Spiritualism, though with special inconveniences of its own, is not without value as a counterpoise to materialistic specialism. The time is near at hand when Positivism, which is neither spiritualist nor materialist, will combine all that is best in either school and reject the dross. The reconciliation of analysis with synthesis will then be accomplished. But until, under the Religion of Humanity, the complete ascendancy of Ethics has been rendered compatible with free play to the lower sciences of which it is the crown, spiritualistic philosophy at least serves the purpose of fastening attention on the study of man's moral nature, which the unorganized specialities of biological and physical research tend otherwise to overshadow.

The greater part of Mr. Drummond's book is devoted to the preparation visible in the lower stages of life for the facts specially characteristic of the highest stage as revealed in the nature of man. He dwells on the fact which Positivist writers have constantly emphasized, that the Darwinian theory of evolution, though true so far as it goes, is fatally one-sided in that it concentrates attention almost exclusively on the function of self-preservation. The truth is, however, that in the lower degrees of life, as in the highest, we may discern the continuous operation of two forces—the struggle for the life of self, the struggle for the life of others. In the most elementary forms of life these two forces are represented by the two functions of growth and reproduction. As in the simplest cells, whether vegetal or animal—in the *Amoeba*, for instance, or in the ultimate cells of root-fibres—we can trace something that can be called Choice, and that may be regarded as the germinal principle of Mind; so in the mutual attraction of two cells, which, by their union, produce a new generation, we discern the first beginnings of that vital force known to us ultimately as Love. Proceeding upwards through the scale of Life, as the sexes become separate, this instinct takes a visible and palpable shape; and superadded to the sexual instinct is one of even greater significance—the care of the mother for her offspring. Unconscious and almost mechanical in the articulate and lower vertebrate tribes, it becomes prominent and conscious among birds, still more potent with the animals that feed their young from their own substance and nurse them through a period of infancy, until the function is carried to its utmost height in the longer and more helpless infancy of Man.

The family once formed, the germs of morality appeared in the world. In the short-lived families of animal tribes few traces can be seen of this, except by naturalists whose insight has been fortified

by study of human society. No one has thrown greater light on it than the philosophic sportsman of the eighteenth century, Georges Leroy, the friend of Hume and Diderot. His descriptions, in his *Letters on Animals*,[1] of the family life of wolves and foxes vividly describe the first beginnings within the narrow circle of the home of those emotions of tenderness and pity which lie at the root of morality. Further than this among animals it is impossible to go. Morality, in the true sense, requires the simultaneous existence of the family and of society. A moral action is a social function performed by a free organ under the influence of those affections which the family has first called into being. Now, social existence on a large scale has been crushed out among the higher vertebrates by the ascendancy of Man. On the other hand, we may see social life carried to a high pitch of perfection among bees and ants with entire absence of family life. A state of things in which all our social activities were prescribed by our official superiors, or were the automatic result of ancestral tradition, would be quite incompatible with morality. Moral life, as wise men have said for ages, implies a measure of freedom and choice. What Comte added to the time-worn discussion was the all-important truth that morality implies love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The characteristic feature of human action is *Agir par affection, et penser pour agir.*[2]

Human society is distinguished from the bee-hive or the ant-hill by the fact that it is made up, not of individuals, but of families. In the love of parents for their young, in the dependence of children on their parents, in the comradeship of children of the same household, we have the germs of the three altruistic affections—compassion, reverence, and friendship—the growth and final supremacy of which form the principal factor in the Ascent of Man. Into the making of Man, into the moulding of his character and impulses, it is abundantly clear that other factors have entered. Fierce struggles against external fatalities, battles with rigour of climate, with carnivorous races, with rival tribes, carried on through thousands of years, have not merely hidden from view the faint and dim beginnings of unselfish love, but have left inveterate traces, have strengthened ferocious animal instincts which, when unrestrained, render man the most formidable of beasts of prey. Nevertheless, the double meaning of the word *Humanity* is no fortuitous fact. It reveals the instinctive assurance, engraved on the monumental tablet of familiar speech, that what specially defines man from other animals

[1] See p. 54 (note 1). [2] See p. 38 (note).

is his capacity for the final triumph of unselfish love. The rise and progress of that love is the central theme of human history, when some day it shall be rightly written.

In man's slow ascent self-love and love of others have ever been, and in the future will be, intricately intertwined. A world of unselfish activity, from which self-love should be wholly shut out, may be dreamed of; but it is not, and never will be, ours. Of ours what can be said is that the nobler element flashes out the brighter for the darkness; or rather, like the bullet in the rifled barrel, it gains efficiency from the resistance. War, the collective killing of fellow-men, has been the school of the noblest virtues; as the very name of virtue—manliness—remains to testify. Fidelity, truth, honour, valour, discipline, endurance—such are some of the lessons learnt in that school, when men like Cæsar were schoolmasters, or when the contest was for the defence of the best treasures and traditions of humanity. Rome's incorporation of her conquered nations gave rise to the wholly new conception which illumines the writings of Cicero and the Stoics before the Christian Church arose —the conception of *humanum genus*, of the collective whole of which each one of us is a member, and to which each owes service. Paul and the Christian saints did but add intensity to a current of thought and feeling already flowing. The Christ of the Catholic Church is the forerunner of Humanity, with whom the Christ of the nineteenth century tends every year to become more identical, stripping off what is specially Jewish, miraculous, and theological, and embodying the results of modern science and revolutionary progress. For those who can read between the lines of the evolutionary story, the spectacle of a Pope[1] persuading the faithful to accept the French Republic, and occupying himself with the solution of labour problems, is one of the many sure signs that the reign of Humanity is not far distant. The bud is opening into blossom, though theological husks may still cling to the outer petals.

It is quite true, as the naturalists tell us, that the law of natural selection holds good of every form of life; of complicated social organisms no less than of the humblest protophyte. Those societies which, from whatever cause and in whatever way, have developed the virtues of truth, fidelity, justice, courage, will hold together best, and, other conditions not opposing, will take the leading place. In the final state of man, victory thus gained can leave no sting in those who are the losers, since the very qualities

[1] Leo XIII.—Ed.

that obtained it are guarantees that it will be rightly used. In our present imperfect state the operation of this law, though confused by conflicting causes, is none the less certain.

To take a familiar instance. Englishmen won their empire by strength born of virtues fostered for eight centuries in English households, and culminating in the age of Elizabeth and Shakespeare. Strength may survive for a time the moral force that generates it. But if in the retention and extension of empire a different temper should arise—pride of race and caste, greed of power, suppression, in the name of patriotism, of patriotic life in every race but our own; if empire comes to mean destruction of African races by Maxim guns and alcohol; if the annexation of a coveted province is effected under a veil of fulsome pledges which we are pre-determined to violate; and, lastly, if internal progress and the urgent needs of our working population are disregarded in the struggle for these avaricious and visionary aims—then it is certain that the seeds of self-destruction which such an empire contains will be swift to germinate. Whether from outward attack or from inward decay, it will fall; and great will be the fall of it.

We need not and cannot deny that by the law of natural selection advantages and ultimate success are given to those societies that observe the rules of justice; disadvantage and failure are the ultimate fate of those who violate them. This is but the repetition in scientific language of many wise saws of old times, as that "Honesty is the best policy," that "The mills of God grind slowly, though they grind exceeding small," that "Righteousness exalteth a nation," and many others. In this way the Darwinian law makes for righteousness, it is said; and we want nothing more. It is much, no doubt; but it is not enough. Hope of reward, fear of retribution, have been held out to man for centuries during the reign of the gods. They are held out again during the more permanent dominion of law. In neither case does the incentive suffice if unaccompanied by direct appeal to a higher motive; to the enthusiasm that springs from unselfish love, sacrifice of self, devotion to the cause of others. Such feelings have their root, as we have seen, in the deepest sources of life. Their growth from lowly beginnings, their increasing power to modify the instincts of greed and savagery, their ultimate ascendancy in the far-off future to which we tend—these things, and not the power to annihilate space, rival the speed of birds and fishes, or transmute earth into gold, form the final standard by which we are to measure the Ascent of Man.

Chapter II

IMPERIALISM

I

IMPERIALISM AND PATRIOTISM[1]

Facts that pass immediately around us, which form part of our own atmosphere, and from which we cannot escape any more than from our shadow, are very often just those which it is hardest to grasp with the clear, definite precision which a student aims at in studies of a remoter kind. Mathematics, electricity, the description of some unknown microscopical organism, the investigation of an obscure corner of the Athenian or Roman constitution, offer problems of much difficulty, and sometimes of much importance. But the problems offered by man's practical life, to say nothing of their overwhelming urgency, are of much greater scientific difficulty. We are driven, of course, to form rough and ready rule-of-thumb solutions, reached by the varying play of passion, interest, or prejudice which governs our life, much in the same way as fish swimming in a whirlpool may be said to solve practically some very complicated problems of dynamics. But to arrive at clear, definite statements of general truths, such as we aim at, not without success, in the simpler sciences of biology and physics, is altogether another matter. And yet nothing short of this must be aimed at, unless human life is to be tossed hither and thither by the varying play of popular impulse, commercial greed, and political ambition.

What, for example, is patriotism? Without attempting, in the first instance, a definition that shall stand all tests, we may at least start with a provisional definition that, so far as it goes, shall be both intelligible and certain. We may speak of it as the complex of feelings and convictions which lead men to behave in case of need as the Greeks behaved at Marathon or Thermopylæ, the Romans when Hannibal was encamped at the Colline gate, the Dutch at the siege of Leiden, the French in the first years of the Revolution, the

[1] 1898

English when threatened by the Armada, the English and Scotch when threatened by Napoleon. In all these cases there was an almost absolute concentration of the muscular and nervous energies of the community upon a common purpose. Self-preservation, the strongest and most persistent of animal instincts, was entirely subordinated to the preservation of the community. In plain English, men died for their country, or were ready to die.

It is, perhaps, not needful to spend many words in praise of patriotism as thus defined. Indeed, no words at all would be needed, were it not that Positivism has been supposed, by those who know nothing of it but the name, to take but little account of it. But only those who are entirely ignorant of what Positivists think and teach could make this mistake. No principle has been more strongly repudiated by Comte than that of bare cosmopolite humanitarianism. Between pure self-love and pure love for Humanity, our Family affections, our devotion to our Country, are interposed. Those who show themselves insensible to the narrower ties are looked on with suspicion, and with well-merited suspicion, when they proclaim their devotion to the wider. Philanthropists, pure and simple, are not always the best of men. Rousseau, who sent his children to the foundling hospital, and his pupil Robespierre, who began by advocating the abolition of death penalties, and ended as we know, have not left savoury memories behind them. A man who is known to be brutal to his wife or children, or to the lower animals, will find it hard to gain the credit of a good citizen; and so, too, no professions of devotion to the widest interests of Humanity can atone for indifference to the welfare of the community in which he was born, and through which he inherits all that raises him above the savage. These truths are trite; yet it seems that sometimes they need repeating.

Assuming patriotism to be a state of mind and of character to be devoid of which is a grave misfortune entailing grievous moral loss, what are the conditions for its manifestation? Three things seem to be necessary. First, a definite appropriation of a certain portion of the earth's surface. Secondly, willingness to combine politically under a fixed government. Thirdly, acceptance of a common tradition embodied in religion, in language, in laws, in historical memories, or at least in some of these, for identity in all of them is not strictly necessary.

As to the first of these conditions, few will doubt, though few seem to understand, the principle upon which it rests. Why do we cling with such invincible love to the inanimate mountains, plains,

and shores that we call our fatherland? Why do we return to them with joy after months and years of absence, spent on a richer soil and in a more genial climate? These feelings are, in the truest sense of the word, fetishistic; and fetishism is no bundle of savage traditions to be handed over to the student of folklore; it is something that lies permanently at the root of man's life; something that inspired Wordsworth's noblest poetry and Turner's pictures; something that is destined to play a large and growing part in the religious culture of the future.

Be this as it may, the necessity of this first condition of patriotism is forcibly illustrated by its absence in the case of the Jews. I speak not of those who are Jews by race, and who become naturalized in the country where they may choose to dwell; but of Jews who cling to their tribal religion, and who, with many admirable qualities of mind and character, have been a source of continual disturbance in Europe, often of tragic outrage, for many centuries.

We may pass, with few words, to the second condition of patriotic feelings—willingness to act under a common government. The Scotch are said, and rightly, to be patriotic Britons, because, however strong their national feeling as Scotchmen, no doubt can be raised as to their acceptance of the central government in London. As to Ireland, the case is obviously different; but to discuss it here would exceed the limits of this paper. As illustrations of the combination of local independence with federal co-operation, two examples are worth considering, because in extent of territory they stand at the two extremes: the Swiss and the American republics.

The third condition is, perhaps, the most important of all. To constitute patriotism, acquiescence in a common government, though essential, is obviously inadequate. Infinitely more important than this are the collective actions, not of the present generation only, but of past generations. Some will tell us that such a thought appeals only to that infinitely small portion of mankind that reads books of history, and that the enormous majority of men and women care little about the matter. Those who think thus are but shallow students of human nature. Did Nelson's signal at Trafalgar stir his rough crews any the less that few or none of them had read Hume's or any other history of England? Men rally round symbols as soldiers round their flag; and increase of knowledge will but make such symbols more potent in the future.

A common country, a common government, common memories,

traditions, enthusiasms—these things constitute patriotism. Of its ethical and political value little need be said on the present occasion. The point to be considered is, In what relation does it stand to Imperialism, which it is now sought to encase in patriotic veneer? As used by British politicians at the present time, the word *imperialism* covers two wholly distinct and even opposed political states. There is the case of India and the Crown colonies, which we govern by force, and to which the word *empire* properly applies. Secondly, there is the case of such colonies as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, which we cannot be said, in any ordinary sense of the word, to govern at all. They make their own marriage laws; they impose what duties they please on the introduction of British produce. The retention of the Crown veto on their acts is as nominal as is the right to veto a Bill which has passed through both Houses of Parliament. Nor do they contribute, in any substantial way, to the maintenance of the British army and navy. No one doubts that the ties which bind the colonies to England—the ties of race, of language, of intimate family relationship—are very real and strong. Equally certain is it that they will not bear straining. As time goes on, and as new generations appear on the scene, the local patriotism of Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Canada will grow stronger. The dream of uniting them into anything that can be called a political federation is swiftly melting away.

The government of British India, like that of the Dutch and the French East Indies, rests, distinctly and avowedly, on material force—force modified, doubtless, by the moral restraints of humanity and justice, which are strongly operative in each of these three cases. On the unrighteous deeds connected with the original conquest there is no reason now to dilate. The continuance of our dominion can only be justified ethically if the result be what it was in the case of the conquest of Gaul and Spain by Rome—a steady progress towards identification of the conqueror and the conquered, ending in the entire removal of all political and social disabilities. So long as this result remains doubtful it will be best to refrain from exultation at the maintenance of our Indian empire. That it is a source of wealth to us, except in so far as it supplies lucrative employment to a few hundreds of our upper middle classes, is an illusion long since dispelled. That the country is growing richer under our sway is often strongly stated, but has also—and especially of late years—been strongly doubted. But the test question remains—Are we preparing India for self-government? Are we

making progress towards obliteration of the social distinction between the governing class and the governed? Unless and until these questions can be answered satisfactorily no one who knows what patriotism really means can pretend to feel patriotic exultation at the maintenance of our Indian empire. We may accept it as a duty inherited from the past. We may recognize its necessity as the only means available for avoiding the miserable anarchy that would follow a successful invasion of India. But to be proud of it is another matter altogether. Between Imperialism and Patriotism there is a gulf set which no sophistries can bridge.

II

ROMAN AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM[1]

POSITIVISTS are well known to be admirers of the Roman Empire. Even Dante's appreciation of Julius Cæsar was not higher than Comte's; and what Comte has said of this great statesman has been reiterated and amplified by M. Pierre Laffitte in his *Grands Types de l'Humanité*,[2] by Dr. Congreve in his lectures on the Roman Empire,[3] and by the Editor of the *Positivist Review* in the *New Calendar of Great Men*.[4] Before the appearance in England of Mommsen's great work,[5] Positivists were content to bear with equanimity the stigma of Cæsarism cast on them by their democratic friends. Guided, though not slavishly guided, by Comte's *Philosophy of History*, they have always seen that in the great Roman Revolution of the century before the Christian era Cæsar was the upholder of progress, the true republican; and that his assassins were what Dante paints them—traitors, or dupes of traitors, to the cause of Humanity. The Roman Empire, with all its abuses, with shortcomings inherent in its origin, often administered by unworthy chiefs, and due account taken of the corruption of its later years, remains, as a whole, one of the noblest instruments of progress ever forged by human wisdom.

This being so, why is it that we look with coldness on the British Empire as it stands, and offer all the opposition in our power to its further extension? The Roman Empire established its

[1] 1900
[2] Vol. ii, pp. 461-96.—ED.
[3] R. Congreve, *The Roman Empire of the West*; 1855.—ED.
[4] See Professor Beesly's biography of Cæsar, pp. 164-68.—ED.
[5] The *Roman History*; 1854-56.—ED.

sway over many nations and languages, welded them into a whole, gave them peace, gave them law. Is not British rule in India and elsewhere tending to do the same, and to do it in a purer and less tyrannical way? Admiration of the Roman Empire, detestation of modern Imperialism—what is to be said of a political school which combines these two principles, except that those who hold them blow hot and cold at once? And yet nothing is more certain than that the Positive school of politics does combine them, and is prepared to justify its attitude. What is the justification?

We have again to go back to the fundamental meaning of the word *Positive.* It is an unattractive word at first hearing; it rouses many objections, and even among Positivists there are some who would like it changed, because it has too harsh, too dry, too doctrinaire a sound. Some would like it changed to *scientific;* some, again, to *humanitarian.* Each class of objectors fails to see that the ideal towards which Positive Philosophy is working is to be both at once. Of its seven characteristic notes the first four—*reality*, *utility*, *certainty*, *precision*—distinguish it from mystical or metaphysical schools, and bring it into touch with science in the rather narrow sense in which that term is often used by physicists. Building on this firm foundation, Positive Philosophy aims at being *organic*, *relative*, and *sympathetic.* It is the second of these three qualities that I wish to speak of now, though in truth it is only by an artificial effort that it can be separated from the rest.

What do we mean by *Relative?* It is best explained by reference to Comte's definition of life as "a continuous and close adjustment of internal spontaneity with external fatality."[1] To speak of the life of an organism apart from its environment is an unintelligible use of words. The words are simply devoid of meaning. The simplest plant—a microscopic fungus, for instance—presupposes certain conditions of atmospheric pressure, of soil, of temperature, and so on, without which it would be non-existent. In animal life it is much easier to recognize this truth; indeed, animal life was spoken of by Bichat with significant exaggeration as the life of *relation*, as distinguished from vegetal life, the life of nutrition.[2] Obviously most of the functions of nerve and muscle consist of continuous relations with the outer world. By one of the five senses the animal perceives its food; by muscular action it seizes and devours it.

Far wider is the significance of relativity when we pass from the

[1] *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, p. 335.

[2] *Cf.* above, pp. 5-6.—ED.

science of biology to that of sociology. Many new factors come into play here. For the present let us concentrate attention on the most important of these—the gradual evolution of the advanced portion of Humanity, often spoken of as the History of Civilization. Pascal taught us long ago that "the whole series of human generations should be looked upon as one and the same man ever living, ever learning."[1] In the eighteenth century many other thinkers, notably Leibnitz and Condorcet, enforced the same truth, the full significance of which it was left for Auguste Comte to discover. More or less dimly the truth has always been perceived by the great leaders of men. "When I was a child," said St. Paul, "I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man I have put away childish things."[2] In his own mystical way he, like Pascal, felt and expressed the analogy between the growth of man and the growth of Humanity.

This being so, it follows that all political judgments of any value must be relative. In other words, we cannot form a sound opinion as to the action of statesmen at any period of history as to the value of laws enacted or of institutions established without taking account of the degree of evolution which the community under consideration has at that time reached. Obviously this view of the matter raises a difficulty, and suggests a danger. It would be so much easier if we could devise a hard-and-fast rule that any one could apply to all cases and all times. Change being a law of all life, individual or social, there is the danger of mistaking what is relative for what is arbitrary; of confounding change in accordance with a definite law, with the fortuitous results of arbitrary caprice or contending passion. But who is prepared to say that political problems are easier than mathematical problems? There is no royal road to the solution of either. Here lies the function of the law-giver, or rather of the law-revealer in science. The planets were thought to move at the capricious will of a deity, till Hipparchus, Ptolemy, and Kepler revealed their laws of movement. So has it been, and so will it be, with the changing phases in the life of Humanity. Comte, aided by his predecessors, has gone very far in determining the laws of these changes. Much more,

[1] From the *Préface sur le Traité du Vide* (1647). A similar thought to Pascal's occurs in the writings of the two Bacons, Descartes, and Fontenelle. Readers interested in the history of this important idea should consult the note on pp. 139–41 of vol. ii (1908) of the complete ed. of the *Œuvres de Blaise Pascal*, by L. Brunschvicg and P. Boutroux, where they will find full references and authorities.—ED.

