to science what formerly had seemed but custom and rule. Treatises and arguments were no longer enough for the critics; they had taken instead to current and popular forms, in order to bring the public and critics into touch; as in the *Lettere virgiliane* of Bettinelli, the *Difesa* of Gaspare Gozzi, and in publications like the *Frusta letteraria*, the *Caffè*, the *Osservatore*. So the new criticism was producing a new literary form; it was launching a number of new ideas on the public, in a new, rapid, cogent, lively form almost like conversation, a form that took its organization from logic and its tone from the people. It is true that these critics were fighting not merely the past but each other, as were also the philosophers. But all were informed by the same spirit, and had the same tendencies. All were fighting for emancipation—to get free from rules and authority, from the tyranny of grammar and rhetoric, the Arcadian and the academic; and here, as in everything else, they admitted no other judge but logic and nature. As usual criticism went too far; in venting its rage against literary superstition it even laid hands on the sacred Dante, provoking Gaspare Gozzi to his fine *Difesa*. The new criticism was purely intellectual, not

rooted in the past nor in early education, and in fact diametrically opposed to them. This explains why the critics, brilliant judges as they were of writers both modern and ancient, as writers themselves were so very mediocre. When the rhetoricians and grammarians, whom they described as "pedants," turned the tables by calling them "barbarians," there was a certain truth in their reproach. These new critics were placed between two styles: the old, which they disliked, and the new, which was perfectly clear to their intellects, but entirely personal, and extraneous to the national spirit and their own education. So they threw themselves into the French manner, turning upside down words, sentences, and grammar—the process known in that day as "barbarizing the language." Gaspare Gozzi took the middle path. While welcoming the new ideas to a great extent, he objected to a liberty carried to licence, and endeavoured to strike a balance between pedantry and barbarism, adopting a manner of writing that was correct, pure, and classical, yet natural and easy. But Cozzi, the good, the eloquent, and the wise, remained alone in his century. The fight was still too fierce to allow of a middle party, and both sides felt certain of victory. Facing each other were the purists and the philosophers. The purists, unable to invoke the Tuscan manner, which like everything else had been tainted by imitation of the foreign, invoked instead the Crusca and the classics; and as the empty prolixity of the *Cinquecento* no longer went down, they revived the fashion for the *Trecento*—for simple, concise, and pithy writing.[1] The greater number of the purists were members of the Crusca, the Arcadia or one of the other academies—pure literati, excellent people in their way but creatures of habit with a great dislike for change and disturbance. In the opposite camp were the philosophers, who refused authority altogether, and especially the authority of the Crusca, who invoked their own reason, and who looked forward to an Italy renewed not only in political insti-

[1] Later there arose that very happy proverb *Il Trecento diceva, il Cinquecento chiacchierava*—"The fourteenth century spoke, the sixteenth century chattered."

tutions and social orders but also in literature. The critics supported the philosophers in literature, but they took no part in politics; in fact their insolence in literature was frequently a cloak for their servility in politics, as in Cesarotti and Bettinelli. First among the fighters were the two abbots, Cesari and Cesarotti. Cesari worshipped the classics to the point of deleting from his writings every vestige of the modern man. Cesarotti—who had far more wit and culture than Cesari—carried his irreverence for the classics to the point of lecturing Homer and Demosthenes and looking for a new mythology in the glens of Scotland. Then Ossian appeared, and the whole country went mad over the book, so sick to death was every one of classicalism, and for a time the Scottish bard was the rage, people declaring that he was greater than Homer. There was a feeling that the old content was vanishing with the old society, and anything that served to fill that void was welcomed. In the new pleasure of those liquid, musical lines, those swords flashing amid Northern mists, the Frugonis, Algarottis, and Bettinellis were forgotten. And a reaction set in against the idyll, the form that expressed a bored and somnolent society softly reclining in the lap of Chloris and Galatea. And those northern warriors, those forests and mists, those lords of the brand and virgins of the snow, had a great success. The Arcadians were horrified, but the public applauded. And to oust Cesarotti it was not sufficient to abuse him; a way must be found of pleasing the public.

But unfortunately for the purists all the intellectual activity was on the side of the innovators. Every person who possessed some little talent at once "threw himself into modernism," as the saying went, in doctrine and in style. To acquire the title of a "fine intellect" one had only to disparage the classics; and to be known as a "strong mind" it was enough to disparage religion. The old literature, together with the old beliefs, was branded as "prejudice"; and the special mission of that enlightened century, the century of philosophy and culture, was

precisely to fight against prejudice. To get a good idea of the *philosophical enthusiasm of the eighteenth century we have only to recall the literary enthusiasm of the sixteenth century.* To the men of the Renaissance "barbarism" had meant the Middle Ages; to the men of the eighteenth century "barbarism" meant the Middle Ages and also the Renaissance. Both movements were characterized by the same negative, polemical impulse that precedes wars and revolutions. Nor were their main ideas fundamentally different. Stifled in Italy by persecutions, they had passed into Europe and had developed there, and now they had come back into Italy. The movement had really been one and continuous. Spread over two centuries with varying vicissitudes in the different nations, and often facing the bloodiest persecutions, it had yet developed persistently, and was now condensed and centralized under the name of "philosophy," with literature as its instrument. This was what people meant by "Things and not words." This meant that literature, having lost its seriousness and being merely a tool of the imagination, had at last sunk into a game of words.

But literature was now to regain its seriousness, to acquire a content, to be the natural and immediate expression of thought and feeling, of mind and heart.[2] What mattered in a work was the content. The ideal of perfect form, the chief glory of the Renaissance, the ideal that was still apparent in the works of the decadence, as for instance in the *Pastor fido*, the *Adone* and the plays of Metastasio, became secondary. In its place had arisen the ideal of *natural* form: no longer traditional nor classical nor conventional, but the form that comes to birth at the same moment as the thought, and is its natural and immediate expression. Cesarotti, in his *Saggio sulla filosofia della lingua*, replying to Count Napione's *Sull' uso e su' pregi della lingua italiana*, sustained the thesis that language is not an arbitrary thing nor a question of custom and authority, but

[2] A conception which, later on, gave rise to that barbarous word *cormentalismo* (heart-and-mindism).

contains in itself its reason for existing; that its reason for existing is its thought; that the best word is the word that best renders that thought, whether the word used be classical or Tuscan, or simply dialect, or even a completely foreign word with an Italian inflection. What was the *Saggio?* It was the emancipation of language from custom and authority, in the name of philosophy and reason—the same thing that was claimed for all social institutions. It was reason, the sense of logic, penetrating now into grammar and language. It was the modern spirit violating the consecrated, fossilized forms worn out from long use, and giving them an air of the philosophical and the cosmopolitan, with a loss in local and national colour. Cesarotti, adding example to precept, made use of whatever word seemed to him handiest, without stopping to ask where it came from. And since he was a man of clear intelligence and lively wit, from this mixture of foreign and indigenous elements of Italian conversation he compounded a living and harmonious language, near to the spoken word of ordinary life, and understood throughout the length and breadth of Italy.

The writers, intent now on things and not words, and sick to death of that form known as "literary" (the form largely derived from the Latin which had ceased to go down with the public on account of its vacuity and insipidity), simply adopted the local and current Italian, just as it was, with all its mixture of dialect, and all its enlivening infusion of words and constructions from the French—a language that answered to the state of culture of that time. It was used in the north and in the south, in Venice, Padua, Milan, Turin, and Naples; by Baretti, Beccaria, Verri, Gioia, Galiani, Galanti, Filangieri, Delfico, and Mario Pagano. The small opposition it met with was chiefly in Florence, the home of the Crusca, and in Rome, the home of the Arcadia, from cackling literati and academicians relegated to the shelf by the public. The same rules were applied to style. What was asked for now was rapidity, naturalness, and brio. Padding, elegance, polish, and ornament were cut away as encumbrances. Writers

no longer aimed at perfection of form. What they wanted now was effect —to produce an effect on the reader, to rouse his intellect, to keep it awake and expectant. The secrets of style were found in psychology, in the study of feelings and impressions—the basic idea of Beccaria's *Trattato del stile*. That empty, outworn mechanism, learnedly artificial and soliciting the ear, the style known as "classical," which had sunk now into a heavy and boresome phraseology, was replaced by an easy, natural form—brisk, broken, lively, and unequal, an imitation of ordinary speech. The type of the former was the "treatise"; the type of the latter was the "gazette." It was a revolution based on the imitation of nature, or to use the jargon of today, on realism in its truth and simplicity; a recoil from declamation and rhetoric, from the old conventional "manner," from the thing known as "ideal" or "perfect" form.

And the old literature was attacked not only in its language and style, but even in its substance. The heroic, the idyllic, and the elegiac, which still survived in sermons, lyrics, orations, and tragedies, were no longer acceptable: the public was sick to death of them. The heroic was seen to be exaggerated, the idyllic was boresome, the elegiac insipid; the shepherds and shepherdesses and Greeks and Romans were a stale conventional world, worn out for literature, useful, if at all, for being set to music, as in Metastasio. There was a longing for novelty, for change, for a different content, for another society, for a new kind of man—for other ways and for other customs: and the Persians, Turks, and Chinese swept into fashion. Every one was devouring the *Lettres persianes* of Montesquieu, and Ossian, whose poems they placed above the *Iliad*. And there appeared on the scene the natural man, the savage man, the man of Grotius and Hobbes, the man who looks after himself, the man à la Robinson Crusoe. And in the place of the knight errant came the bourgeois adventurer of the type of Gil Blas. And there was also the lady errant, the female philosopher, the "*lionne*" of today, who despised convention

and womanly decorum as "prejudice." There was the person in society but at war with society in the name of the laws of Nature, and often its victim—women forced into convents, or forced into marriage, or seduced; natural sons bullied by legitimate sons; poor men oppressed by the rich; science dragged down by charlatans, the Clarissas, the Pamelas, the Émiles, the Chattertons.

This philosophic content was in keeping with the thought of the day. It appeared in the novels, the tales, the letters, the tragedies, the comedies: a sort of French repertory making the round of Italy. Its basic conception was the natural law contrasted with the written law, the proclamation of the rights of man in the face of a society that was violating them. At the head of this school were Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot, with the rank and file in their train. A writer with a great vogue in Italy, where his plays were being given, was Mercier. There was *Le déserteur, L'amour familiale,* the *Jennéval, L'indigent.* In *Le déserteur* we have an amiable and virtuous youth, who in order to succour his father, and for reasons of love, deserts from his regiment and is shot: it is the cry of Nature against the written law. *L'amour familiale* paints in the liveliest colours the oppression of heretics in Catholic countries. The *Jennéval* is the opposite of Clarissa: the heroine is a certain Rosalie, a Don Juan, but a woman, who drags down the young and inexperienced Jennéval to the point of crime. In *L'indigent* we have the rich, idle, dissolute, courted, and powerful man, who makes profit out of everything, including his marriage, and the poor, virtuous, diligent man, despised and oppressed.

With the new content had come a new type of man. Both in tragedy and comedy comes the man mutilated and aggrandized, seen from one point of view alone and that the ultra-natural one. And criticism too was changing. From the low strata of language and style it was rising to a conception of art, of its matter and form, of its end and its means. The man who initiated this high criticism, which was known by the name of

"aesthetics," was Diderot; it was he who affirmed the ideal in the full reality of Nature that is the basic conception of the philosophy of art. The ideal had come down from Olympia and from Heaven, was no longer a "beyond," was mixing as an equal among men, and was sharing to the full in the grandeurs and the meannesses of life. No longer a god with the name of man, but man himself; no longer comedy nor tragedy, but drama. Poetry was history, just as history was poetry. The ideal was the real; no longer the real mutilated, nor exaggerated, nor changed, nor selected, but full, concrete, and natural in all its varieties, true and living reality. Tragedy made room for laughter and comedy for tears; and there came into fashion the "tearful comedy" and the "bourgeois tragedy." The new ideal was no longer the god, or the hero of feudal times; he was the ordinary middle-class man in conflict with life and society, and tasting to the full the pains and passions of the struggle. Just as the child enters the world amid tears, in the same way the ideal, leaving its serene abstraction, entered the world with tears, was sentimental and pathetic. Inspired by Young's *Night Thoughts,* Alessandro Verri wrote his *Notti romane;* and Rousseau had as much success with his rhetorical sentimentality as he had with his philosophical naturalism.

These conceptions and studies, which in France were the result of a long elaboration, descended on Italy like a flood, awakening both anger and enthusiasm. As we have seen, the questions of language and style were questions now of content. Mechanical criticism was rising to psychology, and psychological criticism was rising to aesthetics. The old literature, already attacked on its technical side, was rejected now even in its substance. To paint from the real meant the end of the heroic as conceived in Italy—the end of Metastasio. The rise of the pathetic and sentimental meant the end of those idle, serene, and boring ideals summed up in the idyll—the end of Arcadia. The theatre, it was said, was not an amusement, but a school of noble sentiments and strong feeling—so the comedies of sub-

ject emerged. Reform was everywhere. Genovesi, Verri, and Galiani were all hammering their hardest at the old economic system; Beccaria was fighting the old legislation: the whole of the social order was in question. Filangieri, going to the bottom of things, was proposing a reform in national education. Princes and ministers, carried forward by the tide of opinion, were starting reforms in everything and everywhere. And the old literature demanded reform with the rest. It had ceased to be productive or to hold the public's attention; the cry was for song and music and philosophy. If we think of this wish for novelty we shall cease to be surprised at the truly stupendous success won by the Abate Chiari with his novels and comedies. Forced by poverty to earn his bread, he flattered the public and gave it the sort of concoction it was asking for. A study of these works by Chiari, so many and so utterly forgotten, would be a work of considerable interest, for the light it would throw on the particular thought of these times. His events are monstrous, his characters impossible: "ladies errant," female philosophers, giantesses, natural sons, the abduction of nuns, the scaling of windows, a pathetic-heroic and a sickly pathetic, philosophy dished up to the public in rhetoric, a hash of the old and the new, with all that was most vulgar in the old and all that was wildest in the new. Such was the fare provided by the Abate Chiari. In the same way that verse in the Latin manner had once been fashionable, the vogue had arisen now for verse in the French manner: "Martellian verse," the invention of Martelli. Chiari thought it stupendous, and used it extensively; he even put the Book of Genesis into Martellian verse. Chiari, hack and scribbler as he was, was typical of that time of transition when the old literature was vanishing and the new was barely fermenting in that first confusion of ideas: he had all the faults of the old, and all the strangeness of the new. But soon he was plagued by a rival—that tiresome Carlo Goldoni, who just like himself had to serve the public for his

bread and give it the thing it was asking for. For a time the followers of Chiari and Goldoni were tearing each other's eyes out; till between the two came a third, who belaboured them both. This third was Carlo Gozzi, the brother of Gaspare. In Paris he produced his *Tartana degl' influssi,* making fun of both Chiari and Goldoni:

Il primo si chiamava "Originale,"
ed il secondo "Saccheggio" s' appella. . . .
I partigiani ogni giorno crescevano,
chi vuole Originale e chi Saccheggio;
tutto il paese a rumore mettevano. . . .
Il parlar mozzo e lo stare infradue
niente vale per trarsi di tedio. . . .
dir bisognava:—Saccheggio è migliore—
overo:—Originale è piu dottore.

The first was known as "Original," the second was known as "Plunder." . . . And every day the numbers of their followers swelled, for Original or for Plunder, till the whole country was in an uproar. Impossible to get peace from the boredom by deciding for neither and standing between the two; each person was forced to say, "Plunder is the better," or, "Original is the more learned."

Carlo Gozzi had more culture than either Chiari or Goldoni; like his brother Gaspare he was something of a scholar, and was a member too of the Granelleschi, whose aim was to restore correct language, of which Chiari and Goldoni had shown themselves very ignorant. That literary reform preached with such blowings of trumpets and brought forward so extravagantly, seemed to Gozzi not a reform but a corruption; and not merely literary but religious, political, and civil corruption:

Usciti son autorevol dotti,
con un tremuoto di nuova scienza,
c' han tutti gli scrittori mal condotti.
Tratto il lor, di saper non c' è semenza,

Learned, authoritative men have appeared with all the upheaval of a new science, leading all the writers by the nose. And they claim that beyond themselves there is no thing as a seed of knowledge;

dicono che gli autor morti fûr cotti,
e condannano i vivi all' astinenza. . . .
Leggonsi certe nuove "Marianne,"
certi "baron," certe "marchese" impresse,
certe fraschette buse come canne,
e le battezzan poi "filosofesse,"
che il mal costume introducono a spanne:
credo il dimonio al torchio le mettesse.
Chi dice:—Egli è un comporre alla francese.—
Certo è peggior del mal di quel paese.

they say the dead authors were drunk, and the authors of today should keep quiet. . . .

So now we have the books of the "Mariannes," of the "barons," of the "marchionesses," and of flighty women as empty as sugar canes, who are known as "female philosophers"; women who scatter profligacy wherever they go: it seems to me that the Devil himself must have got them into print. Those who say, "It is a composition in the French style," are certainly worse than the disease of that country.[3]

Carlo Gozzi's *Marfisa* is a caricature of the new novels à la Chiari. Charlemagne and his paladins become idle vagabonds; Brandamante becomes an acid old spinster.[4] Marfisa, the heroine, is a sentimental, hysterical, dreamy, queer sort of girl, spoilt by the reading of the new books; and she ends as a lay sister, and consumptive. The women of Chiari and the novels of the day are the things he attacks. Especially obnoxious to Gozzi was that talk on everybody's lips of "natural rights," "natural religion," "equality," and "fraternity." He saw it as leading to bad citizenship, and to teaching the common person things unfit for him, and to making him envy the people above him. The danger seemed to him all the worse for being preached from the theatre, which was not a school but a place of amusement. And he invoked the governments, calling for severe measures against the preachers of the new morality. Chiari, poor fellow, was utterly bewildered. And so was Goldoni. Like

[3] The puns ("*mal costume*" and "*alla francese*") are lost in translation.—Translator.

[4] "Spigolistra" is a Tuscan word meaning "acid old maid, disagreeable old spinster."—Translator.

Metastasio he was an artist pure and simple, and was the best and most peaceable of men. To be told suddenly that he was little better than a rebel and an enemy of society must certainly have seemed very strange to him.

Adding venom to the fight was the question of money: the different theatrical companies were competing furiously for the meagre box-receipts. Gozzi was the champion of the Sacchi company, which had returned from a season in Vienna to find its place usurped by the Chiari and Goldoni companies. Sacchi was the last of those able comic improvisators who travelled with their companies to Paris, Vienna, and London, upholding the glories of Italian comedy in Europe. The Italian improvised comedy (*a soggetto*), which had risen on the ruins of the old dull and academic literary comedies, had entirely conquered the field in Rome, Naples, Bologna, Milan, and Venice. It was the only form of the old literature that still had life in it, and belonged peculiarly to Italy; it was the one form of Italian art that still survived in Europe. When an actor in Italy rose to some little fame, he usually moved to Paris, where the pay was better. But in Paris now there had arisen Molière, who was founding French comedy, and wanted to oust the Italian comedy; and in Venice there had arisen Goldoni, who was reforming comedy, and wanted to abolish the masks and the improvised comedy. To Carlo Gozzi to attack the masks and comedy *a soggetto* was simply a crime against the glories of Italy. To us of today that fierce, raging struggle seems somewhat foolish, for we wonder why they should ever have fought at all. It is evident that there was plenty of room for both the types and that both could have lived and flourished in peace and amity. But passions were roused, money interests were involved, and the struggle continued to rage, till Carlo Goldoni retired from the field and moved to Paris. His fame rose to such heights that even Baretti was silenced, and even Gozzi was compelled to respect him, especially when Voltaire classed him with Molière. Criticism was barely advanced an inch by it

all. Carlo Gozzi's *Ragionamenti* had less judgment than bile, being full of vain and confusing generalities, as though the author himself were none too sure of the meaning of his own words and arguments. But the struggle led to the first attempts of the new literature—the comedies of Goldoni and the *fiabe* of Gozzi, the bourgeois comedy and the people's comedy.

