(3) Do not bind yourself by oaths;

(4) "Resist not him that is evil";

(5) Be good to the just and the unjust—

all from the Sermon on the Mount. Well, I affirm that in the judgment above discussed Tolstoy has broken every one of those five precepts—that is, if we take the third, the least important, in a sense in which it has any relevance to nine-tenths of life, and the second in a broad and rational rather than in a narrow and ascetic sense. For, firstly, the judgment on the smokers and drinkers is an angry judgment, if "anger" is to mean anything short of resort to physical violence. Secondly, it is a giving way to the lust of censoriousness; and, being an act of wholesale moral impeachment, it characteristically ignores a main precept of the Sermon on the Mount, after a profession to accept and obey that body of teaching. If there is no significance in the precept, "Judge not that ye be not judged," why are we taken to the Sermon on the Mount at all? Thirdly, the censure is uttered in the very spirit of wild over-emphasis which is the moral folly of oath-taking, as apart from its intellectual absurdity. Fourthly, the censure is a very strenuous attempt to resist supposed evil by evil speaking; and, fifthly, it is bitter and unjust all round. And as I have taken a test obtruded by one of Tolstoy's most thoughtful disciples, there must be some serious flaw either in the master's ethical code or in his practice.

§ 3

To keep the main argument clear, we may put it that not only is the practice perverse and inconsistent, but the code is uninstructive and arbitrary; and that Tolstoy's adoption of it is in large part an exhibition of sheer self-will. At the same time, many of us are free to avow concurrence of predilection with him to the extent of (1) hating war, (2) desiring an economic reconstruction of society, and (3) revolting against the stupidity of

existing penal systems. My own criticism is thus that of one who to a considerable extent shares his aspirations. And it is specially because of sharing them that I indict as unenlightened his code and much of his critical practice.

The code, to begin with, is authoritarian, and is not reached by an analysis of the results of conduct. In the introduction to his book "On Life," Tolstoy sharply criticizes the definitions of the term "life" by various men of science; and he does it with such irrelevance, such disregard of what the definers are driving at, that one would be led to call him extremely disingenuous if one had not learned to see in him a man above all things self-willed and self-assertive. Probably every one of the definers took far more pains over the definition than Tolstoy ever did: to that consideration he gives no thought. He wishes to speak of life in its moral aspect; and when they seek to define it as an aspect of conditioned energy he lets out at them[1] with the declaration that "To-day the word 'life' is applied to *something debatable, which lacks the essential characteristic of life*—that is to say, the sensations of suffering and enjoyment and the aspirations towards good." That is to say, he gives a moral definition of life, which does not even glance at the scientific problem; and he supposes himself to have convicted men of science in general of folly. "The word 'life,'" he announces,[2] "is short and very clear, and every one knows what it signifies. It is just because every one knows the meaning of it that we ought always to employ it in the sense admitted by all." After this he works diffusely up to the propositions that "the true human life is not that which is lived in time and space," and that "the renunciation of the well-being of the animal individuality is the law of human life."[3]

[1] Ed. 1902, p. 16. [2] P. 17.
[3] Chapters xiv and xv.

Now, any man of science reading this is entitled to say that Tolstoy has not only shouted down the biologists to no earthly purpose, but has played fast and loose with his own case, pretending that he uses a term in a universally accepted sense when he does no such thing; and it might be suggested to Tolstoy's disciples that scientific men who make these discoveries are very likely to be made resolute enemies of Tolstoyism all round. But the worst of it is that all the while Tolstoy's account of life on his own lines is "debatable" to the last degree, and that he is ostensibly incapable of even seeing many of the problems which life presents to men who have thought at least as much about it as he. By his own account he was past fifty before he thought out issues of which most thoughtful men became conscious a generation earlier. Certainly his statements of fact are confused. When he reached fifty, he tells us in the first sentence of the introduction to "What I Believe," he had been "for thirty-five years a Nihilist in the true sense of that word—that is to say," he "*had no religious belief*"; and he adds that at fifty he "began to believe in the teaching of Jesus Christ." In the first chapter he writes: "From the time when I began to read the Gospel for myself, almost from childhood, what touched and affected me most were those passages in which Jesus spoke of love, humility, self-abasement, self-sacrifice, and the repayment of evil by good. This has *always* been for me the substance of Christianity; *that which in my heart I loved*." Let him reconcile these statements who can.

What *does* seem clear is that Tolstoy finally accepted the teaching of the Gospel Jesus as being either divine or otherwise authoritative; for in a paragraph in the third chapter—certainly again a badly confused passage—he says that he committed "horrible sacrilege" by using words of Jesus "in jest in their true significance" when he really thought them to have a different significance! All the while, the sense his use of the words

naturally bears, as he quotes himself, is exactly that which he says he did not suppose they could bear. I recommend the whole passage to students as a sample of Tolstoy's mental processes. At least it would seem that at the time of writing (1884) he regarded Jesus as divine. In a tract issued in 1896, however, he avows on the one hand that the Gospels, "so far from being infallible expressions of divine truth, are the work of *innumerable minds and hands,* and contain many errors," and on the other hand he speaks of them as "holy books," and as giving "Christ's teaching." Finally, àpropos of the work of "Verus," "Vergleichende Uebersicht der vier Evangelien,"[1] he writes:—

> They are attacking the last of the outworks, and if they carry it, and demonstrate that Christ was never born, it will be all the more evident that the fortress of religion is impregnable. Take away the Church, the traditions, the Bible, and even Christ himself: the ultimate fact of man's knowledge of goodness, i.e. of God, directly through reason and conscience, will be as clear and certain *as ever*, and it will be seen that we are dealing with truths that can never perish—truths that humanity can never afford to part with.[2]

Thus are we bluffed from pillar to post, from the authority of "Christ" to the authority of "God"—that is, to Tolstoy's personal equation. If he were of the conventional type of "inspired artist" who professes no allegiance to logic and makes no pretence to coherence, this kicking up of the magistral heels might pass with a smile. But Tolstoy is from first to last a professed zealot for consistency of word and deed, with a rod in his hand for all who show levity on either line. His reader, then, has a right to ask him: "If the moral law is thus absolutely clear, why in God's or Reason's name, Master, did you have no glimpse of it till you were fifty; and

[1] Leipzig, 1897. P. van Dyk (not "Vaudik," as in Mr. Aylmer Maude's note).

[2] Mr. Aylmer Maude's "Tolstoy and His Problems," 2nd ed., 1902, p. 209.

why did you even then proceed painfully to piece it together out of the patchwork of the Gospels? What have we to do with a dead Jewry or a phantom Christ as a guide to goodness if we know goodness 'directly through reason and conscience'? And if there be this direct moral knowledge, how comes it that men as honest as you, and apparently more painstaking, are at issue with you as to what is right? Have these men, then, no reason and conscience? If so, what becomes of your pæan? And if the truth 'can never perish,' what exactly is it that you are fighting over? Do you really mean that you are elated because somebody will always know the truth, although the mass of mankind will not? Can it be that you, the teacher, are after all but a bundle of inconsistencies, a wayward old man concerned above all things to 'say your say' as the mood moves you?"

§ 4

But the scandalized Tolstoyan may protest that it is not for me to play the disillusioned disciple; and I waive the character. Let me, however, before I proceed further to deal with the Tolstoyan code on its merits, revert to the manner of Tolstoy's handling of the Sermon on the Mount while he ostensibly regarded it as an authoritative teaching. I have spoken of his utter disregard of the precept, "Judge not, that ye be not judged"; and I may be told that Tolstoy explained that saying in a certain way and held by his interpretation. It is exactly so; and I doubt whether the whole vast literature of exegesis contains a more flagrant perversion of a plain doctrine than Tolstoy's reading of that text. Through a whole chapter, entitled "Jesus and the State," he argues that by "Judge not" Jesus meant "Have no courts of law: pass no penal sentences." To simplify the issue, let the reader grant for the moment that Tolstoy is right—as in a sense I hold that he is—in desiring to abolish penal sentences; none the less clear is it that he has by sheer

self-will read his own predilection into a passage that has no such bearing.

"The whole passage," he reiterates, "is directed against human judgments in courts of law, and repudiates them." This is nakedly and ludicrously false; the passage is a plain precept to *the individual reader or hearer*, and it vetoes the whole of Tolstoy's criticism of his fellow-men. And that is precisely why he forces it to mean something else. To cloud the plain fact, he makes play with the inadequacy of the common interpretation which takes "Judge not" to mean "Slander not." Certainly that interpretation is false, as false as Tolstoy's. But at least the ordinary commentary never went the length of professing, as he does, that "All my studies have shown me that the words of Jesus......were understood by his first disciples as I now understand them, in their simple meaning, 'Take no part whatever in the administration of the law.'" Concerning the deeds of the first disciples we have the narrative of the Acts, which is either broadly true or broadly false. If it be true, Peter actually slew or desired to slay by miracle the first two offenders within the Church, on a question of finance. If it be false, *what* knowledge has or had Count Tolstoy of the doings of the first disciples?

The student should give preliminary attention to these dialectic methods, because, taken with the whole drift of his criticism of life, they give us the clue to Tolstoy's intellectual character. First and last, he is a man of intense predilections, a feeler, an intuitionist, and his business as a writer is never to get at truth in his own despite, never to challenge and inspect his bias (save, it may be, to discard an old, on the impulse of a new bias), but to give at any cost of perversion and crooked exegesis the semblance of an authoritative reason for what he wants done; and, when his authority itself is called in question, to fall back on the primeval pretence that what he asserts is self-evident.

§ 5

From our analysis thus far there issues the general perception that Tolstoy forces into his sacred books meanings which accord with his bias. In particular we note that he forces on the precept "Judge not," which really vetoes his own censorious practice, the artificial sense, "Have nothing to do with courts of law," simply because he is dissatisfied with legal and penal systems. This repudiation of civil law he evidently holds to be the logical extension of his doctrine of peace; just as for him the condemnation of war involves the condemnation of all resistance to aggression. As I hold these positions to be fallacious, and to be practically injurious to the causes of peace, mercy, and justice, I will ask the reader to check with me the confusions and inconsistencies they involve.

As Tolstoy never proceeds sequently from first principles, it is unnecessary here to meet him with any countertheorem of moral philosophy; it will suffice to note his own starting-point, and the self-contradictions of his procedure. The starting-point is a morally and psychologically interesting one—the revolt from the stupidity of war and the demoralization it works. Apparently, indeed, the latter perception in Tolstoy's case came first; and thus, significantly enough, his moral judgment starts from his moral-æsthetic activity as a critical observer of men in action. He approaches the Crimean War not as a man shocked or saddened by the monstrous folly of going to war on such trivial pretexts as were in that case put forward, but as a political patriot like another, with, however, a quite abnormal insight into the weaknesses of average character, and a bitter zeal for exposing them. Coming thus to a desperate sense of the moral poverty of human nature, and of the worsening effect of war on characters already ignoble enough, he revolts at the line of action which leads to such results, and passionately

repudiates all the conventional formulas that serve to consecrate it. It needed the concrete impact on his artistic and critical temperament to set him in opposition to the political folly which made war possible: had he not gone to the Crimea, one surmises, he might not have discovered the madness of the strife.

Thus temperamentally established in his hostility to war, he characteristically proceeds, not to calculate how we may best evolve above it, but to stigmatize it as simple sin, with which there must be no paltering. And as he is really concerned to be consistent where he sees straight, he proceeds from his condemnation of both sides in a given war to the doctrine that there should be no resistance to aggression. Justly enough, he notes that each side in every war charges the other with the real aggression, and that in reality there is generally a spirit of aggression on both sides. For him, this is enough; and from the perception of the average fact he goes straight to the condemnation of (1) self-defence, and (2) penal or otherwise protective social provisions against crime. It may be that some of the more remarkable Gospel doctrines, impinging on such a naïve intelligence, moved it to the logical leap; but it seems as likely as not that Tolstoy on his own temperamental lines made the leap, and then appealed to the Gospel to justify him.

§ 6

What, then, are the doctrines worth? Let us place ourselves beside Tolstoy as far as possible in sympathy and aspiration in order the better to realize the issue. We join with him in detesting war and resisting war-mongers; we say with him that he who overlooks an injury is nobler than he who revenges one. The ideal is set forth in the tale of the old Greek statesman who, when blinded by a brutal blow from a violent youth, refused to take the life that was forfeit to him, but took the youth into his house and fatherlike educated him

into a civilized citizen, whom he at length presented to the community as his return for the barbarian who had been yielded up to him. In none of Tolstoy's sacred books is there a nobler illustration of the doctrine which he is so concerned to stamp as Christian. All reasoning men must respond to it. But because we so respond, are we in consistency committed to vetoing all social repression of crime, and all self-defence against aggression? If we are, where shall we in consistency stop? Are we to go on indulging the spirit of resentment in sarcasm and vituperation? Are we, like Tolstoy, to write novels in which we exhibit the mass of our fellow-creatures as selfish, base, fatuous, or false? On that line, where is the gain? The moral of the pagan tale is that the good man *betters* the wrong-doer by forgiving and educating him; but the Tolstoyan moral castigation of all men is not administered in a spirit of forgiveness, and there is not the least ground for supposing that it works reformation. Nor is it justifiable as a mode of self-defence. If there is to be an abstention not only from all retaliation but from all self-defence, all aggressive or retaliatory censure is logically vetoed. Why, then, does Tolstoy persist in it? Simply because he likes it; because his temperament, as latterly evolved, craves for that outlet. Every argument he urges against social or individual self-defence is valid against every one of his own works; and he sees it not.