[2] 1 Corinthians, ch. xiii, 11.—ED.

we cannot doubt, remains to be done by great discoverers in the future.

Enough, nevertheless, has been already done to be of much service in determining questions of the kind raised in this paper. Take, for instance, the great discovery with which the scientific treatment of social evolution may be said to have begun; what is commonly known as the Law of the Three Stages.[1] The law, as all students of Comte are aware, is twofold; it applies on the one hand to man's thoughts, on the other to his activities.[2] As his theories of the world around him are in the first place supernatural and ultimately scientific, so in the department of practical life war takes the first place in the early stages of civilization; pacific industry in the final stage. In either case there is an intermediate phase, or rather there are groups of intermediate phases; but the essential point for our present purpose is that war, which at one period of man's development is a normal condition, becomes at another period an anomalous and morbid condition. Hence it is that a serious student of history forms such diametrically opposite judgments of Julius Cæsar and of Napoleon Bonaparte; regarding the first as a benefactor to mankind, the second as a curse. But let us look at the matter somewhat more closely; turning from Comte's abstract laws to the concrete facts of history.

All will admit that for many centuries before the Christian era the nations of Europe were in a state of incessant warfare. Of the more remote Celtic and Teutonic tribes we know this mainly through their legends; the evidence, however, from this source is overwhelming. Of Greece and Italy, and of the nations in direct contact with them, we know it by recorded history. In Greece the growth of scientific and literary culture went side by side with more effective military discipline. The new force thus created suggested, to Athens first and afterwards to Macedon, the conception of universal empire, futile in the first case, partially successful in the second. Rome, endowed with an incomparably greater genius for organization and eagerly receptive of Greek culture, followed in the same path, and made herself supreme over Italy, over North Africa, over Spain, over nearly all that had been conquered by the successors of Alexander. There remained one danger to the Græco-Roman world of extreme imminence—that of barbarian invasion from the

[1] See p. 90 (note 1).

[2] See *Early Essays on Social Philosophy*, pp. 182–84; *General View*, p. 25; *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iii, pp. 44–55, and vol. iv, p. 157. Also consult Laffitte's *Philosophie Première*, vol. i, especially pp. 377–83.—ED.

north. From this the great republican dictator saved civilization for three centuries by the conquest and the effectual incorporation of Gaul. The work of Rome was secure; and, many years before the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, peace became the law of the progressive nations. Among many things that may be said of the Roman Empire we are entitled to say this: founded by war, at a time when war was the predominant occupation of men, and when industry was left almost entirely to slaves, it turned war to the noblest account that was possible; it was the first sign, and offered the first hope, that war was destined finally to disappear.

One more feature of Roman conquest is to be noted. "The culture, the institutions, even the language of the victors, were eagerly adopted. The grandsons of the men who had fought so gallantly against Cæsar won full citizenship, took their seats in the Senate, and commanded Roman armies."[1] Of the long list of great emperors, most were neither Roman nor Italian. Trajan and Hadrian were Spanish, Marcus Aurelius of Spanish descent, Antoninus was half a Gaul. Others were African, Thracian, Syrian; Diocletian and many of his predecessors were Illyrians. The Roman Empire was in the truest sense an incorporation of discordant nations and languages into a harmonious system, from which the free civilization of Western Europe takes its origin. To compare it to the British Government of Hindostan is misleading. If several of the Governors-General of India had been drawn from the native population, the parallel would be less absurdly inaccurate.[2]

British Government of India is, however, rightly described as an empire; and the title of emperor or empress, taken of late years, wisely or otherwise, by the head of the Government, is at least not a misnomer. Our Indian possessions are a conquest effected by force, and needing force to maintain it. But to use the same word of our self-governing colonies is an abuse of language. Communities free to elect their own Parliaments, to make their own marriage laws, and to impose heavy duties on goods imported from the mother country, free also to choose what share they will take, if any, in military or naval expenditure, cannot be said to constitute an empire. That Australians and most Canadians are knit to us by ties of kindred and language, that in time of danger they form a recruiting-ground for volunteers, are facts of great political importance. If the time should come when the colonies consent to bear their fair share of

[1] *New Calendar of Great Men*, p. 165.

[2] See further on this subject the paper on "The Services of Ancient Rome" in Part V.—ED.

the cost of our army and navy, then, no doubt, Great Britain would have become, not, indeed, an empire, but a federation. How long that federation would stand the strain of party politics and of the enormous spaces that would separate its scattered members is another question; and its discussion is by no means urgent. As yet the Australians, New Zealanders, and Canadians fighting for us in South Africa are paid by the British taxpayer. Our colonists are indulging in war at the expense of the mother-country.

The truth is that the very conception of empire for progressive nations has become for many centuries a gross anachronism. The Roman Empire is an unique fact in history; meeting in an admirable way a peculiar combination of circumstances which, as we see when we analyse it, cannot recur. Between ancient Rome and modern France or Britain a series of events has passed; an evolution of thought and of action, which might be almost called a transformation of political species, were it not for the continuity and unity which pervade the whole. The rise of the Catholic Church, feudalism, substitution of serfage for slavery and of hired labour for serfage, the liberation of thought, the growth of science, the establishment of international diplomacy, the Dutch, English, American, and French revolutions—these and other things have brought about a new order of things in which the permanent subjection of Europeans to a king, queen, or cabinet resident thousands of miles away is entirely inconceivable. I say *permanent* subjection; for laws of historical evolution, plain enough to men of ordinary wisdom and average morality, may be resisted, and for a time with apparent success, by policies of "blood and iron," or of blood and gold, such as before now have tempted unscrupulous statesmen to national disaster. A strong statesman untroubled by conscience, finding a policy of reaction serve his turn, may resolve to "see it through." He may succeed for a time; a Napoleon for a generation; a smaller man for a few years; time enough to work irreparable mischief to his nation, though not enough to arrest the onward march of Humanity.

By creed and by instinct Positivists are nationalist no less than humanitarian. Their firm conviction that the interests of Humanity are in the long run safe will not deter them—will, on the contrary, impel them to do their utmost, be it much or little, to save their country from danger, physical or moral; from the danger of injustice or the danger of invasion. It is for this reason that they have taken and will take every occasion to resist so far as they can the spread of the imperialistic taint; that at the present moment they

are making common cause with those who seek to prevent the establishment of a new Ireland seven thousand miles away; and who, with this view, are urging that our inevitable triumph in the present struggle shall not be embittered and nullified by suppression of the two South African Republics.

III

THE SEA[1]

CAPTAIN MAHAN'S books on sea power have been widely read and carefully considered. No one before him had so precisely analysed the conditions which enable a nation to be preponderant on the sea, and the results which follow from such preponderance. It is safe to say that Englishmen, with all their pride in their past naval achievements, had not realized the full importance of the subject until it had been presented to them in all its bearings in these writings of a friendly foreigner. They have been a powerful factor in stimulating the vast increase of our navy which began a few years ago, and which is still advancing with giant strides. The past history of the world is invoked, and is studied with a zest wholly new to naval men. From the second Punic War to the struggle of England with Napoleon, or of Japan with China, the enormous advantage possessed by the combatant who has command of the sea is made obvious to all.

But this conclusion, though applicable to every phase of the world's history, Athenian, Venetian, or Dutch, is of far greater moment at the particular point at which Western civilization now stands. In ancient history nothing was thought of but the Mediterranean and the countries which contained it. To this in the Middle Ages the Baltic and the German Ocean were added. Four hundred years ago the discovery of the Americas brought new problems to statesmanship; and the struggle to resist the monopoly of Spain on the South Atlantic agitated Europe, and England especially, till the middle of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the most pressing questions of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even of the eighteenth century related in the main to Europe. And so it has been in our own century till close upon the present time.

Three conditions have been operating during the last generation

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to bring about a fundamental change. First among those is the enormous increase in the velocity of transit from one end of the world to the other. When New Zealand half a century ago became a colony it took as many months to sail there as it now takes weeks. It is the same, of course, with India, China, or the Cape. In a year or two from now Pekin will be reached from Europe in a fortnight. The means of travel have of course increased with its rapidity, and in far greater proportion. Where fifty years ago there was one ship bound for the Antipodes there are now fifty. Secondly, the vast continent of Africa has been at last opened to explorers and exploiters. Immense regions hitherto left blank on the map and thought to be desert are now known to possess, at least when cultivated, boundless possibilities of wealth. A scramble among the great powers of the West for the occupation of them has ensued, and is still going on. Yet a third factor in the situation has recently been added. An ancient empire, inhabited by the most industrious population in the world, as rich in products that Europe needs as in consumers of what Europe produces, has been assailed by an ambitious neighbour, and so smitten as to be compelled to open its gates. The Japanese war with China has done what a series of English wars have failed to do. Immense possibilities of profit lie open to European and American traders. A bottomless source of mutual jealousies has been set flowing.

The result of all this is that the statesmen of Europe—not to speak of those of America—have no longer to confine their attention to this or that portion of the earth's surface. They are compelled, each and all of them, to deal with the whole planet. And the first fact that meets them is the elementary geographical truth that three-fourths of the earth's surface are covered by water. It was a shock to the Germans three years ago, when England was angrily resenting their sympathy with Kruger; it was a still greater shock to France the other day to find that, if it came to blows, they could not move five thousand men across the sea if England chose to say them nay. They ought to have known this, of course; but nations, like men, are shy of grasping disagreeable truths until the time comes for their practical application. They are now digesting another truth which is an obvious corollary from the foregoing. Germany, France, Holland, Portugal, and every other power that holds, or hopes to hold, distant colonies, holds them by sufferance from England.

It has been a principle of modern statesmanship, ever since the fall of the Papacy, to resist the preponderance of any one State in

Europe, and, if need be, to combine practical efforts for that purpose. Charles V, Philip II, Louis XIV in the later half of his reign, and the first Napoleon experienced in turn this very salutary limitation of their ambitions. The field of conflict was far more limited then than at the present time. Europe was its centre, and the Indian and Atlantic seas its extreme boundaries. The vast Pacific ocean, with the lands that lie there, was still outside the limits. It is otherwise now. Captain Mahan severely criticizes France under Louis XIV and his successor for her blindness to what was taking place on the sea, and for not uniting her efforts with those of Holland to resist the maritime domination of England. He says :—

> While England's policy thus steadily aimed at widening and strengthening the bases of her sway upon the ocean, the other governments of Europe seemed blind to the dangers to be feared from her sea growth. The miseries resulting from the overweening power of Spain in days long gone by seemed to be forgotten; forgotten also the more recent lesson of the bloody and costly wars provoked by the ambition and exaggerated power of Louis XIV. Under the eyes of the statesmen of Europe, there was steadily and visibly being built up a third overwhelming power, destined to be used as selfishly, as aggressively, though not as cruelly, and much more successfully, than any which had preceded it. This was the power of the sea.[1]

It needs no special boldness of prophecy to foretell that this condition of things will not be tolerated indefinitely by the civilized world. We are told that the existence of the British Empire depends upon it. If that motley assemblage of Asiatic and African dependencies, and of self-governing colonies, content for the present with the protection of a fleet for which they are not taxed, has no other bond of cohesion than this, it is very certain that its life will not be long. When it falls we are told by its defenders that the British population will starve, for the United Kingdom depends for its food on foreign supplies. It is hard to appreciate such an argument. Is it contended that, when England no longer imposes on the world with its fleet, every other nation will combine to prevent American, Russian, or Indian cornships from entering British ports? Why have they not done the same by Holland, whose once formidable fleet has disappeared for two centuries, and whose people are none the worse?

[1] A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783;* p. 63. —ED.

Captain Mahan has let fall a significant expression which one day will become a household word—"The common birthright of all peoples, the sea."[1] He has struck the right note; and, in spite of deeply ingrained prejudices to the contrary, that way lies the path of progress. The common birthright is not to be monopolized by any power whatsoever—even by our own. The ultimate goal lying before us, unattainable as yet, but to which each generation should seek to approximate more nearly, was pointed out fifty years ago by Auguste Comte—a combined navy of the Western Powers, established for the double purpose of preventing piracy on the high seas, and of promoting physical and geographical discovery.[2] France, in Comte's view, should take the first step in this great enterprise; that first step consisting in the reduction of her own navy to the fourth part of its existing dimensions. In civilized communities it is not tolerated that any wealthy citizen should swagger about with a band of armed retainers. And so it will be with navies when the world is wiser.

Changes of this kind are not brought about by the unmixed operation of moral and intellectual causes. Material circumstances intervene. And in the present case they are not wanting. During the last decade, while the British navy has been increasing rapidly, three new navies have appeared on the horizon, all of them fully determined to make their weight felt—the German, the Japanese, and, latest and most formidable of all, the American. The time for piercing the Isthmus of Panama is at hand; and it is an open secret that the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty is to be set aside.[3] The Americans have become a power on the Pacific Ocean; and they intend to keep the approaches to their Pacific as well as to their Atlantic coasts in their own hands. Not all the fulsome flattery that has been lavished so profusely from this side of the water on the great Republic will alter the remorseless logic of events. The supremacy of any one nation on the sea will not be tolerated much longer.

Let us not make the mistake of dismissing the Czar's appeal to the nations to meet in conclave and discuss disarmament either as an idle dream or a diplomatic trick. When the Council meets, the impossibility of discussing the size of armies irrespective of the size of navies will be foremost among the facts to be met. What will be

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[2] See *General View*, p. 285.—Ed.

[3] The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 was superseded by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty (1901), which allowed the United States to build the Panama Canal while still guaranteeing its neutralization.—Ed.

our claim? Hitherto we have been content to hold that our navy should be equal to the two strongest navies that could be brought against us. Shall we be prepared to better that claim now, and to maintain that we should be equal, not to the strongest two, but to the strongest four? Such a course would be almost equivalent to putting ourselves outside the pale of civilization, and proclaiming ourselves the public enemy. Yet if we do not take it we shall be told that we do not make ourselves absolutely secure against combined attack. In a state of civilization no one is absolutely secure; nor is it well that he should be so. Absolute security belongs only to the despot who lives in an armed stronghold involving the absolute insecurity of everyone around him. Let me quote from the Editor of the *Positivist Review:* "What is the meaning of this claim to absolute security......that we shall go to war with impunity—that we shall be insured in advance against the consequences? Who are we that we should be exempt from the penalties affixed by Nature to folly and crime, whether of individuals or nations?......In the field of international morality......the dread of consequences is at present the chief security for fair dealing. No true patriot, therefore, would desire his country to be invulnerable. He would dread for her this gift, fatal as the ring of Gyges. The true glory of a country, as of an individual, lies not in wealth and strength, but in equity, in moderation, in nobleness of temper."[1]

[1] From Professor Beesly's essay on "England and the Sea," in *International Policy*, 2nd ed., pp. 135-36.—ED.

Chapter III

WAR AND PEACE

I

DEMOCRACY AND WAR[1]

Thirty or forty years ago there was no surer way of catching the ear of a popular audience than by denouncing any of the wars with Asiatic or African nations in which this country happened for the time to be engaged. John Bright's voice was heard in the land in those days. Animated by deep and generous sympathies, and guided by convictions as narrow as they were intense, he taught the crowds who listened to him that our political and social evils were due to the domination of a privileged and self-seeking class of land-owners. Driven by his and Cobden's efforts from their entrenchment of the Corn Laws, they clung desperately to every vantage-ground that remained. So long as workmen were excluded from the suffrage the resources of the nation would continue to be wasted in aggressive wars, waged nominally for the sake of trade, but in reality to provide positions of profit and dignity for the needy sons of lords and squires. To meet these evils, to reduce our overgrown armaments to reasonable proportions, two measures were necessary and sufficient—free trade and popular suffrage. The first had been gained, the second still remained to be fought for.

Democracy came, rather sooner than Bright expected, with Disraeli's Reform Act of 1867. It has so happened that during a great part of the time that has passed since then England has been under the sway of a Minister whose personal predilections were entirely on the side of peace. Nevertheless, there has been no period since Waterloo during which England has been more constantly engaged in war. Wars in West Africa, in South Africa, in East Africa, in North Africa; wars in Afghanistan, wars on the frontier of India, wars in Burma; and now, worse than all, rumours of wars for the maintenance of English supremacy in the central river of the Chinese Empire. How far each or any of these wars

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was justifiable is not now the question. The point for inquiry is: How far has the transfer of political power from the middle class to the mass of the population affected the temper of the people with regard to warlike proceedings? On the whole, it would seem to have inclined them to acquiesce in war and in preparations for war far more readily than was the case before the democratic revolution. The most important military enterprise of our time, the foundation of an English empire in the valley of the Nile, has been accepted without a murmur. Sixteen years ago, when we suppressed the first and solitary effort for Egyptian independence, a few scattered protests were heard and disregarded. A few days ago we soaked the sands of the desert with the blood of its bravest inhabitants, and the result is hailed with unanimous acclamation as a glorious victory. Sensational newspaper correspondents have been piling up the horrors of the skeletons through which our soldiers have been marching. Nothing is said of the ten thousand corpses that they left on the battlefield, if, indeed, *battue* be not the fitter name for an encounter waged with such hopeless inequality of weapons. But this by the way; the point here insisted on is that it is not the change from aristocratic or plutocratic to democratic government that will bring about the millennium of peace.

Nothing perhaps has more helped to expose the delusion that democracy and peace were inseparably associated than the example of the great American democracy since the days of slavery were ended. Before that time there had been iniquitous wars enough. Half the territory of the Spanish Republic of Mexico had been shamelessly seized. But the Mexican wars were supposed to be accounted for by the eagerness of the slave-owning aristocracy of the Southern States of the Union to enlarge their boundaries, increase their voting power in Congress, and so preserve their cherished institution. Slavery once abolished, war, it was boasted, was abolished likewise. Needless to say that all such hopes have been by this time effectively dissipated. As gratuitous and unprovoked a war[1] as history records has resulted in developing the latest greeds of the American democracy, and in bringing her before the world as a new aggressive Power, prepared to take her share in plundering the planet. There are far-sighted schemers who dream of a union between the two English-speaking Powers in carrying out this elevated purpose, and in bringing the tropical regions of

[1] The Spanish-American war of 1898.—Ed.

the world—of the New World to begin with—under Anglo-Saxon administration. Were this dream to be brought within measurable distance of realization the Schleswig-Holstein drama would be repeated on a vaster scale. The spoilers of the weak would fight in deadly duel over the spoils.

What are the agencies which in a democratic community make for war? A few weeks ago I was asking an Englishman, long resident in America, a well-qualified and well-trained observer of political facts, how he accounted for the sudden explosion of the war fever, repugnant as all aggressive war was known to be to all the more stable and progressive elements of society, especially in the Eastern States. His reply was significant: "Sensational newspapers and Sunday-school philanthropy."

It is time that people should set themselves to consider more seriously than they have done as yet the character and the procedure of the amazing spiritual power which they have allowed to grow up during the last half-century, unchallenged and uncriticized, in the shape of the cheap newspaper Press. I need not apologize for calling it a spiritual power—a power that acts on opinion, as distinguished from legislative or administrative powers that direct or control action. So far as politics are concerned, it is at present the only spiritual power in existence, the Churches having practically abdicated their claim, so irresistible a few centuries ago, to be listened to in public matters, or urging it only in ways too obviously mischievous to involve much risk of its acceptance. In the times of the Commonwealth, and for more than a hundred years afterwards, the place of the priest in questions of public interest was taken by the pamphleteer. Here, at any rate, the guarantees of personal character and individual responsibility were retained. It was known, not merely what the adviser said, but what manner of man he was that advised. Moral securities of this kind are wholly wanting in the anonymous Press of the present day. It would be something gained if the political counsellor could be recognized as a very young man, with no experience of life outside a public school or college, no political training other than that of a debating society, no reasons for writing except to make a livelihood while waiting for briefs.