III

Carlo Goldoni, like Metastasio, was an artist born. Both were intended for the law; Goldoni in fact had a certain success as a lawyer. But whenever he could he ran after actors, till in the end his natural genius prevailed and he gave up the law for literature. He attempted various forms before finding his vein. The fashion of the day was musical drama, the two stars being Zeno and Metastasio. So following that fashion he wrote some musical drama: the *Amalasunta*, the *Gustavo*, the *Oronte*, and later, the *Festino*. And he attempted tragedy: the *Rosmonda*, the *Griselda*, the *Enrico*—and tragi-comedy, like the *Rinaldo*. Writing as he did for a salary paid him by theatrical companies, and forced to provide a certain number of new works in each season (in one season alone he produced no fewer than sixteen), he took from here and from there, furbishing up and adapting and borrowing from the stock of Italian and French plays and even from novels. As yet he was nothing but a hack; he was not Goldoni, he was Chiari. His plots were all of them treated with an eye to the public. His comedies were romantic and sentimental, as we find in the *Pamela*, the *Zelinda e Lindoro*, the *Peruviana*, the *Bella selvaggia*, the *Bella georgiana*, the *Dalmatina*, the *Scozzese*, the *Incognita*, the *Ircana*. Most of them were patched up from or imitations of the French. He even wrote comedies *a soggetto*, like the *Figlio di Arlecchino perduto e ritrovato* and the *Trentadue disgrazie di Arlecchino*. But the work that revealed him finally to himself, and also to the public, was the *Vedova scaltra—The Crafty Widow*. It started criticism;

and it brought to life in Goldoni the consciousness of an artist. The old literature, as we have seen, was swaying between the thing called *seicentismo* and Arcadianism, in other words, the inflated and the ordinary. In Goldoni's *Memorie* we read:

> My compatriots for a long time past had been accustomed either to trivial farces or else to gigantic representations. . . . For myself I have never gone in for the sublime style. But an ordinary style was precisely the thing that was needed if that public accustomed to hyperboles, antitheses, and everything ridiculously gigantic and romantic was to be brought back, little by little, to common sense.

Luckily he chanced on a good company:

> I am now, said I to myself, perfectly at my ease, and can write as my fancy dictates. First of all I must cease to work on old subjects. My actors at present are a very promising set, so now is the moment to create, to invent. Perhaps, who knows? this is the happy moment to start the reform I have had in view for so long. What I must do is to treat character subjects. It was thus that Molière came to the front, carrying his art to a degree of perfection that the ancients only pointed to and the moderns till now have never equalled.

Goldoni knew little of Plautus and Terence. Aristotle and Horace he respected. And he respected tradition too. But all the same he says in his memoirs: "Speaking for myself, never have I been able to risk a good comedy and perhaps turn it into a bad one for the sake of a prejudice"—"prejudice" here being unity of place. His faulty culture had at least the advantage of leaving him thoroughly modern and contemporary. What he aimed at was not the learned, literary, regulated comedy in the Latin or Tuscan style, whose last exponent was Fagiuoli: his aim was "good" comedy—good comedy as he personally understood it. "As comedy is my bent," he says, "I will aim at *good* comedy." And again: "In the construction of my pieces I have striven, above all, not to disfigure Nature." An idyllic character, superior to the gossip and the small provincial envy of the Italian literato, a man who accepted the gifts of fate, whether good or bad, with equal serenity, he lived to the ripe

age of eighty-six, surviving Metastasio by a few years. Here is his character, described by himself:

> My moral qualities resemble my physical qualities; I dread neither heat nor cold, and allow myself neither to be inflamed by rage nor to be intoxicated by joy.

By temperament more a spectator than an actor, while others acted Goldoni observed them, and fixed them in his comedies. It seemed to him that Nature properly observed gave richer results than any combination of fancy, however extraordinary. Art to him was Nature, was the drawing from life. Goldoni may be called the Galileo of the new literature, the telescope here being the true and quick perception of the soul, guided by good sense. Where Galileo banished from science the occult, the hypothetical, the conjectural, the supernatural, Goldoni's aim was to banish from art the fantastic, the declamatory, and the rhetorical. What Molière had achieved in France Goldoni had the courage to aim at in Italy—in Italy, the classical land of the academy and of rhetoric. The reform was more important than appeared superficially, for it was based on a universal principle of art as opposed to the mannered and conventional, more especially in comedy. By nature Goldoni had all the gifts necessary for this difficult undertaking. He had fineness of observation, he had power of invention, he had temperance and truth in conception, and he had warmth and brio in execution. While very young he had lit on the *Mandragola*, and had been deeply affected by it. Later he had read the Molière comedies—*Le misanthrope, L'avare, Tartuffe, Les précieuses ridicules,* and the others. Italian comedy was still based on plot. But "good" comedy, as Goldoni conceived it, should be based on character. "You already have the comedy of plot," he says. "What I desire to give you now is the comedy of character." And comedy of character meant getting the effects not from the heaping on each other of extraordinary and marvellous events, but from the ordinary development of a

character, even in the most commonplace situations. The system was different fundamentally, and not in comedy only but in the aims and means of art as a whole. In the former system the protagonist was Chance or Accident, whose curious combinations generated the marvellous; the persons were nothing but shadowy figures without weight or outline, obscured by the whirling rush of events—life was on the surface, the life of the soul was hidden. The old literature had worn itself out in this stupid life of the surface; and at last, when the forms of the marvellous were all of them exhausted, it turned for aid to song, music, dancing, mimicry, and declamation. Words were no longer the principal thing, but were only the accessory, the theme, the occasion. Even comedy was afraid to appear by itself without the help of the masks and the improvised *lazzi* of the Harlequins, Truffaldinos, Brighellas, and Pantaloons.

But the fixed idea of Carlo Goldoni was that comedy could interest the public by itself alone, and could afford to drop the spectacular, the gigantic, and the marvellous, whether with the masks or without them. His reform at bottom was the revival of the word, the restoration of literature to the place that belonged to it and with the honours that were due to it; in fact, to put it shortly, it was the New Literature. And he saw very clearly that to revive the word it was necessary to work not on the word itself, but on its content, to revive the organic or inner world of expression. He aimed at stressing not the formal, mechanical parts, but the inner organism. His conception was this: Human life is not at the mercy of chance, is not governed by an occult power, but is the thing that we make it ourselves with our mind and our own will. It was the conception of Machiavelli, the thing that gave birth to the *Mandragola*. The protagonist therefore is man—with his strength and his weakness, man who either creates and regulates events or allows events to sway him. Goldoni had the clear conception necessary for reform, but unfortunately was wanting in the audacity of the reformer, and often compromised,

to please the public or his companies, or to placate his enemies. A pacific man by nature, he often gained his ends by patience and adroitness rather than by hammering at his point, and even in the best of his comedies he has not refused certain vulgar and gross means to get applause from the pit. This explains why till the very end of his life he continued in the romantic, the sentimental, and the harlequinesque: he was trying to please the public—the artist was sacrificed to the man of business. On the other hand, intent as he was on the inner organism of comedy, he neglected expression: in trying to make comedy natural he made it ordinary. His conceptions detach themselves vigorously from a form that is more like granite than polished marble.

The thing in Goldoni that remains eternal, that can never vanish, is that inner world of comedy, gathered from the actual life of that day, and perfectly developed in the situations and the dialogue. His comic world is centred in character—not character conceived as an aggregate of abstract qualities, but true and living character with all its attendant circumstances. The Venetian world he shows us is the society of the middle class, nearer to the people than to the upper classes, and better suited to the purposes of comedy, allowing as it does for those sudden, coarse, and natural impulses that are characteristic of the people, to which the middle class in Venice approached very closely. The characters, as for instance the backbiter, the liar, the miser, the flatterer, the *cavalier servente*, step forth from that mediocre atmosphere alive, vivid, original, and new; and they take their form of life from it. They all have a touch of the gross and the sudden—this, in fact, is the source of the comedy. Their feelings, being natural and undisciplined, spring forth suddenly and directly, uncouthly, just as they are in Nature, not weakened by a sense of decorum; and the result is the purest comedy, as in the *Burbero benefico*. Being neither subjective nor conceived in the abstract but studied from life and fixed in the actual movement of life, the comic

is not developed in mottoes, reflections, or descriptions (the thing that is known as "wit" and belongs to a mellower, more cultured society), but breaks out in the brusque vivacity of situations and contrasts. The situation is never lost sight of. Goldoni has a marvellous gift for finding situations in which character can be developed to the full. As a rule the situation is single, simple and natural, soberly varied, thrown into relief by a contrast that is rarely complicated or confused. It rises by degrees in a crescendo of dramatic movements, and carries us rapidly to the finish amid the liveliest merriment. Excellent above all is his dialogue, which is spoken action and is rarely permitted to cool because of an overuse of reflections and maxims. The situation is the character itself, the dialogue is the action itself in movement. There are never digressions, and there are the fewest possible interludes or episodes. No part is unduly accentuated, and rarely does a character or a scene or a saying stand out apart from the rest; everything is welded into one. But Goldoni's world has the defects of its qualities; in its grossness it is superficial, in its naturalness it is vulgar. The author proceeds on his way swiftly and directly, without stopping to meditate or look into his soul, or to plumb the depths, but stays on the surface, content and joyous, indifferent to his theme; he might almost be handling it merely for his own amusement. Everything is done with the greatest ingenuity, and with never a hint of malice or bitterness. The form of his comedy is gay caricature, without malice, and rarely rising to irony. In studying to be true and natural he has neglected relief; with the brio of the spoken word he has failed to avoid its carelessness; in recoiling from the rhetorical he has fallen into the ordinary. He is wanting in divine melancholy, the ideality of the comic playwright, the thing that holds him beyond and above his world, making him look at it with love as if he were father and this his child, which he caresses with his glance and which he will not leave until he has given it its last perfection. This fault of carelessness in Goldoni has been attributed to his

ignorance of the language and to the great hurry in which he was forced to write. These things may perhaps explain his negligence, but they do not explain the rawness and opaqueness of his colouring.

It was here in the comedies of Goldoni that the new literature appeared for the first time, announcing a restoration of the true and the natural in art. The old literature had sought its effects in the extraordinary and the marvellous in content and in form, and in the avoidance of reality. The new literature on the contrary looked for its basis in the real—in man and Nature studied from life. Manner, convention, rhetoric, Arcadianism, reminiscence, quotation, the mythological machinery and the classical machinery, were all of them banished—all that was included in the expression "literary form." The centre of drama was man; and man moreover in his ordinary, everyday life. It is true that reality is skimmed, that the depths are not plumbed. But such was the trend of that day, and such above all was Goldoni himself.

Now to Carlo Gozzi that cult of the true and natural was nothing less than the utter ruin, the tomb, of poetry. Though Goldoni's success forced Gozzi in the end to respect him, he never could manage to look on his reform as desirable. In Gozzi's eyes the marvellous and fantastic were an intrinsic part of poetry, were its indispensable elements; to copy from life seemed to him vulgar. And the many and various attacks on the comedy *a soggetto* grieved him to the heart; he saw the improvised comedy as one of the glories of Italy. It was accused of being old and exhausted, of being stale in its repertory, of being nothing now but an outworn mechanism, of being a school of immorality and scurrility, of being "awkward buffoonery and indecent foulness in an enlightened century." Undoubtedly the charges were exaggerated, but all the same there was truth in them. The Italian improvised comedy, the comedy of art or *a soggetto*, had ceased to be fertile, together with the old literature in general. Except for slight variations,

those *lazzi* that the public so delighted in were ancient stuff that had been handed down through the centuries. The theatre was feeding on the past; the new actors copied the old ones; the improvised part in the comedies was no more new and no more improvised than the written part was new or improvised. The reason that the comedy *a soggetto* was preferred to the literary comedy was the fact that it was nearer to the people, was more in touch with them. But the Bolognese doctor and Truffaldino had at last begun to be wearisome, like a master who goes on repeating the same old lesson year after year. The champions of the regular comedy, the literati in general, quoted this tedium as an argument for abolishing the masks altogether, and demanded that a sweep be made of that whole type of comedy as "indecent in an enlightened century."

Carlo Gozzi, who objected very much to those "luminaries," and was hostile and suspicious of the novelties that were pouring into Italy from the Continent, dared to defy those enlightened critics and to leap into the arena in defence of the improvised comedy, with example and precept, writing, under the name of *fiabe*,[5] comedies that included masks and therefore an improvised part. These *fiabe* of Gozzi, which today are almost forgotten, had considerable success in their time. Gozzi to his contemporaries seemed the reactionary and Goldoni the reformer; but we of today could wish that the reformer had had a little of the revolutionary ardour that burned in the reactionary, for he would have prosecuted his reforms with more vigour. The "taciturn, solitary Gozzi," as he was called, since he was a man of intelligence was penetrated by contemporary life without knowing it—was influenced by the very ideas that enraged him. In working to restore the old he ended as an innovator and a reformer: in running after the comedy *a soggetto* he met with the comedy of the people, and set it firm on its foundation. But Gozzi's mind was confused, as we see from his *Ragionamenti*. This was the reason for his weakness. Gol-

[5] Fantastic fairy tales.—Translator.

doni, on the contrary, knew what he wanted, was perfectly clear as to end and as to means, and went straight and surely to his goal. This was the reason for the very great influence he wielded. Gozzi was confused as to his aim, wanted one thing and did another, and went forward by sudden jerks, pulled this way and that by the different currents. He wanted to support the masks; he wanted to parody his opponents; he wanted to restore Pulci and Ariosto and the fantastic; he wanted to Tuscanize and at the same time to be modern and popular: he wanted in fact to take his place as a modern while reconstructing the old. These aims of Gozzi's were transitory. They were no doubt interesting to his contemporaries, and useful for polemics and for helping him to success in the theatre, but today they are the dead part of his work. They penetrate into the whole of his composition as disturbing elements, not harmonized with the rest. The part of his work that is alive is his conception of popular comedy as opposed to bourgeois comedy. The masks, or in other words, the typical characters or caricatures of the people, like Tartaglia, Pantalone, Truffaldino, Brighella, Smeraldina, exist in his composition as obligatory, conventional elements, superimposed on the content and often grotesque or insipid when compared with it. The content itself is the world of poetry as conceived by the people, avid as always for the marvellous and mysterious, impressionable, emotional—laughing as easily as weeping. It is based on the supernatural, on miracles, witchcraft, and magic. It is the world, in fact, of the imagination, and the less it is intellectual and the less it is developed mentally, the more it is alive. It is the natural basis of popular poetry under its different forms of tales, novels, romances, comedies, and farces. The old literature had annexed these things, not to destroy them, but to cast on them the little ironical smile of a cultured bourgeoisie.

What Gozzi aimed at was different: he wanted to revive this world in its first ingenuity, dramatizing the *fiaba* and the *fola:* it was there that he sought for the new blood that was to bring

back life to the comedy *a soggetto*. And he attempted it in the face of a cultured bourgeoisie, in the century of "luminaries," the century of "great minds" and "fine spirits." That he did succeed in interesting the public proves once more that the world of the imagination possesses an absolute value and responds to certain chords that, handled by an artist, can be counted on to ring in the soul, for every man or woman has a touch somewhere of the child and of the people. At the same time the public continued to be interested in the comedies of Goldoni, so the critics might reasonably have concluded—if a reasonable conclusion had been possible at that time—that both these types of comedy were in keeping with truth, Goldoni's representative of the bourgeois society with its mediocre culture, and Gozzi's of the lower classes with their credulity and their power of amazement. Both types were reforms of comedy: both were the new literature appearing on the scene. But what Gozzi did was not what he thought he was doing. He fell into his reform from pique and from the exigencies of the moment, despising the public that applauded him and not taking his own work seriously. Goldoni imitated the real, so Gozzi threw in his lot with the romantic and the fantastic. Now art, as we know, is something more than individual caprice; art, like religion and philosophy, like political and administrative institutions, is an intrinsic part of society, a natural result of culture and of national life. While Gozzi was trying to revive the world of the imagination, he was pointing to its dissolution in his own *Marfisa*. And he attempted to revive that world when the whole of the cultured and intelligent part of the nation was moving not towards it, but away from it, and when the people, inert and sunk in their poverty, had not the slightest glimmer of a literary life. Now if Gozzi had gone to the people for his inspiration and had mixed with them personally, his work would have been alive. But he was naturally aristocratic, and had the greatest objection to anything that smelt too strongly of democracy, so he passed his life entirely among the members

of the Granelleschi, in a circle that was purely literary. Moreover nothing literary could ever have arisen in that day from the people, sunk as they were in a hopeless stagnation. The literary movement in Italy arose from the bourgeoisie, and the national life developed in every direction according to bourgeois tendencies. When the whole mission of the age was to fight imagination in the name of science and philosophy, Gozzi's attempt to revive that world of the imagination was a retrogression. He was born too soon: the time was to come when the bourgeoisie, alarmed by these very exaggerations which disgusted him, were to turn once more to the world of the marvellous as to a rock of salvation. It was then that Gozzi should have lived. And there was indeed a Gozzi, but his name was Manzoni.

Gozzi in his own day was a warring element, therefore he arrived at nothing definite. His idea, which in the abstract was highly aesthetic, in practice was literary and artificial. He hated novelty, yet all the time he was carrying it within him. He treated imagination as the lawyer Goldoni treated bourgeois society; his works are wanting in chiaroscuro, and in the atmosphere and the feeling of the supernatural. His whole effort is to show the supernatural as though it were real and natural, an ordinary fact accepted by every one, as Goldoni did. So his style is monotonous, his colouring opaque, and his tints are imperfectly fused. By dint of being natural he often falls into the insipid and the ordinary. He did not see that when the world of the imagination is in question naturalness depends on ingenuity—on curiosity, marvelling, suspense, terror, anger, tears, and laughter—as in the stories of primitive peoples. In Gozzi ingenuity has been lost, so naturalness sinks into carelessness and ordinariness. To the author himself those apparitions were a game and a pastime. But nevertheless, though abortive and valueless in themselves, with the help of the scenery and the *lazzi* they still contrive to be effective on the stage, and are pleasant to read, though they leave no trace

on the mind. Baretti proclaimed Gozzi as a new Shakespeare, and when he failed to come up to expectations attacked him furiously, as though Gozzi had betrayed him. He ought instead to have been furious with himself for having predicted a Shakespeare in the eighteenth century. Popular comedy relapsed into its quagmire, with its masks, its indecencies, and its vulgarity. Of Gozzi there remained a fine idea, soon to be forgotten. Society took the other road; it followed Goldoni.