The constructive answer to Tolstoy's ethic is that the highest ideal of conduct is not a possible basis for civic co-operation, precisely because an ideal is as such something beyond average realization. If all men could act like the old Greek statesman, there would be no charm or point in the tale; and even those who applaud his act must further recognize that success in such an experiment is always problematical. One brutal youth (if the story be true) was found reformable; but who can believe that all brutal men are equally so? Who, again, in our

crowded world, can personally undertake the reformation of any ruffian who may chance to assault him? And if we simply practise non-resistance, what will become of the ruffians? Instead of bettering, they must needs worsen. The more non-resistance, the more assault. And whereas we are all primarily free to submit to injury as regards ourselves, we are bound to consider whether our submission does not endanger others.

This brings us to the root problem. The preacher of non-resistance, presumably, would defend himself against a wild animal or a savage dog; and he would similarly defend his child. Where, then, and on what grounds, does he draw his line? He would defend his child from a savage dog: why not from a violent human being? And if his child, why not his friend, his neighbour, his fellow-citizen? And if there is to be individual self-defence, what becomes of the objection to a common law, which was originally instituted for the express purpose of preventing excesses of individual vengeance and abolishing private feuds? If the Tolstoyan prescribes absolute non-resistance all round, the dispute comes to an end: most of us must simply reject the prescription once for all. We *will* defend our child, our friend, our neighbour, our fellow-creature, against violence from beast or beastlike man; and on this ground stand the vast majority of men living in society. It follows, then, that, while ascribing nearly all wars to the brutish unwisdom or injustice of our fellow-men and their rulers, we who hate war reserve to ourselves the right to defend ourselves against aggression: nay, that even in a matter in which our own rulers may have been as guilty as those of the enemy, we may finally join in the defence of our own country against the enemy, knowing that their conquest of us would only make matters worse. In the late war in South Africa, the Boers had the clearest right of such self-defence; and even those of them who had opposed President Kruger's policy, as did General Botha, joined

in the war against Britain, which had no shadow of right to use force against another State on the bare ground that it was slow about franchise reform. I say "had no right," meaning thereby that our own professed principles absolutely negated any such right.

President Kruger, on the other hand, is said on good authority to have resisted the decision to send an ultimatum to the British Government: I am told that when the vote was taken by the Executive Committee he burst into tears and said, "You have lost the country." Nevertheless, recognizing that Britain was certainly going to attack the Transvaal, he threw in his lot entirely with his countrymen, rightly holding that his forced co-operation in the opening attack on the British colonies was a less evil than would have been his separation from his people and his virtual identification with the unscrupulous enemy which was preparing to crush them.

On Tolstoy's principles, the Boers ought not to have resisted at all; and a plausible case might be, and indeed has been, made out for the possibilities of *non-warlike* or *passive* resistance by such a people to an overwhelmingly strong oppressor. They might have sat still and let the invasion pass; then they might have quietly refused everywhere to pay the taxes imposed by the conqueror. But what is the use of such speculations in face of the certain fact that at some point average human nature would have revolted against the insolence of the oppressor; that isolated acts of resistance would then be followed by some measure of concerted resistance, which would either have been crushed and punished by new outrages or have led to a successful general resistance? What is the use, in short, of giving to men in the mass counsels on which we know they cannot act?

§ 7

The fact is that Tolstoy's identification of the love of peace with the doctrine of non-resistance, so far from

persuading men in general to accept the latter doctrine, tends to set them against the propaganda of peace. He labours to his own confusion. The only men who listen to him in groups are abnormal types like the Doukhobors, who by their action entirely fail to persuade the majority even to begin the reform of relaxing compulsory conscription, much more to go the length of repudiating the principle of individual or national self-defence. Among ourselves, profession of Tolstoyan principles seems to me even to weaken the hands of peace-lovers, since it sets against them a number of men who *could* be persuaded to join in a rational movement for minimizing war by resort to arbitration. Against all such rational methods Tolstoy has perversely and aggressively set his face, declaring that no progress will ever be made save by absolute acceptance of the high Gospel doctrine as a divine command. Now that he concedes the possible fictitiousness of the entire Gospel story he will presumably continue to preach his absolutist ethic as the direct revelation of his "reason and conscience." *Ipse dixit.* And who is persuaded? Nay, if some be persuaded, of what value is their assent? For what will they count in the long campaign against folly? The categorical imperative of non-resistance has lain before Christendom for two thousand years: with what results? With far worse results, I maintain, than may be attained in one hundred years by a steady appeal to common-sense and consistency. Those who merely echo an absolute ethic because they revere its propounder are morally less efficient as well as less educative forces than those who scrupulously shape their ethic by the light of total human utility, and think for themselves on each issue as it arises. For all Christian history goes to show that the attitude of unreasoning submission to moral authority perpetually tends to become an empty pretence; and that the worst war-mongers are among those who profess to see in Jesus a supernaturally perfect teacher. On questions of war

we see the Christian Churches pretty much at one with the criminal classes: the parson, the publican, and the sinner go hand in hand to rob and slay.

That Tolstoyan doctrine can avail to reverse this state of things I can see no ground for imagining. Of Mr. Aylmer Maude I cordially desire to write as a friend; and in that spirit I put to him the question whether the presentment of Tolstoy to the public as a great teacher can do aught but confuse the moral currency. We could make some small impression on the nation by showing that the Boers had been shamefully wronged: what impression can we make by teaching that the Boers were as far wrong in resisting us as we in going about to invade them? Mr. Maude prints at the end of his wonderfully cheap edition of Tolstoy's amorphous essay "On Life" a set of extracts from the article by my friend, Mr. H. W. Massingham, entitled "The Philosophy of a Saint," in the "Contemporary Review" for December, 1900. But a few years earlier Mr. Massingham—again I comment in all friendliness—put his whole energy into the movement for forcing this country into a war with Turkey on behalf of the Armenians. If this be compatible with Tolstoyism, what becomes of the gospel of non-resistance? If it be admitted to be incompatible, what becomes of such Tolstoyism?

§ 8

As with war, so with law. All men with the spirit of reform in them recognize the crudity and the cruelty of the prevailing systems of criminal treatment; and a number strive constantly to introduce humaner and nobler principles. The result of their total effort is that within little more than a century from the beginning of the movement for rational reform there have been set on foot, with a considerable measure of success, scientific and merciful schemes of dealing with prisoners, whereas Christendom during fifteen hundred years practised by

the light of the Gospel methods of sickening cruelty and of hideous stupidity. At this stage enters Tolstoy on the scene, with the demand that, because Jesus is said to have said "Judge not, that ye be not judged," we shall abandon the whole system of penal law. The pretext is naught, and the precept is a mere stumbling-block to the movement for reform. It is not by a return to primeval anarchy that the relations between the community and its lawless members are to be purified of barbarism. Were it possible—which it is not—to persuade the community to abandon its system of criminal law, the first consequence would be the formation of smaller groups which would go to the extreme length of violence in defending their members against violence. Against these the aggressors in turn would band themselves, and society would resolve itself into a congeries of warring clans. No one with the least insight into the nature of civic structure could have made Tolstoy's suggestion, or, hearing it, could suppose it feasible.

What induces some reforming spirits to listen to Tolstoy in this connection is, doubtless, the unquestionable power of his pictures of the actual evils of the prison system. His concrete impeachment or diagnosis of symptoms is indeed as impressive as his prescription is futile; there he is on the ground of his genius; and all his powers of pessimistic vision, all his exasperated sensibilities and his ruthless veracities, come into play. As a sheer arraignment of moral miscarriage his view of the jail system in "Resurrection" is convincing to the last degree; and there is a quite deadly truth in his summing-up that right management can never be reached through putting sinful men in control of sinners. But the moment he passes from perception to prescription, from vision to action, he passes from the plane of genius to that of ignorant self-will. As a guide to collective social conduct he has neither competence nor the sense of his

own imperfections that might lead to competence. Seeing things vividly as they are, he can see no remedy save to have them as they cannot be. It is as if a physician should exhibit the clearest insight into the causes of a patient's cardiac disease, and should end his diagnosis by prescribing a new heart. Tolstoy evidently supposes that society can be induced to add by volition a cubit to its moral stature; and when saner men propose a more practical mode of evolution he angrily protests that no other method can avail. It is the old fatality of the prophetic type; vivid vision and judgment of moral evil, with an absolute blindness to the rationale of moral betterment as distinguished from the mere exhortation to do right.

§ 9

The worst of such cases is that they tend to go from bad to worse. A prophet may indeed at times, by sheer intensity of concrete vision, rise from childish to scientific conceptions of conduct, as when Ruskin progressed from the hollow rhetoric of his earlier doctrine on war to the accurate economics of his later teaching; but such evolution is rare, and the prophet normally remains wrapped to the eyes in the robe of his self-esteem, being unable to pass from confidence in his vision to diffidence in his power of guidance. And in Tolstoy's case we see the instinctive self-confidence of the man of æsthetic perceptions yielding one arrogant oracle after another on no better prompting than the dictation of physiological impulse. Apart from his own avowals, it might be taken for granted that such a man would in his youth have lived in the free gratification of his senses; and those who have surveyed religious history might have been prepared to see him at a certain point duly developing into the familiar type of the hater of the life of the senses. Given a certain flaw in the functioning of the liver, and the average man becomes an average ascetic,

decrying that to which he is not inclined for the sufficient reason that he has now no mind to it.

So it is with Tolstoy; and here again he is a stumbling-block to progress. The line of rational advance is by way of such development of the mental life and its appetites as shall keep in balance and control the bodily. But Tolstoy, having undergone a physiological change, can see in the sexual life in particular nothing but a vice to be if possible extirpated, or at least an inclination always to be regarded with shame. It is not for him a question of marriage versus free-love; conjugal love itself is odious to him if it has in it anything of sex attraction; and he brands it as "impure." And since Tolstoy forces utterance on this point by his perpetual outcry, one is bound to say that he is merely one more case of physiological flaw, and that his strident denunciation of normal instinct is not a whit more morally authoritative than the neurotic excess or depravation of that instinct. As between divergent forms of physical bias there is a rational test, that of total human utility. Now, the sex instinct is not a mere cause of vice and depravation on the one hand and of the preservation of the species on the other; it is a source of infinite emotional inspiration and of countless æsthetic and poetic impulses, of which the total outcome is a balance on the side of joyous life as against mere passivity and grey endurance. Its reduction to the Tolstoyan minimum would mean an incalculable shrinkage of the total forces of existence. To listen to the Tolstoyan impeachment one would suppose that "the good life" consisted in having no cordial desires, no powerful impulses, no exaltations of the spirit in presence of the beauty and plenitude of things. It is a vain veto. Valid life consists not in having neither pulse nor impulse, not in reducing the human being to a spiritless machine of one rate of movement, but in so controlling appetite and bias that they minister to energy without working suffering or

wrong. The asceticism which brands as "impure" or primarily unworthy a property of life that is bound up with half its energies, and is radically on the side of construction and love as against destruction and hate, is simply an aspect of average self-conceit, prophetic or otherwise. It cannot justify itself at the bar of reason; and its main allies house in the camp of superstition.

§ 10

It goes without saying that the moralist who thus solves the concrete problems of conduct in terms of his unanalysed and unenlightened impulses will yield us sheer self-will and pragmatism when he seeks to construct a comprehensive philosophy. And this is, in sober sadness, the upshot of Tolstoy's treatise "On Life." On the general or abstract as on the concrete issues he proceeds on the spur of his repulsions; and in the act of formulating a professed gospel of love we see him with the scowl of contradiction on his brow and the twist of acerbity on his lips. As usual, he thrusts at real weaknesses in the life and thought around him. With his lucid hostility of temper he spontaneously detects the tone of imperfection in the pretensions of "science"; and his jeer for it is as ready as of old, as ready as his jarring insolence in his early intercourse with Tourguénief, whose genius he could never recognize. "Science," he jeers, "will decide this some day. There is an institution, a body, an association of men of intelligence which is infallible, and is called science. It will define everything in time. Is it not evident," he goes on, "that such a solution of the question is but a parody of the reign of the Messiah, a reign in which science plays the part of the Messiah?" Exactly so. It is the only Messiah we shall have; and it is not yet wholly delivered from the arrogance of the prophets.

To put the case more philosophically, let us say that "science" is simply "the best that intelligence can do";

and that therefore there is a paralogism in the habit of talking in the name of that best as if we, who are not the best, were its plenipotentiaries. Our science is but our last revision of our opinions; and the revision must be for ever reiterated. But if there is thus no finality of "science," are we therefore to fall back on a finality of nescience, on the arrogance of the prophet, on the personal equation of our thrice detected and dissected misguiding friend the novelist? It really cannot be. The cure for fallacy is not prophecy.