Anonymity is an evil, but it is not the worst evil. A great political leader may gather young men round him, inspire them with his principles, and use them to develop his policy as a master painter may entrust disciples with the less important parts of his canvas. But the modern newspaper is something very different

from a political studio. It is a great commercial enterprise, bringing in dividends to shareholders, and relying on advertisements and the maintenance of an enormous circulation. It has to flatter popular prejudice, to prophesy smooth things, to lay hold of startling events, to use the strongest colours, to listen readily to wild conjectures—in a word, to be sensational. To say that all newspapers yield to this temptation would be, of course, absurdly unjust. But the temptation exists for all, and many give way to it. It is commonly said that the most profitable page of a newspaper is that which contains its sporting intelligence. War carried on by Englishmen against barbarous tribes, or by Americans against Spaniards, has all the fascination of sport on the grandest scale—excitement of the keenest kind, without the remotest personal danger. War correspondents have developed a new branch of the fine arts. By their aid, and by the telegraph, we are brought as near to the scene of action as though we were at a Spanish bull-fight. In a word, it is to the commercial interest of the newspapers that we should be at war.

"Sensational newspapers and Sunday-school philanthropy." The second is intimately associated with the first, and is quite as dangerous. Man's altruistic instincts are his most precious possession—his principal leverage for spiritual progress, his sole safeguard against sinking into a piece of industrial or military mechanism. But, like other instincts, they may be indulged with immense detriment and danger to all around him. Unreasonable gushes of benevolence led the followers of Rousseau and Robespierre by a straight path to the Reign of Terror. On a small scale or a great, the same thing is happening every day. The story of the church-goer who was so deeply stirred by a charity sermon that he stole his neighbour's purse to empty into the collecting-plate is not so very exaggerated a parody. A story reaches us of gross misgovernment or cruelty committed by some foreign potentate. Special correspondents are sent out; vivid pictures of atrocities are placarded through the country. The cry arises: "In the name of Humanity let the Government be suppressed, let civilized rule be established." Whether action follows the cry, or whether it is allowed to die out, depends on whether it suits the purposes of aggressive statesmen to push the boundaries of empire in that particular direction. All this we have seen over and over again. When we want to annex Burma, we fill the newspapers with denunciations of the cruelties of King Thebaw. Americans who wished for Cuba fed their countrymen for years with exaggerated stories of

Spanish misgovernment. Atrocities committed by the Khalifa are inducing Englishmen to listen with perfect equanimity to the tale of the massacre of ten thousand Africans at Khartoum. The thing has been developed into a system. When a statesman wishes for a new province a skirmishing body of philanthropists prepares the way.

On the whole, then, those who look to peace as the primary guarantee for moral and social progress will do well not to pin their faith to democratic institutions. Europe has been startled during the last few weeks by the Czar's proposals for disarmament. They show at least that, so far as governmental action can forward so vital a change, as much, and perhaps more, is to be hoped from strongly centralized dictatorships as from popular assemblies split into rival parties, and swayed hither and thither by an anonymous and irresponsible Press.

But for a permanent remedy for the dangers that are every day threatening civilization we must look to the formation of an organic body of principles, held by a few in the first place, but inevitably spreading in the way in which truth of all kinds has been accustomed to spread and prevail. Rapid results in the first instance it is chimerical to hope for. The beginnings must be small and slow. A small group of resolute thinkers in each of the civilized countries of the world, brought into communication with each other, having clear conceptions of the essential principles of social order and social evolution, and a competent knowledge of the special circumstances of each political community, would be prepared, as each serious exigency arose, with the outlines of a pacific policy which would commend itself to the body of their fellow-citizens with increasing force as the years went on, and would guide public opinion into safe channels. Stringent measures should be taken for the absolute exclusion from such a society of theological influences of every kind; for theological religion, ever since the Crusades, has been one of the chief sources of division among the nations. The aim is to found, on purely human principles, an association which, as each occasion arose, would point out the way of conciliating national independence with international peace.[1] The path seems narrow and arduous. But there is no other which leads to the goal; and when the first few pioneers have led the way it will be easier for others to follow.

[1] Such an association was proposed by Comte, to be called the *Comité positif occidental*. See above, pp. 296–97.—ED.

II

CHRISTIANITY AND PEACE[1]

"WAR and the preparations for war," said the *Spectator* of December 24,[2] "are originally due to the fears and passions and clashing interests of the different peoples, and there are only three ways in which these effects of those motives can be cured. One is the rise of a dominant Power, such as Rome was when Augustus decreed that all the world should be taxed.......The second way is a federation of Europe, with a clause in its constitution that any State declaring war on another State shall at once be occupied by the armies of the remainder. Does anyone hope that this condition will ever be realized? And the third way is for the white world to turn sincerely Christian. That is not impossible, as we all hope and some believe."

If to turn Christian would remove the cause of war, it might be thought that the world would not hesitate. Laying aside all philosophical speculations, it would rush, one would suppose, to the Church door and seek sanctuary at all costs. And yet it is evident that the *Spectator* itself, with all its superabundance of orthodox religious sentiment, hesitates much. All hope, it says, for the result, and some believe. We are left in doubt as to whether the *Spectator* itself has passed beyond the hope to the belief.

In considering the question, the first difficulty that meets us is to find out what people mean when they speak of being sincerely Christian. Between acceptance of the morality of the Sermon on the Mount and acceptance of the conclusions of the Council of Trent there is evidently a vast interval. Which of the two extremes is meant? And if neither, then what particular stage in the intervening distance? Is belief in the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus an essential element in sincere Christianity? If so, the time when, according to this theory, the sword can be converted into a ploughshare is far off. We have, then, first to decide whether by sincere Christianity we mean Christianity with dogma, or Christianity without dogma. Let us begin with the latter. It is fully set forth for us in the later writings of Tolstoy. True Christianity, in this view of it, consists in absolute forgiveness of injuries, and in firm resolution not to repay wrongdoing with

[1] February, 1899. [2] 1898

violence. The crucial case he selects is the duty of every true Christian to refuse service in the army. When summoned to obey the law of universal conscription, he should decline to comply, in full consciousness of the consequences of his refusal, imprisonment, starvation, torture. Tolstoy pushes his principles to their farthest extremes. In case of invasion of his country by a hostile force he is prepared to advocate absolute non-resistance to the invaders. These views, he thinks, once realized in practice by a few pioneers, will spread by their own intrinsic truth and beauty; and war will in the end disappear for mere lack of fighters. The possible alternative that a small remnant may be left in whom the old Adam survives, and that this remnant may reduce the disarmed and non-resistant mass to slavery, Tolstoy does not seem to think it worth while to discuss.

Probably few people will think it necessary to devote much time to the consideration of this singular theory. Its chief interest lies in indicating how very short a way the teaching of the Gospels will carry us in the practical conduct of life. From the Christianity of Jesus we may pass to something very different—the Christianity of St. Paul and of the communities founded by him in Greece and Asia Minor. Here we are in presence of a Church; a confederation of men and women striving to lead a pure and regenerate life, and relying for strength to do so on faith in the incarnate, the crucified, and the risen Christ. In ordinary life the members of this body were governed, on the whole, by ordinary human motives. They held aloof, indeed, as far as possible from military service; but, as Gibbon tells us, "their love of action soon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the Church.......The safety of that society, its honour, its aggrandizement, were productive, even in the most pious minds, of a spirit of patriotism such as the first of the Romans had felt for the Republic; and sometimes of a similar indifference in the use of whatever means might probably conduce to so desirable an end."[1] When the Roman Empire adopted Christianity, Christians filled the ranks of its armies; and when the Empire broke up, the warriors of one barbaric king fought against another—Christian against Christian no less than Christian against Mohammedan or pagan. In the first class of contests undoubtedly religion was a restraining influence, as was seen in the capture of Rome by Alaric. But just in the same proportion were the passions of Christians against outsiders embittered and intensified. Charlemagne in his

[1] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xv.—Ed.

dealings with the pagans of Saxony, the Crusaders in their struggle for Jerusalem, paid very little attention to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

Christianity reached its maximum of political power in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. Within the boundaries of Christendom it exercised a strong restraining influence on international conflicts. Visions of the triumph of the Church over the whole known world seemed within reach. Union of the Eastern and Western Churches was successfully attempted; Mohammedanism was thought to be near its downfall; the mendicant orders, acting as a powerful Papal militia, were sending their agents to found missions in the boundless regions that lay eastward of the Saracen. A spiritual monarchy holding sway over the whole planet was on the point of accomplishment, to which all temporal sovereignties would yield homage. To men like Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon the peace of the world, temporal no less than spiritual, seemed within measurable distance.

But new forces were at work already which the Catholic Church was powerless to withstand. Industry, first fostered by Benedictine monks, had passed into the hands of guilds and town councils; and became, if not hostile to the Church, yet disconnected from it and secular. The Scholastic philosophy, importing into Christendom the dangerous philosophy of Aristotle and his Arabian commentators, undermined Catholicism by the very metaphysical controversies which had been provoked for its defence. Meanwhile the Kings were asserting their independence of the Popes, the civil law was taking precedence of the canon law. All these things took place two hundred years before Luther. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while the systematic disruption of the Christian world was going on, Christianity was the direct stimulant of war. With the Treaty of Westphalia[1] the struggle ended; but neither camp retained the slightest hope of mastery over the other. From that time to this, Christianity has continued to exercise a potent ethical influence, the value of which wise men will not dispute; but politically it has been powerless, except for purposes of reaction and discord. Alternately flattering socialist dreams and fomenting anti-republican conspiracies, it shows itself equally hostile to order and to progress.

If peace is to be established in the world, it must be based on principles of public order laid down in conformity with the laws of

[1] 1648

sociological science. There are laws of healthy living for political communities no less than for individual organisms; and it is the business of publicists and of statesmen to find them out and to enforce them. Prominent among the principles involved in them is the truth that vast territorial extension is incompatible with the health of States. Beyond certain limits, which it is not difficult to define with sufficient precision for the purpose, the reaction of the whole upon the parts, which is an imperative condition of social harmony, becomes impracticable; and the way is left open for guilty ambitions and acts of fraudulent violence by which a few reckless adventurers may involve the mass of their fellow-citizens in disastrous war. Short of this, the very fact of maintaining armed forces at vast distances from their homes involves moral and social dangers of the worst kind, as has been shown abundantly by recent revelations of the physical condition of our soldiers in India.

In Europe, as it now stands, there are a considerable number of small States: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Greece, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania. The imminent probability of a disruption of the incoherent empire of Austria, the increasing tendency to advocate "Home Rule all round" in the United Kingdom, the possibility of Alsace and Lorraine becoming a buffer State between France and Germany—all these things point not, as is commonly said, to a further increase of large States, but to a multiplication of small ones; and if we consider the likelihood that both the Spanish and the Italian monarchies may develop into federal republics, we shall not find it a very difficult stretch of imagination to forecast a future in which the civilized world will become a system of small and truly self-governing States, from which the idea of the military predominance of any one among them will be entirely extirpated. Language and tradition may for a long time continue to hold some of these communities together in loosely united groups; but this, when unaccompanied by naval and military apparatus, would be perfectly compatible with the general harmony. At a very early stage of this evolution the dominant power in North America would have reverted to her pacific tradition; and where the northern continent led the southern would soon follow.

And if any barbaric Power, like Russia, chose for a time to stand outside this system of pacific States and to retain its vast accumulation of destructive forces, it would be powerless in the last resort to withstand the United States of Civilization. Such retention of defensive armaments as the attitude of that Power might

render necessary would but consolidate the Union of Peace by the sense of a common danger, until the retrograde State came to see that its economic safety and social well-being depended on laying its sword aside and sharing in the common lot.

On the whole, it will be found that the second of the three remedies proposed by the *Spectator* is less chimerical and more effective than at first sight it might appear.

III

THE PEACE CONFERENCE[1]

WHAT is the true significance of the Conference at the Hague? Has it been the hopeless failure which its opponents foretold from the beginning? Or will it, on the other hand, take its place in history as the beginning of a new era? It was belittled at the outset and throughout its course from two totally opposed points of view: by the enemies and by the friends of progress—by believers in the old system of theology and war from which Humanity is slowly emerging, and by those who look forward to a new world of peaceful industry in which war shall have no place. To the first the success of the Conference appeared disastrous; to the second, hopelessly impossible. Of the blind prejudices and frankly selfish interests of the first little need be said here. In the main the actual administration of European affairs is in the hands of men to whom war and the apparatus of war are by far the most important objects of consideration. On the well-being of society as a whole they do not spend five minutes of thought in a month. Apart from personal ambitions, what they think about is the interest of their country. Will the area of territory over which their administrative sway reaches be diminished or extended? To this question all others are quite secondary. From the beginning of their career no other point of view has been possible to them. Those who instructed them looked at things in that light, and so will those whom they teach. To consolidate the military and administrative power of the government to which they belong is the first object of their lives. To a French politician the supreme question is, How shall we recover

[1] September, 1899. The Peace Conference referred to was that which assembled at the Hague in July, 1899, on the initiative of Nicholas II of Russia, and which resulted in the first Hague Convention.—ED.

Alsace and Lorraine? or if not, then, How shall we found an African or Eastern Empire to rival that of England? British politicians think of the sovereignty of the seas, the retention of India, the occupation of the river valleys of Africa and China. Russian and German statesmen are similarly occupied.

But great changes in the structure of society are rarely due to politicians. While these do their work, well or ill, from day to day, processes go on around them silently for years or centuries, resulting in new growths with which statesmen are but little concerned till they approach maturity. Whatever part may have been played by any prominent ruler who may chance to have connected his name with them is usually found to be altogether subordinate. Constantine appended his seal to the fact that Christianity had become the dominant religion of the Roman world. It was not unimportant that he should have done so; but with the fact itself he had little to do. A long time had passed since the days of the Apostles; a long time was yet to pass before paganism disappeared.

So it has been and will be in the transition of man's activity from the state of war to the state of peace. No greater change in man's position and activities on this planet can be conceived: we need not wonder it should be so long in coming. The Roman Empire began the work; after the fall of the Empire the Papacy carried it on; the very Crusades promoted peace among the nations who engaged in them. In recent centuries the approach towards peace has been far more direct and determined. The establishment of a diplomatic council after the religious wars of the seventeenth century,[1] the rise of modern industry and commerce, the intellectual bonds woven by art, literature, and scientific discovery, the sense of physical unity of our planet now that its remotest provinces are brought into instantaneous communication—all these things and many others have co-operated to the same result. And the result is that the century which is about to close may be called, by contrast with those which have gone before it, the first century of European peace. Since the sanguinary orgies of the Napoleonic wars, that peace has been seriously disturbed only by the brief Crimean war, and the still briefer though more disastrous conflict of France with Germany.

In the passage from war to peace there are various stages.[2] The

[1] The allusion is to the prolonged diplomatic proceedings at the Congress of Münster, which eventually resulted in the Treaty of Westphalia and the close of the "Thirty Years' War" of 1618-1648.—ED.

[2] *Cf.* p. 396.—ED.

first of these is the transition from offensive to defensive war, as shown in the contrast of mediæval wars with those of antiquity. The phase through which we are now passing marks a further progress; defence without war; vast military armaments, maintained at enormous cost, but without breach of peace. This was the burden which the Congress at the Hague was convoked to remove, or at least to alleviate. In this purpose it has notoriously failed. Yet even the failure has its encouraging side. Fears had been aroused lest pressure for disarmament might sow the seed of fresh quarrels; and these fears have not been realized.

But the scheme of organized arbitration which has resulted from the Conference has in some respects surpassed the hopes of the most sanguine. Of this scheme the most important clause is that which provides automatic machinery for convoking the arbitrating Council, in the event of any serious breach of the peace being threatened, without waiting for the invitation of the two contending Powers: a clause commonly known as that of d'Estournelles, though its adoption was largely due to the eminent French statesman, M. Bourgeois. Everyone who remembers the facts must admit that if any such machinery had been in operation thirty years ago, during the months that preceded the Franco-German war, even Bismarck would have been unable to accomplish his guilty purposes. It is deplorable that the obstinate determination of the British Government to interfere with the independence of the Transvaal should have prevented the application of this remedial measure to South Africa. But a glance at the map of the world will show the numerous points of danger at which the preventive action of the new policy may be of service. For Cuba and the Philippines it comes too late; but throughout the whole range of the South American republics, in Samoa, in Siam, in Persia, above all in the vast empire of China, now being opened definitely to the scientific industry of the West, it may work with the happiest results.

Another feature of the Conference is of extreme significance. It has been in the strict sense of the word what the early Church Councils claimed to be, but never were—œcumenical. It embraced the whole civilized world. More than thirty years ago a group of Positivists put forward some suggestions for regulating International Policy.[1] They dealt with the relations of the West to the East; to India, to China, to Japan, to uncivilized communities. But they

[1] See p. 373 (note 2).

hardly ventured to forecast a time at which representatives of Eastern nations should take their place at the Council Board with Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, and Germans. Comte indeed, in his *General View*, published in 1848, sketched out the plan of a Positivist Committee, in which every nation of the East and West would be represented.[1] But this Committee was to act avowedly outside of the official world. Its function will be to create and guide public opinion, not to draw up protocols for the guidance of statesmen. It has its own distinct part to play, quite apart from the sphere of diplomatic intervention of which we are now speaking.

One more feature of the recent Conference deserves a word of comment. It was noticed with surprise in several English journals that in the opening ceremonial prayer to the Supreme Being was entirely omitted. Why was this? For the obvious reason that there was no Supreme Being in the worship of whom all members of the Conference could unite. It was the most significant of all possible reminders that God can no longer be regarded as a bond of union between the nations. In the old Hebrew or Assyrian legend, when the human race was engaged in the construction of the tower of Babel, the powers above thought it needful to divide the vast and growing population into discordant sections, lest remaining united it should become too powerful. That verdict of disunion has never been revoked. Theological religion from that time to this has divided the nations, not united them. Even a purely European conference would find it hard to draw up a ritual with which its meetings should begin. For should the prayers read be Mohammedan or Christian? If the latter, should they be offered by Greek, Roman, Anglican, or Lutheran officials? Overstepping the boundaries of Europe and including the vast populations of Eastern Asia, the problem of theological prayer becomes hopelessly insoluble. Catholic and Protestant missionaries are not yet agreed as to what is the proper Chinese translation of the word *God*. Confucians, Shintoists, Buddhists, and Brahmins are wholly doubtful as to what the word means.

On a sober review of the whole situation, and after making all necessary deductions for the perverse prejudices of the European public and for the selfish ambition of statesmen, it seems impossible not to recognize in the Peace Congress of this year a sign of definite

[1] Comte proposed to call this Committee the *Comité positif occidental*. It was not, however, actually founded until 1903. See *Phil. Pos.*, vol. vi, ch. lvii, pp. 544–45, and *General View*, pp. 284–90. *Cf.* above, pp. 296–97.—ED.

and substantial progress towards the reign of Humanity. Her kingdom is coming: is near at hand. That it may be speedily and firmly established is the supreme object of our prayer and work.

IV

THE FUTURE[1]

ALL men who have served their kind faithfully and well have looked forward to a future which they knew that they should never reach. Sometimes the promised land they sought was visible, tangible, temporal. Sometimes it was ideal and spiritual. And, in the latter case, the aim with some has had no relation to terrestrial things, and those who strove for it have felt themselves to be, as the Epistle to the Hebrews describes them, strangers and pilgrims on the earth. With others, again, the guiding vision has been that of Humanity growing slowly but surely to perfection, with Earth for her home. The tyranny of the present, which a recent writer on evolution has imputed to the principal thinkers of our time, and, indeed, of almost all times, has no existence but in his own imagination. Long before Shakespeare's time Man has been known to be a being of large discourse, looking before and after.[2]

Comte has developed this thought of Shakespeare in a way widely different in extent and in character from that of any previous thinker. Of the four volumes of his great work on *Positive Polity*, the third is devoted to the Philosophy of History, the fourth to the Future of Man. The purpose of his life was to implant in men's minds and hearts the conception of Humanity. Humanity for him, and for those who follow him, is not the mere assemblage of men, women, and children who at this or that moment may be alive. These form but a small part of the whole. What Comte strove for is that the population of the present, to use his own words, "should be made conscious of standing between the mass of those who have gone before, and of those who will follow after." "Our intercourse with the dead, and even with the unborn, should be more constant, although less special, than with our own contemporaries."[3] "Men are fellow-labourers in a continuous work which never has exclusive

[1] 1902 [2] *Hamlet*, act iv, sc. iv.—ED.
[3] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 21.—ED.

relation to a single group, but always to the whole human race. The present works for the future, as the past worked for the present."