IV

The movement in Venice remained purely literary. In the Academy of the Granelleschi there was the Tuscanizing centre of which the brothers Gozzi were the soul, and which soon became ridiculous. Against them was Goldoni, who had higher aims and touched not merely on the forms but on the organism of art. Of all the men of that day only Carlo Gozzi saw the significance of the movement politically, and sounded the alarm. But nobody answered it—for nobody could see any enemy! Even in Paris Goldoni had not the slightest understanding of all that vertiginous medley of ideas; Rousseau he saw as a curious phenomenon, a magnificent comic character, something like the *Burbero benefico*. This power of concentrating on a single point, to the exclusion of everything else, was his strength, but was also his weakness. His whole effort was to copy Nature and to avoid falsifying it. This idea of Goldoni's was the beginning of the literary renewal, implying as it did the rejection of Arcadia and the reconstruction of content and form. It is incarnate in a few comedies, more or less perfectly executed, but all of them deathless, because clearly and truly conceived, with living situations and living characters. Here was his strength. His weakness was the purely literary nature of his reform, which prevented his scrutinizing the depths or producing anything but the local and the individual. His indifference to religion, politics, philosophy, morality, and

social questions, his mediocre culture, and his poverty of inner motives prevented his endowing his plays with relief and vigour and with the ideality that can come only from a general and permanent significance. What he lacked was certainly not wit nor comedy nor technique: he was an artist born. It was the thing Metastasio lacked—the inner world of consciousness, warmed by faith and by feeling, which works, and moves, and creates. He lacked faith, and force of conviction; he lacked the thing that had been absent from Italy for more than a century and had made her decadence incurable.

But a glance at the best minds of the day will show that force and conviction were returning, that a renewal was imminent. Brains were stirring, feeling was reviving. It is true that the impulse was mostly foreign. But the fact that Italy welcomed the novelty with enthusiasm was proof sufficient that minds were ready to receive it, that Italy after long inaction was taking the road again. In the south speculative activity had continued unbroken from Telesio to Cuoco. The same liberal school that was formerly concerned with jurisdictional questions had turned its attention to useful reforms in the state. When the new ideas arrived in the south, they found a soil ready and prepared for them, and men like Filangieri, Pagano, and Galiani to interpret them. The new content was developed in a witty, lively form, which was often ingenious and impassioned: it was philosophy popularized, served to the public in the vivacious and witty language of the gazette. The farces, comedies, tragedies, dissertations, sermons, treatises, sonnets, canzoni, and rearrangements, all the accepted forms of the old literature, went on their way mechanically without ever a sign of life or of inner movement: a conventional world, received with conventional applause.

Salvator Rosa had already thrown down a challenge to rhetoric and declamation, accompanied by a blowing of trumpets, never stopping to realize that the thing he was doing was precisely rhetoric. Not only Rosa but several others from the

south had a touch of rhetoric, more especially Filangieri. But their message was in itself so interesting, so new and so important, that the rhetoric ceased to matter. These writers of the south were informed by the spirit of the day, which is never without interest. The literary feeling, the mixture of the voluptuous, the ingenious, and the sentimental that had endeared Tasso and Marino to the people, had turned now into musical feeling, had given Metastasio to the world, and was leading to that immortal school of singers and composers, the real fathers of the art, which was destined to so glorious a future. Music was developing from the impulses that no longer had an outlet in literature; it was developing as pure melody —alive, voluptuous, and full of feeling. Speculative activity and music continued to develop in the south, while in Venice Goldoni continued his reform of comedy. But the place above all others where political and intellectual life was actively centred was Milan, where Pietro Verri and Cesare Beccaria were the moving spirits. In Venice there was the Academy of the Granelleschi, in Milan there was the Academy of the Trasformati. While in Venice they conceived reform as a revival of classicism, and fought Goldoni, who was really the reformer, in Milan the new spirit had pervaded the whole range of social and intellectual life. The *Encyclopédie* had come to Milan, accompanied by a whole cortège of French writers. In Milan they cared little for words, they were interested in ideas; and when they felt that their ideas could be expressed more adequately in dialect, then they used dialect.

Among the members of the Trasformati were Beccaria, Baretti, Balestrieri, Passeroni, and the brothers Verri, the flower of the intellect of Milan. They called themselves the "Transformed," and certainly human study in its every branch, whether philosophy, politics, or morals, was all of it transformed, more or less consciously and clearly, in passing through their minds. And literature of course was transformed too, the old classical solemnity giving way to a supple and natural

form, in the most lively and emotional French manner. Great was the laughter at Alessandro Bandiera, who wanted to teach language and style to Padre Segneri, because he thought him too little Boccaccian; and at Padre Branda, who was all for the Tuscan tongue and had a horror of dialect. A writer who laughed very heartily at that old society was Passeroni in his *Vita di Cicerone* and *Favole esopiane*. His flowing, easy-going style was itself a criticism of the empty bombast of Frugoni, of the alembics of Algarotti, of the affectations of Bettinelli —who were the poets in vogue. A good fellow, without an ounce of acrimony or of initiative in his nature, he laughed with gusto at the society in which he lived poor and contented. He was a man of the type of Goldoni and Metastasio; an idyllic nature, a pure literato. Metastasio, Goldoni, and Passeroni were the poets of transition; all have signs of a new literature, of a popular form—light, easy, rapid, and clear, more to be blamed for carelessness than for artificiality. But literature was still a game to them, without loftiness or seriousness of motive: we feel the literato, but not the man. All three were reformers. Yet all the same we still feel in them the old type of Italian, whose form of expression in literature was Arcadian and academic. They fought the Arcadian, but had never really escaped from it.

In that day of new ideas and of old-time men there came into the world Giuseppi Parini. Born on May 23rd, 1729, in the Milanese, he was given the ordinary classical education of the day under the Barnabite Fathers: his teacher of rhetoric was Padre Branda. His father wanted him to be a priest, in order to bring lustre to the family name. But his studies were suddenly interrupted, and he was forced to get a living as best he could. Working as a copyist and a tutor in an atmosphere of slights and poverty, his character was tempered. Like Metastasio and the great majority of the poets of that time he began as an Arcadian; his first *Rime* appeared in a collection edited by the Arcadians. The first sign of his strong personality was shown

in an attack on Padre Bandiera and Padre Branda—the very same Padre Branda whose bad scholar he had been. He seems to have learnt very little while at school, and to have rebelled above all against that system of learning by heart which was then the basis of education. But rid of school, and master of his own leisure, he devoured Virgil, Horace, Dante, Ariosto, and Berni, forgetting his poverty in the joys of reading. What he thought of Padre Branda with his Tuscanizing, and of Padre Bandiera with his academic periods, we can well imagine. Pedantry he despised; but he was no less opposed to the habit of Frenchifying that was the fashion of that time with high and with low. Obliged by his profession to frequent the houses of the rich, he was able to study at first hand the strange mixture of the old and the new that made up Italian society. The fact that he took up his stand at once on the question of literature revealed his personality. He held himself aloof from the struggle and above it, and avoided exaggerations: we are dealing with a man of character.

Parini was more inclined to meditation than to action. Utterly indifferent to the usual pleasures of youth and with no ambition at all for honours or for riches, he had few needs. Like Dante he was a party by himself. That new world which was fermenting in the minds of the day, that world founded on Nature and reason and opposed to the conventions and falsity of the century, reached him less through the French writers than through Plutarch and Dante, and remained in him unchanged, unshadowed by worldly feelings and interests, free from exaggeration and ostentation. He had that inner balance of faculties which is the sanity of the soul; he had the self-possession of the sage, the calm, controlling mind that holds imagination and passions within their proper limits. His strength lay more in morality than in intellect. His intellect was in fact nothing extraordinary; it had the virtues of fairness and moderation, but little novelty or profundity of conception. The quality that raised Parini above the men of his day was his

morality—his sincere and vigorous morality, which served him in lieu of a religion, supporting and inspiring him. It was Dante's *sapienza*—the concord between will and act by means of love: the inner man had come back.

With Parini man and artist are one. He conceives of art in the same way that he conceives of life. Parini is something more than a mere literato shut into form and indifferent to content. Content to him is the substance of art, and the artist is the man in his integrity, as patriot, believer, philosopher, lover, and friend, who is expressing not merely a part but the whole of himself, in all his integrity. Poetry has regained its significance, has returned to being the voice of the inner world; for poetry is impossible without conscience, or in others words without faith in a religious, political, moral, and social world. So the basis of the poet is the man. Poetry has regained the seriousness of a living content, alive in the consciousness; has regained substance; has become itself the idea, the harmony between idea and expression.

The basis of Parini's content is moral and political; liberty, equality, country, dignity, harmony between thought and action. It is the old program of Machiavelli, which had crossed the Alps, and now had returned to Italy. The basis of the form is truth of expression and its direct communion with content. It is the form of Dante and Machiavelli, renewed together with the content. The content is lyrical and satirical. It is the new man in the old society.

This new man in Parini is not an imaginary conception; he has all the conditions of reality, since he is the poet himself. The protagonist of this literary world is Giuseppe Parini, who sings of himself, and pours himself out, just as he is, in all the ingenuousness of his nature. The artificial and abstract themes of religion, love, and morality have vanished; all here is alive, concrete, and contemporary, produced in a living and moving world of facts and impressions. But the poet is withdrawn from his world; he is living in the peace of Nature and

the calm of his own mind, so is raised above that world. He feels its emotions, its pleasures, and its stabs, but never to the point of losing his serenity. In this new man there is a vein of the idyllic and the philosophical, like that of a solitary man, an onlooker, a spectator rather than an actor, accustomed to living quietly with himself, and remaining pure and dispassionate in his judgments. In the poet there is the slightest touch of the pedagogue, a tendency to teach, and to weigh and judge the facts of humanity. But he is never pedantic or portentous. His love for the solitude of the country is never misanthropic; it is touched, on the contrary, with the tenderest concern for humanity. His strict ideas of womanly propriety and virtue are softened by the liveliest feeling for feminine beauty. With all his dignity and virtue he is modest and charming; in conceptions and feelings there is always a harmonious temperance; it is here that he excels as poet and as man. When we read his *Vita rustica*, his *Salubritá dell' aria*, his *Pericolo*, his *Musa*, his *Caduta*, his *Nice*, and his *Silvia*, we enjoy a satisfaction that is more than aesthetic, we feel that not merely a part but the whole of our faculties are appeased.

That old society is caught, not in its rhetorical generalities as in Rosa, Menzini, and the other satirists, but in the substantial form of its old age, which is pomp of forms and insipidity of content. Those pompous, magnificent forms, which were thought so enormously important, when placed in antithesis to the content seem an irony. The *Batracomiomachia* is the irony of the *Iliad*, the *Moscheide* is the irony of the *Orlando:* they are epic forms applied to a plebeian world. Irony is the form of old, decaying societies, which are not yet conscious of their impending dissolution. It is the old endeavouring to be young; and the poorer the substance, the greater are the show and the pomp. Such is the basic conception of Parini's *Giorno*, founded on an irony that lies in the things themselves, and therefore is sad and profound. Parini has put in nothing of his own but the relief, a solemnity of exposition that increases the contrast.

But conscious as he is that those lying forms are a denial of himself, of his own simplicity, of his seriousness, of his moral sense, he never manages really to laugh at them, and never once comes out with a joke or a caprice. He laughs with a wry mouth, and beneath it we feel his disgust and contempt. Italy had laughed enough, and was laughing still in the works of Passeroni and Goldoni. Here the laugh is on the surface; beneath it, repressed and contained, is the man's indignation. Parini has the power of repression; rarely does feeling rise to the surface, or irony become sarcasm. The irony of the old forefathers of the Renaissance was merry and sceptical, as we see in Boccaccio and Ariosto. It was chiefly intellectual; it was the intellect refusing to be a party to the absurdities of theology and feudalism; it was a vindication of the intellect accompanied by moral dissolution; it was science looking at ignorance with irony. In Parini irony is the awakening of conscience in the midst of an empty and superficial society. The irony of the Renaissance was the irony of common sense; the irony of Parini is the irony of the moral sense. We feel that man and the inner life have been born again.

The language of that old society suited it to perfection. It was cadenced, affected, and empty, sunk in music. Here language is resurrected. And we get it laborious, produced with difficulty, pregnant with meanings and with meanings within meanings. It is the language that reveals the irony, because placed in antithesis to that soft and nerveless society which the poet is feigning to celebrate.

And now, eliminate the irony. Allow the disgust, anger, and contempt to rise openly and defiantly to the surface—all those feelings that Parini hides with such care and effort with his laughter—and behold! you have Vittorio Alfieri. Alfieri is the new man standing defiantly forward from the midst of his contemporaries, a gigantic solitary statue with menacing finger.

Alfieri was late in discovering himself, and he did it from his own impulse, in opposition to the society he belonged to.

Till the age of twenty-six he lived the habitual life of an Italian nobleman, among the usual dissipations, travels, women, and horses—without, however, being satisfied. From his early studies he had learnt very little, except to dislike study. Rich and noble by birth, money, honours and public positions had no attraction for him; his only object in living was to live. That is the usual vapid life of a rich young nobleman, which many think enviable. But Alfieri was not content with it. He was often sad and suffered from the tedium of that meaningless activity. He had the malady of Italy, the malady of all peoples fallen into decadence; he was suffering from an inner idleness, from emptiness of the inner world. And moreover he was conscious of it, and beneath the surface of worldly amusement he suffered from weariness, hiding it only more or less. Men who are forced to work for their living can assuage that weariness; in Alfieri's case the work had been done by his ancestors—he was born to a life of ease. So his inner forces, which were very considerable, for he was possessed of unusual tenacity and energy of character, were idle for want of use. On several occasions he rushed through Europe, his only satisfaction being the rushing, the sign of his inner disquiet—an aimless, empty life, guided by chance. Thought and affection, the two forces inherent in man, were immobilized. He felt his manhood denied and was sad and bored. Endowed very richly by Nature with thought and affections, he had still to discover the inner centre round which he could concentrate his faculties. Living in idleness, it was easy to fall into love-affairs, and Alfieri had his share of them, and also of disillusionments, and it was only at times like these that he seemed to be living.

His boredom drove him to books. Latin he had forgotten, and had lost the habit of Italian, having spoken French for ten years. Reading as he did to pass the time and purely from natural taste, he found the classics tiresome. Racine sent him to sleep. When he started the *Galatea* he got stuck in those first "albeits" and flung it out of the window. He read romances in

the spirit of a schoolboy devouring the *Arabian Nights;* he read them for the sake of the story, which he liked to follow to its finish. Ariosto's digressions annoyed him, and he read Metastasio skipping the ariettas. The *Henriade* and the *Émile* he found intolerable, because of that ranting which takes our attention from the tale. One day at Savona while awaiting the arrival of his horses he chanced on a Plutarch. Here he was moved by something that was more than the story: his heart beat fast. The greatness of these figures did not frighten him but aroused him to emulation. "Why should not *I* be as great as they were?" And there was nothing to prevent him, for in greatness of heart and mind he was their equal. One night while nursing his mistress, who was ill, he made a rough sketch of a scenario, and the play it gave birth to was produced at Turin amid great applause. "Why should not *I* be a tragic playwright?" he thought. And the thought, having come, stayed with him.

It was the generally accepted opinion that Italy was immeasurably ahead of all the nations in all forms of literature excepting tragedy. To supply this want had been the mania of Gravina, the ambition of Metastasio, the thing that Trissino and Tasso and Maffei had all of them striven for. To supply Italy with the tragic work she was waiting for seemed in that day the loftiest ambition possible to an Italian. Alfieri had come back from his travels with a magnified idea of Italy; nothing in the countries he had visited had compared with Rome, with Florence, with Venice, with Genoa. He had a strong sense of the majesty of ancient Rome, of the Roman greatness that had never been surpassed. It was true that the Italy of his day was decadent, but he believed in the Italy of tomorrow, which he pictured as similar to ancient Italy. He knew that to lay the foundation of this new Italy it was necessary first to revive man, and it seemed to Alfieri that tragedy, the depiction of the heroic, was akin to portraying the new man who was fermenting in his mind, and in fact was himself. These conceptions of Alfieri were the conceptions of the century, which had pene-

trated here and there into the minds of the day, his own among them. But in the case of Alfieri they were a passion, an all-absorbing aim that drew to itself the whole of his forces, and developed at last into the sole and ultimate aim of his whole existence. He aimed at being the redeemer of Italy, the great precursor of a new era. As he could not do it by deeds, he would do it with his pen.

So here at last was a worthy aim, and one which promised him glory and made him greater in the eyes of men and in his own eyes. The aim was extremely difficult, for he had none of the conditions for achieving it. But the obstacles were a spur to his energies and made the end all the more desirable. The energy that till now he had squandered in dissipation he directed to his work. To lose his "Frenchification" and become "Tuscanized," he lived as much as was possible in Tuscany. He took up the study of Latin, and plunged with ardour into the *trecentisti*, prepared, as he put it, "to *un*think, so as to be able to think." He lived in spirit with Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso, copying and annotating and translating, "sinking himself deep in the vortex of grammar." Entirely unspoilt by education, and being himself and nobody else, he evolved a style of his own. When he wrote he rushed in a straight line, as he had travelled; when he stood at the beginning, his mind was already at the end, having devoured all the road between. Language to Alfieri is an impediment, so he shortens and transposes and suppresses it; an unnecessary word is an excrescence. Phrases, circumlocutions, ornamentations, trills, and *cantilenas* he avoids. He treats the word as though sound were nothing at all: he is the very opposite of Metastasio. Alfieri takes an actual delight in offending the cultured Italian ears. And when people were shocked he made fun of them:

Mi trovan duro?	Do they find me hard? I know
Anch' io lo so:	it full well. But I make them think.
pensar li fo.	

Taccia ho d' oscuro?
Mi schiarirá
poi libertá.

Have I the fault of obscurity?
Liberty shall explain me in the future.

To the Italy of Metastasio and Frugoni he says ironically:

Io canterò d' amor soavememte:
molle udirete il flauticello mio
l' aure agitare armoniosamente
per lusingare il vostro eterno oblio.

I will sing softly to you of love,
and you shall hear my little flute
stirring the breezes gently and harmoniously, to soothe your eternal sleep.

What his verses seemed to his contemporaries, and what they seemed to himself, we can see from the following epigram aimed at the pedants:

Vi paion strani?
Saran toscani.
Son duri duri,
disaccentati. . . .
Non son cantati.
Stentati, oscuri,
irti, intralciati. . . .
Saran pensati.

Do they seem to you strange?
Perhaps they are Tuscan.
They are hard, hard, and badly accentuated. . . .
They are not sung.
They seem to you hampered, obscure, bristly and entangled. . . .
Perhaps they are thought about.

But Alfieri, who was his own disciple and nobody else's, was not so very sure of his own intentions, and consulted the esteemed writers of the day like Cesarotti and Parini. Looking for a model for his tragic verse, for a time he saw a glimmer in Ossian. But he was looking for the unfindable, and in the end he did the sensible thing and wrote as he felt. Parini had said to him in a fine sonnet: "Dare, strive." He sweated at his verses, tormenting them and twisting them, but, "*gira, volta, ei son francesi*"; turn and twist them as he might, they stayed Alfierian, strongly individual and "more pointed than rounded." This he called the "tragic style." The empty singable form of that day he opposed with this style of his own, "not sung but thought," a style vigorous to the point of harshness, and so full of meaning as to be congested. His writing comes from him-

self, from his own nature, therefore his harshness is alive and original.