Seeking in Tolstoy's essay for a large philosophy of life, we find simply the old affirmation of his individual or sectarian impulses. Carping perpetually at other men's definitions, he never comes within sight of a satisfying definition of his own. To the average man he announces that "this life, sole end of all his activity, is shown to be something delusive and impossible; whilst the life outside him, that which is by him uncared for, unperceived, and to him unknown, is the only real life."[1] This, after the preamble that "the word 'life' is short and very clear, and every one knows what it signifies."[2] So that what "every one knows" is "something delusive and impossible." The heading of the second chapter runs: "Humanity has recognised from the earliest days the contradiction of life. Wise men......have given to the world definitions of life explaining this intrinsic contradiction, but Pharisees and Scribes conceal it." So that Humanity does not include the Pharisees and Scribes. It is always thus in Tolstoy's philosophy. We are promised a comprehensive solution, and we are given a doctrine which excludes the bulk of things from consideration. Here his thought gains nothing from his gift of concrete observation: the psychology is worthless. "All men," we are told, "know in the depth of their souls that all sufferings are always necessary, indispensable to

[1] "On Life," ed. 1902, p. 31. [2] Id., p. 17.

the welfare of their life, and it is only for this reason that they continue to live"[1]—a proposition as false as that before considered, as to men's motives for drinking and smoking. And on the same page with this we have the assurance that "If men really understood life as they say, not one would remain in the world, if only from fear of all the suffering, so cruel and so entirely inexplicable, which he sees around him, and which may attack him at any moment." We are scanning a chaos of contradiction. At one stage we have the doctrine that "during infancy man lived like an animal, without having any idea of life" (p. 57); at another we learn that animals "know they are doing what they ought to do, and that what happens ought to happen" (p. 165). And amid all this nugatory mysticism comes the assurance that the only true philosophy is that which appeals to the multitude:—

> The *fact* that the insignificant doctrines of Aristotle, of Bacon, of Comte, *and of others*, have been and remain always the property of a small number of readers and admirers, that these doctrines, *because of* their falsity, have never been able to exercise an influence on the masses, and consequently have not undergone the alterations and amplifications which superstition produces—even this mark of their insignificance is accepted as a proof of their truth.[2]

Such is the spirit and the manner of the philosophy of "love," playing on life; and one is moved to ask the promoters of the Tolstoyan cult whether they think on the strength of this last maxim to prove the master great by dint of large editions at a low price, though every work they circulate is a stultification of its professed gospel? Would they not, one asks, do better to circulate simply the works in which their Master *pictures* life, here proceeding on his gift instead of on his foible? To the product of the gift, one ventures to say, the world will

[1] "On Life," ed. 1902, p. 163. [2] Id., p. 36.

in the end limit itself. But the present student must not on that score shirk any part of his task; and before we proceed to estimate Tolstoy the artist, we have to consider Tolstoy the critic.

II.—The Critic

§ 1

It is as a moralist, indeed, that Tolstoy approaches the problem of æsthetic criticism; whatsoever business he may set about, he recalls Coleridge's question to Lamb: "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?"; and the answer: "I ne-never heard you do anything else." But in his "What is Art?" he has undertaken to give us at once a theory of art and a canon of criticism; and the undertaking must be considered in a study of him.

As usual, he sets out by cannonading his predecessors; and here, with Schasler and Véron to back him, he has no hard task. But one would like to have the opinion of Schasler and Véron on the doctrine which Tolstoy has added to the cairn of æsthetic literature. Not of him, certainly, can it be said that he wearies us by vain metaphysics; hardly will he try to analyse the phenomena of his own preferences, being, indeed, incapable of a cool self-criticism, though he partly disarms us by an unsparing blame of most of his own imaginative work. He plunges at his subject with his invariable passion of repulsion from the tastes of the monied classes, his normal spasm of disgust for all that savours of physical satisfaction. "The ballet," he shouts,[1] "the ballet, in which half-naked women make voluptuous movements, twisting themselves into various sensual wreathings, is simply a lewd performance"—another of his violently false generalizations, recognizable as such to those of us whom the ballet bores,

[1] "What is Art?", Eng. trans., p. 7.

as well as to many whom it pleases. From such a verdict we learn simply that in his own youth of pleasure the moralist was not a little of a sensualist, taking pleasure of a gross kind where many less pretentious men enjoyed innocently the simple spectacle of rhythmic motion. Thus from the start we are listening to a polemic instead of an analysis; the scientific comprehension of æsthetic pleasure is not being a whit furthered.

"Criticism, in which the lovers of art used to find support for their opinions," the censor continues, "has *latterly* become so self-contradictory that, if we exclude from the domain of art all that to which the critics of various schools themselves deny the title of art, there is scarcely any art left." When, in the name of history, was the mass of criticism *not* self-contradictory? "The artists of various sects, like the theologians of the various sects, mutually exclude and destroy themselves. Listen to the artists of the schools of our times, and you will find, in all branches, each set of artists disowning others." Precisely so; and what is the business of the scientific critic but to deal comprehensively with this aspect of things, and reduce the babel to law? But our Jeremiah, in the very act of complaining that in terms of the totality of negation "there is scarcely any art left," proceeds to mend matters by making a holocaust of all the schools alike, and leaving less than is spared by any one of them!

We are prepared for Tolstoy's solution by the Introduction of his faithful and sympathetic translator, Mr. Aylmer Maude, wherein we read as follows:—

> But how are we to know what *are* the "best" feelings? What is good? and what is evil? This is decided by "religious perception." Some such perception exists in every human being; there is always something he approves of, and something he disapproves of. Reason and conscience are always present, *active or latent*, as long as man lives. Miss Flora Shaw tells that the most degraded cannibal she ever met drew the line at eating

> his own mother—nothing would induce him to entertain the thought; his moral sense was revolted by the suggestion.

Now, the student who goes a little further for his information than the experience of Miss Flora Shaw knows that, according to Herodotus, certain tribes among the ancient Scythians *did* eat their aged elders, mothers included, and held the act for a highly religious sacrament. Of what avail is it, then, to announce that "religious perception," whether "active or latent," tells us what is good and what is evil? We have but learned what we knew before, that to all men certain acts or sensations are good and others evil; we are left asking as before for the test as between clashing preferences; and we are either being treated to the usual "religious" evasion of the problem or to a solution of it on the familiar line of a declaration for our own pet prejudice.

§ 2

And this is in effect what we find. Reduced to its skeleton, Tolstoy's long essay amounts to asking and answering not so much the general question, "What is Art?" as the particular question, "What is good Art?"; and doing so not critically but sacerdotally, in terms of a certain gospel of conduct. On the general question, indeed, Tolstoy is not uninstructive when he gets out of sight of his bugbears and his Doukhobors; his definition of art, though not perfect, is in the concrete really better than many of those of his predecessors. Thus it runs:—

> *To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and, having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling—that is the activity of art.*
>
> *Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them.*[1]

[1] "What is Art?", p. 50.

The obvious difficulty is that such a formula will apply to the writing of essays, sermons, and critiques, and will not apply well to the painting of portraits, or to the first rendering of a piece of music by a player; and if we chose to treat Tolstoy as he treats the other framers of definitions—rudely negating whatever does not tally with his own—we should toss his as rubbish to the void. But we can see that, like the others, he has his eye on a mass of the facts, and has partly appreciated them. At moments he is almost scientific in his comprehension: "*All* human life," he writes, "is filled with works of art of every kind—from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity." True; but this is not the line of the definition, which further embraces the literature of persuasion, and leaves us asking for the principle of limitation that shall make the word serviceable. We get it thus:—

> By art, in the limited sense of the word, we do not mean all human activity transmitting feelings, but only that part which we for some reason select from it, and to which we attach special importance. This special importance has *always* been given by *all* men to that part of this activity which transmits feelings *flowing from their religious perception*......That was how men of old—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—looked on art. Thus did the Hebrew prophets and the ancient Christians regard art......

And thus, it appears, does Tolstoy regard it, in common with "the Mohammedans" and "religious folk among our own peasantry." For the general effect of his diffuse polemic is to demonstrate that for him no art is good unless it seems to him to be on the precise plane of taste of his religious peasantry, as represented, however, by himself. Angrily he protests against the taste which asks whether a work of art is beautiful; he even becomes childish enough to insist that such a phrase as "beautiful

music" is not "good Russian"; that it was not used when he was young; and that it is unintelligible—this though he presumably knows that it is good English, good French, good Italian, and good German. The perversity of the device is enhanced by the fact that while he thus carps at a metaphor which confuses nobody—"beautiful" here signifying "finely delightful" —he confounds a common confusion tenfold by using incessantly the phrase "to understand a work of art," after he has expressly claimed (p. 102) that "art is differentiated from activity of the understanding." The issue over which he so bitterly battles through two hundred closely-printed pages is briefly this: Uneducated peasants do not *enjoy* the art that pleases many cultured people; some of the latter thereupon say that for lack of culture the majority cannot *understand* high art; Tolstoy then retorts in his haste, as above: (1) that art is differentiated from activity of the understanding; and, again (2), that the uncultured majority *do* "understand" good art, the art which they do not understand being *ipso facto* bad. This is really his whole case; and a more nugatory web of fallacy it would be hard to spin.

§ 3

To clear up the chaos it is necessary first to note the significance of the proposition which he loosely puts and then perverts, that art is distinct from activity of the understanding. The essential truth covered by the phrase is that joy in art is a matter of concrete appreciation and not of sequent reasoning or logical inference; so that a highly instructed and thoughtful man may fail to enjoy music and painting which delight others, both instructed and uninstructed. But when Tolstoy goes on to assert that art "acts on people independently of their state of development and education," and that "the charm of a picture, of sounds, or of forms, infects any man whatever his plane of development," he not only contradicts and

confounds the rest of his own thesis but affirms what is notoriously false. With a perversity which is not easily to be distinguished from disingenuousness, he pretends that the majority of all races appreciate given works of art alike. "The tears and laughter of a Chinese," he asserts (p. 101), "infect me just as the laughter and tears of a Russian; and it is the same with painting and music and poetry, when it [i.e. poetry] is translated into a language I understand." Not even Tolstoy's rich fund of assurance can sustain such a patent falsity. Neither the cultured nor the uncultured in Europe find pleasure in Chinese music, and vice versa; and if Tolstoy pretends that he enjoys the popular music of China and Morocco as he enjoys that of Russia, we are entitled to say squarely that the truth is not in him. Assuredly his peasants will not bear him out. And if for the terms "find pleasure" and "enjoy" we substitute his preferred terms "be infected," his case is no better. He is saying the thing that is not.

The plain and familiar fact, established by endless observations, is that (1) races differing widely in their civilizations do differ very widely in their art-tastes and perceptions, many savages, for instance, being unable even to recognize a civilized man's pictured landscape as such; and that (2) individual men do vary in their art-tastes and perceptions in terms of their degree of culture at given periods. The scientific truth is exactly the opposite of what Tolstoy asserts. Instead of the uncultured majority in Europe being abler to appreciate the bulk or any sample of Chinese or Japanese art than the sophisticated minority, it is the other way about: it is the cultured eye that appreciates some craft and charm in the strange art where the uncultured sees merely oddity and absurdity. The Chinese peasant and the Russian peasant are about the last people to "infect" each other with their appreciations in painting, sculpture, and music, or even in poetry. On the other hand, the capacity to

respond to a skilful artistic appeal, whether in colour or sound or language, is a matter of development as much as the capacity to reason, though it is not the same faculty. It is a matter not of "understanding" but of perceiving, sensating, appreciating. On Tolstoy's principles, an artist's taste is as good in his teens as in his maturity: nay, if he ever grows tired of what first pleased him, he is for Tolstoy a degenerate. The true taste, for our prophet, is that which never ripens, never develops; only it must be *his* taste or a peasant's, not that of any other unprogressive. All the while, no note is given by him to the salient fact that his peasants and artisans in the mass are as readily "infected" by what he knows to be cheap and tawdry art as by that which he affirms to be nobly simple. Mr. Aylmer Maude, in a passage quite unworthy of him, argues that when critics point to this fact they are but meeting the proposition, "Good art always pleases every one," with the quibble, "Good art does not please every one; some people are colour-blind, and some are deaf, or have no ear for music." They are really doing nothing of the kind. They are showing that indisputably *bad* art is at least as "infectious" to Tolstoy's popular majority as he declares good art to be. Such a fact is fatal to Tolstoy's thesis. Mr. Aylmer Maude suggests that the Russian peasantry are far more generally "unperverted" than the English; but that will not save the argument. The Russian peasant is "infected"—as in his icons—by a religious art which is as stupidly conventional as any; and this precisely because his artistic taste has on that side had little or no chance to develop. Mr. Maude might do well to ask himself quietly and reflectively whether it may not be that after all Tolstoy is simply wrong—flatly and irretrievably wrong—in his generalization.

§ 4

The only plausible considerations adducible for Tolstoy's thesis are these: (1) That "unperverted peasants" do

cultivate folk-music which is also enjoyed by cultured people; (2) that certain folk-tales and other simple forms of literature are liked by both cultured and uncultured people; and (3) that some cultured people develop a fantastic taste for incomprehensible poetry and unattractive or "unintelligible" music. It is with the last set of phenomena that Tolstoy makes the most strenuous play, holding them up to contempt as *the* art of the cultured class in his day. Yet his own book is the proof that he knows the obscurantist or whimsical art in question to be *not* to the taste of cultured people in general. It is for cultured people that he is writing, not at all for his peasants; and he shows that he confidently counts on their repudiation of the obscurity-mongers whom perhaps he has been the first to introduce to the notice of most of them. It is vain for Mr. Aylmer Maude to urge that there is merely a "verbal contradiction" between Tolstoy's theses that "every one" appreciates good art and that cultured people as a rule do not appreciate it. Mr. Maude and his prophet alike count on an extensive acceptance among cultured people for Tolstoy's entire gospel. They are cutting the bough on which they sit; for, according to Tolstoy, the life of culture corrupts taste. All the while, indeed, Tolstoy is in a fair way to startle some even of his worshippers by the fashion in which he brackets greatly strange work with work that is merely odd or obscure, girding at Ibsen exactly as he does at Mallarmé, jeering at a deeply pathetic song of Maeterlinck's till one wonders whether he is as obtuse as he is impatient. But he knows that even when he is deriding the popular Wagner (on whom the present critic will here say nothing, being himself a little of an anti-Wagnerian, made dubious by Tolstoy's violent concurrence), he will have with him more of cultured than of uncultured people.