Continuity with the Past is thus the fundamental principle of Comte's conception of the Future. If the Past has been rightly interpreted, if it has been shown to be subject to definite laws of development, there is a strong presumption in favour of a forecast of the Future founded on the continuous operation of those laws. Such a forecast is, indeed, sure to be inaccurate in many details. It will not make sufficient allowance for obstructions; it will be often wrong in its indication of the time at which an anticipated change will occur. Those who are familiar with Comte's distinction between abstract and concrete laws,[1] and of the extreme difficulty, even in the simplest physical sciences, of passing from the abstract to the concrete, will be prepared for a far wider margin of uncertainty when this transition has to be made in so complex a science as sociology. Superficial readers of Comte smile at his anticipations. Closer study would show them that, in the half-century that has passed since he wrote, changes as great as any that he foretold have begun, and are steadily proceeding; and that many of these changes are in the direction which he had indicated. In estimating the force and direction of social currents, it has always to be remembered that institutions, empires, creeds, may be undermined and near their downfall when the flattering voices of their supporters are at their loudest.

Comte's programme, frankly announced in 1848 on the title-page of his *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*, was *Réorganiser sans dieu ni roi, par le culte systématique de l'Humanité.* In my translation of this work, published in 1865 under the title of *A General View of Positivism,* I rendered the words *sans dieu ni roi* "Irrespectively of God or King," with the view of indicating what Comte very distinctly explains in the first chapter of this work, that he held no atheistical view of the universe. Of all attempts to explain the unexplainable, Atheism was on the whole, he thought, the least rational. "Theism," he says, "was the only mode which really satisfied the reason, until men began to see the utter inanity and inutility of all search for absolute truth. The Order of Nature is doubtless very imperfect in every respect; but its production is far more compatible with the hypothesis of an intelligent will than

[1] See the *Fundamental Principles*, pt. ii, §§ 17–23; *General View*, pp. 28–30; *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, pp. 343–54.—ED.

with that of a blind mechanism."[1] But no attempt to penetrate "the unattainable mystery of the essential Cause that produces phenomena" was of the least use, he considered, in the work of providing a solid basis for social and moral reorganization. It is obvious that on the negative side of his programme—that is to say, in dispensing with supernatural agency in political problems—Comte is at one with thinkers and with practical statesmen of many schools; indeed, of almost every school except the Catholic. Toleration of all theological differences is an old affair by this time. It was preached by Locke and Voltaire; it was incorporated with the institutions of the United States and of the first French Republic. Desperate as the battle is still between clericalism and progressive republicanism in France, in Belgium, in Spain, in some parts of Austria, the result is hardly doubtful even for our own generation, certain for the future. In our own country it is an annoying obstacle to impatient reformers: it cannot be called as yet a serious or permanent danger.

But toleration pure and simple will carry us but a little way. Though a necessary condition for reconstruction, though it clears the ground, it adds not one stone to the fabric. Toleration may be, and often is, the outcome of indifference, laziness, slavery to selfish comfort, Mammon-worship; in a word, of every form of social decadence. Where this is the case, sincere fanaticism is respectable by comparison; more mischievous, it may be, for the moment, but not in the long run. In any case, the leverage for reorganization on which Comte relied was not toleration, needful as that might be; not demolition of any kind, for that work in France, at least, had been sufficiently done; but the combination of social fervour and social science to which he gave the name of Positivism. If there were no natural laws discoverable in social phenomena; if they were regulated, as was once believed of the planets or the solar system, or of the diseases of the human body, by the caprices of a superhuman power, Positivism would be an idle dream. If, again, human nature were utterly corrupt, as theologians say, or were controlled, as Hobbes and other metaphysicians have held, by wholly self-regarding motives, then, again, Positivism would be an idle dream. Comte's celebrated motto, *L'Amour pour principe, l'Ordre pour base, et le Progrès pour but*,[2] sums up the whole of his teaching. Without a sufficient leaven of unselfish enthusiasm, without a policy

[1] *General View*, p. 34.—ED.

[2] *Catéchisme Positiviste*. See above, p. 39 (note), and p. 34 of the Eng. tr. —ED.

based on the natural laws that regulate the structure and the growth of society, there can be no safety from the fatalities that surround us. It is a delusion, and a deadly one, to despair. It is a delusion, again, to imagine that all will go right if we only leave it alone. And, lastly, it is a delusion to suppose that the world is to be saved solely by benevolent endeavour. Lovers of Carlyle have not forgotten the motto of his *Latter-Day Pamphlets:* "Then said his Lordship, 'Well! God mend all!' 'Nay, by God, Donald, we must help him to mend it!' said the other." The word remains truer than ever, when "Humanity" is written in place of "God." *Pour compléter les lois, il faut les volontés.*[1] The laws must be found, and the wills also.

Signs are not wanting to those who look for them that should prevent despair. We must not let the storms and eddies of passing events blind us to the massive tidal currents that are steadily working towards the goal of our hopes. Eighty-seven years have passed since Waterloo. Can any one point to an equal period in the six centuries of modern history in which Western Europe has had a larger proportion of peaceful years? There have been many wars, far too many; and some of them have left bad results behind them. But all of them have been short, and at long intervals, compared with the wars of religion, the wars for military supremacy in Europe, the wars for commercial aggrandizement, of previous centuries.

War is threatened from many sources. But the political forces making for peace are numerous and potent. Forty years ago, for instance, we made a commercial treaty with France. Who can deny that it has bound both nations in heavy penalties to keep the peace? Read, again, Count Goluchowski's recent address (May 8) to the Austrian Parliament on the Triple and the Dual Alliances, and on the alliance of England with Japan. Not unduly optimistic in tone, the speech was a striking indication of the all but unanimous desire of European statesmen to refrain from war. The danger comes from the spiritual side, not from the temporal; sometimes from reactionary theological doctrines, far more often from the irresponsible newspaper Press, swayed by democratic follies, and manipulated by adventurers of the Stock Exchange. Against spiritual dangers, spiritual weapons alone will serve; and Positivists, among others, have been doing their best for the last forty years to forge them. In the meantime it is something, it is much,

[1] See p. 171 (note 2).—Ed.

that the States of Western Europe, with America and Japan added to their councils, have been of late acting together—at the Hague, three years ago, for a good purpose; in China, again, for a purpose not so good; yet still together. Comte's great conception of the Republic of Western nations is not dead, as some have thought; it is on the point of revival.

It is probable that the international force, partly material, partly moral, thus arising will deal in one way or other with the subject that touches the pride of Englishmen most nearly—the claim of any single nation to the Dominion of the Sea. The discovery of our power—for the moment our exclusive power—to convey an army across the globe four times greater than that which fought for us at Waterloo will add intensity to the wish that this claim should be resisted. France and Germany are not content, and never will be content, to hold their Colonies at our good pleasure. The desire has been there as long as the Colonies; but power to give effect to it has hitherto been wanting. That want exists no longer, as many have foreseen for a long time, and as the Shipping Combination is beginning to convince the blindest. On this point it may be well to quote some words written by Professor Beesly thirty-six years ago:—

> The time is not far distant when England will cease to be in material strength the foremost member of the Anglo-Saxon race. Most of us will live to see the United States with a population double that of our own islands, overflowing with wealth, exempt from most of the economic difficulties that embarrass an old country, and enjoying equally with ourselves all the advantages of modern civilization. I say nothing of their emancipation from hereditary institutions, because that will not be unanimously admitted as an element of superiority. But that their material force will be vastly greater than our own no one in his sober senses will deny. Already our most formidable rivals on the sea, in a few years they must inevitably overshadow us. And yet Englishmen, professing to respect their country, are content to rest her claim to be considered great on this material superiority, which Nature herself is rapidly transferring to another nation![1]

It may be that, when this inevitable transference of naval supremacy has been effected, wise counsels may prevail among the statesmen of this country as well as of others. In that case, without any previous internecine struggle, agreements will be made

[1] *International Policy*, 2nd ed., p. 144 of the essay on "England and the Sea."

between the nations which will mark a definite step towards the ideal put forward by Comte as the only final solution of the problem —an international navy sufficient to prevent piracy; abolition of all others.[1] That final solution may be far off, or it may be nearer than we think. But those who love their country best, be that country England, America, Germany, or France, will be the first to bid welcome to any policy that shall bring it within the range of practical statesmanship.

[1] *Cf.* p. 402.—ED.

PART V

MISCELLANEA

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

I

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF MILL WITH COMTE

COMTE's letters to Mill were published twenty-two years ago by the Paris Positivists.[1] Mill's replies were naturally looked for; but difficulties had arisen, of which the most important was the objection felt at that time by Professor Bain to the publication of his name in those letters, in some of which his admiration for Comte is an extremely significant feature. At last, however, we have the correspondence in its complete form, edited by Professor Lévy-Bruhl for the *Bibliothèque de Philosophie Contemporaine.*[2]

The correspondence began in 1841, and closed in 1846: an isolated letter from Mill in 1847 on the Irish question hardly forms part of it. Of the eighty-nine letters of which it consists—forty-four from Mill, forty-five from Comte—seventy-seven were written during the four years 1842–45; and it may be said generally that the first half of the series is by far the more important.

The first letter is from Mill (November 8, 1841). He was then thirty-five years old, Comte being forty-three. Mill introduces himself as an entire stranger. But he had been familiar, he says, since 1828 with those earlier writings of Comte in which, as most people are now aware, the programme of his whole career as a thinker and a social reformer is clearly set forth.[3] Mill remarks that these early writings had done more than anything else to set him free from the narrow Benthamism in which he had been brought up, and which is so vividly described in his *Autobiography*. He goes on to say that in 1837 he read the first two volumes of the *Positive Philosophy*, all that up to that time had been published. "Since the happy moment," he writes, "when these two volumes became known to me, I have been looking forward with keen impatience to the appearance of each new volume, and I read it,

[1] *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à John Stuart Mill; 1841–46.* Paris; 1877.—ED.
[2] *Lettres inédites de John Stuart Mill à Auguste Comte.* Publiées avec les réponses de Comte et une Introduction par L. Lévy-Bruhl. Paris; 1899.—ED.
[3] The *Early Essays on Social Philosophy*. See above, p. 95 (note).—ED.

and read it again, with true intellectual passion. I may say that I had already entered on a line of thought nearly approaching your own, especially under the impulses given me by your earlier work; but I had still many things to learn from you of the greatest importance, and I hope some day to show you that I have learnt them well. There remain questions of a secondary kind on which my opinions are not the same as yours. Perhaps the disagreement will one day disappear. At any rate, I think I may say that, whatever erroneous opinions I may hold, they are not so deeply rooted as to resist such thorough discussion as may arise if you allow me sometimes to submit my thoughts to you and to ask for explanations of your own."[1]

Comte was then at one of the darkest hours of his life. The scientific specialists, whose prestige he threatened, were beginning to strip him of his official appointments; his private life had for years been as desolate and dreary as it could be; and at such a time the intellectual and social sympathy of a man like Mill was peculiarly grateful. Both had the same public purposes; both saw that theological belief was undergoing irrevocable decay, and that the salvation of all that was noblest in man's life depended on bringing sociology and ethics within the pale of science. And, besides this, there was much in the natures of the two men that was akin. Springs of deep tenderness in both lay underneath a cold and stoical exterior.

Comte replied to Mill's overtures, as might be expected, with extreme cordiality. Living as he did a life of extreme isolation, it was the more pleasant to receive signs of sympathy from those who could appreciate his aims. He thinks Mill had exaggerated his debt to him. Mill's "Benthamism," the most remarkable product of the economic school, was a true preparation for positive sociology. He speaks of the rooted aversion of the scientific coteries in Paris, established and endowed as they were, to any broad co-ordinating principles, as the chief obstacle to progress; and of his own determination to bring the question between him and them to a definite issue in the final volume of his treatise.[2] And, lastly, he speaks of his project of an association of thinkers among the Western nations who should occupy themselves with the work of elaborating political and ethical principles on a positive basis, since without regeneration

[1] *Lettres inédites*, pp. 2-3.—ED.
[2] See *Phil. Pos.*, vol. vi, ch. lvii, pp. 374-400; or pp. 302-7 of vol. iii of Miss Martineau's version (1896 ed.).—ED.

of principles reform of institutions was hopeless.[1] In the organization of this new spiritual force he hopes that Mill will take a leading part.

So the correspondence began, and so it continued through the long series of letters in 1842 and the first half of 1843. Mill was impatient for Comte's concluding volume. He was at that time finishing, under Comte's influence, his great treatise on *Logic;* and at one time he thought of deferring the publication of it till Comte's treatise had been completed (p. 77). Mill's delight at receiving this final volume is described in the nineteenth and twenty-first letters. At first he failed to grasp its full bearing. He was profoundly impressed, however, even at this first reading, with Comte's conception of the splendid social and ethical results that would follow from modern industry when once the organization of it had been carried out as thoroughly as the organization of war among the military nations of antiquity. In this connection Mill speaks of Carlyle, with whom he had been long intimate, and whose *Past and Present* was to appear in the following year. But Mill now set himself to read again the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes continuously. (These, it will be remembered, correspond to the second volume of Miss Martineau's very useful, but also very imperfect, condensation.)[2] His impressions on this survey of "Social Physics" as a whole must be given in his own words, which differ materially, not indeed in substance, but in tone, from the language used by him in later years with regard to these same volumes:—

> I had read the fourth volume often and carefully; but till now I had never realized its full scientific value. It was not possible for me fully to assimilate the principles contained in it till I saw their full development in the last part of your work. Hitherto I had looked upon it merely as the necessary preparation for the philosophical survey of history in the fifth volume, although I had always appreciated the bearing of your great conception of Social Statics. To the fifth volume I had always done full justice, though I am now penetrated by its spirit more deeply than before. As to the sixth, perhaps my last letter led you to think me less capable of appreciating its spirit than was really the case. On the whole, it seems to me superior to anything you have yet done. In the foregoing volumes, by a privilege peculiar to systematic and comprehensive minds, you had sown the germs of all the principal conceptions of the final volume,

[1] See above, p. 416 (note).

[2] Dr. Bridges refers to the earlier edition of Miss Martineau's work in two volumes. The 1896 ed. is in three vols.—ED.

> so that at first even the most astonishing of them seemed familiar to me. But now that I read again the whole work from the beginning, my final and definite impression is one which is not merely stronger than the first, but it is new in kind. It is essentially a moral impression. What is passing within me seems to me a first and special verification of the general conclusion of your great treatise—the aptitude of the Positive Philosophy, when once organized as a whole, to deal with the great social functions hitherto very imperfectly fulfilled by religions alone.
>
> It has been my lot, a rare one in my country, never to have believed in God, even when a child. I have always seen that the construction of a true philosophy of society was the only possible foundation on which a general regeneration of human morality could rest, and that the idea of Humanity was the only substitute for the idea of God. But wide indeed is the difference between this speculative belief and the conviction which I am now feeling, that this inevitable substitution will be effective in its results, and that it will come speedily.[1]

He continues in this strain, expressing the hope that he may not be found unworthy to take part in forwarding this greatest of causes. In this letter, as in others that preceded it, he mentions differences of opinion. But he persists in maintaining that these differences were secondary. And it is difficult to avoid agreeing with him. On the fundamental question of the organization of a spiritual power—that is to say, of an association of thinkers occupied in bringing sociology and ethics into line with the other sciences, they were entirely at one.

"There was nothing," he says, twenty-nine years afterwards in his *Autobiography*,

> in his [Comte's] great treatise which I admired more than his remarkable exposition of the benefits which the nations of modern Europe have historically derived from the separation, during the Middle Ages, of temporal and spiritual power, and the distinct organization of the latter. I agreed with him that the moral and intellectual ascendancy once exercised by priests must in time pass into the hands of philosophers; and will naturally do so when they become sufficiently unanimous, and in other respects worthy to possess it.[2]

On the method, again, in which sociology should be studied their agreement went very far. Mill accepted, as we have seen, the great division of the subject into social statics and social dynamics; "the

[1] *Lettres inédites*, pp. 134-36.—Ed.
[2] *Autobiography*, 1873, p. 212.—Ed.

first branch of the science ascertains the conditions of stability in the social union; the second, the laws of progress."[1] As to social dynamics, the true method of study, designated by Mill as the Historical or Inverse Deductive Method, was due, in Mill's opinion, to Comte alone.

Why, then, did their correspondence terminate? Mill, in his *Autobiography*, gives an explanation which does not seem quite to tally with the facts as stated by himself. It appears from the letters that one of the "secondary points of difference" assumed, in the course of 1843, greater prominence. This was the question of the political equality of women and men. On this subject many letters of great interest on both sides passed between these two thinkers; and they ultimately agreed to differ. "Our intercourse," Mill says, would not have been discontinued "if the differences between us had been on matters of simple doctrine. But they were chiefly on those points of opinion which blended in both of us with our strongest feelings, and determined the entire direction of our aspirations."[2] He goes on to attribute their final divergence to Comte's conception of organizing philosophers into "a kind of corporate hierarchy, invested with almost the same spiritual supremacy (although without any secular power) once possessed by the Catholic Church." "It is not surprising," he adds, "that while as logicians we were nearly at one, as sociologists we could travel together no further."[3] If the *Politique Positive* had been published while the correspondence between Mill and Comte was going on, language of this kind would be intelligible, though, as the present writer thinks he has elsewhere shown, it would not be justified.[4] But that treatise was not published till many years afterwards, between 1851 and 1854, when letters had long ceased to pass.

In the controversy as to women's position in society Comte, at the time at which these letters were written, was at a great personal disadvantage as compared with his friendly opponent. His miserable marriage debarred him from women's society. He had no experience of the highest form of pure and elevating love. That came three years afterwards;[5] with what transforming consequences to his character he has told us. Mill had for years enjoyed the friendship of the lady who afterwards became his wife. We are not forced to

[1] *Logic*, bk. vi, ch. x, § 5.—ED. [2] *Autobiography*, p. 211. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[4] See *The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine*. A Reply to Strictures on Comte's Later Writings addressed to J. S. Mill by J. H. Bridges. 1866; 1910 (Watts).—ED.

[5] See p. 342 (note).

accept his appreciation of her genius when he ranks her intellectually above Shelley, Carlyle, Comte, or any other of the great spirits of his time; we may even doubt whether she did not sometimes lead him astray; for woman no more than man is infallible. Nevertheless, his passionate acknowledgment of her beneficent influence over his life will take its place beside the Dedication of the *Positive Polity* to Clotilde de Vaux[1] as a noble forecast of what the religion of the future holds in store for men. On the whole, it will be found, when the irritation of temporary controversies has passed away, that the agreement of Comte and Mill on the subject of woman's influence and position is far more fundamental than their difference. This was at least the case when richer personal experience had revealed to Comte much that, when writing to Mill, he did not know. Both were at one in the conviction that women were destined to take a far more prominent part in the solution of social and moral problems in the future than has been hitherto possible. Both were agreed that the intellectual inheritance of our race should be shared by men and women alike without distinction. But Comte, taking his stand on certain elementary biological facts, thought that the work of women would be better done if they were saved from the worst extremities of the competitive struggle, into which Mill, or the followers of Mill, have been ready to plunge them.

Many other topics are handled in these letters. But even a bare catalogue of them cannot be given here. A word, however, may be said of the question of Psychology, which arises frequently. Comte, as everyone knows, had thrown doubts on the value of the introspective method of research.[2] Mill explains that he means by the word something different from the psychology of Condillac, or of Cousin, or even of the Scotch school (p. 13). Comte urges Mill to read Gall's *Functions of the Brain*, guarding himself carefully against attaching any importance to Gall's localization of those functions. This leads to many valuable observations on both sides. In the course of them Bain, then a young man, is spoken of as a student and admirer of Comte. Obviously, nothing can usefully be said on this vast subject in the present paper. Many details are given of the persecution of Comte by Arago and others, consequent on his protest against the narrowness of mind engendered by scientific specialization when uncontrolled by general principles. Here Mill played the part of a noble and generous friend. We can only regret that the friendship should have cooled.

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, pp. xxxi–xlv.—Ed. [2] *Cf.* above, pp. 212–14.—Ed.

On the whole, it may be said that a more interesting *Commercium Epistolicum* has never been given to the world. It will not satisfy those who worship Comte as an infallible revealer of truth; still less those who have made up their minds that his work is superseded. But it will be welcome to others who are content to revere him as a mighty, but not unerring, intellect; a noble, but not faultless, character. The perfect man has not been seen in the world yet. There is no ground for thinking that he ever will.

II

COMTE'S LETTERS TO DR. AUDIFFRENT

A VOLUME of Comte's correspondence has recently been published,[1] of which the larger part is occupied by a series of ninety-three letters addressed to Dr. Audiffrent, one of the thirteen executors nominated in Comte's will, and one of the two who still survive.[2] Dr. Audiffrent came into contact with Comte in 1850, and the letters extend over the seven following years; the last was written twelve days before Comte's death. Passages from some of these letters will be found in Dr. Ingram's selection published last year.[3] All these, however, refer to the later period (1854–57); many of the earlier letters are of equal interest.