The critics condemned the style, but praised the rest, presumably on the principle that style is an arbitrary thing, apart from the matter; the living connection between the style and the rest escaped them. For not only did Alfieri dock the periods, ornaments, and phrases, but he was equally vigorous in reducing asides, personages, and episodes. The result is a tense, nervous form, often tortured, responding to his way of feeling and conceiving, a warm and living expression of the soul, interesting and sincere. To grasp its secret we must see how it arose and from what its secret was born.

Alfieri did not seek his tragedy in the living and actual world around him, but in the tragic works of the past. Ready to his hand was a set of rules and definitions, and he accepted them as good without examining them. They were not his problem, but were only the data and antecedents of his problem: his problem was to bring tragedy to perfection within the bounds of those given rules and definitions. He knew little of the Greek dramatists, but had read Seneca. He was familiar with the French and Italian tragedies, but held them in small esteem, as inflated and rhetorical, and was sure he could improve on them. According to the ideas he had accepted blindly, tragedy must be heroic; and he conceived it as a conflict of individual forces, in which the hero succumbs to *force majeure*. In Metastasio the *force majeure* was beneficent and clement and heroic. The world born from his musical imagination was a laugh, a song, a hymn; it was the world of harmony and measure, glorified and deified. In Alfieri the *force majeure* is tyranny and oppression, and its victim is heroism or liberty. It is the world of violence and of barbarism, condemned and branded. Metastasio and Alfieri belong to different eras; Metastasio closed the one, Alfieri opened the other. And their contemporaries disputed over their styles, expecting a resemblance of style in such utterly different contents.

Alfieri in accepting tragedy as the conflict of individual forces remained in the picture of the French tragedies. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in their reaction against supernaturalism endeavoured to explain history by natural means, showing the "destiny" of the ancients and the "order of Providence" of Dante and the Christian world as the action of individual characters and passions. In Italy there was a scientific conception of history. Destiny and the order of Providence had turned into the "nature of things" of Machiavelli, into the "spirit" of Bruno, the "reason" of Campanella, the "fate" of Vico. But the concept had remained in the high spheres of the intellect, barely made known to the public and remote from art. Shakespeare from the depths of his genial soul had taken and used those collective and superior forces which are the Fate of history. But Alfieri's spirit was superficial; it was inclined more to activity than to meditation, was intent more on rapidity and warmth of narrative than on searching the depths —so he stayed in the picture of the eighteenth century. Tragedy to him was the struggle of individuals; the Fate of history was *force majeure* and tyranny; and the key of history was the tyrant. Later, under the influence of the Bible, he was attracted by the tragedy of Saul and had a glimpse of a superior order. But the inexorable God in his *Saul* is a rhetorical figure, and exists rather in the opinions and sayings of the characters than in the actual events, which are all of them explained naturally. A tyrant was necessary, so God was taken for that tyrant. But our interest is actually in Saul, whose acts are unconscious, and are more determined by Abner's wickedness than by his own wickedness. The *Saul* is the Bible topsy-turvy: a whitewashed Saul, with the priests shown as unpleasant characters.

Now this of course is the negation of Arcadia, in fact is its open and exaggerated contradiction. Following the world of Tasso, Guarini, Marino, and Metastasio there was arising a tragedy no longer academic and literary, as were the French and Italian tragedies, but political and social, based on the

conception that society belongs to the strongest, and that justice, virtue, truth, and liberty are oppressed by a double power, absolute and irresponsible, the double tyranny of pope and emperor, of throne and altar. To this double tyranny of pope and emperor Alfieri added yet another—the tyranny of the people. Now here we have something alive, the tragedy of that very century, the struggle of mature and civilized thought against a social order that was still barbaric and founded on force. But Alfieri's was a tragedy of pure thought floating in regions that were purely speculative, not transformed into history. The society of that day, in spite of speculative agitations, was still idyllic and rhetorical; it still believed in a peaceful progress with princes and peoples in concord. The tragedy that corresponded to this state of society was the philosophic and academic tragedy, like that of Voltaire. With Alfieri we have something added from his own personality; Alfieri's tragedy is the lyrical outlet of his own indignation and hate, of the storm that was raging in his soul. In the middle of that powdered and bewigged society contentedly spouting on tyranny and liberty Alfieri took life seriously and refused to live without an aim. He took morality seriously, and brought his actions into harmony with it. He took tyranny seriously, and was galled by his chains, and raged and struggled against them. And he took art seriously, and wooed perfection. His ideas, feelings, principles, and actions were one. The new man that he felt within himself had the proud consciousness of solitary greatness, and stood on his solitude as on a pedestal, with breast and forehead held high, as the ideal statue of the future Italian, the "exemplar of a free man":

Giorno verrá, tornerá il giorno, in cui
redivivi omai gl' Itali staranno
in campo audaci. . . .
Al forte fianco sproni ardenti dui,

The day will come, the day will come again, when the Italians, returned to life, will stand audacious on the battlefield. . . .

On their strong flanks will be two burning spurs—their ancient

lor virtú prisca ed i miei carmi, avranno:
onde in membrar ch' esse giá fûr, ch' io fui,
d' irresistibil fiamma avvam peranno. . . .

virtue and my odes. In remembering what once they were, and what once I was, they will be lit with an irresistible flame.

Gli odo giá dirmi:—O vate nostro, in pravi
secoli nato, eppur create hai queste
sublimi etá, che profetando andavi.

Already I can hear them saying: "O poet of ours, born in a decadent century, it is thou who hast created this sublime age, which thou didst never cease to prophesy."

In the Alfierian tragedy there is a spirit of life, which carves the situations, inspires the feelings, moulds the ideas, and fills the whole creation with its warmth, even to the accessories. His tragedy has the new man in it: solitary, disdainful of his contemporaries, yet compelling their notice and their sympathy. This new man in Italy, though he had yet to penetrate into customs and characters, was already established in men's minds, and was influencing culture in all its branches. As we see, Alfieri's spirit was related to the spirit of the century. Then why, we ask, did he feel himself alone? Why did he meet his century as an enemy? The reason is this: The new man in Alfieri was an exemplar, a model, made concrete in his powerful personality. This new man became not merely his idea, but his very soul itself and the whole of his life. And he suffered when he saw him mishandled and denied by the very persons who praised him so loudly in words. Therefore he despises the democrats perhaps more than he despises the popes, priests, and kings; he calls them "manufacturers of liberty," and flies from them, "virginal of language, of ears, and even of eyes": "*Non l' opra lor, ma il dir consuona al mio*"—"Not their deeds but their words are like mine." And he dies a sad man, cursing his century and entrusting his fame to posterity:

Ma non inulta l' ombra mia né muta

But my shade shall not be useless or mute—no: my voice, as

starassi, no: fia de' tiranni scempio
la sempre viva mia voce temuta.
Né lunge molto, al mio cessar, d'ogni empio
veggio la vil possanza al suol caduta,
me forse altrui di liber' uomo esempio.

living and feared as ever, shall break the tyrants.

It will not be long after my passing that I shall behold the power of the wicked brought low, and myself the exemplar of a free man.

His compassion was all for Louis, and his indignation was all for the National Assembly—for those "perfumed barbarians" stammering "some free idea not their own," those "fortunate scoundrels" at whom he fires his parting shot in the *Misogallo:* "*Tiene 'l Ciel dai ribaldi, Alfier dai buoni*"—"Heaven speaks for the scoundrels, Alfieri for the good."

And there you get him exactly, that solitary Alfieri, who kept his ideal inviolate within himself: if Heaven blames him, he blames Heaven. Taciturn and melancholy by nature, he was thrown still more on himself by society. He remained alone with his ideal in the vague and unlimited world of feelings and fantasies, which had nothing that was concrete or complete except himself. So his fantasies resemble logical conceptions rather than effectual things, are genera and species rather than individuals. They are not abstractions, as many have called them; empty abstractions could never have aroused so live an interest. They are fantasies, but sanguine and warmed, not empty at all, but on the contrary congested with the blood transfused from the author. We feel in them the solitary man struggling with himself and producing from his own substance. He has no love for the things extrinsic to himself, such as Nature, locality, personality; he does not understand nor tolerate them, but violates them and leaves his mark on them. His personality, powerful as it is, is insufficient to create life; it is impotent for want of love, for want of that feeling of two beings losing and forgetting themselves one in the other. He is impotent from excess of activity, which prevents his receiving and giving back

impressions—for the man gripped by passion does not stop to observe and take in what he sees. Alfieri is a living flame of passion. It is as though he were expelling the lava from his breast with a single mighty impetus. He has not the repose and patience of the artist, the divine smile as his gaze rests on his creation. The rage he vaunts is the madness of Crestes, who in attacking the paramour slays the mother. And it leads him astray in his colours and outlines, and gives an edge to the feelings, a strained and nervous atmosphere to the whole. This accounts for his stage directions and his style, for his want of gradations and of lights and shades, for his vaunted way of saying so much in so little, for his cripplings and congestions, his tumultuous abbreviations of life, his strangled situations, his shadowy characters, whom we understand the less the more they rage. Alfieri must have glimpsed this fault when he wrote:

Nulla di quanto l' uom "scienza" chiama
per gli orecchi mai giunto erami al core:
ira, vendetta, libertade, amore
sonava io sol, come chi freme ed ama.

Nothing of the thing that men call "science" has ever penetrated through my ears into my heart. The things that have resounded in my heart have been anger, revenge, liberty, love, like a man who rages and loves.

And so it is: his tragedy rages with anger, revenge, liberty, love. But rage and violence are not enough for a tragedy, and the Attic goddess who said, "Sleep and create," was wrong: one does not create in one's sleep, but by studying and meditating. A full heart is not sufficient if the mind be "naked." Alfieri was wanting in the art of living, in the deep and quiet gaze that pierces the mysteries and hears the harmonies of life. He gives us the peaks but not the slopes that lead up to them. His images and objects are intensified, like flashes of lightning indeed, but lightning in a meagre, uninteresting sky: as for instance the "*Pace!*"—"Peace!" of Nero, or the famous "*Scegliesti? Ho scelto*"—"Hast chosen? I have chosen," and the "*Vivi, Emon,*

tel comando"—"Live, Haemon, I command thee," or the oft-quoted "*Fui padre*"—"I once was a father," or the "*Ribelli tutti, E abbidiran pur tutti*"—"Rebels all! Yet all at last shall yield"—the style of a challenging sentry, as it were, like that of Tacitus or Machiavelli. The surface display draws attention to the artifice beneath it. It is a style of leaps and bounds, less action than dialogue, and in spite of the brief forms is frequently prolix and stagnant. Crude and oversharp feelings follow each other incessantly without pause or preparation; arising from a short-lived tension of the mind, they suddenly become poor and insipid. In spite of the tremendous amount of warmth, the dramas of Alfieri as a whole are monotonous and cold. The excitement of the dialogue strikes us as fictitious, and we feel we have nothing to catch hold of. Maxims and mottoes in plenty have remained, but not a single one of the characters, whether man or woman, is alive today. This want of life is especially noticeable in the virtuous characters, more especially in the rare cases where *force majeure* allows them to win the day. Their sentiments on religion, country, liberty, love, are exhaled in general phrases, but never do we get them in their inwardness, as living people. There is patriotism, but not the fatherland; there is love, but not the lover; there is liberty, but not man. Charles and Isabella, David and Jonathan, Icilius and Virginius, and the Brutuses, Agises, and Timoleons are personifications, not people at all, and their virtue is certainly not modest or simple. The content is poor, in spite of the excited form of expression. The tyrannical or guilty characters are those most alive. Alfieri has brought to their creation the whole of his rage, and hate has endowed him with depth. One of the most interesting of his characters and one of the worst morally is Egisto (Aegisthus) in his *Agamemnone*. The scene where this base creature so cunningly implants the idea of murder in the brain of Clitennestra (Clytemnestra) is worthy of Shakespeare.

Alfieri was the new man in old dress. His patriotism, liberty, dignity, inflexibility, morality, his sense of right and duty, that

inner world of consciousness which had ceased to be felt in Italian life and art, came to him not from his own world, but from a study of the ancient world, joined with his own iron personality. The Italy of the future that he proclaimed was ancient Italy revived, restored to her power and glory—"the 'shall be' is the 'has been.'" To reawaken this "pristine virtue," to make his odes "burning spurs" to the new generation, rendering them worthy of ancient Rome, is the lyrical theme that he shared with Dante and Petrarch. Since Petrarch it had fallen gradually into empty rhetoric, and in Metastasio had turned into music. With the rise in Italy of the new man, of whom Alfieri himself was the exaggerated and epic expression, this theme was regaining its seriousness. Alfieri, feeling as he did his kinship with Machiavelli, had developed the political soul: his law was Country, his god was the Nation, his virtue was Liberty. But like all aspirations that have still to become concrete through collision with practical life, these ideas in Alfieri were poor of content and free and unlimited in form. If Alfieri's theme had been the collision of aspiration with reality the result would have been a lofty pathos, the motif of the tragedy of today. But a conception so lofty as this would have been barely possible then. Alfieri, together with his contemporaries, saw only the grossest part of the reality that abounded in that age—the *force majeure,* or tyranny. And he never went deep into it, nor ever really understood it; all he did was to hate it as the victim hates the executioner. He hates with the hatred of the Jacobin, who, unable to explain or assimilate the obstacle, cuts it away with his sword. Alfieri detested the Jacobins, but all the time was himself a Robespierre—if we can imagine Robespierre a poet. The Jacobins (if they had been able to read his tragedies) might easily have said to him, "Master, it is you who taught us the art." The man who glorified the first Brutus, the slayer of his sons, and the second Brutus, the slayer of Caesar his father, and had only contempt for Charles of England beheaded by the Commonwealth, was unlikely to blame the killers of Louis of

France. When the collective forces are narrowed to the power of an individual, that individual acquires, as is natural, a colossal and epic greatness under the name of "tyrant," and the greater the tyrant, the greater should be the hatred for him. But in the plays of Alfieri the tragedy is merely a game of individual forces, so its only possible basis is the artistic development of the individual.

Nevertheless, Alfieri is more concerned with the heroic ideas voiced by his heroes than with their souls or personalities. The political and moral content, instead of being a mere stimulus or occasion for artistic formation, is its substance, and ruins the work artistically. This fault was common in the new literature. After a century of indifference the content was regaining its importance. It was regarded as a thing detached from art and superior to it, though it could use art as its instrument for the gaining of publicity and the awakening of conscience, making odes into "burning spurs." But so violent a political feeling as that in the plays of Alfieri makes serene contemplation impossible. His conceptions, feelings, and colours are crude and discordant; in exalting the content he neglects the form. Alfieri is the new literature exaggerated to the highest degree. He is a violent reaction against the past; he is not the new literature tranquilly affirming itself, gladdened by an irony devoid of bitterness—so noble in Parini. In Parini's irony we are conscious of a new world coming tranquilly forward, sure of itself; in Alfieri's sarcasm we are conscious of approaching revolutions. Alfieri's violence and exaggeration were necessary to that particular time, when man's imagination had sunk into utter torpor: anything less than Alfieri would have failed to move that imagination.

His work had the effect he had intended. It awakened patriotic and political feeling and a national consciousness, and Italy regained the seriousness of an inner world in life and in art. His epigrams, sayings, mottoes, and tirades passed into the language, and were made part of public education. The fashion

arose of declaiming on tyranny and liberty. At first just a vogue and an amusement, later, when the times had *ripened, this* declamation became personal and political. His contemporaries, while applauding his plays, had not the slightest idea of pledging their consciences; whoever connected the two was barbarous and eccentric. And exaggeration was nothing unusual in that day, as it was the special vice of Italians, in whom the sense of reality had been absent for so long. But for the new generations, disillusioned and hampered and prevented from developing, those tragic ideals, so vague yet so impassioned, responded to the state of their consciousness. Alfieri's steely, vibrating lines, as sharp as a poniard, and his mottoes, as condensed as a catechism, played no insignificant part in forming the new generations.

His fame and influence increased, so that Italy imagined that at long last she had found her tragic writer, a tragic writer on a par with the greatest. The literati accepted the tragedy, but said that the tragic verse was still to seek. They wanted something that included the hardness of Alfieri and the *cantilena* of Metastasio. And when the *Aristodemo* of the Abate Monti appeared the want seemed to be filled. They saw in Monti the pride of Dante and the sweetness of Virgil, "*di Dante il cor e del suo duca il canto*"—"of Dante the heart, and of his leader the song." And it is certain that Vincenzo Monti had something of Dante and something of Virgil: he had Dante in his imagination and Virgil in his ear.

Born as he was into that age of fermenting ideas, Vincenzo Monti received their impress, like the rest of the men of culture. But with Monti they were less a conviction than a fashion. It is true he was never anything but a Liberal; but every one then was a Liberal; even the reactionaries shouted "Liberty!"—not "ordinary" liberty of course, but "real" liberty. In the name of liberty Monti glorified each government as it arose. When the fashionable thing was empty declamation, he threw on the stage his *Aristodemo,* which created a furore on its opening night,

with the Pope himself among the audience. When the French Revolution broke out in a sea of blood he came out with the *Basvilliana.* But his song was cut short by the victories of Napoleon, and then in the name of liberty he sang of Napoleon—and also in the name of liberty he glorified the Austrian government. The same maxims were applied by his docile intelligence to each new case as it arose. The poet was copying the diplomatists; he twisted the ideas of the time to suit the events. His works resound with the words "justice," "liberty," "country," "virtue," and "Italy." But by no means all of it was hypocrisy. He was gifted with a rich imagination, and these ideas took shape and warmth in his mind, till they deceived even himself and seemed like reality. He had not the social independence of Alfieri nor the virile morality of Parini; he was a good enough fellow, who would have preferred to reconcile old and new. But forced to choose his side, he kept strictly with the majority: martyrdom had no appeal for him. He was the secretary of public opinion, the poet of success. A kindly, tolerant, sincere, and trusty friend, he was a courtier from poverty and weakness of soul rather than from natural malignity or perversity. If he had only painted himself, just as he was, he might easily have been a poet. The reason Horace is interesting is precisely because he painted himself, just as he was—sceptical, cynical, lazy, an arm-chair patriot, an Epicurean. The reason Monti fails to be interesting is because with the magnificence of Achilles we are conscious of the mesquinity of Thersites; the more he raises his voice and tries to be a Dante, the colder he leaves us. His is the false heroic, composed of phrases and images, the traditional literature so dear to feeble and imaginative peoples, with large ideas but small characters. He reflected his public, and no one of the day was more applauded than was Monti. He had all the qualities of an artist: grace, power, sensibility, harmony, facility, and brio of production. And he had also consummate technique and an absolute mastery of language and euphony. But his gifts were machines

without fuel. He lacked the seriousness of a content profoundly felt and meditated. Yet all the same, his plays, and especially the *Iliade,* will continue to be studied as a key to the mysteries of art and euphony. And the verdict arrived at will continue to be this: that the artist by himself is not enough—he must also be the poet.