As to the partial concurrence of cultured and uncultured taste in the matter of folk-music and folk-tales,

that phenomenon too is in reality subversive of Tolstoy's doctrine. In his impatience he will not stay to realize that folk-music is often the cumulative or transmuted product of a long series of naturally gifted and *practised* peasant musicians, representing that gradual transmutation of taste from savagery upwards which Tolstoy implicitly denies. So with even some of the tales which he specially lauds, as that of Joseph—for which he has a singular passion—and which he brackets with the "'Iliad,' the 'Odyssey,' the stories of Isaac and Jacob, the Hebrew prophets, the Psalms, the Gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, and the hymns of the Vedas." There could be no more luminous exhibition of error than the proffer of this list with the announcement that all the items belong to "supreme art," and are "nevertheless quite comprehensible now to us, *educated or uneducated*, as they were comprehensible to the men of those times of long ago, who were even less educated than our labourers."

What are the facts? The Vedic hymns, to begin with, are for us to-day perhaps the obscurest literature in existence, a standing perplexity to Sanscrit scholars, a mass of dark sayings to the mass of men, and recognizable as in any sense works of *art* only to those who can follow their original rhythms. "How," asks Tolstoy, at this place, "can a feeling be incomprehensible which is founded on religion—i.e., on man's relation to God? Such art should be, and has actually always been, comprehensible to everybody, *because every man's relation to God is one and the same.*" Hence, shall we say? the perfect appreciation of the Koran by Christians, of the Orphic hymns by Moslems, of Unitarianism by Trinitarians, and of Christianity by Jews! It is the fate of all men sometimes to miscarry; but to few is it given to propound unredeemed untruth as moral science with the zeal and emphasis and fertility of Tolstoy.

§ 5

To make an end of this branch of our study of him, let it suffice to note that the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" were the products of a long evolution of a relatively sophisticated and specialized life, in which bards sang for a feudal aristocracy, careless of the people; that the Hebrew prophets and psalmists were the products of special schools, which would have scouted the doctrine of the universality of appreciation among the illiterate; that the Gospel parables are on the one hand the result of much literary specialization in Jewry, and on the other hand are often *not* intelligible to the common people without exegesis; that the stories of Joseph and Jacob and Isaac are not appreciated by average believers as art at all, but are revered by them as "revelation"; that the said believers have no appreciation whatever for alien myths and folk-tales (not to speak of Homer), which are in their way just as interesting as those of the Hebrews; and, finally, that such tales are *not* supreme art, any more than the Vedic hymns. Tolstoy, in short, does but accept and reject as good or bad art the pictures and writings which seem to him to set up or fail to set up the order of feelings that would promote acceptance of his social gospel; and his tests and verdicts will be trodden under foot by the most gifted artists as long as art endures.

For them the motive to creation is not the setting up of the "religious" or other moral emotions which are for him the sole end of life, but the instinctive expression of their own perceptions, joys, interests, and inspirations. The truth disguised by his sectarian polemic is this, that all good art sustains or *may* sustain the inner life in virtue of its ministries of innervation or chastening, stimulus or comfort, happiness or tranquillization. But such ministries will always be derived by different men in different degrees, and from different sources; and

there is no statistical test which will measure the vital or social potency of any art. A picture painted by an artist indifferent to all but his art may give to either a bad or a good citizen, finely gifted as to colour perception, an intensity and permanence of joy, which in one case may deepen and irradiate the enthusiasm of humanity and in the other yield no such fruit; while the painting of a crude artist zealous for good works may at once stir humane sentiment in many of little taste, and chill the sympathy of others no less humane and of finer sense. To think by mandate to compel all this cosmic play of variation to the moulds of a sectarian gospel that merely pretends to be universalist is but to fall once more into the snare of the typical prophet and the typical priest—nay, of the typical fanatic. Tolstoy, professing a universal human sympathy, ends as he began by repudiating well-nigh half of all life, anathematizing the bulk of all art, excommunicating two-thirds of all opinion. Professing to seek a rational standard of judgment, he gives us but invented statistics and the flouts of his personal equation. His criticism is only his ethics over again; the imposition of his self-will under the semblance of a reasoned code; and we must reject the one manifestation as we do the other.

III.—The Artist

§ 1

There is a quaint mingling of pathos and absurdity in the footnote in which Tolstoy pauses to sigh that he attaches "no special importance" to his selection of examples of good art. He has been talking specially of music, and is probably thinking of that, though he applies his disclaimer to "art" in general, and its effect is to quash his entire argument. "I belong," he avows, "to the class of people whose taste has, by false training, been perverted. And therefore my old, inured habits

may cause me to err, and I may mistake for absolute merit the impression a work produced on me in my youth." This dejected declaration comes after a series of chapters in which he has applied his "perverted" taste with the utmost stress of arrogant emphasis to every species of art; and we can but note it as one more proof that Tolstoy is æsthetically and intellectually a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde, a compound personality in which the Jekyll of humility now and then supervenes on the Hyde of self-assertion and over-mastering bias. But, turning our back on the final wreck of the critic's polemic at his own hands, we have to vindicate the artist in his own despite. "I must, however, mention," concludes his *peccavi*, "that I consign my own artistic productions to the category of bad art, excepting the story 'God Sees the Truth,' which seeks a place in the first class [truly religious or Christian art], and 'The Prisoner of the Caucasus,' which belongs to the second" [universal art of common life]. If one had any hesitation about his artistic theory before, it must vanish now. The artist's own work is for critical readers the sufficient rebuttal of his pseudo-æsthetic dogma.

I have not been able to meet with the story "God Sees the Truth," but I know "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," and that may suffice as a test. It is a good and simple but mainly external narrative of the capture of a Russian officer by Tartars, his detention with a companion, their attempt at escape, their recapture, and the final escape of the first. From what has transpired as to Tolstoy's methods one may surmise that he has here closely followed a real narrative, in which case his merit lies in his clear and effortless presentment of his material. If it is substantially an invention, it exhibits a great gift of controlled imagination in respect of its naturalness of action and vividness of environment. Either way, however, it is "universal art" only on the score that every one can readily sympathize with a

captive seeking to escape, *whether the story be true or fictitious*; and if that be the measure of artistic performance, many a newspaper report may rank as a piece of world-literature. On the side of psychology the story is not to be compared with "Robinson Crusoe," which *might* justly be ranked as universal art of the second grade in respect of its combination of universally interesting action with moral and psychological intensity, but which Tolstoy never mentions. The strongest reason for supposing this story of his to be a transcript of an actual experience is that the writer makes almost no attempt to set forth the *inner* life of the captive, which is what would specially have concerned an artist of Tolstoy's power if he drew the whole from imagination, but which is rarely dwelt upon by narrators of their own real adventures. And whether or not my surmise be correct, this lack of psychological content (as apart from dramatic suggestion) must be pronounced, by those who apply to art the true critical test of "the amount of mind to the square inch," to remove the story in question from the category of great art altogether. Good and true art it certainly is, in its relatively restricted way: where a contemporary English sensation-monger would have protracted the tale by mere prolixity of style, detail, and a certain amount of ordinary psychological padding, Tolstoy packs his matter with the strong sincerity of method which is the supreme virtue of all the great Russians, as of the great artists of all time. But in respect of its externality this story nevertheless remains on the level of a sketch as compared with a great painting.

Instead, then, of letting ourselves be bluffed by Tolstoy's false canon of universality, even when he uses it to exalt his slighter work at the expense of his best, we answer that it is not we who are "perverted" by our intellectual or social experience, but he who is perverted by his inartistic and uncritical purpose of reducing the fine arts

to the plane of the useful arts. Reporting or photography is not in the higher sense of the word art: transcription is not construction: an artist's technical sketch is not an artistic creation. If the demand for psychological chiaroscuro in a story be a proof of perversion, then the taste which in Tolstoy's favourite story of Joseph appreciates above all things the episode of Joseph's going apart from his brethren to weep—the one highly artistic touch in the whole—is a perverted taste; for a North American Indian, while he might possibly be interested in the story in a general way, would certainly not be impressed by that. And if we are to accept the evolution from the stage of the redskin to that of the Semite who can invent or appreciate Joseph's swelling of the heart,[1] equally must we accept the evolution which makes us value the conception (unsubtle though it often is) of the inner life of Robinson Crusoe above a bare record of his actions; and the further evolution which leaves us esteeming Tolstoy's psychological fiction above his simple transcript of an adventure among Tartars. Of all the perversities ever developed by genius or philanthropy, surely the strangest is that which, in the name of humanity, would seek to level down the intellectual life of all to the plane of the heavy-laden peasant instead of lightening the peasant's load and lifting him up to the higher intellectual levels of more fortunate life.

When Tolstoy's propaganda has gone the way of all inconsistency (insofar, that is, as it is unreasonable), his essentially disinterested art work, that in which he strove to picture life as he saw it, at his best for truth's and art's sake, at his worst for the sake of wreaking his censure on his fellow-creatures in mass, but never for the suffrages of the largest mass, will remain to edify men as his artificially selected work never can. When all is said, the story of captivity and escape is mere *entertainment*

[1] I suspect this item to have resulted from a *dramatic* construction.

for its readers: at best only a good and unsophisticated story of adventure as against our many stories of adventure in a cheap taste: it never reaches the innermost court of moral judgment at all, and so can have no real influence on life, even the life of the peasant. But an intelligent peasant might very well read and be deeply influenced by "Resurrection," which Tolstoy in his perverse mood would repudiate. I remember to have read an account of his mortification at finding that a group of his peasants did not at all appreciate some story which he had written with a special eye to their supposed standards. He would do much better to leave the larger-brained and better-trained among them to read such a book as "Resurrection" for themselves and dilute it down for their less fortunate comrades. If Russian *moujiks* cannot take in such a book, Russian artisans certainly can; and by Tolstoy's own account the honest artisan is not perverted.

§ 2

While we thus find Tolstoy's estimate of his own art-work to be astray, and give our praise to those large parts of it which he would discard, it is implied in the foregoing estimate of his character and bias that the bulk even of his artistic work is in some degree deflected from perfect truth. So self-willed an organism, so censorious a temperament, must inevitably touch with its egoism and its exasperation its artistic transcript from life. After reading the theory that men for the most part smoke and drink in order to dull the stings of conscience, we know we shall find impeachments put for portraits wherever that precious generalization is present to the author's mind. In "Resurrection," indeed, that is hardly a drawback: it was to hear an impeachment, as it were, that we were invited from the start. Yet even there we are at times jarred upon by the *parti pris* against the human race, the taking for granted that nobody is at all

likely to be likeable, or magnanimous, or sympathetic. Tolstoy's world is on the whole rather worse than Zola's, much worse than Thackeray's: it is nearly as repellent at all its levels—save when we meet the admirable peasant —as that of Gorky in what he expressly calls the lower deeps. Whereas Dostoyevsky finds gold in the gutter, Tolstoy detects only tinsel in the drawing-room. And at length we begin to take part with his characters against him. Knowing his bias, we partly distrust his presentment. Seeing him so bitterly bent on blackening human nature, we are set asking ourselves whether there *can* be such a monotony of ignobleness, of spiritual woodenness, of moral poverty, in any society whatever. Again and again we find ourselves surmizing that if we could have met the personage he is denuding and dissecting for us we should have found in him good qualities which Tolstoy cannot see.

It is so with the husband of Anna Karénina, who is handled with such unflinching animosity, with many minor characters, with Ivan Ilyitch, with the very doctors who attend him. We spontaneously realize that something has been suppressed: some touches of truth, honour, sincerity, humanity, cordiality, that would have relieved the eternal suggestion of hollowness, of egoism, of unworthiness, of mere veneer and varnish. The artist, we feel, is working in the spirit of an eighteenth-century Calvinist preacher, so bent on exhibiting the world to itself as a gallery of impostures that he hardly suggests the possibility of bettering it by criticism. Where he sees only lust and deceit and self-seeking, we reflect, there must have been *some* heart, some brotherliness, some fellow-feeling, some love stronger than death. Now and then Tolstoy seems suddenly to remember this, as when he makes the grieving son of Ivan Ilyitch come to kiss his dying father's hand; but, characteristically enough, the loving boy is barely indicated in the picture. The hard and selfish wife and the careless daughter are

definitely drawn, with repeated touches, as are all the other unsympathetic characters; with a bitter complacency the artist's pencil lingers over the morally ugly; the high light of goodness is touched-in as with a half-contemptuous flick and a commenting grunt. Over the good *moujik*, indeed, a little more pains is taken; there the fortune of an incipient thesis was at stake! Among his *moujiks* Tolstoy is latterly as determined to see only good as among his social compeers he was determined to see evil. And in the one case as in the other we remain fixedly distrustful.