From the first, dated 21 Descartes 62[4] (October 28, 1850), we learn that the Positivist Society was founded in March, 1848; that it had at the date of this letter forty-five members, of whom two-thirds were Parisians; and that the meetings took place every Wednesday evening—a practice which, it may be noted, has continued, without interruption, to the present day. There were many sincere Positivists, Comte remarks, both in France and in other countries, who, for various reasons, had not joined the Society. Dr. Audiffrent, if he wishes to be enrolled as a member, is invited

[1] *Lettres d'Auguste Comte à divers (1850–1857).* Publiées par ses Exécuteurs Testamentaires. Vol. i, pt. i; 1902.—ED.

[2] Written in 1902. Dr. Audiffrent died in 1909.—ED.

[3] *Passages from the Letters of Auguste Comte*, selected and tr. by J. K. Ingram. (A. and C. Black; 1901.)—ED.

[4] The date "21 Descartes 62" signifies the 21st day of the eleventh month of the Positivist Calendar, the month headed by Descartes, the year being the sixty-second from the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. The latter year was taken by Comte as the starting-point of the new Positive era in its provisional form. See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 347.—ED.

to read the *General View of Positivism*, published in July, 1848, as well as other minor publications of the Society which had special reference to the political exigencies of the time. Littré's *Application of Positive Philosophy to the Government of Societies, and Especially to the Present Crisis*,[1] is also mentioned. After reading these, he is requested to communicate his impressions to Comte, who will then form a judgment as to his fitness for membership, and, the judgment being favourable, will propose him to the Society for acceptance. On January 9, 1851, Dr. Audiffrent is informed that he has been accepted. Further details as to the origin and constitution of the Society will be found in Dr. Robinet's *Life of Comte*.[2] Immediately inspired by the Revolution of February in 1848, it was intended to occupy, in relation to the second Republic, a position in some respects analogous to that of the Jacobin Society in relation to the Republic of 1792; with all the fundamental differences consequent on the contrast of the destructive doctrines of Robespierre and Rousseau with the constructive teaching of Positivism. The purpose of the Society was defined as the application to questions of the day of the political and social principles laid down in the *Philosophie Positive*, and more especially in the last two volumes. Its operations were not to be limited to France. Whether by direct membership or through affiliated societies, they were to extend to the whole of Western Europe and to the two Americas. The Society was to be neither cosmopolitan nor national, but occidental. Its motto was to be *Order and Progress*.

Nearly four years passed between the Revolution of February and the dictatorship established by Louis Napoleon, as President of the Republic, in December, 1851. Comte approved of this dictatorship; and he has been much blamed for doing so by those who forget all the proceedings of the Assembly which the President suppressed. Within three months of the Revolution, clerical and anti-republican reaction was in full swing. The sudden suppression of the national workshops on June 23, 1848, showed the workmen of Paris what they had to hope. In the street-fighting of the three days that followed more blood was shed than in the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. Between 4,000 and 5,000 prisoners were condemned to transportation. Freedom of the Press was abolished.

[1] *Application de la Philosophie Positive au gouvernement des sociétés et en particulier à la crise actuelle*. Par É. Littré. This appeared first as a series of articles in the *National* of July to October, 1849. It will be found in the small volume entitled *Conservation, Révolution, et Positivisme* (1852).—ED.

[2] *Notice sur l'œuvre et la vie d'Auguste Comte*; 1860. See pp. 218–28 and 462–68 of the 3rd ed. (1891).—ED.

It was no wonder that when the time came, at the close of 1848, for choosing a President, the voters for Louis Napoleon, whose previous writings had shown some sympathy with socialist aspirations, should have outnumbered those for Cavaignac by nearly four to one. His powers were extremely limited, whether under the Constituent Assembly which sat till the end of May, 1849, or under the Legislative Assembly which followed. For the expedition to Rome in the spring of 1849, for the suppression of Comte's lectures in July, for the reactionary law on primary instruction in March, 1850, for the practical exclusion of workmen from the suffrage in May of that year, for the removal of Michelet from his professorship at the *Collège de France* in 1851, the principal share of responsibility must fall on other shoulders than his. In the duel between Parliament and President that wasted the energies of France for three years, there was ground for thinking that the indispensable conditions of *Order and Progress* would be best promoted by the victory of a dictator who professed allegiance to the Republic over the Legitimist and Orleanist reactionaries who made no secret of their intention to destroy it.

Wholly different became Comte's attitude as each month of 1852 made it more clear that the feeble and inconsequent dictator was unable to resist the childish ambition of founding an hereditary dynasty. On this point the fifteenth, sixteenth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-eighth letters of this series are emphatic enough. The imperialism of Napoleon, he wrote in April, will make a further change necessary. The prospect for France is a sequence of dictators, somewhat like that of the Spanish republics, until one comes who can govern on positive principles, combining Order and Progress. A dictatorial republic is the only form adapted to France; though in England, and some other Protestant countries, the case may be otherwise. The fears of those, he wrote again in May, who fail to see that the republic will endure are ill-founded. This parody of the Empire, like Ledru-Rollin's parody of the Mountain, will have no endurance. On December 12, 1852, he gave fuller vent to his scorn. He compares the new-made Emperor with the *Mamamouchi* of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.*[1] The empire is, he continues, a purely official suspension of our republican situation. That situation began in 1792, and under no subsequent government has it really ceased. "Positivists are now the only republicans whose enthusiasm rests on solid conviction." "Let us all unite to

[1] Act iv, sc. 3.—ED.

dissipate the Bonapartist legend. The 'glorious' days of Austerlitz, of Eylau, of Wagram, even those of Arcola and of Lodi, should be irrevocably branded as evil deeds, as acts of treason against Humanity."[1]

That here, as elsewhere, Comte overrated the rapidity of progress, and took too low an estimate of the forces of obstruction, is evident enough. But how right he was in principle! How immeasurably in advance of the Bérangers, the Victor Hugos, the Thiers, the Jules Favres, and other spokesmen of the Liberal party! Even of those who listened to him not all learnt the lesson completely; too few to avert the storm which burst upon France and Europe eighteen years afterwards.

Comte's political creed is habitually misunderstood; not because it was obscure, for it was singularly definite; not because of its narrowness, for it was far more comprehensive than that of any publicist of the nineteenth century; not because it varied, for its essential principles remained unaltered from the beginning of his career in 1822 to the end of his life; but simply because in all these respects he stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries. Like the great Florentine, *fece parte da se stesso.*[2] He was a Conservative republican, profoundly convinced of the need of preserving order. For the mere partisans of opposition he had deep-seated repugnance; constructive politicians of whatever school, Jesuit or revolutionary, were far more to his liking.[3] Yet he could sympathize with a man like Barbès, and take practical steps for his release from prison. Honest revolutionaries, he wrote to Dr. Audiffrent, in September, 1852, are the immediate precursors of Positivism.[4]

Not less noteworthy was his attitude during the Crimean War. Relatively to Russian civilization, he could see much to admire in Nicholas I. Relatively to Turkey, he could speak of Reschid Pasha with respect. When Nicholas, in 1853, disturbed European order by invading Turkey, he could heartily approve of combined European resistance. But he sternly blamed the Crimean expedition of 1854–55 as a needless and wanton aggression on the part of England and France. "The righteous war undertaken against war," he writes in January, 1855 (forty-seventh letter), "has degenerated into an insane war of aggression......which puts the Czar now

[1] Twenty-eighth letter.—ED.

[2] "He formed a party by himself." This is an adaptation of Dante's line, *Averti fatta parte per te stesso*, in the *Paradiso*, canto xvii, 69.—ED.

[3] See the Preface to *Positivist Catechism*, pp. 1–2.

[4] See the 23rd and 27th letters.

morally in the right, since he is acting on the defensive." His *Appel aux Conservateurs*, published in August of this year (of which the right title in English should be "Appeal to Practical Statesmen")[1], develops Comte's attitude on these and other kindred questions at greater length.

I have dwelt, rather too fully perhaps, on the letters in this very important series which touch on passing events, mainly with the view of showing that the author of the *Positive Philosophy* and the founder of the Religion of Humanity never failed in the keen sympathies of a patriotic citizen. These three sides of his life-work —philosophic, religious, civic—were indeed from the first inseparably connected; their connection is the very hall-mark of Positivism. In 1822, while laying down the fundamental laws of social evolution, Comte had said:—

> In order to establish a new social system just conceptions will not suffice. It is necessary that the mass of society should feel attracted by it (*se passionne pour le constituer*). This condition is not merely indispensable to overcome the obstacles, more or less serious, which this system must encounter among the classes who are losing their ascendancy. It is needed, above all, for the satisfaction of the moral craving for enthusiasm inherent in man when he enters upon a new career...... All history testifies in favour of this truth......The mass of mankind will never be inspired with a passion for any system by proving to them that it is one which the progress of civilization has prepared and now demands for the guidance of society. A truth of this nature is accessible to a very limited circle...... The only way of obtaining this result consists in presenting a vivid picture of the ameliorations which the new system should bring about in the condition of mankind......Such a perspective alone can induce men to effect the moral revolution within themselves, essential for establishing the new system. This alone can repress that egotism, now rendered predominant by the dissolution of the ancient system, which, after our ideas have been enlightened by scientific labours, will remain as the only serious obstacle to the triumph of the new social organization. This alone can draw society from its apathy, and impress on it that active devotedness which is demanded by a social state destined to maintain all the human faculties in constant action. Here, then, we find a sphere of work in which the imagination has the principal part to play......It is the part specially reserved for the Fine Arts in the general work of social reorganization.[2]

[1] See above, p. 237 (note 1).
[2] *Early Essays on Social Philosophy*, pp. 171–72.—ED.

Social enthusiasm based on scientific vision: this, in the last resort, is the meaning of Positivism. In the thirty years that passed after the foregoing words were written, Comte had given full development to both sides of his work. He had founded the science of sociology, and he had shown it to be the basis of positive religion. The year 1852 is a critical moment in the evolution of his doctrine. In that year appeared the second volume of his *Positive Polity*, dealing with Social Statics—*i.e.*, the permanent conditions common to every phase of historical evolution. Writing to Dr. Audiffrent on July 7, he says: "This volume deals with the principal difficulty of the construction which I am undertaking." In the final chapter of the *General View of Positivism* he had spoken of the Religion of Humanity. But in this volume for the first time he defines clearly what it is that he means by the word *Religion*.[1] From his conception of religion, not as a creed, not as a set of institutions and ceremonials, but as a *state*—a condition of moral unity, in which man became at one with himself by willing submission to a power outside himself—far-reaching conclusions followed. Attempts to reach this ideal state have been made from the earliest origin of man's social life, with varying success; of these the Religion of Humanity is the final outcome. But all previous attempts were good relatively to their time; all were imperfect at their best, and in their decline were liable to become, in many ways—though not in all ways—noxious and immoral. These thoughts will be found in the opening chapter of the *Positivist Catechism*,[2] published later in the same year.

A further conclusion followed. Comte was under less illusion than is commonly supposed as to the rapidity with which Positivism would spread. In the ninth letter of this series (August 29, 1851) he remarks that for at least a generation to come Positivism will act more decisively on leaders than on those they lead, inversely to what took place with Christianity. *Elle sera, pendant une génération au moins, la religion des chefs, avant de devenir celle des sujets.* For the diffusion of Positivism over the world he assigned a period of two centuries.[3] In a remarkable passage of the thirty-third letter (June 9, 1853) he warns Dr. Audiffrent against attaching too much importance to these dates. "I hope," he writes, "that men of sense (*les bons esprits*) will not attach more importance to them than I do myself." Still, in any case the process must be slow;

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. ii, ch. i, and especially pp. 7–20.
[2] In the First Conversation, on the "General Theory of Religion."—ED.
[3] See p. 290 of *General View*.

and, in the meantime, what was to be the attitude of Positivists towards the less perfect modes of religion to which large numbers of their contemporaries would still remain sincerely devoted?

The answer to this question was given in the *Appel aux Conservateurs*, the second part of which contains his conception of a religious league with sincere theological believers of whatever school, against the forces, daily threatening to become more dangerous, of irreligion and materialism.[1] The project has been criticized as Utopian, and the more so that one of its distinctive features was to be the total absence of such hypocritical concealment as we have become familiar with of late in the case of men holding high positions in English universities. There was to be no paltering with principles, no abandonment of the claim of Positivism to be the highest form of religion. *La présidence positiviste*, Comte writes (eighty-fifth letter), *ne comporte aucun partage; et doit pourtant respecter l'indépendance nécessaire de chaque élément.*[2] Utopian or otherwise—and to the present writer it seems otherwise—the conception is one without which Comte's way of regarding the facts of religious life cannot be understood. It should be added that the third part of this short treatise,[3] dealing with the attitude of Positivists towards Revolutionaries, advocates sympathy, and in many cases co-operation, with those of them who are free from envious and subversive passions, and are animated by sincere desire to build up a nobler fabric of life.

Reference is often made in these letters to the institution of Positivist sacraments; distinct avowals, made at critical periods, that the life of each human being is bound up with that of his nation and of Humanity.[4] That these declarations have no mystical significance, and are imposed on none who do not willingly make them, is, of course, well known to Positivists. Comte instituted no weekly services, nor any formal invocations of Humanity. Such things he held to be hollow, except so far as they resulted from strong inward convictions, widely diffused; and it needed wise guidance to decide when the time for them had come, and with what resources of poetry and other arts they should be surrounded. It was one among many reasons for his insisting so strongly that those who conducted the Positivist movement should have fulfilled the requisite conditions of age and intellectual training. Emphatic judgments on this point are to be found in the twenty-third letter,

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 242.—ED.
[2] See also the 42nd, 44th, 47th, and 59th letters.
[3] The *Appel*.—ED.
[4] *Cf.* p. 224.—ED.

and they are perhaps as necessary now as they were fifty years ago. Comte had no sympathy with "playing at church" (*la fantaisie de jouer à la chapelle*),[1] or with the usurpation of spiritual authority by those who had no claim to it.

III

A VISIT TO PIERRE LAFFITTE [2]

A SHORT visit recently paid to M. Laffitte, at his home in the South-West of France, leads me to say a few words on this remarkable man, the greatest of Comte's disciples, his successor in the only sense in which such a man can have a successor. To the Positivist that word implies no mystic conveyance of apostolical succession, but the power to carry on the master's work, to develop those of his conceptions which had been left half-unfolded, to adapt his thoughts to the changing conditions of the time; to use his methods wisely, and by means of them arrive at new results; in a word, to stand to him in the relation in which Archytas stood to Pythagoras, Theophrastus to Aristotle, Luini to Leonardo da Vinci.

I found M. Laffitte in the little town of Cadillac on the Garonne, thirty miles higher up the river than Bordeaux, on the edge of the Sauterne wine district. The whole countryside is a vast vineyard: the vintage was just beginning, the vine leaves were tinged with orange and crimson, pine-clad hills here and there broke the monotony of the plain. From the heights that bounded the valley the views were singularly attractive and thoroughly southern in character—I was going to say Italian, only that the signs of industry, prosperity, and fine careful tillage so far surpassed anything that can be seen in Italy. Cadillac, with a population not exceeding three thousand, is a prominent point in all these landscapes, for the Duke d'Épernon, in the sixteenth century, built a fortress there which, though wholly unlike the mediæval castles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was a place of great size and strength, well adapted to the warfare of that later time. From this he was able to terrorize Bordeaux with threats of stopping inland traffic. It was one of the principal strongholds of that second feudalism which Richelieu set himself to destroy. This castle, perfectly preserved, is now a penitentiary. A large hospital and lunatic asylum, also of very ancient foundation,

[1] See p. 134 of these *Lettres*.—ED.

[2] 1894

is another feature of the little town whose inhabitants drive a thriving trade in the manufacture of wine barrels, the staves for which are imported, through Trieste and Bordeaux, from the oak forests of Bosnia.

M. Laffitte's house, shared with a sister, is an unpretending but spacious one-story building on the outskirts of the town overlooking the river; plainly furnished, with a small loosely-ordered garden, well shaded by trellised vines, from which the white grapes of the country hang in profusion. Adjoining Cadillac and separated from it by a small stream is the village of Béguey, M. Laffitte's birthplace, in which his family have been settled for many generations. His grandfather was an ironmaster, with forges like those of which the remains still abound in the woods of Sussex and Hampshire. The trade has long since migrated to Bordeaux and elsewhere. In the house of one of his relations we listened to music of the eighteenth century, charmingly played and sung by Sacchini, Grétry, Piccinni, and other masters, whom it is now the fashion to disregard, but whose place in the historical growth of music is immortalized in the Calendar.[1] Gay Gascon songs were interspersed.

It was pleasant to think of our chief in his old age being able to spend half the year in this bright peaceful region surrounded by the affectionate respect of his neighbours of all shades of opinion. With the conservative doctor, the republican mayor, and with many members of the clergy he is on the friendliest terms, and especially with the parish priest of Béguey, a pious Catholic with no pretensions to liberalism, who frankly accepts the position created by recent French history, that the time for Catholic intervention in politics is over, and that the duties of the priest lie henceforth in the sphere of private life. I regretted not being able to see this clergyman, who was from home. But I visited the village church recently rebuilt by workmen of the neighbourhood in the Roman style with singular freedom from tawdry decoration. To the expense of this building M. Laffitte contributed, and he is among the few male inhabitants who attend the Sunday service; a fact noted with much surprise by some of his friends who fail to understand that withdrawal from theology does not necessarily mean irreligion. I had much conversation with him on the leading thoughts contained in the *Appel aux Conservateurs*, especially on Comte's great conception of the religious

[1] In the week of Mozart, and the month headed by Shakespeare, Piccinni is not in the Calendar.—ED.

alliance of Positivists with sincere theologians of whatever creed.[1] The questions raised by the recent law of Divorce appeared to him to be among those on which Positivists and Catholics might usefully unite. It is needless to say that his opinions are well known in the neighbourhood. He has frequently lectured there on Positivist subjects; and one of these discourses, delivered to a large and most responsive audience, on "La Femme Agricole" will, I believe, soon appear in the *Revue Occidentale*.[2]

Several excursions in the neighbourhood have left ineffaceable memories. One of them was to the château of La Brède, a small feudal castle with moats and drawbridges almost unaltered, and old furniture of the time of Henri IV, where the family of Montesquieu have lived for five centuries. Montesquieu's own room is kept, like Scott's at Abbotsford, exactly as he left it, and his vast collection of books is preserved intact. Another walk ending in the village church of St. Roch on the hills was noteworthy not merely for its beauty, but because M. Laffitte's discourses on September 5 were always prepared while walking along this road.[3]

These, alas, are now entrusted to other hands, as he has wisely resolved to spend the latter half of each year that may remain to him in retirement. But retirement in his case does not mean inactivity. On the contrary, it is here that the best part of his work has for a long time been done. A certain toughness, if I may use the word, in the fibres of his brain, fortified by long mathematical training, enables him, as it enabled Comte, to carry on a continuous process of thought for hours without putting pen to paper. Certain specified subjects are thought out by him in this way, partly in the silence of the night, partly in solitary walks. He returns to Paris late in the year with a harvest of results, gathered in with untiring devotion by MM. Jeannolle, Clément, and others of the band of friends and disciples who surround him in Paris, and who are making ready to continue his work.

What has that work been? To estimate it rightly we should form a clear and definite notion of the relation of a disciple to a master. In old times this relation was openly recognized and well understood. In the present century a wave of revolutionary prejudice has overwhelmed it, and, as most men seem to think, has wiped it out altogether. Every man should form his own opinions

[1] See above, p. 242.—ED.
[2] This *Revue* was founded by Laffitte in 1878.—ED.
[3] These discourses were delivered annually in commemoration of Comte's death on September 5, 1857.—ED.

independently, it is said. He should be bound by the watchwords of no master. Yet no one has invented the alphabet or constructed the English or the Greek language. No man can seriously delude himself with the dream that his stock-in-trade of ideas, traditions, and beliefs is of his own manufacture. So it is, however, that those who follow a master do it grudgingly, and with the sense that it is looked on as bad literary form. They turn their faces another way, so to speak, and fear or blush to acknowledge the source of the thoughts on which very often their reputation has been built up. A minority remains, more honest and more dull, for whom discipleship means blind and profitless repetition of the words of their teacher, in season and out of season, with small regard to the time when, the persons to whom, and the circumstances in which they were spoken.