Monti, like Metastasio, was deified in his life. Honours, titles, and influence were his lot, and his following was great. A people as artistic as the Italians could not fail to admire his dispassionate handling of his material, his ease and felicity of harmonies. After his death he was lauded by Manzoni and by Pietro Giordani. And those praises were all the dearer for the exaggerated attacks that had been made on him—they were almost like a pious office to a man who was more to be pitied than blamed.

In the first rush of enthusiasm following the foundation of the Cisalpine Republic Monti was as fiercely abused for his *Basvilliana* as he had once been praised for it. And then, at the height of the abuse, a youth came forward to defend him. This audacity pleased, and the author embarked on life with the good opinion and the good wishes of the public. This young writer was Ugo Foscolo, formed in the school of Plutarch, Dante, and Alfieri.

In the field of politics the same old story was repeating itself, with different impulses. The French and the Germans were as usual quarrelling for the possession of Italy. But the question at issue was no longer territorial rights. The thirst for land and influence was covered by a veneer of nobler motives; Italy was being invaded in the name of "modern ideas." The French cried "Liberty!" and "National independence!"—behind their bayonets were Rousseau and Voltaire. The Germans, beginning as defenders of the pope and restorers of the old, ended as promisers of *real* liberty and *real* independence. The ideas marched

with the soldiers, sinking through the whole of society to the humblest classes. It was propaganda sung to a cannon obligato; in a few short years it achieved what properly should have taken a century, and it left the Italians shaken to their depths. Interests, needs, and customs—all were changed by it. And even after 1815, when everything seemed to have gone back to its original state, beneath that old surface there fermented a people profoundly influenced by the new spirit, like a smouldering volcano that erupts at intervals until it is relieved.

These great events fell on a country immature and unprepared. In the Italy of that time there was nothing that could properly be termed a national spirit—no real personality, no national consciousness. The sun had barely lit up the high peaks. Even the cultivated middle class had a mixture of the old and the new. Nothing was clear or defined; even the wildest ideals and Utopias were mixed with prejudice and barbarism. The events that were to mould character and incite feeling had yet to take place. The Italians were still content that the foreigner should provide them with everything. Made free and republican without effort of their own, they followed obsequiously in the wake of their liberators, like grateful pensioners, flattering them and making up to them. And when the honeymoon had come to an end and Milord had begun to have his moods and to behave like a conqueror and an invader, great was the astonishment and indignation.

The chief centres of these political events were Naples and Milan, the cities where the new ideas were most active. Naples was formed into a republic, but was soon left to herself; her epic was an affair of months. Pagano, Cirillo, Conforti, Manthoné, died on the gallows, bequeathing to Italy memories and desires that could never be uprooted. The writer Cuoco fled to Milan, where he described the errors and glories of the short-lived republic with a sagacity sharpened by political experience. Milan became the meeting-place of all the illustrious patriots fleeing from the carnage. Metastasio and Goldoni, Bec-

caria and Filangieri, had been dead some years. Bettinelli was still alive; Nestor-like he had outlived his own fame. In the first excitement of revolutionary enthusiasm Alfieri had sung the independence of America and the fall of the Bastille, but the subsequent excesses had turned his muse to disdain and revenge, and he vented his acrid humour in the *Satire,* in the *Misogallo.* Later, confuted by events, he threw himself into the world of the classics, like Parini before him, studied Greek, and ended his life to the sarcastic laughter of sad comedies. Cesarotti, fallen asleep under his laurels, was declaiming official eulogies from his professor's rostrum, and was writing insipid panegyrics in verse. Pietro Verri, who had now been raised to office, was maturing plans for reform, with but little hope of seeing them realized. The old generation was withdrawing, to the lyrical strains of Vincenzo Monti, professor, knight, and court poet. At Naples and Milan the republicans waited in the royal antechambers, decked in the gold and braid of their court dress. In the midst of those splendid festivals and clashes of arms not a single proud voice was raised to remind Italians of the sufferings and contempt and shameful usage of the past.

Then *Iacopo Ortis* appeared. It was the first cry of disillusion, coming from the shoals of a Venetian lagoon like the funeral prelude of a vaster tragedy. Ugo Foscolo, its young author, had begun, like Alfieri before him, by singing with lyrical enthusiasm of an unhoped-for liberty, but while the poet was singing of the hero-liberator of Venice, the hero changed into a traitor, and sold Venice to the Austrians. Ugo Foscolo became a homeless wanderer, without country, family, or illusions. From the fullness of his soul he produced his *Iacopo Ortis.* Its substance is the cry of Brutus: "O Virtue, thou art nothing but an empty word!" His illusions had withered like the leaves in autumn, and their death was his own death, was suicide. At so short a distance apart we have the boundless ideal of Alfieri with so great a faith, and the dead ideal of Foscolo with so great a despair. We are still in the time of youth, when everything is

boundless. That inner world of country, liberty, justice, glory, science, and love no sooner blossomed than it withered away. Truth was a dream, progress was a lie. With the first success had come the madness of hope, with the first disillusion came the madness of despair. This sudden jump from the extreme of hope to the extreme of despair at the first collision with reality is a proof in itself of how abstract and theoretical, how little founded in real experience, was the movement in Italy. The ideas, having come from books and not from experience, had stopped short at the mind without influencing the character. There is a morbid strain in the *Iacopo*. The book is the easily provoked outburst of a very young man, not the mature expression of a world long and intimately communed with. It has a tendency to abstract reflection rather than to artistic development. The imaginative part is poor and monotonous, though the feeling is so highly exaggerated.

The cry of *Iacopo* was drowned by the noise of the events, for hope had arisen once more, and new illusions. The work, which was published anonymously, merely as a monetary speculation, cut and altered by the publisher, did certainly cause some stir, being popular with women and the young for its amorous phraseology. But it was not regarded seriously, from a literary or a political point of view. Many of the critics, struck by a surface resemblance, described it as an imitation of *Werther*. The fact is, the book was out of harmony with public opinion at that time, when men and things were changing so rapidly, so was not a success: the despair of *Iacopo* was contradicted by new hopes.

Ugo Foscolo took part in Italian life and was proud of his new country, the home of Dante and Alfieri. But he was harassed by poverty, and still more by the "warrior spirit" that fretted his soul without finding an outlet. Young, idealistic, and impassioned, fed on Plutarch and Alfieri, intensely proud and thirsting for glory, ardently longing to act and to act greatly, he was kept in a condition of inactivity that destroyed his life—the

thing he describes so forcibly in his *Iacopo* as "consumption of the soul." We can picture him at Milan, wandering, unhappy, and restless, often returning to the life of nature, or dreaming, or describing himself in poetry; or gaming, love-making, quarrelling, or drinking. When barely twenty, he played with the idea of suicide:

Non son chi fui; perí di noi
gran parte:
questo che avanza è sol languore
e pianto.

I am not what I was. A great part of us dies; what remains is nothing but languor and tears.

In this malady of languor he grows tender, and thinks of his mother, of his brother, of his Zante far away—not however without a certain rebellion that speaks of an inner force which was still untamed. Alfieri at twenty vented his feelings by rushing through Europe; Foscolo vented his by versifying—his lyrical effusions from sixteen to twenty are his personal history. In those verses of Foscolo we find once more that intimacy, sweet and melancholy, of which Italy had lost, as it seemed, the memory. And it came to him not through Petrarch alone, but also from his mother earth, from his Greek feeling, from "the Aeolian chords wedded to the grave Italian zither." The following lines are like a prelude to Giacomo Leopardi:

Tu non altro che il canto avrai
del figlio,
o materna mia terra: a noi pre-
scrisse
il fato illacrimata sepoltura.

All thou shalt have of thy son, O Mother Earth, are his songs; for fate has ordained for poets an unwept burial.

The thing that cured Foscolo of his malady of death was life. A soldier of the Republic, he fought at Cento, in the Trebbia, at Novi, at Genoa, and with the soldier's life he regained his zest for life. In the odes "*A Luigia Pallavicini*" and "*All' amica risanata,*" we have a musical and voluptuous world, in which the soul, restored and joyous, responds to life in all its variety. From his fame as a poet came a taste for letters and for poetry;

he translated the *Locks of Berenice*, adding a comment of unusual erudition. He embarked on a translation of the *Iliad*, in emulation of Monti. And he wrote an oration for the assembly of Lyons, in a pompous artificial style, but with serious and bold ideas.

The work that raised him to the level of the great was the *Sepolcri*—he was known henceforth simply as "the author of the *Sepolcri*." And certainly this ode was the first lyrical voice of the new literature, the affirmation of the new consciousness, the birth of the new man.

A law had been passed in the Republic ordering equality of burial, the equality of men in the face of death. Funerary pomp was seen as the privilege of the nobles and the rich. But to Foscolo this law was an outrage. Was a man like Parini, for instance, to lie in a ditch with common thieves? This revolutionary logic pushed to its furthest consequences robbed life of its poetry and threw it back into the state of savagery. He refused to accept the premise that man is merely an animal. It offended him as poet and as man. He had not the religious idea that embellishes death and reveals Paradise under the dark vaults of oblivion. But what he had in a marked degree was the sense of humanity in its progress and aims, as he saw it linked with family, with country, with liberty, with glory; and here it was that he found his harmonies, and his new religion of sepulchres. In this poem the sublime of the natural and savage world of death is changed by the finest and most delicate sentiments of humanity into a living pantheon. Death continues to work in the living. It awakens in their souls memories and illusions that inspire them to noble deeds. They are nothing but illusions, it is true, but after all they are the illusions of humanity itself, as eternal as humanity, a part of its history. The *Sepolcri* is a history of humanity written from a new point of view, a history of the living written by the dead. It has something of Vico in its inspiration. The world from its dark and formidable beginnings, natural and savage, is raised to a human and civilized

state by the religion of sepulchres, the religion that educated Greece and Italy, the double world so dear to Foscolo, which unites Ilium and Santa Croce in a single contemplation. Though the story is old the perspective is new, therefore the colours and forms are original. Here, fused together, are Heaven and Hell, the vast Gothic shadow of the nothing and the infinite, and the tenderest and most delicate sentiments of the heart of man. And the whole has a solemn, as it were religious form, as of a hymn to the Divinity.

The Revolution, in spite of its outer horrors and excesses, was continuing the work of progress. Ideas were becoming more temperate. Men felt the need of a religious and moral revival. And Foscolo's poem touched these chords. The muse was no longer Alfierian; it approached the times of Vico. To declaim against priests and superstition was the tone of the century. Add the tyrants, the nobles, the privileges, the monopolies. They were fought in the name of philosophy, of liberty, of public economy. Here in Foscolo the tone is different.

Foscolo was unable to believe in the soul's immortality, yet would fain have believed in it. Certainly the theory was an illusion. But was it not cruelty to rob man of the illusions that bring him happiness, that beautify his life? From here it was a short step to returning to religious ideas—not in the name of truth, but in the name of humanity and of poetry. Already we feel Chateaubriand. If it is true, as "unfortunately" it is, that time removes everything and that matter alone is immortal, and that forms perish, it is not true for that reason that death is the end. There is another and a different immortality. Man in dying leaves behind him his writings, his ideas, his deeds, and his memories; the muse makes the urns speak, and the living turn to the dead for inspiration. Piety towards the dead is the religion of civilized humanity.

If we cannot believe in a Superior Being, the dispenser of rewards and punishments, good, let us not believe in Him: "Truth is well, Pindemonte." But if we are human ourselves,

how can we refuse to believe in humanity? And why should we rob life of all its illusions and all its poetry? Foscolo protests as human being and as poet. He was still a man of the eighteenth century, but of the eighteenth century beginning to recoil from destruction and looking to the feelings of humanity as to something to hold on to. And from the feelings of humanity it was only a step to religious feeling.

It was not that he merely thought these things; he felt them profoundly. He was the new man in his integrity—the free man and the patriot, man in his inwardness, in all the most delicate feelings of his civilized nature. The new man was completing himself, the inner world of consciousness was developing. And the results of this new development were the finest inspiration of Italian lyricism: the lament of Cassandra, the impressions of Marathon, the apotheosis of Santa Croce. So lofty and grand is his point of view that even when he sees Italy fallen so low as to be a rhetorical theme, he is only resigned and meditative on the changing vicissitudes of fate. For in Foscolo there is something of the philosopher, together with the heart of a man and the inspiration of a poet.

The advent of the new literature was announced by the suppression of rhyme. The *terzina* and the *ottava rima* gave place to free verse. It was a reaction against the *cadenza* and the *cantilena*. Words were serious and important in themselves, so musical rhyme was done away with; the word was enough by itself. Foscolo does away even with the strophe, and not in a tragedy or a poem but actually in a lyrical composition, which he dares to rob of even rhythm and metre. Here certainly we get thought naked. The ideas are set alight in the depths of the imagination and break out impetuously as though warmed from their own heat, and with all their inner harmonies complete. The language, tamed and reduced as it is by hard effort, comes out, as it were, uneven, broken, with new textures and new sounds. It is the true and natural voice of the soul, the music of things, the grand manner of Dante. Even the type seems new. Instead

of the sonnet and the canzone we have the ode, a free unmechanized form. It is the lyrical poem of a moral and religious world, the raising of the soul to the heights of humanity and history, the raising of the inner man above the passions of the day. It is man in his integrity—in his active life as a patriot and citizen and in the intimacy of his private affections. It is the dawn of the new century. The ode was the prelude to the hymn: Foscolo was knocking at the door of the nineteenth century.

He followed his ode with others—the *Alceo*, the *Sventura*, the *Oceano*. But the first inspiration had gone. These new odes were written deliberately, in the literary manner, so are only fragments, with nothing mature in them. At the end there appeared the *Grazie*. It has all the finish of an artistic work, but the poet has practically vanished.

We have still to consider Foscolo in his prose. There are his *Prolusione*, his lessons, and his critical writings. His prose is not French, nor yet is it Tuscan; it is wanting in the grace and liveliness of the Tuscans and in the logic and brio of the French. Foscolo's is a personal prose, peculiar to himself, still in formation, with Latin and oratorical reminiscences and a tendency to majesty and power. It has more warmth of imagination than vigour of intellect.

The basic conception of this prose is the raising of the man above the writer. Its power lies in the writer himself, in his inner world. Seen from this aspect Dante and Petrarch shine with a new lustre. Style here is freed from euphony and technique; it is seen to dwell in the thoughts and feelings of the man. Even Beccaria is outdone. Here we get near to aesthetics. It is not precisely science, but the writer has the taste and the bent for it. But there is more in this prose; we find in it again the taste for historical and philosophical investigation, so much despised in that century of destruction. Italy is once more taking up her own traditions. and linking herself again with Vico and Muratori.

Foscolo opened the way to the new century. And there is little

doubt that if human progress had but taken a logical and pacific form instead of the tumultuous form that it did, the last writer of the eighteenth century would have also been the first of the nineteenth century, and the head of the new school. But it happened that the world progressed under the appearance of reaction, and to Foscolo this seemed like a denial of the century he was conscious of belonging to. What he hated above all was the war on mythological forms, which he felt to be a denial of himself. It is true that later he moderated his opinions, both religious and political, to a great extent, adopted a truer conception of life, parted with many of his illusions, and threw in his lot with the new century. But the new century refused to accept him. Defamed and forgotten, and pulled unendingly back and forth by changing impressions, he ended sadly, bequeathing his *Grazie* to the new century like a challenge. It was the last flowering of Italian classicism.

He died in 1827. On the literary horizon were already visible Pellico, Manzoni, Grossi, Berchet. The Romantic school had appeared, the audacious northern school.

VI

Eighteen hundred and fifteen is a date in history as memorable and as important as the date of the Council of Trent. It is the year of the official manifestation of a reaction that had already set in in the minds of the day, as is proved by traces of it even in the *Sepolcri*, a reaction not only political but also philosophical and literary, and dedicated to the 18th Brumaire. And the reaction when once declared was as violent and rapid as the Revolution itself. Napoleon endeavoured to arrest it by granting concessions and by looking for conciliation in the *via media*, but in vain. It soon reached the point where every person who had been connected with the Revolution was condemned indiscriminately, Jacobins and Girondists, Robespierre and

Danton, Marat and Napoleon alike. In the place of the Red Terror came the White Terror.

A new vocabulary had arisen, in philosophy, in literature, and in politics. The enemies now were materialism and scepticism, and against them rose a spirituality exalted to mysticism and idealism. To liberty were opposed authority and order, to natural right, divine right, to popular sovereignty, legitimate sovereignty, to the rights of the individual, the rights of the State. The Middle Ages returned into favour, exalted now as the cradle of the modern spirit, and as such were studied and explored in every direction. And the Christianity so long attacked and abused from every side became the central point of every work, whether philosophical or civic or social. The liberal doctrines, together with the classics, were dismissed as pagan, while the monastic orders were seen as the benefactors of civilization, and the papacy as a powerful factor for liberty and progress. In art too new standards had arisen. There was a pagan art and a Christian art. In the Christian art the highest expression was the Gothic—the shadowy, the mysterious, the vague, the indefinite, the "beyond"—an ideal incapable of realization and therefore melancholy. The mood of melancholy was baptized and annexed as "Christian." The "pagan" type was sensual, material, and plastic. The Christian "romantic" type arose in opposition to the "classic" type. The first words of the new century were "faith," "religion," "Christianity," the "ideal," the "infinite," "throne and altar," "peace and order." The change was pronounced. Instead of Voltaire and Rousseau we have writers such as Mme. de Staël, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Lamennais. And precisely in 1815 came the *Inni sacri* (*Sacred Hymns*) of the young Manzoni. It was a Neo-Guelfism; it was the period of the Middle Ages rearing itself vindictively and menacingly against the whole of the Renaissance.

And the movement was in no wise artificial or fictitious, or the result of a policy, or the result of contemporary self-inter-

ests, or kept on its feet by salaried pens. It was a movement in keeping with the eternal laws of history itself, a genuine and serious movement of the spirit, in which the greatest and freest minds of the century took part. No doubt it was exaggerated in its beginnings, when it aimed, as we have seen, not only at interpreting the past, but at raising it above and preferring it to the present, at cancelling the centuries between. But one exaggeration had called for another; the Goddess of Reason and the doctrine of community of goods had been answered by the glorification of the executioner and the vindication of the Inquisition.

But the exaggerations were soon abandoned; to revive mediaevalism root and branch was found to be impossible, and the idea was dropped. Such a number of factors were against it. There were the new conditions—the new interests, material, moral, and intellectual—that had come with the Revolution, and which were largely supported by the princes, who moreover had worked to create them. The last things on earth that the princes wished to revive were the privileged classes and the guilds and municipal liberties—the things they had fought consistently as a curb to their power, and which had vanished at last in the Revolution. So the new conditions withstood the reaction practically everywhere, and remained practically unchanged, while the absolute monarchy emerged from it stronger than ever, with the clergy and nobles no longer its competitors, but its servants and protégés, though with pompous titles. The new basis of society was bureaucracy, army, and clergy—artificial aggregations obedient to the will of the sovereign by their very nature. The bourgeoisie poured into the bureaucracy, and embarked on a hunt for salaries and places, doing all in its power to uphold the state. Local liberties were suppressed, while local movements were made into a thing of the past by a policy of centralization in which provinces and communes depended directly on the state. Hosts of employees fell on the state like locusts, each assigning to himself a portion of that absolute

power whose instrument he was. The army, established now as a permanent and indeed a state institution, was arranged like a caste in opposition to the citizens, while its members, emasculated by passive obedience, became more like policemen than like soldiers. Throne and altar having made their alliance, public education was given into the hands of the clergy, who maintained a vigilant watch over the books, the schools, the theatres, and the academies, keeping the lower classes deliberately in their ignorance, blocking the new ideas consistently, and treating culture as their personal enemy.