To say all this, however, is to confess to the power of the very portraiture we impugn. Our very sense of something lacking is in part a tribute to the actuality of what is presented. It is not the mediocre artist who thus moves us to say he has been morosely eclectic; it is one whose gift is too great to be disputed. Though he is not the greatest or even the second greatest of the three great Russian novelists—his work being more unequal, more diffuse, and less profound than that of Tourguénief, and less tragically great than that of Dostoyevsky—he is yet a great master; and only alongside of two such masters as these can he be ranked in the second order. To no French or English novelist of our time is he second in total power as distinct from mastery; for he is not more one-sided and not less masterful than Zola; and, if less of an artist, less various, and less subtle, he is more natural and less self-conscious than Meredith; while his range and faculty of portraiture are nearly abreast of the large compass of those two eminent moderns. What keeps him second to his two great countrymen is his fundamental bias, the spirit in which he approaches life. As we set out by noting, he is before all things censorious; and he thus normally makes the impression of a censor rather than a knower of men, yielding an iron rather than a golden note. Where Tourguénief approaches the sorrows and failures

of humanity as it were in a spirit of profound compassion, only once or twice veering to that tone of private animosity which removes a work of fiction from the plane of creative art to that of satire and polemic; and where Dostoyevsky comes to the pitiful theatre of life in a spirit of sympathy so intense as at times to transform him into a seer, yet without his ceasing to be a co-ordinating artist; Tolstoy, as we have already seen, comes in a temper of bitterness, sternly alive to the littleness and baseness of men, and pitilessly bent on exposing them. And yet so large is his inborn artistic gift, and so virile his artistic taste in virtue of his sincerity and of the high artistic tradition into which he came, that he again and again transcends even his great gift of disparagement and denudation, and rises to a sad serenity of presentment in which the grim judge is lost in the artist-humanist. Such a presentment is that of Anna Karénina, not to speak of his more sympathetic studies of women.

His artistic power, however, broadly considered, consists intelligibly with all that we have seen of his strenuous discursiveness, his temperamental vehemence, his prophetic stress of insistence on his prejudices and impressions, his failure to correlate them and to attain philosophic consistency. Where Tourguénief reaches unity of spirit by long brooding, where Dostoyevsky comes to it through mystic intensity, Tolstoy seeks it collaterally through an argumentation for which he has neither gift nor due patience; and his art-work remains only experientially related to his confused mass of doctrine. What the three have in common is a superabundant energy, a perpetual earnestness, an unflagging concentration of the whole temperament on the sensation, the perception, the impression of the moment. The mere quantity of Tolstoy's writing far exceeds that turned out by either of his great countrymen; his share of sheer strength is vastly greater than theirs. And it is the continued application of this strength to the strenuous notation and

reproduction of innumerable aspects of life and character that has made him the artistic phenomenon he is. Not artistic economy but strongly-lined and variegated vividness; not distillation but collocation of experience; not long-brooded selection of deeply-studied types involved in memorable character problems, but a vast pell-mell of personalities of all types, set in a rapid succession of loosely-connected situations—these constitute the multifold artistic performance of Tolstoy. What is totally characteristic of him is the gigantic panorama of "War and Peace," with its astonishing host of sharply individualized human beings; the quick and violent series of lantern-views of the lurid life of besieged Sebastopol; the unsparing sardonic etchings of "The Cossacks" and "Resurrection"; the incessant transitions of scene and subject and portraiture in "Anna Karénina." It is in this strenuous, restless, vehement survey of the crowded stage of his impressions that he "finds himself": when he aims at a small canvas he is successful only by a sharp curtailment of his action, as in "The Cossacks": if he would develop a single situation or relation of one or two characters to the full, as in "Katia," he leaves an impression of strain without strength, of over-drawing, of preaching.

He must have room for the flagellant play of his *moujik* muscles, of his master-passion for the indictment of the majority of the men of his world; he needs a large and crowded canvas over which he can "labour terribly," branding on our retina the vision of a multitude of faces, always powerfully drawn and artistically interesting, often memorable, sometimes magnetically attractive, albeit never standing out for us in the long vista of the world of art with the rounded significance of the greatest imaginary beings of all, the posed masterpieces of the supreme artists. Taking his Titanic output as we find it, though, we have from his hand a mighty contribution to the lore of the inner life, an imaginative and artistic

achievement as decisively expressive of genius as the work of any man of our day.

It is now too late, if it were ever of the least use, to repeat to Tolstoy the dying counsel of Tourguénief, whom he always treated with such strange lack of amenity—the counsel that he should return to art, abandoning the propaganda. But it is assuredly his art rather than his propaganda that will endure. When the time comes for a dispassionate retrospect of the manifold fiction of the nineteenth century, and the chief performers are strictly graded in the old fashion on the steps of a dais, there will stand on the highest level, unless I misjudge, the great, sad-eyed figure of Tourguénief; the rapt, irradiated, sorrow-shaken, morally disordered Dostoyevsky; the tumultuous, arrogant, but irresistibly inspired Balzac; the grimly-trim, frock-coated Berserker, Ibsen, most deliberate of revolutionists of the inner life, with that other Berserker turned Parisian, Flaubert; and perhaps some other and later continentals. Beside them will surely stand our own master of tragicomedy, Thackeray, with the more elusive figure of Hawthorne, at his best the wizard of retrospection and introspection and reverie; and, shall we say, Meredith, in virtue of a force and freshness of conception as rare as their expression was fantastic?[1] On the lower and lowest steps will stand a multitude, which I shall not seek to number, of our skilled sentimental and sensational producers for the popular market: *non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa*. But high above these, on the second step, with Zola and some very different spirits for comrades, will stand the gaunt and powerful form of Lef Tolstoy, with the sombre Slav face towering so high on the tall shoulders that it will not be clear save to the closest scrutineers that he is not standing on the highest level of all.

[1] Needless to say, this was written before the rise of Mr. Conrad.

HERBERT SPENCER

(1904)

I

Some of the estimates passed on Spencer and his work, by writers professing to speak in the name of culture and even of Liberalism, set one wondering by what tests the fitness of the critic himself is in such a case to be ascertained. It would not do, certainly, to set up a rule that every writer is to be judged by a jury of his peers. Even as the publican is the most familiar figure in the jury of the law courts, the man in the street must be let have his say in the courts of literature when he therein enters. But every serious critic, one would think, must at times ask himself, What is my preparation to sit in judgment on a writer and thinker reputed great? And when his criticism takes the shape of a vast disparagement without discussion, a dismissal of an eminent figure to limbo without the semblance of a judicial summing-up of arguments for and against, he must indeed be conscious of high qualifications if he has no misgivings.

To discuss his own fitness, however, is for the critic, as for other men, a task too hard to be undertaken in the open. The feasible course is to ask what are the tests by which the status of any eminent thinker is to be settled; and in no modern case, perhaps, has the problem been better worth raising than in that of Herbert Spencer. Criticism in his regard has not noticeably risen to the form either of science or of art; and with such a criticism to do, one may well try to be circumspect. Let us begin then by putting the normal first critical test, and ask how Spencer compares with his competitors in range, in originality, in achievement.

II

By men whose conception of the sphere of knowledge has not been shaped at the English Universities, Spencer's life-work has repeatedly been described as the greatest effort ever made to give that sphere a comprehensive chart. They ground their praise on the facts that he has a working knowledge of all the great provinces of Nature thus far explored, original competence in some of the main fields of research, and the capacity to co-ordinate the laws of the whole in a reasoned scheme. Measuring merit in the only fair way, they find him intellectually abreast of the greatest of past strivers after such unification of thought, seeing that while he may be deficient in some of the faculties in which others excel—as that of abstract metaphysic—he has in other directions power of the rarest kind; and a total range of real knowledge hardly ever surpassed. Of his system as a whole they say that, whatever may be its errors and oversights, it is from first to last reasoned and coherent; that it alone, thus far, takes account of all the great sources of knowledge of the cosmos; that it is built up from the known, and that only from the ground of à priori beliefs is it ever broadly challenged. It embodies and correlates the nebular theory, the theory of "development" in all organic forms, and the theory of formation of species by natural selection; and it combines all three in a theory of universal and cosmic evolution, the latter being its author's special contribution to scientific thought. To pretend that this body of doctrine is as a whole discredited or superseded is the device of men whose animus is father to their thought. So far, it holds the ground, no similarly comprehensive scheme challenging it. Later speculation is in the direction of further analysis of the forms of cosmic energy, not of a new synthesis.

If the mental power required for this performance be estimated comparatively, it is hard to see who should be

placed higher, among modern thinkers. Academic gentlemen who spend their lives over Hegel are apt to suppose that Hegelian dialectic is the true and final measure of mental power; but as that test would rule out nearly everybody but Hegel and the particular Hegelian who applies it, we must seek a better. Lotze is of post-Hegelian thinkers the one who has made the most comprehensive attempt at a world-philosophy; and some of us would undertake to match in Lotze, with equally obvious defects, every species of intellectual limitation or perversity that can be charged on Spencer. If we scan the figures of the past, the same balancing of accounts can be undertaken in the case of Kant, Leibnitz, Newton, and Descartes. In point of comprehensiveness, coherence, and steady rationality of thought Spencer is comparable to the greatest of these. His larger heritage of knowledge is as fully surveyed by him as was theirs by them.

On what, then, do his detractors proceed? Mainly, I believe, on the imperfections of his metaphysic, on which (as apart from his psychology) he bestowed relatively slight pains. And as the detractors are for the most part supernaturalists, there enters into their criticism the element of critical iniquity that is so nearly constant in theological polemic. Thus we have seen Professor James Ward deliberately asking for a verdict against Laplace, the non-theist, on the score that Napoleon had a low opinion of him as an administrator, after trying him for a month. Any non-theist who chose might on the same lines, with a good deal more force, ask a verdict against the theism of Newton, on the score that Newton was for a time actually insane, and that he wrote many futile pages on prophecy. It is to be hoped, however, that rationalists will not emulate the spiritist's methods. It may well suffice them to point out that every criticism brought by Professor Ward against Spencer's metaphysic recoils with twofold force on his own. His defensive positions will stand no analysis whatever.

Beyond this, as will be argued later, there is a good deal to be said against Spencer at many points in his great circuit. One thing, probably, he lost by his refusal to undergo a university training—the correction which university intercourse might conceivably have supplied to the one-sidedness which in him was the concomitant of abnormal force of purpose. He was too apt, like most energetic minds, to be the sworn partisan of his hypotheses, bringing to bear on them a much less searching criticism than he gave to those of other men. Could he have had this corrected without suffering that loss of power which so often seems to follow on a university life, the gain to him and to us all would have been great. But the answer to his detractors is that *with* his defects he remains one of the great minds of the modern world. A great mind without serious defects, a comprehensive performance without serious miscarriages, it would be hard to find. In point of scientific sanity, as well as of scientific scope, we may safely place Spencer above Hegel and Comte, not to speak of the great Descartes, who conjoined great speculative error with practical sagacity; and in point of philosophic rectitude we may rank him no less high relatively to these and to Lotze, though lower than Spinoza and Hume. But every one of those thinkers has devout admirers; and some of these are yet capable of belittling Spencer's total work on pleas which, impartially applied, would veto their own admirations.

For the rest, the mere psychologists and metaphysicians, and those pupils to whom they have conveyed the notion that metaphysic of the Hegelian order is the perfection of intellectual culture, are themselves partisans of a cause—the cause that is still at times called "Idealism," but concerning which, in view of its internecine propaganda, all that can be broadly predicted is that it stands in large measure for the prejudices of the class which set out to maintain or to exploit traditional religion. That class includes many who cannot finally

"face the music" of the modern war of criticism; but they seem always to identify themselves by disparaging on any pretext or none the men who have openly broken with tradition and convention. Of these partisans—for such they are by habit and association—the ablest are lamed by their experience; and many are all the while secretly swayed by yet other influences which belong to their own weaker side—the instinctive conspiracy of the academic interest against one who made light of it, the carnal impulse to show the scientifically trained thinker that he must not presume to compete with the men of the schools, the specialists of philosophy.

So much they might do with justice if they were capable of noting further the large efficiency of the outsider where they are inefficient; the breadth of his grasp, and the native force of it. But here comes into effect the special limitations of *their* judgment. An academic culture which remains primarily focussed to a study not of modern but of ancient knowledge, which connects first and last with tradition and clericalism—this carries its own fatality, and challenges disparagement in its turn. The English academics, even the strongest of them, may say what they please about Spencer; but by posterity, in all likelihood, they will be seen to have related to him somewhat as the Sorbonne did to Descartes, the Italian academics of the Renaissance to Copernicus and Galileo, and Leibnitz to Newton. In that estimate there is done perhaps less than justice to the Sorbonne and the professors of Renaissance Italy; it is perhaps too readily taken for granted that their light was mere darkness. But that is how the whirligig of time is apt to work its revenges. And in the end Spencer will be remembered and admired, and they, for the most part, forgotten.

III

The hostility to Spencer among ordinary English academics, then, so far from supplying a measure of his power, is simply the measure of their restrictions. They cannot judge his work as a whole because they have never assimilated it; cannot survey it because they have never stood as high as his point of view. And of this restriction they have no suspicion. Brought up, with hardly an exception, not on the modern evolutionary gospel but on the old theosophic one, living in a perpetual compromise with endowed superstition, trained in institutions ruled by priests and shaped to priestly ends, reducing philosophy at every opportunity to a rehabilitation of creeds grown more or less incredible, how shall they appraise the original performance of a great pioneer, whose constructive work begins where their appreciations end? The strongest of them all has to bate his breath and pare his phrases when he deals with current sanctities. As for the rest, they are but enacting afresh the ancient comedy of the criticism of John Scotus by the Church, of Copernicus by the average priest and man, of Galileo by the Cardinals, of Harvey by the Jacobean doctors, of geology by men nursed on Genesis. *The definitive criticism of Spencer will come after Spencer is assimilated*, not before; and the mass of his "philosophic" critics in England have stood where they did precisely because they had not assimilated him, but had merely "read" him as James I or Hooker might read Copernicus.