M. Laffitte has avoided both these snares. He has openly and loyally avowed Comte as his master without ever professing to regard him as infallible. He has concentrated all the forces of his intellect to the development of thoughts which Comte had left half unfolded, or had veiled in abstract language of which no one had perceived the concrete application. He has deliberately set himself to complete the programme which Comte's premature death cut short. The unfinished treatise on the Science and the Art of Human Conduct,[1] which forms the keystone of the human Synthesis—that is to say, the final adjustment of all truths which subserve the highest welfare of man—has formed from the beginning of his career the principal field of his efforts. The fundamental truths of Positive Philosophy, spoken of by Comte as *Philosophie Première*, and set forth in the fourth volume of his *Positive Polity*, form for most readers a barren catalogue of abstractions. M. Laffitte's work on the subject[2] exhibits these truths in their connection with the work of Aristotle, of the mediæval schoolmen, and of the thinkers of modern Europe, as the necessary groundwork of fixed moral and social convictions. In particular, his explanation of the identity of a scientific law and a mathematical equation may be mentioned as a signal instance of the precision and lucidity given by scientific method to a notion which, though verbally very familiar, is yet misconceived by most of those who use it.[3]

Deep truths like these may be thought more adapted to a school of students than to the world at large. But his forthcoming summary

[1] See above, pp. 166–67.—ED. [2] See above, p. 47 (note).
[3] *Cf.* above, pp. 100–101.—ED.

of Positive Ethic put in the form of question and answer will show, I think, his power of bringing principles of the highest moment within the understanding of the humblest.[1] Throughout the whole of his career M. Laffitte has never swerved from the social point of view. As a French citizen it is hardly too much to say that his influence has been greater than that of any thinker since the days of Voltaire and Diderot. His policy has been a consistent defence of the Republic against Clericalism and Democracy, which during the last two decades have continually joined their forces to destroy it. Here it is that his combination of historical and philosophical power have stood him in good stead. His vivid pithy demonstrations of the need for stable government, his bold assertions, backed by solid fact, that Louis XI and Richelieu were the forerunners and founders of the Republic, his personal talk in Socrates' fashion with all comers at the Café Voltaire, his lectures on the French Revolution given in every hall in Paris—these things have made him a real force in the public life of France, so that it is not surprising to hear of the list of statesmen who subscribe to the *Revue Occidentale.* His Professorship of the History of Science at the *Collège de France,* an institution wholly free from the official trammels of the University, realizes a suggestion made long ago by Comte, and secures him a fit audience.

I must not dwell on what it would be unpardonable wholly to omit—on the charm of manner springing from a genial and loving nature entirely free from taint of arrogance or envy, on the brilliant wit that overlies the depth of intellect and character, on the wide sympathy which Goethe himself could not surpass with worth of every kind and degree from artisan to artist, thinker, or statesman; lastly, on the loyalty to his master which secured under very great difficulties the fulfilment of Comte's will and the possession of the house in which he lived.

That there are points of his public policy on which judgment may be reserved, or even opposition expressed, is certain. But in politics, which, like medicine, can never be a science but only an art founded on a science, a wide margin must be left for such dissent, so long as the human race exists. As I said at starting, M. Laffitte has regarded Comte not as an inspired prophet, but as the greatest of modern thinkers and teachers. He has not hesitated to diverge when divergence after mature judgment seemed indispensable. In

[1] Laffitte's catechism was never published in a complete form. See the translation of an article by Laffitte entitled "Preliminary Sketch of a Positivist Catechism" in the *Positivist Review* of June, 1903.—ED.

this he has set an example to all of us. To suppose Comte infallible would be to credit him with miraculous revelation; and the days of miracle are over. It is no mark of reverence for a teacher to accept his mistakes.

IV

PIERRE LAFFITTE'S TEACHING[1]

I HAVE been asked by the Editor of the *Positivist Review* to say something of the philosophical side of Laffitte's work. But I find it quite impossible to do this adequately within the limits of an ordinary article, or even if the whole space of the *Review* had been allotted to me. Perhaps in no case, certainly in few, can the philosopher be separated from the man. Assuredly it cannot in the present instance, the philosophy in question being the Positive Philosophy as instituted by Comte, in which the part taken by the heart and the head are so intimately interwoven. All that I can do on the present occasion is to offer a few special illustrations of Laffitte's mode of teaching, and thus to give somewhat more precision and definiteness to impressions which would be otherwise vague and fleeting. In any case, emphasis will have been given to my conviction that in Pierre Laffitte Humanity has gained (not lost)[2] a thinker of that rare order in whom the highest intellectual gifts have been devoted to the highest service. The world will find this out in due time.

My intercourse—may I say my friendship?—with Laffitte began in 1859. I had been in Paris in September, 1857, having been already in correspondence with Comte; and was present at the commemorative meeting of September 27, noted on pp. 550–53 of Dr. Robinet's biography.[3] On that occasion Laffitte was not present, wisely and rightly abstaining while his claims to act as director were being examined by some of the older Positivists. One of the most remarkable of these was Fabien Magnin, the cabinet-maker, in whose grave, close by that of Comte, Pierre Laffitte now lies. With him I had long conversations as we walked to and fro by the canal which adjoined his workshop at St. Denis. I can

[1] 1903

[2] This paper was written soon after the death of Laffitte, which occurred on January 4, 1903.—ED.

[3] Third edition.

never forget his emphatic approval of the choice which had just been made of Laffitte as head of the Positivist organization—a choice indicated, no doubt, by Comte's mention of him in his will, but obviously needing further confirmation. "M. Laffitte," said this workman, "has the two essential elements which we need—strong social sympathies; intellectual capacity and training. The first he shares with others; the second no one possesses in nearly so high a degree as himself. He is said to be wanting in initiative, but you will see that that will come." Magnin, who had been intimately associated with both Comte and Laffitte for many years, knew well what he was talking about, and his forecast was justified. Between two and three years afterwards an old college friend, J. B. Winstanley, well known in the annals of Positivism for his munificent donations in times of crisis, was writing to me as follows from Paris about Laffitte's many-sided activity: "When one sees the overwhelming amount of work that Laffitte has to do, one's admiration for the devoted energy with which he throws himself into it leaves no room for anything but regret that he is prevented by the physical impossibility of the thing from doing many things which it would be well that he should do." He was engaged at this time in his work on Chinese civilization,[1] he was delivering a course of twenty-five lectures on the general History of Humanity; he was giving elementary private teaching on Positive lines (of which more afterwards); and all this time he was earning his livelihood as a teacher of mathematics, and was spending much time and energy in efforts (happily successful) to maintain the provisions of Comte's will in the law courts.

Winstanley introduced me to him in the summer of 1859. I was then studying medicine in Paris, and had many opportunities of meeting him. Of the wit and genial gaiety of his talk I will say little, for enough has been said by others. These happy gifts, outcome of a nature free from all mean or envious taint, were in full play at the time of which I speak; they had not entirely disappeared when I saw him, in a state of extreme physical decay, in October of last year. They helped, not hindered, his life-work; and if there be any who underrate them, they must be Pharisees indeed. The general drift of our first conversation I remember well. It turned on the pleasure felt in intellectual research. This pleasure, he said, was good and wholesome, provided always that the ardour of social and moral progress lay behind it as the dominant principle. So

[1] See above, p. 93 (note 2).

understood, the capacity for such pleasure was useful, and all but indispensable, to those who sought to guide the spiritual destinies of Humanity. It was a general and most vivid commentary on the well-known maxim of Comte, *L'esprit doit toujours être le ministre du cœur, et jamais son esclave.*[1] The submission of the Positivist differs from that of the Jesuit as life from death. *Sicut cadaver*, said Ignatius; *sicut corpus vivum*, said Comte. Laffitte worked on those lines always; following in his Master's track, but with eye and ear open to what was passing in the world of thought and action, living in the present, living also in the past and future, developing original thought in himself, and encouraging it in others.

The private teaching alluded to above was that given in 1859–60 to Winstanley, who, wishing to repair the defects of his academic education, had been recommended by Comte to apply to Laffitte, as the only one of his disciples capable of teaching the whole series of abstract sciences from Mathematics to Ethics. Full notes of these lectures, so far as they extended (for they were cut short by Winstanley's recall from France to home duties, and soon afterwards by death), are now in my possession. They cover the preliminary course of *First Philosophy*, the course on Arithmetic, and that on Algebra.

Two things would strike any unprejudiced reader of these lectures—first, their extreme simplicity, clearness, and precision; secondly, the way in which social and moral considerations are intertwined with questions of arithmetic and algebra. Let me take as an illustration the first case that presents itself—the problem of numeration. That problem, no easy one, is, the teacher pointed out, to express all possible numbers by the combination of the fewest number of words. The use of the fingers, or of fingers and toes together, would carry the savage a little way, but only a little. To solve the problem with any approach to adequacy we must have the "subordination of groups"—*i.e.*, of groups of units to groups of tens, groups of tens to groups of hundreds, and so on. Now, this conception was not reached till a very advanced period of civilization; and it was the result of what Laffitte was never tired of pointing out to his pupils—the reaction of practical life (in this case of military organization) on speculative life. So, again, with the admirable artifice, unknown to Greeks or Romans, and due to Orientals, of indicating numerical value by position. I find in the

[1] "The Intellect should always be the Servant of the Heart, but never its Slave." This was one of the three mottoes on the title-page of the *General View*.—ED.

notes this remark: "We see in it the reaction of social feeling and custom on the abstract spirit. There can be little doubt that it was in social usages that this conception of a relation between value and position took its rise. A procession, for instance, illustrates it." Again, in the chapter on fractions, while pointing out that the successive addition of the same number to the numerator and denominator of a fraction produces a series each term of which comes nearer to unity, though unity can never be reached, the teacher introduces the general conception of *limit*, which plays so vast a part in the higher calculus, and no less a part, as Laffitte goes on to show, in sociology. That a given institution or instinct tends constantly to disappear may be quite consistent with the truth that it will never disappear completely. Man tends, on the whole, to become more sober but he will never cease to eat and drink.

I might fill pages with instances of the same kind, all of them stamped with the same general character—the infusion of sociological teaching in the first rudiments of systematic education. But as much misconception prevails, even among Positivists, as to what the purpose of Comte's scheme of systematic education really was, a few words of comment are here necessary. It was intended to help the formation among the leading minds of Europe, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, of solid convictions as to the nature of society and man, and as to the means of modifying that nature, within possible limits, in the wisest way. As to the need of such convictions, I need not say much. It is enough to refer to the eloquent and powerful remarks on the subject in Mr. Harrison's New Year's Address.[1] But no true judgment of Comte's scheme of scientific education is possible unless this purpose is kept constantly in mind. It does not come into competition with the various schemes of technical education which are now occupying, and very rightly occupying, public attention. These have for their object to enable each nation to take its proper part in subduing the forces of nature to man's service. No one can dispute the need for such work as this, however unwisely it may be sometimes regulated. In one way or another it will assuredly go on; and no one can see, or wish to see, the end of it. But the systematic course of scientific teaching instituted by Comte, and put in practice by Laffitte, had quite another purpose in view, not less definite and even more

[1] Delivered at Clifford's Inn Hall on January 1, 1903, entitled "The Old Order and the New." See *Positivist Review* of February, 1903.—ED.

important. It aimed at throwing light on the problems of human nature and human conduct. Now, the mathematical and physical sciences, as commonly thought of, seem to have nothing whatever to do with this. As thought of in Positivist teaching, they have very much to do with it. They form an essential part of that ladder of the understanding (*scala intellectûs*) by which we are enabled to travel from the simplest laws of nature to the highest and the most complex; they hold out a type of precision and certainty which it is the principal aim of Comte and his school to introduce, within possible limits, in the fluctuating region of social and moral facts. While ascending this ladder the Positivist teacher (and I am here taking Laffitte as the only complete example of such a teacher known to me) has the summit constantly in view. The numberless applications of physical science to industrial purposes, important as they may be, form no part of his immediate purpose. To many speculations, on which much energy is expended by minds of great acuteness in the present day, he is quite indifferent. In the geometry of space of four dimensions, in conjectures as to the ultimate constitution of matter or the ultimate origin of life, he takes no interest whatever. Throughout the whole series of the "abstract sciences" he never loses sight of the final aim, the establishment of scientific certainty in sociology and morals, as the first condition of governing human nature wisely.

So, then, men must become mathematicians before they can be good citizens? The taunt was hurled at Laffitte continually, but it fell wide of the mark always. No one knew better than he—I take leave to say that no one, after Comte, knew nearly so well as he—that the world was not going to be remodelled by scientific teaching, however wise, if there were nothing else behind it. *L'Amour pour principe; l'Ordre pour base.*[1] Both are equally needed if there is to be any progress worthy of the name. We have already seen that Laffitte's scientific teaching was saturated with thoughts bearing on Man and the Service of Man. But, wholly apart from the abstractions of science, no one I have ever known had so firm and large a grip of life in the *concrete*—the life of workmen, of women and children; the wholesome traditions of a country village, the monuments and memories of a great city. He had grasped Comte's scheme of education to the full.[2] In that ideal scheme, as all know, though many forget, only one-third of the twenty-one years of

[1] See p. 39 (note).
[2] See *General View*, pp. 125-36, and *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 228-39.—ED.

education was devoted to systematic intellectual training; during infancy and childhood influences of a wholly different kind—home life, the life of art and song—were supreme. All this Laffitte fully realized. Those who have stood by when young children were presented for admission to the Positivist body and on other occasions of a similar kind can tell, perhaps, better than others how on every side of life his wise judgments were lit up by the keenest and most genial sympathy.

As I said at starting, I make no attempt to speak in this short paper of Laffitte's two volumes of *Philosophie Première*,[1] or of his three volumes on the *Grands Types de l'Humanité*.[2] His attempt to construct the treatise on Human Nature and Education (*Morale Théorique et Pratique*) which Comte had projected and on which he left a few priceless indications will, it may be hoped, appear in due course.[3] Meanwhile let me call attention to a short work which seems to me to have received far less attention than it deserves—*La Morale Positive, par M. Pierre Laffitte, précédée d'un aperçu sommaire sur sa vie et son œuvre*, published in 1880 by M. Emile Antoine, Dr. Robinet's son-in-law—who, as all who know him will grieve to hear, is now dangerously ill. Eighty pages are occupied by a very admirable biographical notice. The remainder (218 pages) consists of a lecture delivered by Laffitte at Havre in December, 1878. This lecture was very carefully revised by the author, and has the character of a substantive work, brief though it be, and avowedly meant for popular use. It falls into three divisions: (1) The urgency of Positive Ethics in reference to the present time; (2) its fundamental characters; (3) its principal applications to the individual, to the family, to the body of Western nations, and to the rest of the world. Wholly in accordance with Comte's teaching, as continuous with it as the painting of Luini is with that of Leonardo, this little book abounds in the fresh vitality, the pithy illustrations, the instructive paradoxes, the kindly sympathy, the capacity for entering into his hearers' point of view, which made Laffitte's instruction so acceptable to those who would have turned a deaf ear to a formal statement of abstract doctrine. I strongly recommend it as an introduction to Positivism, and hope much that it may soon be translated into English.[4]

[1] See above, p. 47 (note). [2] See above, pp. 232 (note 2), 246 (note 2).

[3] Laffitte's courses of lectures on Theoretical and Practical Morals have only been published in the *Revue Occidentale* (1885–1887).—ED.

[4] See *The Positive Science of Morals*. Its opportuneness, its outlines, and its chief applications. By the late Pierre Laffitte. Translated by J. Carey Hall. (Watts; 1908.)—ED.

V

HUXLEY AND POSITIVISM

WHAT lay at the root of the extreme bitterness with which Huxley always spoke and wrote of Positivism? The admirable biography[1] recently given to the world by his son raises the question; and the attempt to answer it may throw light on several points of interest, and especially on the part which science has to play in solving the problems of human life.

But before entering on such deep matters a word should be said on the vivid portraiture given in this book of a remarkable personality. It brings before us a brave, loyal, sincere man; combative and prejudiced, but genial, affectionate, and devoted; a good fighter, a good hater, but free from paltry jealousies, incapable of mean or sordid thoughts. To the first rank of scientific discoverers he does not belong. He did not make an epoch in the science which he pursued by any new or far-reaching conception. But he played a more important part in fashioning opinion than men whose intellectual force was perhaps greater than his own; for his very considerable powers of scientific research were associated with the literary gift of vigorous and lucid exposition. Towards the end of his career he became almost better known as a man of letters than as a man of science. A philosophic thinker, in any true sense of that word, he never was; and for any attempt to co-ordinate the positive sciences into a coherent system, whether on the method followed by Comte or that followed by Mr. Herbert Spencer, he had no sympathy. For the former, indeed, he had no feeling but repugnance.

It is not difficult to account for this repugnance. Those who have followed the details of Comte's life know that the hostility of the scientific coteries was far more bitter and more fatal to his material prosperity than that of the Catholic Church—although this, too, was not wanting, for the *Philosophie Positive* was at once placed by that Church on the list of prohibited books. Comte's special aptitudes in mathematical science could not be denied; they had been acknowledged by Fourier, the greatest mathematician, perhaps, of the nineteenth century, by Poinsot, Navier, and many others. In biology the illustrious Blainville acknowledged him as one of his most sedulous pupils. His eminence in sociology was,

[1] *Life and Letters of T. H. Huxley.* Two vols.; 1900.—ED.

of course, not duly recognized, precisely because he was the founder of this science. As a distinct branch of the tree of scientific knowledge it had no existence before his time. But his early essays on history had attracted the attention of Guizot; as a careful student of economics he was well known to Say and to Dunoyer. All this was when Comte was a young man, between his twenty-fifth and thirtieth year. As time went on and the building up of his philosophy of the sciences proceeded, it became clear that the new science of sociology, by the very fact of its existence, tended to take an exceptional position among the sciences. This position has been often misunderstood, as though it implied that sociology, when fully constituted, would operate in discouraging the pursuit of other sciences. It has been a very disastrous misunderstanding, the responsibility for which rests partly with the narrowness, the imperfect training, and the want of civic feeling of many of the scientific specialists; but partly also with the narrowness, imperfect training, and impatience of some of the most prominent of Comte's disciples. Both one and the other might and should have learnt from the *Philosophie Positive* that sociology can have no existence as a science except so far as it rests on a sure foundation of biology and physics. Those who are unversed in the methods and results of the more elementary sciences are not likely to do much original work for the progress of the more composite. Be this as it may, sociology, while resting on the older sciences, and maintaining the same degree of dependence on them on the one side, and of independence of them on the other, that biology acknowledges with respect to physics, and physics with respect to mathematics, cannot avoid claiming for itself a position of exceptional prominence. Its field of research contains the truths which touch man's life most nearly. It gives fresh significance to the ancient saying, handed down to us in various forms from theocratic times, that "The proper study of mankind is man."[1] To say that it will obstruct the culture of other sciences is the direct reverse of the truth; and this quite apart from the obvious fact that our industrial necessities will always secure for these their due share of attention. Nevertheless, it is true that this new science, of which Comte more truly than anyone else may be regarded as the founder, will undoubtedly exercise, quite automatically and spontaneously, a directing influence over the choice of the problems on which our store of intellectual capital is to be expended. An instance of this

[1] Pope's *Essay on Man*; 1733. This epigram was selected by Comte as the motto for the title-page of his Treatise on Theoretical Morals, which he did not live to write.—ED.

is the keen stimulus given during the last thirty years to the study of the biological problem of heredity, owing to the growing perception of its sociological importance. The scientific study of language, or, again, the researches now being made as to the mental faculties of animals, are other instances. All this may explain, though it does not excuse, the suspicion of the academic world that the new science of sociology, assuming definite shape between 1830 and 1842,[1] would not merely exercise a directing influence over scientific specialism, but would tend to discourage it altogether. The suspicion was handed on to a later generation, and has not yet died out. It was shared by Huxley; and it must be owned that the language of the first English Positivist with whom he came into controversial contact was not of a kind calculated to allay it.

I have no intention of dealing with all the violent and, it must frankly be said, foolish attacks on Positivism which occur frequently in these volumes—as, *e.g.*, that Comte was "destitute of philosophic power," that Comtists advocate "the crudest eighteenth-century materialism," and so on. These are but wild and whirling words, which, if not forgotten, can only recoil on the reputation of their author. For myself, the principal interest of Huxley's biography is the evidence afforded of the fact that, while never tired of reviling Positivism, he ended by bearing witness in a very striking way to one of its most fundamental principles. Of the two synthetic philosophies of the nineteenth century claiming to be founded on science, one, that which is identified with the name of Herbert Spencer, takes Cosmic Evolution for its central principle; the other, that of Auguste Comte, rests on the conception of Humanity. It will be seen that Huxley's later teaching lends support to Comte rather than to Spencer. This point has been already touched by Mr. Harrison, but it will well bear re-insistence.