But the chief mover of this immense mill-wheel that was known as the state was not the clergy, but the police. The police had wormed their way into every branch of the government, soldiers, priests, and employees being all in their pay. The result was an organized system of espionage and corruption that was known as "government"—absolute government under the cloak of constitutionalism, or absolute government pure and simple.

A reaction like this, so utterly opposed to modern ideas, could of course not endure. Riots broke out—in Spain, Naples, Turin, Paris, and the Romagna. Greece and Belgium fought for their autonomy, and won it. With the awakening of national feeling came liberal sentiments, and the eighteenth century took up its road again with its rights of the individual, its principles of autonomy, its "charter" of Eighty-nine. The legitimate monarchies fell; monarchy, in order to survive at all, became changed, became modernized, adopted a bourgeois air and shared its power with the cultured classes. And since the bourgeoisie was satisfied, every one was satisfied. The *tiers état* had been nothing; the *tiers état* was now everything.

Europe was to live a long, long while with this compromise. The constitutional bodies were enlarged; the highest offices in the state were open to ability and wealth, while the struggle against feudalism, mortmain, and privilege was prosecuted with vigour. Good careers were now open to the bourgeoisie in the

parliaments, the provincial and communal councils, the national guards, the law and the academies, and also in the schools, which had now been taken from the clergy. New sources of wealth were tapped, and trade and industry flourished exceedingly. Even in the countries where the constitutional orders were unable to triumph, like Italy, the reaction grew milder. Life in general became easier and more civilized, and the bourgeoisie took a larger share in public affairs. Little by little the old grew accustomed to living beside the new. In the laws and public documents Divine Right became linked with the Will of the People, as the recognized formula of the compromise. At last it grew to seem possible not only to reconcile the monarchy with the people, but even to reconcile the papacy with liberty.

So when the first excitement had died away it was seen that this apparently reactionary movement was really nothing but the Revolution again, in a further stage of its development; the Revolution grown moderate and disciplined, the Revolution that had learnt its lesson. The delusions, the ruins, the fearful excesses, the pure and promising ideal so sadly profaned at the first collision with reality, had impressed the men of the day and had made them think. The reaction had really come from the past, which had never ceased its influence with the masses. The past had been assailed from every side with such exaggerated violence that at last even the indifferent had turned to defend it, with the result that it had arisen again with the arrogance of a victor. Experience had taught, and the world had realized, that the past is not to be destroyed by decrees, that the fruit of centuries takes centuries to destroy, and that nothing lasting can be built by force unless preceded by persuasion—as Campanella had said, "The sword must be preceded by the tongue." The Revolution had erred, had overrated its powers, and was starting again on its road with less passionate excitement but with an increased sense of reality, trusting in science rather than in enthusiasm. When the first excesses of the reaction had subsided, it was seen to be a continuation of the spirit of the

eighteenth century, which had passed from its stage of spontaneity and instinct into its stage of reflection, was rectifying mistakes, was acquiring a sense of proportion and reality, and was creating the science of revolution. It was the new spirit that had gained self-consciousness and was taking the place that belonged to it in history. Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Lamennais, Manzoni, Grossi, Pellico, were no less Liberals than Voltaire, Rousseau, Alfieri, and Foscolo were Liberals; they were the children of both the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, with the "charter" of Eighty-nine as their program, and with "liberty, country, equality, and the rights of man" as their creed. It is true that religious feeling was rising again; but it was rising again with the stamp of the new spirit on its face and with the program of the eighteenth century. The aim of the Neo-Catholics was not to deny that program (as did the pure reactionaries headed by the Jesuits) but to bring it into harmony with religious feeling, to prove in fact that at bottom it was nothing but the program of Christianity itself, in its original native purity. It was the old thesis of Paolo Sarpi, taken up again and sustained with a greater splendour of language and of science. The Revolution, whether it liked it or not, was forced to reckon with religious feeling, to recognize its power and mission in history, to ponder on it and discuss it. On the other hand Christianity had need of the Revolution as its passport, therefore adopted its language and ideas, speaking for instance of a "Christian democracy," a "democratic Christ," in the same way that the Liberals twisted and turned Bible texts so as to give them a political meaning, speaking for instance of an "apostolate of ideas," "patriotic martyrdom," the "mission of society," the "religion of duty." The sceptical and material Revolution had taken for its watchword "God and the people," while dogmatic and ascetic religion was making itself valued above all in morals and in poetry. Religion had come down to earth and was mixing among men, and was soaking itself in humanism and naturalism, coming nearer to science, and adopt-

ing the forms of philosophy. The new spirit, in gathering to itself the old elements, was changing and developing, and was realizing itself more and more. Such was the great movement that was born from the reaction of the nineteenth century, a reaction that changed suddenly into a reconciliation. Its political form was monarchy "by the grace of God and the will of the people."

Its theoretical basis was a new conception of truth. Truth was no longer an absolute fixed *a priori*, but instead was an ideal in process of becoming, in keeping with the laws of the mind and the intelligence. The ideal became one with the real, the spirit became one with nature. In the words of Vico, it was the "conversion of the true and the certain." Its results were twofold. On the one hand it restored to facts the importance that all the philosophers from Descartes onwards had opposed consistently, assembling them, legitimizing them, spiritualizing them, giving them a meaning and an aim, in short, creating the philosophy of history. On the other hand it realized the Divine, rescuing it from the narrow limits of supernaturalism, mysticism, and asceticism, and as it were humanizing it. The conception, if we look beneath the surface, was entirely opposed to mediaevalism and scholasticism. While outwardly a reaction against the overexclusiveness and absolutism of the eighteenth century, at bottom it was radically revolutionary, and it led to a new development of the Revolution on a firmer and more rational basis.

Its first period was known as "romantic," in opposition to classicism. Its content was mediaeval Christianity—as the source of modern life, as its age of the heroes, as its age of the myths and the poets. The Middle Ages, which the Renaissance had condemned as barbarism, had risen again with a new aureole; God, the saints, the Virgin, the iron-clad knights, the Templars, the towers, and the crusades, had come back among men. The classical colours became obscured by the biblical forms. The Gothic, the shadowy, the indefinite, the sentimental, liquefied

the images, and filled the imagination with shadows and visions. The result was a new content and a new form. The centre of it all was the papacy. Boniface VIII and Gregory VII were depicted as in the right, and Dante and Frederick II as in the wrong. The historian of this old poem rejuvenated was Carlo Troya, and its artist was Luigi Tosti. The ancient chroniclers and the old songs of the troubadours were disinterred; all Europe went back in thought to the Middle Ages, and gave itself up to reviving those images and sentiments of the past. Each nation turned once more to its own traditions, looking in its own past for the reasons for its existence and for the legitimacy of its aspirations. National antiquities, permeated and united by a superior and unifying spirit, the spirit of Catholicism, superseded the antiquities of Greece and Rome. The imagination, kindled by pride of country and by a religious enthusiasm pushed to mysticism, awakened once more. Metaphysical and poetic feeling revived from their long torpor more vital than ever. Once more we have high philosophy and high poetry, music and song, philosophical and historical poems, singing of this re-created past.

Yet all the same, romanticism, no less than classicism, was a manifestation not of the past, but of the modern spirit; Manzoni and Pellico in their romanticism were no less moderns than were Foscolo and Parini in their classicism. We look in vain in these romantic writers for the pure religious feeling and the simplicity of the past. They give us the past, indeed, but the past affected and transmuted by the modern spirit, the past stamped with the mark of the eighteenth century. It is true that the burning passions of that century have vanished, but its ideas have remained—liberty, fraternity, tolerance, united and consecrated by a religion of peace and love, religion in the virginal purity of its origins and motives. It is evident that a reaction made on these lines can no longer be considered a reaction. It was not a reaction, it was a reconciliation. It was the Revolution again, but defeated and innocuous—no longer sarcastic or abusive or

ironical, but transformed into a Christian apostolate, approaching its oppressors with lowliness and humility, annexing God and Christ as its own property and declaring the Bible to be the "last word for a believer." The spirit had ceased to dwell on the heights of the supernatural, had emerged from the generalities of dogma and come down among men. The spirit had at last gained self-consciousness, and now was moulding the divine in its own image, tracing its course, and assigning it its place in history. It was the "divine comedy" again, but upside-down; the human is not merged into the divine, but the divine is merged into the human. It is true that the divine had been born again into the world—but all the same we are conscious that Bruno, Campanella, and Vico had been born before it.

At this opening of the new century the Abate Monti was still in his zenith, with lesser planets revolving around him. Foscolo in his solitude was planning his *Grazie*, and Romagnosi was transmitting to the new generation the thought of the vanquished century. And precisely in 1815, amid the clamour of mighty events, there came to the light that little booklet called *Inni* which nobody bothered about. The eighteenth century was closed by Foscolo's *Odes;* the nineteenth was opened by Manzoni's *Hymns*. The first poems of the new century had names such as "Christmas," "The Passion," "The Resurrection," "Pentecost." Now the old literature, as we know, had never been wanting in its Christmases, Jesuses, and Marys, material for insipid canzoni and sonnets that have all fallen into oblivion. The simple and true religious feeling that had inspired the Church Fathers and Dante and Petrarch, and the artists, sculptors, and architects of ancient Italy, was lacking. That sacred material had been traversed by the seventeenth century and Arcadia, to vanish in the end before the mocking laugh of the eighteenth century. Now, at the opening of this nineteenth century, we have poetry making her concordat with the rest, and behold once more on the scene that old religious material, revived by a new inspiration.

What moves the poet in these *Inni* is no longer the mystery and sanctity of dogma. He does not receive the supernatural with devoutness, with the simplicity of a believer. His aim is, if we may use the expression, to naturalize the supernatural—to bring it down into the imagination. The supernatural is no longer a credo; it has been turned into an artistic motive. In reading these *Inni* we have somehow the impression that the young poet in writing them was faced by the sarcastic smile of Foscolo and Alfieri, and was afraid to present these old and used-up images except finely and artistically. He is not content to show them as holy, he wants them also to be beautiful. The Christian idea had returned above all as art, and in fact was the substance itself of the modern art that was known as "romantic." And the same road had been taken by criticism; from now onwards the expressions in use will be "classical," "romantic," "plastic," "sentimental," "infinite," and "finite." The classical in poetry had been challenged by the hymn, a form religious by its very nature, the poetry of the infinite and the supernatural. Yet Manzoni, in spite of his desire to be romantic, never ceases to be a classical writer. Climb as he will among the clouds of Sinai, he cannot hold out in those mists, and is forced each time to get back to earth; he is only able to receive what is clear, plastic, limited, and harmonious. His forms are descriptive, rhetorical, and literary, and at the same time are extremely effective because enlivened by invention and by new material. In reading Manzoni we are conscious of the new spirit holding its own against the invading religious ideas and refusing to be beaten—in fact conquering those religious ideas by absorbing them. We feel that it is looking for itself in them, and is finding itself in them.

The ideal basis of these *Inni* is fundamentally democratic. It is the idea of the century baptized and consecrated under the name of "the Christian idea," the equality of men who are all brothers in Christ, the rebuke of the oppressors and the glorification of the oppressed. It is the trinity, "liberty, equality, frater-

nity," evangelized; it is Christianity given back its idealism and penetrated by the modern spirit. The result is a serene and tranquil presentation, graphic in its visions, and simple and moving in its feelings, an ideal and reconciled world, in which the discords and pains of the earth are harmonized and appeased. We have the Lord, who in the midst of his sufferings thinks of the sons of Eve; we have Mary, to whose royal bosom the ordinary little woman brings her despised tears; we have the Holy Spirit, which descends like a healing breath amid the languid thoughts of the unfortunate; we have the kingdom of peace, which the world may mock at, but cannot take away. The poor and humble man, raising his eyes to Heaven—to "his own" Heaven—turns his laments to rejoicing, thinking of Him in whose image he is made.

In Manzoni's *Cinque Maggio* we have this same reconstruction of the heavenly world to the lyrical strains of peace and pardon, high above the angers and greeds of humanity. The things of humanity are seen from above, with the eye of the world beyond the grave. The *Cinque Maggio*, an epic composition in lyrical form, is extremely original. However great and mighty the individual, he is nothing really but a vestige of the Creator, a "fateful" instrument of God. Earthly glory, even the truest of glory, in Heaven is but "silence and darkness." Beyond and above the noise of the earth is the peace of God. It is God who brings down and who raises up, who saddens and consoles. It is God who saves us from despair and leads us in the green pastures of hope. So here is the *deus ex machina* back on the scene—man and humanity as conceived in the Bible. History is shown as the inscrutable will of God. Why? We do not know. All we know is that God has willed it. We adore the mystery and bow to the decree. The less we understand events, the more we marvel, the more we are conscious of the Deity, the Incomprehensible. Even the history of yesterday becomes legendary. Napoleon is presented as a great miracle of God, a mighty vestige of the Creator. For what end? For what mission? We know

not; it is the secret of God. He wills it. All that remains of history is the popular, the legendary, part, the part that strikes the imagination—battles, vicissitudes, miraculous conversions, great catastrophes, extraordinary events. What makes this poem an epic is not the greatness or morality of the ends, but the greatness and power of genius, the development of a force that partakes in its nature of the supernatural. There are nine strophes, each strophe so vast of perspective as to be almost a world in itself. The impression we get is of a pyramid. In each strophe Napoleon is shown us in a new aspect, but always colossal. The inspired eye of the poet, swift and penetrating, groups the years, fuses the events, devours space, gives us the illusion of the infinite. The proportions are enlarged by a work that is all perspective, with the utmost clearness and simplicity of expression. The images, the impressions, the sentiments, the forms, within those horizons become enlarged also, gaining in audacity of colouring and dimensions. We are shown, condensed, the life of the great man, in his deeds, in his inwardness, in his historical acts, in his influence on the men of his day, in his pensive solitude: an immense synthesis in which the events and the centuries seem hurried on and drawn forward by some higher power, in those *sdruccioli* lines, tripping on the heels of each other and barely controlled by the rhymes.

Such was the first movement of the nineteenth century—epico-lyrical. The poetic machinery had ceased to be classical and was now theological. But the machinery here is something more than colouring or embellishment; it is the content itself, brought back to life in the imagination—the content that is reconstructing in its own image the history of humanity and the heart of man. It is the lost Christ who has been found again in our own hearts; it is the miracle come back into history; it is the new blossoming of hope and prayer. The heart once more grows tender and accessible to gentle feelings; a breath of peace has descended on the discords and disillusions of the earth. The thing that Foscolo had only glimpsed was painted now by Man-

zoni with youthful enthusiasm, a reflection of that religious enthusiasm which accompanied the exiled Pope on his return to Rome, which awakened in Alexander the ideal of a Christian federation, and which promised to tired men a new era of peace and repose. These were the illusions on which the new generation had been nourished. While the aged Foscolo was imagining a paradise of Graces, allegorizing modern things with ancient colours, Manzoni was reconstructing the Christian Paradise in accordance with the modern spirit. Mythology had gone, but classicism remained; the eighteenth century was rejected but its ideas remained. The frame was changed but the picture was the same picture. Take for instance the *Cinque Maggio*. The frame is an artistic illumination, a fine work of the imagination, which fails to arouse a single religious impression worth mentioning. But the picture is the history of a genius reconstructed by a genius. The thing of interest is not the frame but the picture.

With great rapidity the theological movement changed to a purely philosophical movement. God was the Absolute, the idea; Christ was the Idea in so far as it was realized; the Holy Spirit was the Word, the Idea reflected and become conscious: the Christian Trinity was made the basis of a philosophical trinity. The theological God was a formal, abstract God, without a content; God in His truth was the Holy Spirit, which recognized Itself in Nature. The three moments of its history were Logic, Nature, Spirit. And everything in this history was reasonable and inevitable. War, slavery, conquest, revolution, *coups d'état*, were the necessary phenomena of the spirit in its growth. The spirit had its laws just as Nature had its laws, and the history of the world was the history of the spirit, was a living logic, which could never be determined *a priori*. Religion, art, philosophy, law, were movements of the spirit in its unfolding. Nothing repeated itself; nothing died; everything changed and developed in a never-ceasing progress, which was the self-spiritualization of the idea, the increasingly clear consciousness of self, a greater reality.

In these ideas, codified by Hegel, we are conscious of Machiavelli, of Bruno, of Campanella, and especially of Vico. But it is a Vico *a priori*. The laws that he deduced from social facts are looked for *a priori*, in the very nature of the spirit. What we get is an appendix to the "new science"—its metaphysic under the name of "logic." Next we have real theogenies or philosophical epics appearing on the scene, with their ramifications: a philosophy of religions, a history of philosophy, a philosophy of art, a philosophy of law, a philosophy of history—all illumined by the greater planet, which is logic, or as Vico calls it, metaphysics. Science was entirely renewed in its content—not merely in the moral order but also in the physical order. There was a philosophy of the spirit, but there was also a philosophy of Nature. Both in fact at bottom were the same philosophy; both were moments of the idea in its manifestation.

So instead of the old mysticism, founded on the inscrutable will of God and nourished by sentiment, there had come this pantheistic idealism. It was a system well adapted to the bourgeoisie, the cultured class, because on the one hand it rejected mysticism and partook of the lay and the scientific, and on the other hand it rejected materialism and condemned revolutions as plebeian and brutal. That conception of an irresistible progress based on the peaceful development of culture was thoroughly pleasing to the bourgeoisie. So instead of "revolution" we get "evolution," and instead of "liberty" we get "civilization" and "progress" and "culture." At last it seemed really possible to reconcile everything—authority and liberty, state and individual, religion and philosophy, past and future. Even ideas made peace with each other, like the rest. The official name given to this system was "Eclecticism." The Revolution had discarded its red robe and was learning to be Christian and moderate under the tricolour. As a last hope it was taking to constitutional forms, keeping at an equal distance the clericals with their mysticism, and the revolutionaries with their materialism. These ideas went the round of Europe and became the credo

of the cultured classes. The Liberal party was constituted a centre between the clerical Right and the revolutionary Left, the parties known as "extreme." This ideal of the bourgeoisie was realized by Louis Philippe, and was consecrated by Eclecticism. After a long and painful gestation the world seemed at last to have come to birth. The problem was solved; the key to the riddle was found; God could rest. Reaction and revolution were no longer possible; peaceful and legitimate progress was assured. The bourgeoisie, under the name of the "Moderate Liberal Party," had the government in its hands, holding in check both the Left and the Right. It opposed the Jesuits and the Ultramontanes, but at the same time it honoured Christianity (which was now the idea reflected and become conscious, the spirit that recognizes itself). It rejected the supernatural, but at the same time it expounded it and respected it. It rejected the divine Christ, but it exalted the human Christ to the skies. And it spoke of religion with unction and of the ministers of God with reverence. Therefore without offending the prejudices of the masses it drew to its side the liberal Christians and the patriots. It censured the methods and the violence and the impatience of the Left, but accepted its ideas in the abstract, putting its faith in the slower but surer process of education and upbringing. In ways such as these the Revolution, under the guise of a reconciliation, became acceptable to the greater number, and took up its road again.