Spencer himself has forcibly said, in a late writing, that "in the consciousness of one who has passed through the curriculum universally prevailing until recently, there is no place for natural causation."[1] That is no doubt an exaggeration; but if we put it that the space of the academic consciousness which ought to have been filled

[1] "Facts and Comments," 1902, p. 23.

by the concept of causation has been partly held by other ideas which countervail that, we shall be near the truth. The academic opposition to Spencer, therefore, was in large part the outcome of the pre-scientific habit of mind.

This futility will be re-enacted in human affairs just so long as men fail to realize why it has been so often enacted before. The failure consists in their not having seen that if they have no new order of test they are in their criticism mere duplicates of those who stoned the prophets in the past. Those who derided Copernicus and Galileo were not merely the average blockheads; they included most of the clever and cultivated men of their time; and these were the more fatally wrong because they knew they were clever and cultivated. What is said fanatically and perniciously, because arbitrarily, on the side of faith—that to receive it we must become as little children—is in a sense true of all new and great doctrine. The new truth is to be appreciated only when cleverness and cultivation are recognized to be "snares," as the old fanatics put it: when the clever man consents to think as if his cultivation in the new conjuncture counted for nothing; when he is ready to be shown that the new doctrine may be true, however it may derange his old conceptions; when he perceives that to derange old conceptions is precisely the first property of a great new truth. And how is such a revelation to come to one such as the good Green, occupied alternately in expounding the Pauline epistles as transcendental truth, and in framing a transcendental ethic which should be opportune for the Church of England? How was it to come even to the candid Sidgwick, who studied the history of ethics as a series of literary or didactic contagions and reactions, a mere process of school A leading to school B, never as an expression of the total equation of life, of actual experience, for a given generation with a given cosmology; who stood forever perplexed over the open riddle of

Determinism; and who could never even deliver himself from the mere Newmanite craving for a residuum of theology? And how can it come to the generation of *diadochi* whom these good men trained, and who looked up to them as great thinkers?

No; the half-baked generation must go before the pioneer can be truly known by all for what he is. A great truth is *never* assimilated by the age in which it is first expounded. Copernicanism was not truly established till after Galileo; geology was still professionally perverted to pious obscurantism in the day of Hugh Miller, sixty years after Hutton; and Darwin could not conceivably have won a fair hearing in his lifetime had not the "development theory" been discussed for two whole generations before him. What is vital and distinctive in Spencer has indeed been recognized by the thinkers and men of science in his own day, but only in the most gradual and tentative fashion; prompt response coming only from the most open-minded men, as Mill and Buckle. The "Principles of Psychology" was in fact too original, too profound a performance, to be otherwise than gradually read and realized; and the academics continue to this day to belittle Spencer because they are the products of an education still mainly shaped by the light of the Middle Ages, and but slightly modified by the unifying science which he sought to compass. Let no young student, then, be browbeaten by their consensus; and let no innovating thinker be discouraged if, like Spencer, he first meets with but slow recognition, and later with the flat hostility of those who resent the recognition and cannot see for themselves. That is the sure price and penalty of originality, so long as men have not learned to transcend the spontaneous stupidity of the past by seeing that their instinctive resistance to the new is just the psychic course of the past gone over again.

IV

Are we then to say that Spencer cannot yet be criticised even in detail, or estimated even approximately as a system-maker? Certainly not. Valid detail criticism may come even from the men of the old order, in so far as they check Spencer at any point after a fuller preparation or a minuter survey than his. It is not for a moment to be disputed that he who seeks to co-ordinate all science, physical, psychical, and social, is sure at some points to miscarry. The veriest specialists do so in their own specialisms; and when the co-ordinator has not even valid work from them to proceed upon, but must be his own specialist, and develop a psychology, a biology, and a sociology for himself in the act of framing a scheme to hold them all, many miscarriages must inevitably befall him. We may take it then that a good many men who have accepted Spencer's general principles, and set themselves to master minutely the provinces he has preliminarily charted, are capable of correcting him; and it is from a comparison of notes among such, in the spirit of the great Spencerian scheme itself, that there will emerge a reasonable estimate of his achievements and his shortcomings.

When, further, we have realized the supreme originality and abnormal capacity of the mind which could scheme the entire survey, we may even now without gross presumption begin to sketch for ourselves a table of estimates, in terms of general intellectual experience. Great men are to be studied in comparison; and we are helped to measure Spencer by having studied in their strength and weaknesses such of his forerunners as Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Hegel, and his contemporary Comte. The most obvious generalization from a series of such cases is that every great scientific generalizer has shallow places in his knowledge; the next is that the thinker's very successes, feeding his sense of power, cause

him to misjudge his actual scope, so that his weaknesses lie close to his special strength. Always there is a place where simple egoism, the self-assertion of the will as such, does the work proper to the vigilant intelligence. It was so with Bacon, pronouncing on concrete problems without due concrete preparation; and with Hobbes, venturing to be original in mathematics when he had no special gift and little discipline, because he had been competently and studiously original in logic, ethic, and politics. It was so with Hume, letting his mere personal and social bias and temper shape his politics after signally excluding temper and pre-supposition from his metaphysic and his economics. It was so with Descartes, framing unverifiable laws for the total cosmos on the strength of success in deducing verifiable laws from studied phenomena. It was so with Kant, letting his old dogmatic habit reshape his doctrine after having been shaken out of it to the extent of radically criticizing all its previous products. It was so with Hegel, forcing his personal equation on the universe, determining that it should yield its secret to his mere dialectic, and absurdly scouting the patiently-tested discoveries of the specialists where they would not fall into line with that. It was so, above all, with Comte, when he passed from the position of true Positivism, which is Impersonalism or nothing, to the codification of his private tastes and experience as a law for the human race to live by.

In Spencer's case we can get our clues both biographically and inferentially. Following such first-hand accounts as Mr. Hudson's and Mr. Macpherson's of his early bias and environment, we realize (1) that he came to his summary of the historic rôle of religion without any thorough study of religious history, having never had any personal interest in religious experience or in religious dogmas;[1] and (2) that at the same time his domestic

[1] "In conversation I once asked Mr. Spencer if, like George Eliot, he had first accepted the orthodox creed, then doubted, and finally rejected

associations biassed him to a comforting solution of a problem which ought to be as dispassionately handled as any other. Thus we can account for the famous reconciliation of religion and science, which breaks down at every essential point when logically tested. From "First Principles" itself, further, we gather (3) that he had made no long study of metaphysic when he set about putting a metaphysical solution in the forefront of his synthesis of things, instead of leaving it for the last chapter of all. To discuss the problem with reference only to Hamilton and Mansel is to make light extravagantly of the lore of philosophy, though it is true that Hamilton and Mansel between them had brought the philosophic debate to a crisis; and to treat the strictly philosophical or ultimate problem as a mere preliminary to the series of concrete problems is to lay unseemly store by mere mother-wit.

Where Spencer begins to count is in the reasonings which proceed on his real preparation. All that he has to say of matter and motion is vitalized by his years of actual dealing with and brooding on matter and motion as railway engineer, his actual close studies of physics, and the habit of scientific inquiry which dates from his boyhood. When he writes on education he is crystallizing endless practical experience and theoretic thought acquired by him in intercourse with his father and his uncle, original thinkers both; all that is conventional in his book is the occasional stereotyped formula of theism, which proves that at forty-one he had never thought out the religious problem as he thought out the others. Thus, when he is careful to pay a non-scientific tribute to religion, we can see that, like most men who have held

it. His reply was that to him it never appealed. It was not a case of acceptance and rejection; his mind lay outside of it from the first" (Hector Macpherson, "Herbert Spencer," 1900, p. 9). This although (or because?) in his boyhood his father regularly took him to Quaker Meeting on the Sunday mornings, and his mother to Methodist Chapel in the evenings.

religious beliefs up to forty, he is concerned rather to make out a good case for opinions he held so long than to criticize them on their merits.

When he writes on Psychology, again, he is drawing on all his past reflection and doing original thinking so intense that the strain shatters his health once for all;[1] it is perhaps his high-water mark as an analytical investigator. In biology, in which also he studied not a little, and to which also he had a bias, he has competence in a high but still only in a secondary degree; his generalizations are notable, original, suggestive; but they are not bottomed on an equivalent preparation; and later specialists, recognizing his great gift of theory, have yet to be on guard against it. One day, perhaps, we may learn that some of his divinations far outwent their perceptions; such power has the seeing eye; but though recent research certainly proceeds on his principles, and in the light of the main laws he formulated, it does not seem to owe him specific clues. Still, he is working here from his strength, and the result is broadly worthy of his scheme.

When we come to the "Principles of Sociology," surely also a massive and powerful performance, we are moved to reckon with some of our biographical data. Spencer the schoolboy had been notable for impatience of or inattention to all manner of mental drill, and for a deeper impatience of every sort of coercion by his bigger schoolmates. At the same time he was noted for his considerateness to the younger boys, to whom he gave the courtesy he desired for himself from his elders.[2] Here were the makings of a good Nonconformist, in the higher (and lost) sense of the term; and in an age of which the political and the economic ideals were alike libertarian it was only too natural that Spencer should

[1] Professor W. H. Hudson, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer," 1897, p. 53.
[2] Professor Hudson, pp. 5, 15.

become, with a Radical father and uncle, an advocate of *laissez-faire*. As such he appears in his earliest published writing, the "Letters on the Proper Sphere of Government," contributed to the "Nonconformist" newspaper in 1842, and republished as a pamphlet in 1843. On the side of politics, as on that of science, he is thus from the first led by his natural bias as well as by his environment. But whereas the scientific bias was new and abnormal, the political bias was ordinary enough, and the writings to which it first led were simple translations of predilection, not a long-breathed research into the law of things. And the "Social Statics," written to deepen the foundations already laid, was hardly in possession of an audience before he had flinched from one of its central doctrines.

After the issue of the "Principles of Biology," and before the appearance of the "Principles of Sociology," Spencer's political leanings, already set forth in various essays, were made clear in the characteristic "Introduction to the Study of Sociology" (1873), in some respects his most brilliant work. A judicial reading of that alone, one would suppose, must make impossible the language of cheap disparagement permitted to themselves in Spencer's regard by certain critics. Unlike the larger scientific works, it is easy reading for them; and yet its chapters are so packed with observation and reflection, so stamped with ordering thought, that even the dissentient reader is forced to confess its comprehensive power. Its very errors are newly instructive, so clearly do they define themselves in the planned structure. But no less than the errors of argument, the errors of standpoint and of scheme come home to the student when, copying his instructor's independence of spirit, he asks himself how a Sociology is rightly to be framed. By all analogies, it should proceed upon a complete comparative study of social growths—that is, of histories of societies, civilizations, polities. Such a study, however, Spencer never makes in his sociological writings, despite

the supervision he bestowed on the compilation of the eight tomes of the "Descriptive Sociology." And here, perhaps, will arise, or has arisen, the most definite reaction of evolutionary thought against a Spencerian teaching. It is by men of his own scientific school, who have sat at his feet, that his conception of sociology is pronounced à priori, non-inductive, a product of his personal equation, though it be marked with much of his power, by reason of the fullness with which he had brooded out his predilection.

V

The non-historical character of Spencer's sociology becomes clear in the construction of the "Principles." We set out with what are termed the data of sociology, reached through a lucid and orderly study of primitive life in general, of the *norms* of savage life, and the normal environmental forces; and we proceed on the same principles through a study of primitive ideas, religious and scientific. Then come the "Inductions of Sociology," a series of generalizations on the lines of universal biology, in which isolated illustrations from any age of history rub sides with illustrations from zoology, to show what societies abstractly are, cosmically speaking. The exposition is wrought out by analogies from the structure of organisms in general; and the result is pretty much an abstract biological idea of a society—this after we had set out with a definition of social evolution as "super-organic." When next we have a section on "Domestic Institutions" we go back to a study of savage life in general. Here, it is true, the "organic" analogy is very definitely restricted, and the full application of it repudiated (§ 269), with the declaration that previous analogies had been used only as "illustrations." Still, however, we are mainly dealing with savages and general principles. There is abundant information, some acute criticism, much sound thinking; but it leaves us at the

mere threshold of civilization. Thus in the bulky first volume of over 800 pages we get two parts largely made up of what other investigators commonly call "Anthropology," with a certain amount of good sociology of savage life thrown in, and one part of abstract sociology presented largely in the light of biology and zoology. The entire progression is determined by predilection, by prepossessions in favour of static political doctrine, by the need to give a quasi-scientific basis to individualism, not by the total problem and phenomena of social evolution.