Let me quote one of these later utterances from the ninth volume of Huxley's *Collected Essays*.[2] It occurs in the essay entitled "Evolution and Ethics"[3]—

> The influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater the more rudimentary its civilization. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process, the end of which is, not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest in respect of the

[1] The *Philosophie Positive* was published between the years 1830 and 1842. *Cf.* above, p. 336 (note 1).—ED.

[2] 1893-94.—ED.

[3] The Romanes Lecture, 1893.—ED.

> whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.......As I have already urged, the practice of that which is ethically the best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which in all respects is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but help, his fellows; its influence is directed not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence.[1]

And, again, p. 83:—

> The ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it. It may seem an audacious proposal thus to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm, and to set man to subdue nature to his higher ends; but I venture to think that the great intellectual difference between the ancient times with which we have been occupied and our day, lies in the solid foundation we have acquired for the hope that such an enterprise may meet with a certain measure of success.

It is difficult, I think, to define the Positivist attitude in this great controversy more distinctly than is done by Huxley in the foregoing passage. One is tempted to recall the example of the prophet Balaam, who came to curse Israel and ended by blessing them altogether. We may raise our hopes of ultimate success higher than Huxley did, but we know well that it can never be complete. "With all the agencies, physical or moral, which can be brought to bear, we shall have to acknowledge," said Comte, "that the exceeding imperfection of human nature forms an eternal obstacle to the object for which Positivism strives—the victory of social sympathy over self-love." The whole spirit of Positivism consists in recognition of and resignation to the lower order, and in gradual modification of it by the higher order. We are neither to imitate the Cosmic process, nor to run away from it, but to combat it. The whole thing is summed up, philosophically speaking, in Comte's classification, or rather his serial arrangement, of the sciences—a piece of sociological construction of which Huxley, no less than Spencer, has entirely failed to grasp the meaning. Throughout the scale of sciences the higher order rests upon the lower, but is at the same time quite distinct from it—as distinct

[1] Pp. 81–82.

as the flower is from the soil on which it depends for sustenance. Every molecule of every living organism obeys the law of gravitation, and submits to all other conditions imposed by the structure of the solar system. Yet the science of Biology is distinct from the science of Physics. Humanity, in addition to all those fatalities, is subject also to the Malthusian competition which Darwin and Wallace have shown to play so enormous and so unexpected a part in the evolution of living forms. We cannot run away from this fact any more than we can leap from our own shadow. The scientific error of the last forty years, now in slow but sure process of correction, has been to believe that it stood alone. The humane Malthus was the innocent occasion of much bad political economy, much faulty legislation, much social indifference, in his day; and so in our own time has the no less humane Darwin.[1] Needless to say that a great scientific discoverer is not to be held responsible for the temporary evils that may attach to his discovery. The fault lies with those who, under the dazzling influence of a new and original truth, become blind to older truths of equal or greater value.

The history of civilization is a continuous struggle of Humanity against physical and biological fatalities—the Malthusian fatality among the rest. It has involved a pitting of "the microcosm against the macrocosm," a repudiation of the "gladiatorial theory of existence." We had all this out half a century ago, when Malthusian theories, spoken of in those days as the "stern laws of political economy," were barring the way to many forms of social progress. In natural history the application of Malthus's doctrine has proved, in the hands of the founder of a great school of naturalists, most fertile in results. In the history of Humanity it is but a half-truth; and half-truths have sometimes shown themselves more dangerous than lies.

VI

THE CENTENARY OF KANT[2]

IMMANUEL KANT died on February 12, 1804, in his seventy-ninth year. His centenary has been recently celebrated with great honour by his countrymen in Königsberg, where the whole of his life was spent. It demands some notice in the *Positivist Review*, for Kant occupies an honoured place in the Positivist Calendar under the

[1] *Cf.* p. 336.—ED. [2] April, 1904

month of Descartes and the week of Hume. Thinkers equally great have left a less profound impression on the mass of their contemporaries. It was the consistency of a noble character, of a pure and upright life, that won the veneration of those who had no power of sounding the depth of his thoughts.

He prepared himself for his work by a very thorough training in mathematics and physics. Between 1755 and 1770 he was occupied as a private tutor in these subjects. How completely he had mastered them is shown by the fact that he had predicted the existence of the planet Uranus prior to its discovery by Herschel.[1] In 1770 he was appointed professor of logic and metaphysics, and held that office for twenty-four years. When compelled by the infirmities of age to resign it, he still continued to publish important papers on philosophic subjects. It is noteworthy that his principal works were produced towards the close of his life. The first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* was published in 1781, the second in 1787; the *Critique of Practical Reason* in the year following.

Hume, by his discussion of causation, gave the first impulse to his work. Was it necessary for us to believe that everything that happened had a cause? That we did so believe was undoubted. But whence came the necessity? All our experience of causation is that of a constant succession. We say that the antecedent has a power of producing the sequent. But what do we know about this power? Experience teaches us that when a billiard ball in motion impinges upon a second at rest, the second ball moves. We say that the first ball causes the motion of the second. But is the connection between the first movement and the second necessary? We have no perception of any power in the first ball to move the second. When this succession of events is repeated over and over again, the idea of necessity begins to form itself within us. But this is only a subjective notion. We pass, by the force of habit, irresistibly from the antecedent to the sequent. This passage, by habitual association from the idea of the motion of the first ball to that of the motion of the second, is the fact that we call causation. When sequent follows antecedent invariably in our experience, we call the antecedent the cause of the sequent. The idea of cause is not given us *a priori*. It is a fact of experience.

Hume's absolute denial of all knowledge derived elsewhere than from experience, involving as it did entire scepticism as to the

[1] Or, rather, he had suggested the possibility of there being other planets outside the orbit of Saturn.—ED.

possibility of metaphysics, was the starting-point of Kant's philosophical career. Kant set himself to ask, What, then, were the elements of experience? Locke had maintained that the materials of knowledge were derived from sensation and reflection. Leibnitz, with other successors of Descartes, held that there were elements of knowledge transcending sensation—ideas of substance, of causality, of infinity, of eternity, and so on. These he regarded as innate. Kant introduced the very fertile thought that there were not two sources of knowledge—external objects on one side and human understanding on the other—but one only: the interaction of the two; the union, in other words, of object and subject. Thus water has not two causes, oxygen and hydrogen. Water results from the union of the two. So knowledge results from the interaction of object and subject, from the co-operation of the outer world and the mind.

Kant asked himself the question, Are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible; and if so, how? The expression is technical, but the question may be easily put into simpler language. A synthetic judgment adds new knowledge, as opposed to an analytic judgment, which is a mere explanation, an unfolding, of the terms used. Thus, when we say a triangle is a figure bounded by three straight lines, we merely define the triangle; the judgment is analytical. But when we say the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, the judgment is synthetical. We have a piece of new knowledge. So, too, if we say all body is extended, it is an analytic judgment. Extension enters into our conception of body, so we are merely saying the same thing again in new words. But if we say all body has weight, the judgment is synthetic. It adds to our knowledge. In this last case the knowledge given is *a posteriori;* it is derived from experience. But in the former example of the three angles of a triangle the knowledge, so Kant considered, was *a priori.* It was dependent on the laws of space, not on observation of outward facts. This, it may be observed, is a very doubtful proposition. It may be contended with great probability—and, indeed, if we study the history of mathematical science, the probability becomes a certainty—that geometry, like other sciences, is a science of observation. But Kant thought otherwise. There were, he considered, two conditions, two forms, as he expressed it, under which our intuition of the outer world took place. These were Space and Time. We are so constituted as not to be able to apprehend the facts of the outer world otherwise than in these two forms. They are part of our mental structure. And so it is, he thought, that

geometry results from our consideration of Space, independently of material furnished by the outer world.

Again, our intuitions of the sensible world, received under the forms of Time and Space, are generalized, unified, gathered up into objects of thought, or concepts, by the Understanding, in ways appointed by the constitution of the Understanding. These ways Kant indicated by the term "categories." That is to say, the material given by intuition of the outer world was thought of as quantity, as quality, as relation of cause and effect, and in various other modes, of which Kant specified twelve. Much subtle thought was expended on this machinery of categories, which has not altogether carried conviction to subsequent thinkers. So much, however, was established: our knowledge of the external world and of ourselves was a knowledge, not of things in themselves, not of absolute realities, but of the impressions received by the senses and moulded by the structure of our intelligence. Compelled though we may be to believe in the existence of things outside us, we have no real knowledge of these things. What we call knowledge is the result of the action of the world upon sense modified by the structure of sense and of understanding.

Thus, said Kant at the conclusion of this part of his work,

> we have traversed the region of the pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it; we have also measured it, and assigned to everything therein its proper place. But this land is an island, and enclosed by Nature herself within unchangeable limits. It is the land of truth, surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the region of illusion, where many a fog-bank, many an iceberg, seems to the mariner on his voyage of discovery a new country, and, while constantly deluding him with vain hopes, engages him in dangerous adventures, from which he never can desist, and which yet he never can bring to a termination.[1]

But beyond Understanding there is in man a higher faculty, that of Reason, whose function it is to furnish what Plato called Ideas—that is, conceptions formed from notions transcending the possibility of Experience. Kant set himself to examine the validity of Reason. "The science of metaphysics," he says, "has for the proper object of its inquiries only three grand ideas—God, Freedom, and Immortality—and it aims at showing that the second conception, conjoined with the first, must lead to the third as a necessary conclusion. All

[1] *Critique of Pure Reason.* Transcendental Analytic, bk. ii, ch. iii.—ED.

the other subjects with which it occupies itself are merely means for the attainment and realization of these ideas."[1]

Now, to follow Kant in his elaboration of these subjects would be impossible within the present limits. All that can be done is to state briefly his conclusion. And his conclusion was that, though it was impossible to disprove these ideas, it was equally impossible to prove them, from the purely speculative standpoint. An important chapter of his treatise is devoted to an examination of the arguments employed by speculative reason in proof of the existence of a Supreme Being. It was said that the mere idea of God was a proof of his existence. Kant destroys this line of argument mercilessly. "We may as well hope to increase our stock of knowledge by mere ideas as the merchant to augment his wealth by the addition of ciphers to his cash account."[2] He proceeds to examine the argument based on the necessity of a First Cause, and, lastly, the argument founded on the evidence of design in the universe. And his conclusion is that "all attempts of reason to establish a theology by the aid of speculation alone are fruitless; that the principles of reason as applied to nature do not conduct us to any theological truths; and, consequently, that a rational theology can have no existence, *unless it is founded on the laws of morality.*" "A Supreme Being is, therefore, for the speculative reason a mere ideal, though a faultless one; a conception which perfects and crowns the system of human cognition, but the objective reality of which can neither be proved nor disproved by human reason."[3]

The words italicized in the foregoing passage suggest that we should now turn to Kant's theory of morality, both for its own sake and to see what light it throws on his general conceptions of truth. I will quote the opening words of his *Metaphysic of Ethics:* "Nothing can possibly be conceived in this world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will."[4] Moral worth depends, he goes on to show, on this alone, and not on feelings of any kind, whether self-regarding or otherwise.

> A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition—that is, it is good in itself, and, considered by itself, is to be esteemed much higher

[1] *Ibid.*, 2nd ed., Transcendental Dialectic, bk. i, sect. 3.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, T. D., bk. ii, ch. iii, sect. 4.—ED.
[3] *Ibid.*, T. D., bk. ii, ch. iii, sect. 7.—ED.
[4] *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics.* Tr. by T. K. Abbott. 3rd ed. (1907), p. 10.—ED.

> than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination—nay, even of the sum-total of all inclinations...... Even though this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will (not, to be sure, a mere wish, but the summoning of all means in our power), then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself.[1]

Acting from duty is the only kind of action, said Kant, which has moral value. "There are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them, and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work."[2] Kant maintains that an action of this kind, however amiable, has, nevertheless, no true moral worth; it is on a level with other actions performed from inclination—*e.g.*, from the inclination to honour, which, if happily directed to objects of public utility, may likewise deserve praise, but not respect. Respect is due only to actions done from duty, not from inclination.

The moral rule of action is for a man so to act that he can will that his rule should be a universal law. Let the question be asked: Is a man in distress and under compulsion justified in making a promise with the intention of not keeping it? Kant replied: "Let such a man ask himself, Should I be content that my maxim (to extricate myself from difficulty by a false promise) should hold good as a universal law, for others as well as for myself?"[3] Then he will at once become aware that, while he can will the lie, he cannot possibly will that lying should become a universal law. For with such a law there could be no promises at all. This, then, is the practical law of conduct; and the necessity of acting from pure respect for this practical law is what Kant called the "categorical imperative"—that is to say, the obligation of duty, before which every other motive must give way, because it is the condition of a will being good in itself; and the worth of such a will is above everything.

Further, this law must not only be obeyed, but must be regarded as given by the will. The will must be regarded as itself giving the law. The will must be free. "A free will and a will subject to moral laws are one and the same."[4] On the other hand, it is equally necessary that everything that takes place should be fixedly

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 11.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.—ED.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.—ED.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 79.—ED.

determined according to laws of nature. Here, then, is a contradiction. Can it be solved, and how? Theoretically it cannot be solved; a solution would overstep all the bounds of reason. All that we can say is that, morally, we are compelled to assume freedom. "This thought certainly involves the idea of an order and a system of laws different from that of the mechanism of nature which belongs to the sensible world, and it makes the conception of an intelligible world necessary (that is to say, the whole system of rational beings as things in themselves)."[1]

Further consideration, the exposition of which must be omitted here, led Kant to the view that for rising to the highest summit of morality two other Ideas, in addition to that of Freedom, must be postulated as practically necessary, though all attempts to demonstrate them as speculative truths must inevitably fail. These were the Immortality of the Soul and the existence of God. Into these abstruse questions we need not now try to follow him. Enough has been said to show that his ethical teaching was pure and elevated. Yet his almost indignant repudiation of Love as an element of moral action affects us with a sense of harsh and cold sterility. Hume's *Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* contains truth which Kant would seem to have wholly missed. Hume, at least, did not omit Love from his ideal of life.[2] Love for our principle, Law for our basis, Growth towards perfection for our goal—such a rule of living needs no factitious support from belief in the Immortality of the Soul, or in the existence of a Supreme Being.

No mention of Kant, however brief, should omit his very remarkable essay, published in 1784, on the *Idea of Universal History in Relation to Humanity*. He begins by saying that, whatever may be said of Free-will by metaphysicians, its manifestations in human action are reducible, like other phenomena, to general laws of nature. History always cherishes the hope that, if the play of free-will be looked at on a sufficiently large scale, there will be found in it signs of a continuous, though slow, unfolding of man's original faculties. Thus births, marriages, and deaths, though when looked at individually they seem to follow no rule, yet appear quite otherwise when viewed statistically in large masses. So, too, is it with the facts of weather. Hence it may be that while individuals, and even nations, go their own way, and follow their tendencies, yet all the time, unknown to themselves, they are following the guiding

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 95.—ED.

[2] *Cf.* above, p. 50.—ED.

thread of nature's plan. Let us see if we can find this guiding thread.

For the development of Humanity we must look not to the individual, but to the race. Man is not the slave of automatic instincts, as other animals are; what he is is due to his own efforts guided by reason. These efforts are called into being by the antagonism between his sociality and his individualizing self-love, his passions of ambition and avarice. Were it not for these passions, the human race would have lain dormant in Arcadian sloth; man's inventive powers would never have been roused to action. The play of these passions led men to form societies in which the freedom of each was limited by the freedom of others. But then the same thing happened with States. Their warfare with one another has been continual. From this there is no issue except in the institution of international community. Towards this final result the whole course of human development has been slowly and imperceptibly tending. It will be the purpose of the new philosophy of history, when the Kepler of history shall arise,[1] to unveil this hitherto secret process of nature. To become conscious of the process will hasten its completion.

In this short essay, even more than in his general philosophy, Kant shows himself one of the principal and most immediate predecessors of Auguste Comte.[2]

VII

COMTE AND CARLYLE[3]

To bring these two names together, except for the purpose of contrasting them, will seem to many a sheer paradox. And indeed in every detail of outward form no sharper contrast could be imagined than that between the systematic rigid thinker, founder of a school of thought and of a rule of life, and the rhapsodic seer, disdainful of all systems, and the last of whose wishes it assuredly would have been that his own dark oracles should be regarded as forming one.

[1] We may justly say, with Littré, that in this essay, with its distinct prophecy of the appearance of a thinker who should one day find the precise laws of historical growth, Kant really foreshadowed the coming of Comte as the great historian of Humanity.—Ed.

[2] *Cf.* p. 91.—Ed.

[3] A posthumous paper.—Ed.

These two men, though they were contemporaries, had no understanding of each other's work. Carlyle, in his *Reminiscences*,[1] speaks of Comte, *more suo*, as an "algebraic ghost"; to Comte, Carlyle was *un pur littérateur*, a brilliant writer for effect. These failures of strong men absorbed in their own work to appreciate the value of another's, when pursued on wholly different lines, have been seen before, and will be seen again. For those who have profited by both teachers, it is often easier to see what they have in common. And the attempt to do this may perhaps throw new light not merely on either teacher, but—and this is of much greater moment—on the thing taught.

For many readers of Carlyle the unfinished papers and summaries of conversations published by Mr. Froude were the first intimation that Carlyle held any abstract principles as to Man's place in the world that could be called by the name of a philosophy. Careful students of the *Sartor Resartus* have no doubt seen that it was otherwise; but even to them, even perhaps to Carlyle himself, the underlying principles were so wrapped and veiled in their vesture of parable and trope that it was often difficult to attribute to them separate existence. Men become readily the slaves of words which yet, for all the richest and deepest thoughts, are a miserably imperfect vehicle. And the worst is that when the slavery is once established, the words henceforth and mechanically lose the meaning which the first speaker had given them. It is not wonderful, then, that Carlyle, in his loneliness, deeply penetrated with truths held by few and for which no words then current seemed to him adequate, should shrink from embodying them in abstract formulas. Embodying in such a case might be too like embalming. Preferring formless life to petrified perfection, he chose, as great teachers before him had chosen, to speak in parables. Nevertheless, if the parables are sound, the hard kernel of truth must lie within them.

Here are some passages of Carlyle's conversations as summarized by Froude:—

> Sciences of natural things he always respected......Science, however, in these latter days, was stepping beyond its proper province, like the young Titans trying to take heaven by storm. If man, as explained by Science, was no more than a developed animal, and conscience and intellect but developments of the functions of animals, then God and religion were no more than

[1] *Reminiscences*, by T. Carlyle. Ed. by C. E. Norton. Two vols.; 1887. The epithet occurs in vol. ii, p. 219: "*foreshadowing* the miserablest phantasmal *algebraic ghost* I have yet met with among the ranks of the living."—ED.

> inferences, and inferences which might be lawfully disputed...... He did not believe in historical Christianity......The body of the belief was now perishing, and the soul of it, being discredited by its connection with discovered error, was suspected not to be a soul at all; half mankind, betrayed and deserted, were rushing off into materialism. Nor was the materialism the worst. Shivering at so blank a prospect, entangled in the institutions which remained standing when the life had gone out of them, the other half were "reconciling faith with reason," pretending to believe, or believing that they believed, becoming hypocrites, conscious or unconscious, the last the worse of the two, not daring to look the facts in the face, so that the very sense of truth was withered in them......Centuries of spiritual anarchy lay before the world before sincere belief could again be generally possible among men of knowledge and insight.[1]

Thus Carlyle recognized that the destructive effect of modern science could not be stayed at the traditional Christianity which he had long abandoned, but was threatening those fundamental truths in which he still believed; and yet he repudiated as strongly as ever the materialism which would account for conscience and duty in terms of physics or biology. These conversations, Froude tells us, took place in or about the year 1862; and it is impossible not to be reminded, in spite of differences of language, of the conceptions reached by Comte some forty years before, the root from which all his subsequent teaching grew. It is not without interest in this direction to notice that two of the few contemporaries on whom Comte had exerted a marked influence, John Stuart Mill and Gustave d'Eichthal, one of Comte's earliest and most intimate friends, had also come into close contact with Carlyle. How strongly Mill had been impressed by Comte appears from a well-known passage in the first edition of his *Logic*;[2] yet high as the eulogium was it failed to convey an adequate measure of the real bearing of Comte's conceptions. It may be doubted whether the moral intensity of Mill's nature was such as to render him sensible to the primary purport of a thought which proved indeed to be the starting-point of a new philosophy, but of which both the source

[1] *Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in London* (1884), vol. ii, pp. 259–61.—ED.