As the result of these ideas there arose a new literary criticism. In the eighteenth century, when everything was shouting for liberty, criticism had shouted with the rest. And to a certain extent it had won liberty. With the decline in prestige of rules and authority it had attained to a certain measure of independence, used by the best among the critics with good sense and also with good taste. The attention that had once been given to the machinery of literature was now turned on the productive force. The motive and the meaning of a work was now looked for not in the outer form of the composition, but in the qualities

of the author. So art had its "*Cogito*" too; and it also had its formula—"The style is the man." But criticism was still an affair of impressions and observations rather than of judgments and principles. Now, with the rise of the new philosophy, in which the beautiful was given its place beside the good and the true, criticism acquired a scientific basis in logic; together with religion and law and history, it became a manifestation of the Idea. So now we get a philosophy of art, or in a word, aesthetics. The ideal course of humanity being established, art was given its place in the system like the rest; it was a *manifestation of* the idea, deriving its essence and character from the nature of the idea. The new criticism was primarily concerned with the idea; the formal qualities in a work became secondary. We have the pagan idea, the Oriental idea, the Christian or romantic idea, in philosophy, in the state, in art, in all the branches of social activity—a historical development *a priori*, in accordance with the laws or logic of the spirit. Every treatise on aesthetics or on anything else was preceded, as a matter of course, by a philosophy of the idea; the problem in art was to look for the idea and to judge the work in accordance with the idea. So once again we get the Christian-Platonic conception of art, which Dante formulated and Tasso revived; poetry once more was "the truth hidden under the veil of fables," or "the truth served in soft verses." With poetry once more the "veil of the idea" it follows that the mythical and allegorical forms returned into vogue. So the ideal conceptions became changed into ideal constructions, and the *Divine Comedy*, the subject of such numberless commentaries, had its counterpart in *Faust*.

A sort of philosophism became fashionable in literature, even with the best of the writers, even with Schiller. And not merely philosophy but history became a necessary preliminary to criticism. To seize the idea in its abstractness was not enough; it must be shown in its historical apparitions, its content. The customs, institutions, ideas, and tendencies of the century were minutely investigated. "The style is the man" gave way to a

new motto: "Literature is the expression of society." The result was a double impulse, analytic and synthetic. The fact being once established that history was not an empirical and arbitrary succession of events, but on the contrary was a progressive and rational manifestation of the idea, or in a word, a living dialectic, the writers became attracted to synthesis. So now in literature we get real historical epics, in accordance with a preordained logic. The history of this world was rewritten, the road opened by Vico was traversed and retraversed by the metaphysical genius in every possible direction—in the different religions, in the arts, in the philosophies, in the laws, in the political institutions, in the whole of the moral, intellectual, and material life of peoples.

No one could resist the glamour of the Idea. This was the epic moment of all the sciences. On the other hand, these hasty syntheses, these often extremely risky solutions of problems of the utmost delicacy, were occasionally found to be contradicted by the known and proved facts of history and the sciences; the lacunae, the involuntary deceptions, the artificially induced interpretations, the throwing together of things that were utterly disparate, were obvious and glaring, were impossible to ignore. So side by side with this vast ideal construction there arose once more patient analysis. Vico's method was seen to be surer and safer, even if longer and more troublesome. So back came the work *a posteriori*—with patient and minute researches in the whole range of the knowable. The movement of erudition that had been cut short in Italy by the invasion of Cartesianism and the rise of the absolute systems of the eighteenth century started again with renewed vigour in the whole of Europe, but especially in Germany. There developed once more the historical sense and the habit of observation. Science grew wider; from the trunk of knowledge came new branches, more especially in Germany, and most of all in the natural sciences and in the teaching of philosophy. Galileos, Muratoris, and Vicos came back on the scene. The material of culture,

which till now had been practically limited to the Graeco-Roman, became wider and deeper, and stretched its boundaries to include the Orient, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, and all with so great an activity in research and discovery that the whole of knowledge was renewed by it.

To sum up, there were two tendencies, face to face, the one ideal, the other historical. And they often met. The former proceeded by categories and constructions, the latter by observation and induction. The ideal school set great store by facts, proclaiming as it did that the true ideal was history, the idea realized. So it was not above and beyond history, in the regions of the absolute and unchangeable; on the contrary its metaphysics was at bottom nothing but an ideal in process of becoming, was history itself. Similarly, the historical school was anything but empirical and limited to the circle of facts, but had its preconceptions and conjectures like the other. Bold speculation and patient investigation moved forward together. And these two forces, at times parallel, at times in collision, set into action all the forces of the spirit. The century of luminaries was followed by the century of progress. The genius of the new century was the genius of Vico.

And side by side with Vico there arose to European fame both Bruno and Campanella. In these three great Italians the century recognized its fathers, its forerunners. The moral and intellectual lever, the Bible of the new century, was the *Scienza nuova* of Vico. It was seen to contain, in a condensed form, the three forces representative of the century: speculation, imagination, and erudition. Past and present made peace, each taking its own place in the fateful course of history—for what is the sense of fighting against Fate, getting angry with Fate? Dogmatism with its infallibility and scepticism with its irony gave up the field to criticism, or in other words to that superior view of the spirit that has gained self-consciousness and recognizes itself in the world and is not going to fight against itself.

The movement, of course, had its effect on literature also.

Every work of literary criticism was ushered in with philosophy and history. A work of art was no longer regarded as an arbitrary and subjective product of the mind in its immutable rules and examples, but was a product, partly unconscious, of the spirit of the world at a given moment of its existence. A man of genius was the expression, condensed and sublimated, of the collective forces that constitute the individuality of a society or a century. Idea and content were given him together. The idea was around and about him, in the society that he had been born into, that had given him his education and upbringing. He drew his life from the common life of his day, except that the intelligent and emotional part of that life was more developed in the genius than in the ordinary man. His strength lay in being one in spirit with his day; and the result of this spiritual union between a writer and his material was the thing called "style." How should a writer be indifferent to his content when it was there and nowhere else that he must look for his inspiration and his rules? With this changed point of view came a change in criteria. The literature of the Renaissance was condemned as classical and conventional, and the use of mythology was ridiculed. Those rigid ideals, all of a piece, decorated with the name of "classical," were seen to be the ideal counterfeited, the idea in its empty abstraction—not the idea in its historical conditions, in the endless variety of its existence. Rhetoric and poetics declined; the empty forms of rhetoric and the mechanical and arbitrary rules of poetics were seen to be absurd. There returned to favour that old motto of Goldoni, "Paint from real life; avoid falsifying Nature." And side by side with this lively feeling for the real was the utmost solicitude for historical truth. The epic gave place to the romance, the tragedy to drama, and ballads, romances, fantasies, and hymns shone out brilliantly in new metres. Naturalness, simplicity, force, sentiment, and profundity were infinitely preferred to dignity or elegance, they were valued as the qualities nearest to the heart of the content. Dante, Shakespeare, Calderon, Ariosto—the writers considered the

furthest removed from the classical—were the major planets. The Bible, Homer, and the primitive and spontaneous poets became the favourites. And often the rough chronicler was preferred to the elegant historian, and the songs of the people to serious poetry. What was valued now was the content in its native purity, not the content artificially altered in later times. History was pruned of its fantastic and poetic elements, of all that fictitious display which had arisen with the imitation of the classics. And poetry, by copying the spoken word and the popular forms, came nearer to prose.

VII

All this was known as "Romanticism," the "literature of modern peoples." Its success was enormous. To the reaction it seemed like a return to the Middle Ages and religious ideas, and a condemnation of the abhorred Renaissance and the still more abhorred eighteenth century. The Liberals, unable any longer to quarrel with governments, were glad to quarrel with Aristotle, the classics, and mythology; if in nothing else, at least in literature they could be revolutionaries. So vast and so varied was the system, and covering such a wide area of ideas and tendencies, that each person could look at it with his own lens and see in it whatever he was looking for. As for the governments, they left it alone; they were delighted that the peoples' minds should be diverted from political affairs by these literary squabbles. Again in Italy came all the phenomena of servitude; academical disputes for and against the Crusca, quarrels on questions of language, literary wrangles that led at times to political denunciations. In Italy the great events that followed on Waterloo were the *Proposta* and the *Sermone all' Antonietta Costa*. The country was thronged again with "Indifferentists" and "Purists," and "Classicists" and "Romantics." This was the only food left to journalism, since political affairs were no longer discussed.

The liveliest centre of this literary movement was as usual Milan, the place where the French and German influences were strongest and closest. It was in Milan that the eighteenth century had been inaugurated in the *Caffé;* it was in Milan again that the nineteenth century was inaugurated in the *Conciliatore.* Manzoni reminds us of Beccaria; and the Verris and Barettis of the new century were Silvio Pellico, Giovanni Berchet, the Manzoni circle, Tommaso Grossi, and Massimo d'Azeglio, who in his marriage to Giulia Manzoni formed a link between Lombardy and Piedmont. In Piedmont there was Cesare Balbo and Vincenzo Gioberti, coming forward with the same ideas. The old generation was intertwined with the new. Survivors of the kingdom of Italy were Foscolo, Monti, Giovanni and Ippolito Pindemonte, and Pietro Giordani. Over against Melchiorre Gioia was Sismondi, Italian in mind and in heart. While the old Romagnosi was writing his *Scienza della constituzione* the young Antonio Rosmini was publishing his treatise *Della origine delle idee.* Camillo Ugoni, Felice Bellotti, and Andrea Maffei, the translator of Klopstock and Schiller, were all coming forward. Facing the poets were the critics, themselves amateur poets—men like Giovanni Torti, Ermes Visconti, Giovanni de Cristoforis, Samuele Biava. Fighting in the same ranks were Carlo Porta, Niccolò Tommaseo, the brothers Cesare and Ignazio Cantú, Maroncelli and Confalonieri, and others of lesser note.

And what exactly did they want, these romantics, who were lifting up their voices so loudly in the *Conciliatore?* They talked of the old generation with youthful audacity. They barely acknowledged even the great Alighieri. They applauded the writers of Europe, above all of England and Germany. They objected to mythology, and scoffed at the unities. They bowed their heads to nothing but reason. It was rationalism or free thought applied to literature, and by men who in matters of religion preached faith and authority. The classicists were exactly the contrary: in matters of religion they were sceptical and disbelieving, but

in regard to literature they were positively superstitious. And they considered it unreasonable that Aristotle, dethroned in philosophy, should still be enthroned in literature. Fierce and long was the struggle between the *Conciliatore* on the one hand and the *Biblioteca italiana,* backed by the *Gazzetta di Milano,* on the other. Writers of every type and species were mingled in it—rascally and ingenuous alike, salaried pens and honest enthusiasts. So long and furiously did they struggle, attacking and defending so extravagantly and absurdly, that the whole affair got into such utter confusion that even today there is no one to tell us precisely what romanticism really was, and in what respects it differed substantially from classicism. Monti was regarded by many as really a romantic under the appearances of a classicist, and Manzoni was regarded by many as really a classicist who set out to be a romantic. The whole trouble lay with that word "romanticism." It was only when that troublesome word, imported from Germany, was got rid of, that light began to dawn. Little by little the name "romanticism" was replaced by "national and modern literature," and the new name was acceptable to every one.

In Italy "romanticism" was linked with the ideas diffused by Schlegel and Tieck, in the exaggerated form they had taken in France, more especially in Victor Hugo. These romantics rejected paganism and rehabilitated the Middle Ages. They rejected liberty in art while insisting on liberty of conscience. They rejected the plastic and simple of the classical ideal, replacing it with the Gothic, the fantastic, the indefinite, and the lugubrious. They rejected the artifice and convention of classical imitation, replacing it with imitations of worse taste. In their dislike of classical beauty they exalted ugliness; the one superstition was replaced by the other. What in Shakespeare and in Calderon was natural and legitimate became strange, gross, and artificial at such a long distance in time and with such widely different standards and ideas. The extravagant form of romanticism that hailed from France and from Germany never really

took root in Italy. Now and then attempts were made to establish it, but with no success; proving again, if further proof were necessary, that this particular form was essentially repugnant to the Italian genius. The romantics were glad to discard the borrowed name that had caused such difficulties and quarrels, and to adopt a name that every one approved of. In Germany too romanticism was soon to change, to be drawn into the high regions of philosophy, where it shed its fantastic forms and reactionary content and under the name of "modern literature" turned into eclecticism, or in other words into the reconciliation of all forms and all elements under the higher principles of aesthetics or the philosophy of art.

Looking at romanticism as it was in that early stage when it arose in declared opposition to the eighteenth century, making war on Alfieri and proclaiming a new reform in literature, we shall see that its real error was its failure to recognize the fact that instead of being, as it imagined, a contradiction of the very century against which it was taking arms, it was really its consequence. In Germany the case was different. The romantic idea arose as a reaction against the French imitation in vogue under Frederick the Great. It was certainly an exaggeration; but the exaggeration was to become the first foundations of a national literature that was to lead to Schiller and to Goethe. And moreover romanticism in Germany was the work of the eighteenth century: Schiller was a contemporary of Alfieri. When the romantic idea arrived in Italy, in Germany it had already declined, had been transformed into a concept of philosophical and universal art. Goethe was already in his third period, the period of pantheistic spirituality that led to the *Faust*. Romanticism, like Hegelianism, arrived in Italy too late. What culture had already passed beyond and absorbed in Germany, appears in Italy as an advance. The fact is, the romantic reform proclaimed in Italy with all that tremendous excitement and flourish of trumpets was not a beginning but a continuation; it had begun in the preceding century. It was really a further stage in the

new literature, inaugurated by Goldoni and Parini at the time when the German people were laying the foundations of their culture. The difference was this: Italy in reacting against her isolation and intellectual stagnation and throwing herself into the culture of Europe was discarding a part of herself—*seicentismo,* Arcadia, and the academy. What Germany did, on the contrary, was to break with French culture, linking herself up once more with her own traditions and acquiring self-consciousness. The period of French influence in Germany was really nothing but a brief divergence from the continuous stream of national life that brought to the Germans of the nineteenth century a clear consciousness of their national autonomy and their intellectual superiority. The reform in Germany went rapidly and peacefully forward, with clearly marked, definite stages and an inner harmony of all the branches of learning. Far from Germany's receiving an impulse from Europe, it was Germany who gave the impulse. The German movement, exclusive and exaggerated at the start under the name of "romanticism," was soon to embrace all culture and all knowledge and all history, in a vast unity whose colossal monument is the *Faust,* the *Divine Comedy* of modern literature, in which all religions and all cultures, all elements and all forms, are brought together and harmonized. All are partakers alike of the Bread of Life, all are subject to the same laws of spirit and Nature, all are expressions of the same idea. Unconscious and inimical before, here they are united and reconciled by the ironical eye of consciousness. Goethe's supreme indifference to form, which was called his "scepticism," is really the Olympic serenity of a superior intellect, a tolerance of all differences, which he brings together and reconciles in the higher world of philosophy and art. So romantic mysticism in Germany changed into pantheistic mysticism, the Christian idea into the philosophical idea, the Christ of the Gospels into the Christ of Strauss. Theology was submerged in philosophy, dogma and doubt were smelted into criticism; and the famous "*Cogito*" had its point of arrival and of

fixation in the consciousness of self as the spirit of the natural and moral world, a point of arrival that had grown stagnant in the superficiality of French eclecticism.

When Alessandro Manzoni, who at that time was an ardent Alfierian, was in Paris, he came into contact with the literary circles opposed to the Empire, of which Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël were the soul. In these he saw a reflection of Germany, and the young poet started on a history of German literature. He was brought into touch with the illustrious men of the two nations; Cousin called him his "friend," and Fauriel and Goethe flattered and encouraged him. His horizon became wider, he caught sight of new worlds, and he reacted against his literary education, against his youthful adorations, Alfieri and Monti. In Milan, when the Kingdom of Italy had fallen and the youth of Italy were flocking to the new ideas, Manzoni became the leader of the romantic school. So at the time Germany had finished the cycle of the philosophical and ideal stage of her culture and was already embarked on the work of applying it in all the natural and social sciences, Italy was still disputing about principles. But naturally neither Manzoni nor any one else could assimilate the German movement integrally, a movement that had developed through a century; all that they saw of it was its initial, obvious, superficial part. They admired Schiller, Goethe, Herder, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, but the writers and philosophers of Italy meant infinitely more to them —from the former there came to them, as it were, an echo, often from second-hand studies and judgments, often from the works and opinions of the French. So Italy remained in her stage of spontaneity, putting the problems as they were put in Italy, with Italian methods and Italian arguments. The result was an Italian, a local, romanticism, free from the extravagances of France and Germany and in keeping with the state of Italian culture at that time—suspicious of novelty, and held in check by literary tradition and the national character. Romanticism so derived was nothing at bottom but a further development of the

new literature that had come with Parini, and which in forms and colour was and remained purely Italian.

In fact, in all its substantial points this Italian romanticism was in harmony with the movement started in the preceding century. So after all, if we come to think of it, nothing was really more natural than that the struggle, carried on as it was in so great a confusion of ideas, should have ended in the complete indifference of the Italian people, who recognized themselves in the ranks of both sides. Did the romantics demand that the classical themes should be dropped? Well, Italy was sick of them anyway, and had Ossian, the *Saul*, the *Ricciarda* and the *Bardo della selva nera*. Did the romantics demand that characters should be drawn from life and forms be natural and simple? Well, what had Goldoni preached but that very same thing? Did they sneer at empty form? Well, so had Alfieri, and so had Foscolo. And what, after all, was the meaning of the new literature if not the resurrection of the content and the revival of consciousness? And what, after all, were the unities, and mythology, that apple of discord, but secondary questions of the same nature? Even in the *Sepolcri*[6] of Foscolo and Pindemonte there had been a glimpse of a world less absolute and rigid, more human, and in fact religious. It is true that the romantic school, by its name, by its connections, by its studies, and by its impressions, was linked with the German traditions and the French fashions, but in its accent, its aspirations, its forms and motives, it remained at bottom essentially Italian. It was really the school of the preceding century—the same school, but with experiences behind it, having learnt from its great illusions and its great disillusions, and gone back now to the naturalness of Goldoni and the temperance of Parini. The romantics, who seemed to be fighting that school, were more nearly related to it than the classicists. The latter were its heirs in name, but

[6] There were two *Carme sui Sepolcri*, one by Foscolo and one by Pindemonte. Pindemonte's was written first. He spoke of it to his friend Foscolo—perhaps even read it to him—and Foscolo replied with his famous *Sepolcri*. It was published some years before Pindemonte's poem on the subject.—Translator.

its degenerate heirs, whose exhausted vitality is seen in the showy emptiness of Monti and the rhetorical purism of Pietro Giordani. Under the Kingdom of Italy it declined visibly; no longer having novelty of content, it continued to revolve round itself, and under the name of "purism" became a game of words that aimed at the pure language of the fourteenth century and the elegance of the Renaissance. Back came the old collection of grammarians, purists, and rhetoricians, and also, under different names, back came Arcadia and the academy. This made possible a work like the *Storia americana* of Carlo Botta, published in Paris contemporarily with the *Inni* of Manzoni. Even the Crusca was staggered by this work; the members looked at each other askance, asking what type of language this was. It was the romantics who in fighting that school put blood into it, and in the guise of enemies were really its heirs. They endowed it with a new content and a new ideal; they cleansed it of its classical varnish and mythology; they subdued its rhetorical and academic exaggerations. In short, they freed it of the literary habits that still lingered from the past, of which traces are found even in the proud disdains of Alfieri and Foscolo. And they endowed it with simpler, more natural forms, free from artifice and rhetoric, nearer to the forms of ordinary life. Just as under the guise of reactionaries they were really the Revolution grown moderate and disciplined, which had drawn even God into progress and democracy, so under the guise of fighting the new literature they were really a continuation of it. They were the new literature of Goldoni and Parini, which was shedding its last vestiges of the past, was gaining a clearer consciousness of its own tendencies, and which, dropping rigid and absolute ideals, was touching earth again, drawing near to reality.