In the later volumes the principle is the same: we get studies of various growths of social institutions considered in themselves—that of "Political Institutions" being particularly able in its own way—but never a continuous study of societies as wholes in specific evolution. It all constitutes a great performance, but it is not the work of a sociologist in the sense in which the volumes on psychology and biology are the work of a psychologist and a biologist. The thinker is reducing human societies in general to an appointed place in his cosmic synthesis, and their phenomena are made to point the moral of his political prepossessions. And while every sociologist will do well to study a theoretic structure so skilfully contrived, so full of ingenious speculation and criticism, it is certain that it does not yield the laws of higher social growth or a code of social policy to men for whom social reconstruction is an orderly purpose, and the history of societies a body of phenomena from which to gather comprehension and guidance. To put it as a sociology is as if we should profess to divine the laws of health from a mere study of skeletons, and the laws of ethics and education from bare dissection of bodies.

If the hostiles were at this point simply to charge upon Spencer inadequacy and perversity, we could not gainsay them. Magnificently perverse he has been; and we may here avow that his very independence, his

originality, his self-will, have been his snare. With his mind made up that book-education is far below the education to be drawn from nature, from things, from science, he as it were determined that, while he was bound to go to books for his knowledge here, his sociology should be drawn from the least bookish of books—chiefly the accounts of the lower societies. Rarely and slightly does he allude to previous sociologists; he will not compare notes; will not build up his science as other sciences are now built up; and still less will he study continuously the history of the higher societies; his discussions are almost solely on the problems of social beginnings; thenceforth it is not societies that he studies, but institutions, usages, practices as such. He has stamped his thought on the subject, but he has not carried sociology forward in the interest of living States.

VI

Thus much I had written before the publication[1] of Spencer's astonishing letter of eleven years ago to the Japanese statesman, Baron Kaneko—a memorable document, which will be found printed in full at the end of this article.[2] I point to it as justifying in every respect the foregoing criticism. Let us take Spencer's four specific counsels to the Japanese nation:—

1. To prohibit foreigners from either owning or leasing Japanese land, and to allow them only annual tenancies.

2. To prohibit foreigners from working any of the mines owned or worked by the Government.

3. To prohibit foreigners from engaging in the coasting trade.

4. To prohibit peremptorily and absolutely the intermarriage of Japanese and foreigners in Japan.

[1] In the "Times" of January 18, 1904.

[2] This is now unnecessary, the letter being reprinted in full in Dr. Duncan's "Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer," ed. 1911, pp. 321-3.

These remarkable recommendations Spencer justifies on the main ground that (*a*) the proposed opening of Japan to foreigners and foreign capital will in all likelihood lead to the subjection of Japan as India was subjected in the past; and that (*b*) racial intermarriage "*is not at root a question of social philosophy. It is at root a question of biology*"; because alike in the intermarriage of human races and in the interbreeding of animals widely different "*the result is inevitably a bad one in the long run.*"

Let us deal with the latter proposition first, seeing that it is employed to justify the most violent departure from that doctrine of individual liberty on which Spencer normally grounded his entire practical politics. It will be seen at once that as the argument stands it calls not only for interdiction of marriage between Japanese and foreigners in Japan, but for its interdiction in Europe; and that it sets no definite limit to the interference proposed. Not only would a European on those grounds be forbidden to marry a Japanese, a Chinese, or an Egyptian, a Hindu, an Arab, or a Turk; but it is left possible to contend that a Teuton should not marry a Russian, a Persian, a Jew, a Circassian, an Italian, a Spaniard, or a Portuguese. It is, I think, safe to say that no man in modern times has proposed so vital an interference with normal personal liberty as is here insisted on by the ostensible high-priest of individualism. He who would have barred laws to prevent men from drinking themselves to death, and who urged that poor children with reckless parents should be left to sink or swim as to both schooling and feeding, explicitly calls upon the State to interfere with the choice of any citizen who seeks to marry outside his own race.

And on what grounds? On the bare assertions (1) that the counsellor has "verified" his view by the evidence of one gentleman who testifies to the bad results of breeding between sheep which are "widely unlike";

and (2) that he has seen bad results arise in the cases of Eurasians in India and of half-breeds in America. They exhibit "an incalculable mixture of traits, and what may be called a chaotic constitution." That is the whole case; and, once more, the argument involves the corollary that two persons of the same nation who can loosely be pronounced "widely unlike"—e.g., a blonde or albino and one of dark skin and hair; a gay person and a melancholy one; a tall one and a short one; or an enthusiast and a cynic—should be prevented from marrying. Not the slightest attempt is made to set up a *measure* of permissible difference.

Never was the fatality of resolving sociological into biological problems more flagrant. Our biologist has never bethought him of asking *how* the alleged bad results have arisen in the cases of Eurasians and other half-breeds, much less of asking whether the mere hand-to-mouth verdict of average full-breeds is of any value as evidence. If we should ask (1) how many marriages in the *same* race yield unstable characters; (2) whether there has been framed by anybody any tolerably judicial standard of character by which to proceed; and (3) whether *social prejudice* in India and the United States does not tend injuriously to affect the characters of half-breeds there, it will be found at once that the vulgar opinion which Spencer has here adopted has never approached the character of a scientific conclusion. It is the merest empiricism. If it be true that Abraham Lincoln had in him Indian blood, and Frederick Douglass Anglo-Saxon blood, and Dumas Creole blood, what becomes of the thesis?

The one ground on which the position is abstractly arguable is that if a race relatively highly evolved should extensively intermarry with one but little evolved—e.g., Europeans with negroes or Australian indigenes—the offspring would in the main be presumptively much inferior to the higher of the parent races, which would

thus lose heavily if its own types were not at the same time preserved in abundance. But where the higher race is abundantly preserved, even the crossing of races widely apart in civilization may yield *an improvement on the lower race*, and where then is the loss? I do not suggest any plan of the kind whatever; the counter-considerations are too weighty to admit of any conceivable resort to such intermixture as a *policy*. I do but insist on the scientific issue; and submit that, inasmuch as Arabs are now interbreeding with the indigenes of Africa, the result is presumptively a momentous improvement of that section of the human race.[1]

This, however, is not really the issue involved in the question before us. The Japanese are *not* a backward race; and it is only in respect of certain forms of culture, not of total experience of evolution, that the Chinese are so. A Chinaman is in the average a more self-controlled organism than a European of the same status, and if the Japanese are more vivacious they do but approximate the more to European types of temperament. In the event, then, of marriage between a Japanese and a European of the same or similar culture-grade what worse result is to be looked for than would normally arise in marriages between French and English, German and Italian?

On the other hand, what becomes, under Spencer's proposal, of the further considerations (1) that the highest civilizations, and the most intelligent types of human being, are seen to arise where civilizations and races different, but not widely unequal, meet—as in ancient Babylon, Ionia, and Greece, Renaissance Italy, the Northern Europe of the period of general intercourse, and the United States; and (2) that countries or races *withheld* from intercourse with others are seen to be always relatively unprogressive—as ancient Egypt in its period of isolation, Byzantium, Turkey, the Switzerland

[1] On this problem see the strong testimony of Sir H. H. Johnston, "The River Congo," ch. xi, end.

and Germany of the Dark Ages, and, above all, China and Tibet? On all this our unhistorical sociologist has not a word to say; he has tried this case, as he has tried so many others, by the sole tests of animal life and the contemporary records of the backward or downtrodden races.

That something might reasonably be said for the policy of *controlling* the influx of foreigners into Japan we need not deny. Even the stipulations as to the coasting trade and the mines might be defended as measures of tentative prudence, to be relaxed in course of time. But Spencer contemplates a perpetuity of alienation; and we can but say that it is an astounding flout to all the main prescriptions for national conduct put forth in his works. His use of the analogy of India is vitally fallacious. What is proposed in Japan is the very reverse of the policy of the old rulers of India towards the trading Dutch, Portuguese, English, and French. That policy actually isolated the incomers as national groups, with separate armaments; and it did so in a country with no national political system, civil or military, a country wherein armed groups of incomers might go in time to any lengths. Japan has a national political system, civil and military; she is admitting foreigners just as European countries do, not in organized groups capable of military union and action, but as private individuals; and in permitting intermarriage between Japanese and foreigners she is admitting one of the best means of preventing any such racial action as Europeans in the past took in India. She is *assimilating* foreigners just as all progressive nations have always done. And if it be still argued that she runs a risk of a combination of foreigners against her, the sufficient answer is that precisely such a combination has of late been made against China, which pursues the policy of exclusion; and that the policy of exclusion would make such risks perpetual; whereas Japan has every year less to fear from a combination of Europeans against her.

True, she runs a risk of becoming gratuitously embroiled in European quarrels when she seeks European allies; and she would do well to seek alliance with China rather than with them, guarding China from *her* risks of European subjection, since such a conquest would at once constitute a vital danger to Japan. But to say this is not at all to endorse Spencer's counsel that Japan should keep all foreigners individually at arm's length. That counsel would exclude even alliance with China, and it is entitled to no acceptance whatever. The evolutionist has virtually taught that the historic conditions of national progress are to be vetoed.

VII

When the most remarkable of Spencer's practical teachings thus fails to stand critical tests it becomes difficult to vindicate him as a great political thinker; and it is not surprising if in the past ten years his credit in Japan has somewhat abated. It is embarrassing to find that one's chosen philosopher misunderstands one's individual case. But the students of Japan will doubtless do what students of all schools have had to do, and confess without bitterness that a great man and a great teacher may have to be disobeyed by his disciples. It would seem as if political wisdom were the last species of science in which men may become masters. Among Spencer's predecessors, Bacon, Hobbes, Hume, Hegel, Goethe, and Comte—to take six great names out of a score—have failed no less than he to reach the open secret of political evolution; Aristotle himself, the greatest political thinker of all, exhibits some strange blindnesses; and who shall say whether it was their gift or their circumstances that raised to a nobler insight Locke and Spinoza?

To Spencer it may not be unfairly objected, indeed, that of all these he had the least excuse for his mis-

carriage, living as he did in full view of the great century of democratic experiment, and with a store of better teaching at his hand. We can but pronounce that in this as in some other conjunctures he exhibited his great characteristic of wilfulness. No man ever held more tenaciously than he to a judgment because it was his; it is the "defect of his quality" of invincible resolution. It came out as markedly as ever a few years ago, in his replies[1] to the criticisms passed by Ernest Newman and M. Combarieu on his theory of the evolution of music from simple speech. Those criticisms, I think, are unanswerable; it is really less plausible to explain music as a development from speech than it would be to describe speech as a development from music. The latter is *sui generis*; and in arguing that on Spencer's theory it is impossible to explain the higher evolution of music his critics have put the problem in a nutshell. Spencer, however, makes the merely forensic reply that he never undertook to formulate the higher evolution of music, and twits the objectors with criticizing him for not doing what he never proposed to do; thus showing that he failed to see what they were driving at. Wilfulness could hardly go further; and in contemplating this and other displays of unteachableness in the controversial writings of the great synthesist the ordinary man may be tempted to say: "It is well for me that I lacked genius, for thus I have been able to learn."

But even after the letter to Baron Kaneko, the genius of its writer remains unquestionable to all who realize what genius is—no mere specialty of utterance or artistic bias, but abnormal potency of mind in any important field. To the follies so often seen in the company of genius commonly so-called—that is, the faculty of mere artistic creation or expression—most men are very tolerant because of their delight in its products, leaving

[1] "Facts and Comments," pp. 40–4.

it to the minority (who in turn run the risk of becoming uncritical) to extol a great mind in spite of its great errors. But when it is realized that the errors, like the follies, are part of the price normally paid for genius, both alike may be more tranquilly taken all round. There is some reason to think that Spencer even shared the common penalty of artistic genius to the extent of having suffered some cerebral damage at the time of his breakdown in 1855. The writer of the article on him in "Blackwood's Magazine"—evidently an old acquaintance—puts it that there was a serious lesion of one of the higher centres; and some of the stories told of his occasional odd aberrations of temper in his latter years consist only too well with the theory that there was a bloodclot interfering at times with the perfect working of that fine machine.

The result was but to intensify in him that congenital masterfulness which asserted itself in his youthful shaping of his own educational destiny as in his lonely achievement of his life's gigantic task. Professor Hudson has told of the Master's significant invention, in his latter years, of a pair of ear-stoppers, which he was wont hardily to put on in his own sitting-room when the talk of visitors among themselves had ceased to interest him. To the thoroughgoing individualist it seemed quite fair that he should thus secure himself, and quite unreasonable that the talkers should fall into an embarrassed silence at the sight of his self-entrenchment. To minds otherwise constructed such a procedure is the note of a very definitely moulded personality, with all the volition and concentration that were needed to build up the Synthetic Philosophy through forty years of ill-health, in the teeth first of neglect, then of hostility, and finally of academic derision. The pity is that of so great an individualism we should finally have to say that it involved some reluctance to admit debt to predecessors (an anachronism in the prophet of evolution), and not a few failures to

learn from both predecessors and contemporaries. But that, after all, pertains to a thoroughgoing individualism.

VIII

Such, I think, are the kinds of deduction which candour must even now make from Spencer's copious credit, and which criticism will hereafter elaborate. Having made them as best we can, we are free to strike our balance for ourselves. And what a credit remains! The mind of which these are flaws, be it said once more, was one of the most massive and comprehensive that ever looked on men's problems; and it is so often open to criticism precisely because it stretched its ken so far. His failures to grasp all knowledge are singly noted by men who could never have put their arms round his immense gleanage; the feat of that large encompassment remains.