[2] *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*, by J. S. Mill. Two vols.; 1843. The passage occurs on p. 564 of vol. ii: "The greatest living authority on scientific methods in general, and the only philosopher who, with a competent knowledge of those methods, has attempted to characterize the Method of Sociology, M. Comte, considers this inverse order as inseparably inherent in the nature of sociological speculation."—ED.

and the final end had more to do with the conduct of Man's life than with the conduct of his thoughts. The speculative importance of Comte's "law of the three stages" was undoubtedly great; but the ethical importance of it was incomparably greater. The impulse which stirred Comte was his perception of the profound anarchy which pervaded every region of European life, public or private. In the family, in the State, in the body politic of Europe, all the old relations were disturbed, because there was no common understanding as to how to work and what to work for. Comte's early youth had been passed during the temporary arrest of the Revolution by Napoleon. A memorable school of publicists, of whom de Maistre was the strongest type, were mercilessly dissecting the revolutionary doctrine and preaching a return to mediæval principles as the sole hope of salvation. Profoundly convinced of the impossibility of the neo-Catholic dream, Comte was yet taught by it the extreme weakness of the doctrine which had destroyed without being able to replace. Of all the revolutionary teachers Condorcet had come nearest to success in giving coherence to the revolutionary doctrine. He had formed a philosophy of history; he had a clear conception of society moving onward in the future through an orderly path of progress. Yet to Condorcet the Middle Ages were wholly incomprehensible. The *Imitatio Christi* was a phenomenon which his philosophy left wholly unexplained. Comte regarded Condorcet with the reverence of a pupil for a master. But he read a chapter of the *Imitation* daily.

Now, the conception of Comte to which I wish to call attention in order to compare it with the views of Carlyle is this. Moral facts exist in the world now, as always; but an entire change is taking place in the ways of regarding them. Their study is henceforth a branch of Science; not, as heretofore, a branch of Theology. This to some will sound a truism, and it will be said that for a hundred years before Comte, at any rate since the days of Hume and the thinkers of the eighteenth century, it had become a commonplace for many educated minds. To a large extent this is true. Comte himself was the first to insist upon his debt to Hume; and Condorcet's *View of Intellectual Progress* (*Esquisse du Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*)[1] was his avowed starting-point. But the distinctive features in Comte's work were these. First, this assertion of the change of the point of view from which moral facts were to be looked at did not remain with him, as with Hume and others, a

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 91.—ED.

mere abstract philosophical statement. By practice and by example as well as by precept he showed that the new mode was as organic as the old. He removed the strongest motive which has led and still leads men to cling, in spite of their reason and their judgment, to the old mode by showing that human life in every one of its departments could be built up far more perfectly by the new. Secondly, Comte's mode of conceiving this enormous transition was incomparably larger and more complete than that of any of his predecessors. By his law of the three stages, applied successively to different departments of thought, he not only embraced a multitude of facts of which those before him had taken no account, but he explained the apparent paradox that the same minds could remain in the supernatural stage with regard to one order of truths, though they had reached the positive or scientific stage with regard to another. But thirdly—and this is of most importance for our immediate purpose—the region of ethical and social truth was in Comte's survey vastly wider and far more fertile than it was to Hume, or even to Condorcet. The elevation and integrity of Hume's nature no candid student would deny. But what reader of Thomas à Kempis or Wordsworth or Carlyle but must feel that some of the deepest truths of man's life were for Hume as non-existent as star-light for the blind or music for the deaf? It is the same in our own time. Many of our most vigorous thinkers are so absorbed in considering how such facts as duty, reverence, devotion, may have been evolved that they omit entirely to look at the facts themselves, and at last practically forget them. The evolution of a rose in bygone millenniums from some earlier and ruder plant is of course most interesting. But, after all, the rose itself is a more precious thing to man than the evolution of the rose. And so with the life of man. There is no need to disparage the profoundest inquiry as to how the sense of duty came to us, especially if we test at each step the reality of our results; yet the knowledge of what for European men and women in our time duty may be is of greater moment than the completest view, could we attain it, of the genesis of duty in primeval man. Wonderful is the egg; but still more wonderful is the thing that comes out of it; and this the more when, as sometimes happens, the early stages of incubation can only be guessed at, because they lie millions of ages deep.

Those philosophers, from Hume downwards, who have regarded the facts of men's mental and moral life as amenable to scientific method have for the most part dealt only with a small portion of the facts, and one large region till quite lately was left out of their

field of view almost entirely. It is only in the last few years that the history of the great religions of mankind has been generally admitted into the domain of scientific study. Hume had approached the subject in a short essay,[1] and then left it. With Comte it had been the cardinal subject of his *Philosophy of History*.[2] Of late the scientific study of religion has become a speciality. But it will be noticed even here that those who handle this new branch of science speak of the object of their study as of a thing outside them and very far distant from them. It is an ancient monument to be revered, or a strange species to be tabulated. To look at it as we look on gravitation, heat, electricity, or any other permanent agent affecting our life now and always, never suggests itself to them.

To Comte, on the other hand, religion and duty were living things. Whatever the primeval beginnings of love and reverence, they have been carefully nurtured by the good and great of all ages. To them we owe it that we are what we are, imperfect, struggling, bearing with us bloodstains of the savage and broken links of the slave's chain, yet with high hopes of a better and nobler future, and in the midst of toil and suffering blest by the sight of the stars and the dawn and the sunset, the trees and the flowers, blest still more by the deeds of heroic men, whether shown us in sculptured marble or in the moulding of a life of sacrifice and the building up of a Church.

Yes, you say, but these germs of good that you speak of, which have been growing and fructifying from the first ages of the world—whence come they? Can you explain them by the chemical changes in the brain tissue, by the competition of one variety of protoplasm with another a hundred million years ago? No, emphatically reply both Comte and Carlyle. It is not in the power of man to explain the universe at all. The origin of virtue, the origin of life, the origin of matter—all these things are utterly beyond our ken. Philosophies founded on algebra or founded on Darwinism will not serve us here. Algebra is a good thing. Darwin's patient researches into the laws of inheritance—that, too, is good. Positivists assuredly undervalue neither. But a key to unlock the riddle of the universe? Not exactly! A child playing by the seaside might as well try to get the Atlantic into its little wooden tub. The little fraction of the

[1] See p. 325 (note 3).

[2] Contained in vol. iii of the *Pos. Pol.* Dr. Ingram has given a useful *résumé* of Comte's exposition in his *Outlines of the History of Religion.* (A. and C. Black; 1900.) *Cf.* above, p. 344.—ED.

universe that passes under our ken during the lifetime of our race—that is our sphere of thought and work. Our work, our duty lies here.

Materialism, the attempt to explain life by chemistry and physics, to explain the facts of emotion, love, and hope by the facts of growth and digestion—these things Comte utterly repudiates. We are fenced in, guided, helped, by all sorts of material mechanical conditions: that is obvious. Our very existence depends on the axis of the earth being at a certain angle with the plane of its orbit. Were it perpendicular, we should perhaps live more comfortably; were it much sloped, we should not live at all. So, too, a slight chemical change in the composition of the air we breathe would prevent us from breathing at all. These things are very important to know and to think about. In every way the higher life is dependent on the lower. But the lower does not *account* for the higher. Not the cunningest of florists can make the loveliest rose affectionate or virtuous. You cannot account for the fact of love or reverence by physics and biology; they are the products of Humanity, of the social life of Man.

And here we have at once the chief point of agreement between Comte and Carlyle, and also the chief difference. Carlyle's point of view was moral, but not social. It was individual. To dream of the infinite unknown, to meditate deeply on duty, to do the work nearest, whatever it chanced to be—all this is well; but how does it help to unite men together and give them a common object of work, a common object of reverence? How does it help them in dealing with the practical problems of life, such problems as are raised by modern industry and by the Revolution, French, Russian, Irish—European problems? Comte's point of view is moral, like Carlyle's; but by virtue of being moral it is social, for it is governed by his conception of Humanity.

VIII

THE SERVICES OF ANCIENT ROME[1]

I HAVE spoken of Moses, Homer, Aristotle, and Archimedes. Moses, as the type of the old religions of Egypt, Judæa, Persia, and India, implanted in civilized man that which (far more than the invention

[1] A posthumous paper which formed part of a lecture.—ED.

of printing or the steam engine) marks him off from the savage, the sense of religious obligation, of the enormous gulf between right and wrong, between righteousness and sin.

To Homer, Aristotle, and Archimedes, and to the other great poets, artists, and philosophers of Greece, we owe our first notions of Truth and of Beauty. Their poets gave us ideal types of noble men and women. Their thinkers were the first Positive Philosophers; the first men who really studied the Laws of Nature, not because they wanted to become rich by useful practical inventions, but for the love of Truth.

To-day I intend to speak of Rome. What do we owe to Rome? We owe to her the Law and Government, and, indirectly, the Science and the Religion, which make the great difference between Europeans and Asiatics. Every one must see, when he looks at the map of the world, the distinction that there is between the west part of Europe (including the American Colonies, whether Spanish or Anglo-Saxon) and the rest of the world. In France, in Italy, in Spain, in Germany, just the same things are being talked about as in England. There is the same Christian religion; and the same decay and corruption of the Christian religion; the same interest in mathematics, astronomy, electricity, chemistry, physiology, and other sciences; the same social problems; above all, the great problem of Labour and Capital. Western Europe (with its American offshoots) forms really one great community. It takes the lead of the human race. Now, this community of Western Europe dates from the Roman Empire, as established by the great men of Rome, of whom Julius Cæsar may be taken as the highest type.

Rome was founded 700 years before Julius Cæsar's time. For three or four centuries it was only one among many other tribes and cities in Italy. War was the natural condition among ancient nations. All the free men of the nations were warriors. Most of the weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and other mechanics were slaves. The only pursuit which was thought worthy of the warrior was agriculture. Many of the best Roman generals would not disdain to follow the plough. War has developed in man two habits, two faculties of the greatest value—the power of meeting danger calmly; the power of discipline and of organization. The nation that possessed these qualities in the highest degree was certain to triumph over the rest at last. Rome was that nation. Her citizens had a deeper sense of religious obligation than any other. They were more profoundly penetrated with the sense of duty to their country than any other. This gave them their

irresistible firmness in battle, their undaunted perseverance even in defeat. This, too, lay at the root of their extraordinary power of discipline. *The Romans were strong to rule because they knew better than any nation how to obey.*

The City of Rome first conquered the other cities and tribes of Italy. This took four or five hundred years to accomplish. From that time the people of Italy, under all their changes of government and religion, have been really one people, possessing a common language and a common literature.

Rome and Italy now came into contact with the surrounding nations. They narrowly escaped destruction from the great commercial empire of Carthage: a people akin to the Jews in blood, possessed of immense wealth and many rich colonies, but who have left few noble memories, few great works, few names of great heroes behind them. Their one great man, Hannibal, overran Italy, held it for many years, and all but conquered Rome; but while he was camped under its walls the citizens put up to sale by auction the piece of land on which his camp stood, and it fetched the usual price. That shows their spirit. They never for one instance doubted of their destiny.

The Carthaginians were driven out of Italy. Carthage was taken. The peninsula of Spain was conquered. The peninsula of Greece was conquered. All the eastern part of the Mediterranean (the countries formed into an empire by Alexander) were conquered. And at last Julius Cæsar completed the work by conquering France and Britain. So that all Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube became incorporated into the Roman State, which was governed first by the rich nobles and rich capitalists of Rome, who called themselves falsely a Republic; but which was governed ultimately in a far more republican spirit by the Roman Emperors.

Now, see what all this did for the world! This long career of war and conquest did three things.

1. It established *peace* and *civil law* throughout this vast region, which had hitherto from time immemorial been the scene of perpetual wars between small tribes leading to no result. How vastly superior the Roman law courts were to those of the nations whom they conquered, you have an example in the trial of Jesus Christ. Pontius Pilate, though a feeble man, had at all events some notion of what justice meant. Paul, a Roman citizen, appealed from the local tribunals to the Imperial court at Rome. He "appealed to Cæsar." When Julius Cæsar was massacred by the Roman aristocracy, Jews, Syrians, Africans, and men from other provinces of

the Empire were seen weeping at his funeral. They felt that their great defender had perished. This, then, was the first great result of Roman conquest. It gave Peace and Civil Law to Europe.

2. It diffused the results of Greek civilization, Greek art, Greek science throughout Europe. This was the second great result.

3. It paved the way for the diffusion of Christianity throughout Europe. We are too apt to look on Christianity as if it came entirely from the Jews. It is in reality the mixed result of Asiatic, Greek, and Roman civilization. It is far more due to Greeks than to Jews; far more due to Romans than to Greeks.

The change from polytheism to monotheism, from many gods to one God, was going on everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. The Greek thinkers were giving up their paganism four hundred years before Christianity. Jesus Christ's teaching would have remained limited to Judæa, and very likely we should never have heard of it but for the heroic and unceasing energy of a Roman citizen, Paul of Tarsus. Paul saw that the Jews were a set of narrow sectarians with whom nothing was to be done, and devoted his life to the moral regeneration of the Greeks and Italians. Comte regards Paul as the true founder of Christianity, the man who made it a European fact. The Christ of Paul is something quite different from the vague philanthropy of Jesus, a man of whose real history there is very little evidence that we can depend upon. The Christ of Paul was altogether ideal: the noble creation of a noble mind; the idea of the grandest self-sacrifice; God making Himself Man, and suffering torture in order to save Man from misery. The Christ of St. Paul's Epistles is totally different from the Jesus of the Gospels. The Jesus of the Gospels was an amiable enthusiast, apparently professing to possess miraculous powers, a man of whose real life we know very little. Paul was penetrated with the desire of regenerating the Roman world. For this purpose he availed himself at first of the old Mosaic Law. The story, half true, half fabulous, of the life of Jesus revolted him. But after a long struggle it was suddenly borne in upon his mind that this life of Jesus might be the way through which the great purpose of regenerating the moral life of men was to be accomplished. Henceforth he joined himself to the little Jewish sect of Christians, which but for him would always have remained Jewish, and put forward, with sublime forgetfulness of self, his own great conception of heroic self-sacrifice, of purity, of self-mastery, of love, of duty, *under the name of Christ*, consecrating his life with the most unparalleled

energy to the preaching of these truths in every part of the Mediterranean.

The grandeur of the Christian Church in its best days lay in this. It was an organization for moral purposes, wholly unconnected with and independent of the political and civil authorities. Under Moses and the old theocracies morality was a matter for the magistrates. A man was put to death for breaking the Sabbath. Further, religion was a matter of nationality. Each nation had its own gods. The Jews had Jehovah, the Greeks Apollo, the Romans Jupiter, and so on. But here was a religion which bound together men of different blood, and aimed, though unsuccessfully, at becoming the universal religion. The Catholic Church in its best days—that is, from the fourth to the thirteenth century—was a moral power which the Roman Emperors and the kings and nobles were obliged to respect. The Popes in the Middle Ages were the leaders and protectors of European civilization, corrupt as they may have become afterwards. During the times in which the barbarian hordes were tearing the Roman Empire to pieces science and law and (far more important than these) spiritual life—that is to say, the impulse to heroism and saintliness and purity and pity—were kept alive by the Popes and priests and cloistered monks, whom it is now common to regard as the very types of indolence and craft and avarice. Catholicism for the last four centuries has been in a state of hopeless decline. But had it not been for the power which the Catholic Church exercised during the Middle Ages from Spain to Scotland, Europe would be now in a state of barbarism.

IX

THE BATHS OF CARACALLA[1]

THOSE who go to Rome and look carefully at the earliest monuments of the Christian Church and the latest monuments of imperial Rome may perhaps be struck, as I was, by one curious contrast. Amid the waste of vineyards and monastery gardens that still stretch over the southern half of the ancient city rise the stupendous ruins of Caracalla's baths,[2] covered a few years ago with the luxuriant

[1] The concluding passages of a lecture on Health delivered in October, 1886.—ED.

[2] The famous *thermae* or hot baths of the Roman Emperor Caracalla (186–217).—ED.

growth of aromatic foliage of which Shelley speaks in the preface to his *Prometheus;* now stripped and bare, so that the full stature of the ruin can be seen and its former magnificence imagined. It was a building larger than St. Paul's, lined throughout with costly marble, paved with mosaic, roofed with gold, decorated with Greek sculpture. Thousands of bathers could be here at once, attaining in absolute perfection that most legitimate of all luxuries, the perfect freedom of the skin from any particle that might clog its pores, dull the fine sense of touch, or vitiate the blood. These were hot-air baths, like the poor imitations of them which we call Turkish in London. There were many other buildings in Rome of the same kind, and several of the same size; so that many thousands could bathe at the same time. The price of admission was half a farthing, equal at most to half a penny of our money. What city of modern Europe has made cleanliness universal?

While Caracalla's baths were building, the quarries of that friable cement which gives Roman buildings their wondrous durability were being penetrated in every direction by labyrinths of underground passages, where the followers of the Christian sect assembled in secret to worship and to bury their dead. These passages, just high enough and broad enough to admit a man, have on either side small hollow spaces closed with brickwork, in which lie human remains layer above layer. Here and there the passage is enlarged into a small vault in which fifty persons might stand; and, by the light of torches, are seen rude altars hewn in the soft rock, and rudely painted emblems of the Christian faith. Into these dank and death-laden recesses the winds of heaven never found their way. Such air as one breathes is heavy and repulsive, even now, when decay has done its work, and only a few harmless ashes remain. But what must it have been then?

Yet strange indeed as is the contrast, still stranger and more unexpected is the result. Physical foulness goes with moral power; physical purity with moral degradation. The future of the world for many centuries to come lay not with the radiant health and physical beauty that illumined the vast Halls of Caracalla, but with the humble, quiet, unattractive people that you might have watched in the dusk creeping from the Catacombs to their poor homes in the dingy suburbs. Let the Materialist think on these things. Let the Spiritualists think on them also.

See, then, the point which we have so far reached. From the nineteenth Christian century, tracing the growth of society upwards to the first, we have never seen that harmonious interaction of man's

physical framework and nervous organization that we call health, either systematically sought for or spontaneously reached by social arrangements. In the last two centuries our mastery over the forces of nature has been used to amass wealth, and in so doing has made health more difficult of attainment by stimulating the growth of towns, by turning every water-course into a foul drain, so that the very air we breathe and the water we drink have been vitiated. And when we go behind this modern civilization of ours and take refuge in the times when the Christian Church was far more powerful than it is now, and the rage for wealth-producing had not been stimulated by physical discovery, we find that by a strange perversion the degradation of man's body was looked upon as a sacred and holy thing. This earth being a scene of pilgrimage to a higher and nobler life, it was not worth while to spend pains upon it, in order to render it a fit dwelling-place for man; so that physical uncleanliness was tolerated in our towns and venerated in our saints.

And yet passing still farther back to the social life of Greeks and Romans as it was when the Christian revolutionists came to disturb it, we find that life brilliant, splendid, refined, physically perfect as it was, nevertheless tainted with such moral foulness that we welcome its disappearance, the choice between physical and moral impurity being fatally forced upon us. We take refuge from the gorgeous spaces of Caracalla's baths in the stifling air of the Catacombs. None the less do we look forward to a time when the two conditions of health shall be united; when purity of soul and body shall be inseparable; when men and women full of love and tenderness as ever Christians of the first centuries were, eager to help their fellows in weakness or sorrow, purged from anger and avarice, unspotted by the world, shall yet enjoy to the full all those simplest, subtlest pleasures which earth lavishes on those who will not wantonly waste and scorn them: pure air and undefiled streams, the unpolluted fragrance of the meadows that Shakespeare and Milton loved. In the carelessness of mediæval saints for physical purity, in their rapt attention to the inner problems of the soul, in their certainty that this world was but an inn where we stayed for a few days and nights on our way to a permanent home, we, from where we stand, can see the germs of terrible evils that were to follow. Those men were ready, as we know, to sacrifice their bodies for their souls' welfare. The time was to come when their successors should be even readier to sacrifice other people's bodies for the welfare of other people's souls. The one-sided fervour

and the one-sided doctrine of the early Church was one day to sharpen the sword of Dominic and to light the torch of Torquemada. Nay, at this moment it is kindling conspiracies against the French Republic, and cursing Italian society with chronic anarchy. Admit, as I for one freely admit, that these evils are less disastrous, because less potent, than the sordid plutocracy of New York, Paris, and London, which follows from mere negation of all spiritual life. We sympathize with the first more than with the last; but we war with both.

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PRINTED BY WATTS AND CO., JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

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(Founded by the late Professor E. S. Beesly in 1893)

Monthly, 24 pp., 3d.; post free, 3½d. Annual Subscription, 3s. 6d. post free.

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