This livelier feeling for the real had penetrated even to the people. The public was no longer the academic public that had applauded the *Virginia* and the *Aristodemo* in the theatre, and had exalted Italy in canzoni and sonnets. The Italians had witnessed liberty in all its forms—in its illusions, its disillusions,

its promises, its extravagancies. The Kingdom of Italy, the expedition of Murat, the promises of the Allies, the struggle for independence in Spain and Germany, the risings in Greece and in Belgium, had whetted its nationalism. The unity of Italy had ceased to be a rhetorical theme; it was a concrete, serious aim that had been definitely accepted by the minds and the wills of the Italians. The most daring of the citizens joined in secret societies, while against them was formed the *Sanfedesti*, secret too. There was nothing new of course in secret societies. What was new and significant was the fact that the majority of Italians were beginning to think politically, were acquiring a sense of limits and of possibilities. Declamation and rhetoric and abstractions had lost their hold on them. The terrific obstacles in the way of their desires had taught them to be moderate, to examine their aims, to weigh and consider what means were suited to the gaining of them. Liberty found its limits in constitutional forms, and national feeling in a greater independence of the foreigner. "Revolution" had become a new word, meaning "the natural evolution of progress." And it meant the majestic march of the Idea in space and time towards an infinite betterment, moral and natural, of the species. "Progress" became the faith, the religion, of the century. And its passport was not questioned, because it drove out that cursed word "revolution," and meant the natural evolution of history, and condemned violent changes. It preached patience; it preached that every betterment is compatible with every form of government, even the worst of them. It had come into line with Christian philosophy; it preached faith in God and prayer and resignation. Moreover, the governments left it in peace; the word "progress" seemed to them innocuous, whereas "liberty" and "revolution" had stood for definite aims that were not to be tolerated. Indeed "progress," taken in its vague sense of a general betterment of every one and everything, was a cheap and convenient way for the princes to win popularity. When compelled to start some reform they chose some specific measure that seemed to them harmless, such as

lighting the streets by gas, the construction of railways, the telegraph, free trade, orphanages, scientific congresses, and agricultural societies. Little by little the Liberals got back to the point they had started from. Unable to conquer the governments, they flattered them, hoping for reforms from the princes and even from the popes. They revived the times of Tanucci, Leopold, and Joseph, and to a certain extent they revived the times of Arcadia. Undoubtedly a theory of progress that refers everything to God and the Idea might easily lead to a Mohammedan fatalism, and by making the people demand too little, might weaken their character and turn liberalism into a new Arcadia. It was this that Mazzini feared when he opposed it with Young Italy.

But the movements crushed in 1821 and in 1831, the many failures of Mazzini, the policy of non-intervention of the liberal powers, the supposed insuperable power of Austria, the strength and severity of governments, the threads retied and rebroken again and again—all these had led Italians to take stock of their assets, had bent them to compromise, had strengthened their political sense, had led them to suspect that motto of "All or nothing." Even Mazzini, who led the van, has that same note of nebulosity and mysticism which had found its way into philosophy and letters, proving that he was a man of his century. He too was prepared to take stock of public opinion as it really was, and to sacrifice a part of his ideal to it. So now that their passionate feelings were softened, and they were confident of a natural progress of everything and that culture and education could be advanced under every government, even the worst, men in general refrained from direct political action and fixed their attention on study. The sciences, the arts, literature, music and song, all of them flourished exceedingly. The place that politics left vacant was occupied by discussions of Taglioni and Malibran, of Rachel and Ristori, of Rossini and Bellini, of literature and science, of the French and Italian novels. In rapid succession came the *Carmagnola*, the *Adelchi*, and the *Promessi Sposi*

of Manzoni, the *Pia* of Sestini; the *Fuggitiva*, the *Ildegonda*, the *Crociati* and *Marco Visconti* of Grossi; the *Francesca da Rimini* of Silvio Pellico, the *Margherita Pusterla* of Cantú, the *Ettore Fieramosca* of Massimo d'Azeglio, and later his *Niccolò de' Lapi*. At the end of the string, with a note of greater solemnity, came Pellico's *Le mie prigioni*. This literary cycle was known as "romantic." It was a local and Italian romanticism, that played on the softest chords of man and patriot, with a sense of measure, with the ideal linked with history, with history vibrating with patriotism, with an inner melancholy of the soul, with a fineness of analysis combined with the utmost simplicity of motives—with all those qualities which reveal a spirit already mature and holding fast not only to the ideal but also to the real. With cruder colouring and more daring intentions came Niccolini's *Arnaldo da Brescia* and Guerrazzi's *Assedio di Firenze*.

Italian aspirations were vibrating in this literature, and every son of Italy was conscious of it: the smallest allusions, the most distant analogies, were caught on the wing by a public that was one with its writers. Romanticism lost its seriousness of content, and went out of vogue, even to its name. The Middle Ages were no longer literary material, to be treated with historical and positive intentions, but the outer covering of Italian ideals, the sufficiently clear expression of Italian hopes. The themes chosen were those that interpreted most clearly the thought and feeling of the public, like the Lombard League, which was changed into an Italian struggle against Germany. This period of transition from the mainly artistic manner of the romantics to a more frankly political presentation is signalled by the writer Massimo d'Azeglio; at this date he was pondering a third novel, with the Lombard League as its setting. And the writers were backed by the painters. The pictures of that day had titles like the "Challenge of Barletta," "The Toast of Francesco Ferruccio," "The Battle of Gavinana," "The Defence of Nice," "The Battle of Turin." The artistic inspiration which had led to the *Inni*, the *Cinque Maggio*, and the *Ermengarda* was no longer the picture

itself, but was merely an accessory colouring, superimposed on a new philosophical and political background. The Madonnas, the saints, the angels, and Paradise survived in literature in the same way that Pallas, Venus, and Cupid survived in it: they were there as poetic machines or ornaments, extraneous to the spirit of the compositions, and in fact Arcadian. Where poetry is free at last from every obstacle and wrapping, whether classical or romantic, is in the verses of Giovanni Berchet. And not a little credit for this must be given to Byron, who had lived for a considerable time in Venice, and whose proud voice was heard in the *Childe Harold.* If Berchet had remained in Italy, probably his genius would have remained wrapped in the mists and the allusions of romanticism. But as an exile in London, his heart was possessed by the pains and furies of his defeated fatherland. In a lyrical form allied to drama, expressive of life in its highest pathos, a lyric abandoning the old generalities of sonnets and canzoni, he voiced the indignation of Italy.

This dramatic lyric which came to Italy from England was the sole compelling voice in a country whose true and virile expression had been blunted by political prudence. A *modus vivendi,* as we should put it today, had been arrived at—a provisional agreement between princes and people. A certain degree of freedom was permitted in speech and meetings—always, of course, in the name of progress, of culture, of civilization; those opposed to it were "obscurantists." The princes cajoled the people and promised reforms; even the greatest reactionary of them all, who was Ferdinand II, appointed men of culture to public positions, and through the mouth of Monsignor Mazzetti announced that education would be thoroughly reorganized. What more could the people ask for? The Liberals, with that exquisite sense of the opportune which every one acquires in his own interests, applauded the princes and were gracious to the priests, even to the point of smiling on the Jesuits.

This was the moment that there appeared in Italy that extremely curious work, the *Primato,* by Vincenzo Gioberti. With

a great display of erudition and facility of expression and refinement of language, the author proclaimed in this work the primacy of the Italian civilization. He showed it as linked to the Italo-Pelasgic traditions through the glories of the papacy, which had restored religion in its purity, yet at the same time was reconciled with modern ideas and was working for the autocracy of the mind and the redemption of the lower classes. In the place of the Hegelian "becoming" he gave Italy again the doctrine of the supernatural and revelation, put back on their feet. The Renaissance was eliminated *in toto* as heretical and anti-Catholic, the present being linked directly with the Middle Ages. It was the political reconciliation sublimated to philosophy; it was philosophy constructed to suit the book of the Italians. Frate Campanella seemed risen from the grave. The impression made was great—at long last there seemed to be an Italian philosophy. Everything was reconciled with everything: the pope with the princes, the princes with the people, socialism with mysticism. Everything was balanced—God was balanced by progress, hierarchy by democracy. This movement was not intellectual and was not religious; it was obviously political. And the thing that came of it was neither an intellectual movement nor a religious reform, but a purely political movement, propped up by ambiguity, and falling to pieces at its first collision with reality. Such in fact was the character of Italian society. Even the proudest contrived to fit into it, on the whole not dissatisfied with the present, and trusting in a future betterment. The Liberals gabbled paternosters, and the Jesuits gabbled of "progress and reform."

It was a comic situation if we look beneath the surface; and the person who knew how to seize on its innermost secrets was the poet Giuseppe Giusti. As we have seen, the leadership of culture was no longer with Florence. After a prodigious literary output, stretching over three centuries, Florence had fallen asleep, with the smile of Berni on her lips; and the Crusca had embalmed her and made her inventory. Even in her sleep she

resisted as much as she could, pushing away from her the impulses of the eighteenth century. When the need was felt in Italy for a livelier language, less rigid and academic, more easy and natural, many of the writers turned to the local dialects, while others threw themselves boldly into the French forms, and others again, headed by Padre Cesari, went back to the language of the fourteenth century. The obvious solution—to look for language in Tuscany, the place where it was spoken—never occurred to them. The French Revolution had brought the Italians to feel their brotherhood, their common ties of hopes, ideas, and interests. After the failure of 1821 the illustrious patriots from the rest of Italy took refuge in Florence, where soon, through the efforts of Vieusseux, there arose a literary centre in rivalry with that of Milan. Manzoni and Massimo d'Azeglio wandered among the hills of Pistoia, collecting the proverbs and expressions of the living language. Italians endeavoured to seem Tuscans; and Tuscans, such as Guerrazzi and Niccolini, endeavoured to acquire the spirit of Italianism.

In this literary revival the local or Tuscan element, at first overwhelmed and afraid to assert itself, went forward in strength and confidence as it realized its own vitality. The man who restored to Florence her lost place in Italian culture was Giuseppe Giusti. He might almost have been a Tuscan of the time of Lorenzo de' Medici who was casting an ironical eye on society as the nineteenth century had made it. Those political finenesses, those doctrinal hypocrisies, that universal masquerading, with the liberal ideas and the "Harlequins" and "Girellas" and the "arm-chair heroes" winking at each other through their masks, in the hands of Giuseppe Giusti were comic material not wanting in sadness. His poems remind us of Parini—Parini put into the language of the Florentine commonalty, with that quality of liveliness and grace and brio that belonged inherently to the Tuscans, and which gave to the images their last stroke of perfection and fixed them in the memory. Systems of middle ideas that aim at reconciling and satisfying opposites must inevitably

fall into the comic; and that doctrinal equilibrium, so laboriously achieved, that vast systemization and reconciliation of the whole of knowledge in ideal constructions, that mysticism soaked in metaphysics, that Voltarianism sprinkled with holy water, that metaphysics of the Absolute and Divine declining into theology—all of that melted away at the ironical laugh of Giuseppe Giusti.

The poet who marks the end of this period is Giacomo Leopardi. Metaphysics, at war with theology, had worn itself out in that attempt at union. The multiplicity of scientific systems had discredited even science itself. There was arising a new scepticism, which aimed its blows not only at religion and the supernatural, but even at reason. The whole system was looked at differently. Metaphysics was a branch of theology; the Idea was a substitute for Providence. Those philosophies of history, of religion, of humanity, of law, were nothing, at bottom, but poetic constructions; that theory of progress and historical destiny was a phantasmagoria in its development; that over-insistence on the collective and providential elements was directly conducive to the omnipotence of the state and the centralization of government; that universal eclecticism was a Dead Sea of the intellect; that glorification of success was blunting to the moral sense and provocative of violence; that reconciliation of the old and new, even if endurable as a temporary political necessity, was fundamentally a desecration of science and moral weakness. The system had lost its prestige; rebellion was beginning. Faith in revelation had vanished; now faith in philosophy itself was following it. Mystery returned; the philosopher knew as much, and no more, than the shepherd. Of this mystery the echo was Giacomo Leopardi in the solitude of his thought and his pain. His scepticism heralds the end of that world of theology and metaphysics, and the inauguration of the aridly true, of the real. Leopardi's *Canti* are the deepest, most occult voices of that laborious transition which was called "the nineteenth century." The inner life in these poems is highly devel-

oped. The thing of importance in this century of progress is not its brilliant exterior—it is not without irony that he speaks of the "*sorti progressive*"—"the progressive destinies"—of humanity. The thing of importance is the exploration of one's own soul: virtue, liberty, love, all the ideals of religion, of science, and of poetry—the life within. Though shadows and illusions in the face of reason, they kindle the heart, and they refuse to be killed. The mystery destroys his intellectual world, but leaves inviolate his moral world. This tenacious life of his inner world, in spite of the death of every philosophical and metaphysical world, is the original quality in Leopardi, and gives to his scepticism the stamp, as it were, of religion. A scepticism that vibrates so vigorously with the feeling of a moral world is really not scepticism at all; the new formation within it is far too evident to be missed.

In this renovation the instrument used is criticism—a criticism hatched and grown in the womb itself of scepticism. The century, which started on its road with ideal, ontological tendencies, had itself laid down the beginning of its own dissolution —the living idea submerged in the real. As the century advances this sense of the real grows stronger and stronger. The ideal and systematic constructions are declining; the positive sciences are replacing them. Criticism is as strong as ever. The new dogmas are losing credit. The patient work of analysis begins again. Galileo's star has risen again in the intellectual heavens, splendidly shining, with Vico's beside it. The Revolution, which had been immobilized in provisionary institutions, seizes its freedom once more, ties up again with Eighty-nine and draws its conclusions. In the field of politics we have socialism; in the field of the intellect we have positivism. The word has ceased to be "liberty," but is "justice"; and justice is the giving of its proper due to everything that exists—democracy not only juridical but effective. And literature too is changing. Distinctions, classes, privileges are vanishing. The ugly has its place with the beautiful, or rather, to express it better, the beautiful no longer exists,

nor the real nor ideal, nor the finite nor the infinite. The idea is no longer above and detached from the content, the content no longer stands out from the form. There is one thing existing and one thing only—the Alive. From the womb of idealism is born realism in science, in art, in history. The fantastic, the mystical, the metaphysical, and the rhetorical are vanishing at last. The new literature, reconstructed now in the consciousness, freed now from every wrapping whether classical or romantic, the echo now of the life of the day both national and universal, as philosophy, art, history, and criticism—intent on making its content increasingly realistic—not only is called but definitely is "modern literature."

Italy, compelled to struggle for a whole century to win independence and liberal institutions, and kept by that struggle in a circle of ideas too general, too uniform, subordinated to political ends, is witnessing the falling to pieces of that whole theological-metaphysical-political system, which has nothing left to give her. The positive tendencies were vanquished by ontology with its brilliant synthesis; and now ontology is failing too, is stale and repetitive. It has sunk into the Arcadian and academic, as happens inevitably to systems that have ceased to progress.[7] Ontology's heir is criticism, a criticism bearing on its face the stamp of the fantastic and dogmatic it received at its birth,[8] but visibly inclined to investigate, rather than to postulate and demonstrate. Philosophical and literary synthesis are declining; their place is being taken by the humble and patient monograph. Systems are suspect, laws are received with diffidence, principles until now regarded as absolute are being tested in the crucible. Nothing is admitted that has not been proved by a series of ascertained facts—the verification of a fact is an event of greater importance than the establishment of a law. That whole collection of ideas, maxims, and formulae that once gave rise to such

[7] Take Cousin, for instance, with his doctrinaire eclecticism. Take Prati with the *Satana e la Grazie* and the *Armando*. Take Cesare Cantú in the *Storia universale*.

[8] As we find in Proudhon, Renan, and Ferrari.

struggles and excitements, has sunk into a conventional repertory no longer representative of opinion as it really is: Giacomo Leopardi has left his touch on them. It would seem that at this very moment when Italy at last has formed herself, that the intellectual and political world which made her formation possible, was dissolving. That Italy herself is alive we know from the new horizon that has dawned—vague as yet and shadowy, but unmistakable. A never-flagging force is driving her onward; no sooner is one aspiration appeased than another appears.

Italy till now has been dazzled by a brilliant sphere—the sphere of nationality and liberty. Her philosophy has sprung from a thing outside of her, even if around her. Now she must look into her heart, must seek for her very self. The sphere must develop and become concrete as her inner life. The religious hypocrisies, the academic habits, the political necessities, the long periods of lying fallow, the foreign motives superimposed on her liberal development, the memories of a servitude that lasted for centuries—all these have led to an artificial and vacillating consciousness, preventing absorption and intimacy. Her life, even today, is external and artificial. Let her look into her heart with clear eyes, unhindered by veil or obstacle; let her look for the "effectual thing" with the spirit of Galileo and Machiavelli. In this search for the elements of the real in her life the Italian spirit will create its culture once more, will restore her moral world, will refresh her impressions, will find in her own inner life new sources of inspiration—woman, the family, love, nature, liberty, science, and virtue—and not as brilliant ideas revolving in space around and about her, but as concrete, definite things, become her content.

To create such a literature as this two conditions are indispensable. The first is serious study in the whole range of knowledge, guided by a spirit of patiently exploring criticism, entirely free and unprejudiced. The second is a national life, both public and private, developed over a long period. Let us look into our hearts, as Leopardi bids us in his parting message; let us look

into our customs, ideas, and prejudices, our qualities both good and bad; let us seize on this modern world and make it our own, by studying, assimilating, and transforming it. These are the necessary conditions for modern national literature. In Italy there are scattered signs of this culture, with great shadows between them. We have the historical novel, but not the history, and not the novel. And we have not the drama. We are still waiting for the comedy that was to come from Giuseppe Giusti, and for the lyric that was to come from Leopardi.[9] To a great extent we are living on our past and on the work of others. We have still no life of our own nor work of our own. We are still enmeshed in the academy and Arcadia, in classicism and romanticism, and are not yet free from the vices of emphasis and rhetoric, those signs of a want of seriousness in life and in study. From our very boastings can be seen the sense of our own inferiority. The great work of the nineteenth century is drawing to its close, and we are faced with a new fermentation of ideas, the herald of a new formation. The new century can already be seen taking shape within the old. When it comes we must not be found last in the line, nor yet in the second place.

[9] Leopardi died in 1837, and Giusti in 1850. De Sanctis's book was written between 1869 and 1871.—Translator.

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