And while it belonged to the vast adventure that its divagations should be moral as well as intellectual, the disciple has finally the high comfort of the conclusion that its moral inspiration was worthy of the intellectual, despite all miscarriage. For his worst miscalculations there came latterly to the sage the penalty of a far-reaching disillusionment. Preaching his stern social doctrine of everyone-for-himself-and-the-devil-take-the-hindmost, he stubbornly maintained on the one hand that not otherwise could progress be made, and on the other that by means of this universal scramble of selfishness there are to be attained the best fruitions of universal benevolence. In his dispassionate study of primitive societies he noted aright how this and that play of simple egoism and individualism set up fatal reactions on the society and the individual character; and in his general glance over late history he saw broadly how the militarism which is men's inheritance from their first ancestors, the "hairy, flint-hurling anthropophagi," mars all their civilization. His solution was that the life of commercial

and industrial struggle must breed a distaste for the other—this though his own early investigation of "The Morals of Trade" had revealed small sign of social moralization through that function.

At last there came sadly home to him the truth which the passionate Ruskin had glimpsed so long before, that infinite self-seeking in the economic life is not the way to goodness any more than it is to beauty. We know from Mr. Hudson that his later years had been shadowed by a consciousness that his social teaching was not being accepted even by the majority of his own scientific disciples; that the ideals he banned were those most widely welcomed by the believers in that rule of Reason to which he had taught so many to bow. But it is plain that the deepest disappointment lay for him not in the mere non-acceptance of his political doctrine by so many who cherished his moral ideals, but in the failure of the rest to justify his hopes. Despite his stubborn life-long contention, as against the socializers, that no political alchemy can derive golden deeds from leaden instincts, he had trusted, with an inconsistent optimism, that the leaden instincts would of themselves bring men ere long to the golden age of peace. In the recent militarism alike of the United States and of his own country he had seen—what he might have learned from all European history had he read it with attention—the rude truth that the mere egoism of trade does but breed a national egoism with a lower ethic than that of commerce. That was his last and greatest disenchantment; and it was the saddest because of his very love of peace and righteousness.

It was indeed no ignoble ideal that has been thus confounded. When Emerson said, as wise men had said before him, that "the greatest ameliorator of the world had been selfish, huckstering trade," he pointed to a great sociological truth. What the circumspect sociologist has to note is that just as trade raised societies

above mere intertribal rapine, so social science must raise them above the social rapine of self-seeking trade. If, as we say, Spencer had not learned that lesson, it was not because he lacked the spirit of peace and equity. Socialists may gather alike from his life and from his teaching lessons of rectitude and of intellectual self-control which they all need to learn. Whatever mischief the little bloodclot may ever have wrought in the play of the great brain, as regarded his individual relations with men and to some of his special problems, the close structure of his work betrays as little licence of temper, as little heat of blood, as were ever revealed in any performance of such magnitude. It has the massive calm that befits a great intellectual enterprise: Spinoza himself, despite his mathematical form, is in places less impressive; Hegel and Comte are verily not his rivals here.

And on the count of personal scrupulousness we have the fine tribute paid to the Master's memory by Mr. Hudson, who had such rare opportunity to know him as he individually and privately was. "It has been my good fortune," he writes, "to meet many morally great and noble men; but I do not think I do wrong to any of them if I say that Spencer was morally the greatest and noblest man I have ever known."[1] Thus should reason be justified of her children.

POSTSCRIPT

EIGHTEEN years after Spencer's death it is possible to review his career and his achievement with a surer detachment and a fuller measure of confidence in final estimate. The result of such a revision is, in the

[1] "Fortnightly Review," January, 1904, p. 19.

present writer's case, a general reaffirmation of the foregoing judgments. There has been no emergence of more comprehensive faculty than his, though Einstein has enlarged the realm of thought by a stroke greater perhaps than any one of Spencer's. Even in 1904, when that survey was written, the balance of competent opinion was seen to be on Spencer's side. The signatures to the appeal made to Dean Armitage Robinson, to admit a Spencer monument in Westminster Abbey, included those of ten Doctors of Divinity, heads of colleges.

To a Dean, publicly challenged to let an eminent unbeliever have a monument in the Abbey, much sympathy is fairly due. And while Dean Robinson justified his refusal with propositions "*after*" which he held it "unnecessary to enter into the question whether Westminster Abbey as a place of Christian worship could appropriately receive the monument of a thinker who expressly excluded Christianity from his scheme of thought," he was able to add: "It might be right that I should say that this question is answered in the negative by some thoughtful men who differ very widely in religious opinions." While thus entering very definitely into the question which he professed to put aside, the Dean oddly says nothing in explanation of the permitted commemoration in the Abbey of Darwin, who certainly did not include Christianity in *his* system of thought.

Commemoration in the Abbey was indeed not a thing Spencer would have yearned for. No prominent man in his day cared less than he about public honours in his life; and he could probably have given, if consulted, more and better reasons than the Dean's for the latter's refusal. The Dean fastened on the point that the memorialists "do not claim that Mr. Spencer has or will have a high place as a philosophical thinker." It did not occur to him to ask whether that claim had been or could be made for Newton. The probability is that

what most weighed with the Dean was the fact that, after all Spencer's careful prudential procedure in regard to religion—a procedure matched in its day by that of his enemy Carlyle—the systematist had, like Arnold, said certain things about Christianity which too insistently vetoed the Abbey monument, matching the church-goer's "three Lord Shaftesburys" with the picture of the "three Almighties" of the Gospel narrative and the Creed. Darwin in his quiet way had been more discreet.

The larger commemoration by thinking men, so much more important than that effected in the Abbey, goes on as before, the evolutionist's life-work continuing to affect all other evolutionary thinking on nearly all sides. As before, it is on the side of social action that it fails to yield direction. Alike his fears and his hopes have been negated by the course of things. His fears about the extension of the vote have thus far been no more fulfilled than his hopes for the extinction of militarism by the sheer play of commercialism; and in both cases the apparent inference from experience is that the needs and interests of mankind are not to be secured save by what he so fixedly distrusted—the extension of political machinery.

And yet no critic of men's political aspirations is better worth listening to than he continues to be. Erring as he did, even from the standpoint of his own ideals for mankind, in his strange prescription for Japan, he remains one of the most effective monitors against hasty legislative action. He is a long way nearer sane perception of the realities of government than those of our latter day who disparage the League of Nations and clamour for the Utopia of a World State.

Of the thinker's personality there is little that is new to be said, save that the Life by Dr. Duncan sheds over its theme an amount of light which makes more intelligible than ever the deep esteem in which Spencer was

held by those who knew him best. The view of him as alarmed on his journey and forever handicapped in his mental processes by some subtle physiological harm is there fully borne out. And it is in the light of that datum that we should think about the writer who flaunted and justified his temperamental dislike of reading and yet placed on the library shelves not only two feet (Dr. Mozley irritated him by calling it two yards!) of solid books, but left to be read by posterity one of the longest Autobiographies ever written. It is to be feared that in that last regard posterity has resorted and will adhere to his own professed practice. But then, as aforesaid, that pre-occupation with self is the upshot and expression of an endowment of self-will which could alone have achieved the immense and protracted toil that built the Synthetic Philosophy. And that the innate bias was all the while kept by the rule of Reason within the lines of a righteous and beneficent course remains a comfort to all who seek in Reason for the rule of life.

THE MEANING OF MATERIALISM

I

For most readers, probably, the word under discussion is rather an epithet than a label. In journalism it commonly serves as a half-brick to cast at persons or classes charged with being unduly devoted to wealth and its comforts, irrespective of their philosophic leanings. It has even been cast at the Church of England! But "materialist" has also a technical status as applied to a certain "school of thought" by those who dislike it, the term having been first coined by Tertullian in the plural noun-form *materiarii*, applied by him to those who held the views of his contemporary Hermogenes concerning the eternity of matter. This was a Christian artist, otherwise untraceable, whom Tertullian asperses with his customary scurrility before proceeding to prove him a heretic, which he certainly was, and a bad reasoner, which Tertullian himself was, with his school. For that matter, Tertullian was a heretic too. The original flavour of Tertullian's term has somehow cleaved to it down to our own day, having been assiduously preserved in the theological succession, though, as we shall see, there have been plenty of theological materialists. Professed materialists, that is, as distinguished from the ordinary Christian, who, like the orthodox Jew and Moslem, is deeply "materialistic" in his professedly "spiritual" conceptions. Which amounts to saying that materialism is a theme of much loose thinking, as well as of loose application.

It is, indeed, a highly significant fact that in the great majority of references to "materialism" no attempt is made to define that term. Whole treatises devoted to the subject make the same omission. Thus in Lange's

great "Geschichte des Materialismus" it is throughout taken for granted that we all know what materialism is—apparently on Lord Morley's substantially just principle that "we all know an elephant when we see it"; M. Jules Soury has followed suit in his excellent "Breviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme"; and the brilliant volume of M. André Lefevre, "La Renaissance du Matérialisme," similarly discusses the subject without offering any precise formula. So with the histories of philosophy: one may look in vain through half-a-dozen for a definition in the passages which treat of materialism.

It is not unlikely that the abstention is in the main wise: certainly some undertakings to answer the question "What is Materialism?" have helped to darken the problem; but a result of the general method of non-committal is that most readers are apt to get either false or confused notions of what the word actually stands for in philosophy. Used as it is at will to specify widely different ways of thinking, and even ways of acting which have properly nothing to do with philosophy, it has no such descriptive force as attaches to "determinism," though it is perhaps not much more ambiguous than "idealism" and "realism." Yet professional writers do not scruple[1] to fix on it, for a temporary purpose, a pejorative meaning only, and so to use it as a label. Thus so able a thinker as Mr. F. H. Bradley, referring to the assumption that "what is extended, together with its relations, is substantive fact, and the rest is adjectival," affirms that "the doctrine is *of course* materialism, and is a very simple creed."[2] So far as I know, no one

[1] Even scrupulous writers are at times regrettably careless in this matter. For instance, Mr. R. L. Poole, in his valuable "Illustrations of Medieval Thought" (p. 80), has the sentence: "Religion was fast subsiding into mere superstition or into its *kindred opposite*, materialism," immediately after a passage in which he *identifies* superstition with "materialistic views of religion." Previously (p. 50) he had spoken of "the strangest and most materialistic product of that materialistic age, transubstantiation."

[2] "Appearance and Reality," 3rd ed., p. 14.

calling himself a materialist, or any one else, ever laid down the proposition in question, which seems to stand for the surmised idea of a man just beginning to think on the problem of reality—though certainly neither the man in the street nor the man in the laboratory would use the meaningless expression "the rest is adjectival," and the man who realized the meaning of the phrase "and its relations" could not conceivably speak of "the rest." But Mr. Bradley, having in this simple fashion fixed the term, thinks fit to affirm a little later on that "*the* materialist, from defect of nature or of education, or probably both, worships without justification" a "thin product of his untutored fancy."[1]

While the issues of philosophy are handled in this temper, and on these tactics, even great metaphysical faculty will hardly serve to procure progress towards agreement. Unfortunately, Mr. Bradley's tactic is common among philosophical writers who eschew his tone. All students are aware that the term "matter" is now habitually understood by physicists as including forms "beyond sense." The "ether" of modern physics can neither be seen nor prisoned; it is a hypothetical substance, of which the undulations, impinging on the eye, are held to constitute light. Such a conception involves (though this is not always recognized) the admission that intangible matter may exist in an indefinite number of "states." Thus, if any man to-day should declare that the whole universe consists of "matter and its motions," he will be saying a thing to which many "spiritists" of past ages might subscribe; and his "materialism" is presumptively a different thing from the materialism of ages in which the conception of matter had not been thus extended. But if we turn to so modern a treatise as the "Outlines of Psychology" of Professor Höffding, of Copenhagen, we find that highly accomplished specialist

[1] "Appearance and Reality," p. 17.

professing to indicate the positions of "materialism" in terms of an extract from D'Holbach's "Système de la Nature,"[1] published in 1772; then identifying the position of D'Holbach with that of Broussais, whose terminology and proposition are quite different; then again recognizing that "as a method of natural science materialism is unanswerable"[2]; and finally writing thus:—

> We are attending here principally to empirical or phenomenological materialism......Here we move in the region ......in which materialism *has always believed itself* to move. Materialism *has never observed* that......it...... *always overlooks* something which gives rise to a new and, for it, a terrible problem—namely, the circumstance that movement in space is known to us only as an object of our consciousness. For the theory of knowledge, such notions as consciousness, idea, and intuition lie deeper than such notions as matter and movement. *For this reason* an absolute and decided materialism was *possible only in ancient times*, before the awakening of more deeply penetrating philosophical reflection......Modern materialists for the most part confess that, even if we can reduce everything to matter, yet *we cannot know what matter is in itself*......Thus La Mettrie, Holbach, Cabanis, not to speak of the wild, rambling inconsistencies of the most recent writers (Büchner, Moleschott). But what we have here urged against materialism is not the epistemological inconsistency exhibited in its desire that conscious life shall recognize, as the absolutely original and only reality, something which is given only as an object of consciousness......[3]

There are, I believe, inconsistencies in both Moleschott and Büchner. It has been my chastening experience to find no writer on philosophy who escapes them. But I do not think that Büchner ever committed in the same space so much rambling inconsistency as here parades itself. The inconsistency is so bottomless that one has to read further to make sure that one is really dealing with a fairly capable thinker.

No one knows better than Professor Höffding, all the

[1] Work cited, p. 15. [2] Id., p. 59. [3] Id., pp. 61–2.

while, that what passes for spiritism, or anti-materialism, is almost invariably marked by wild and rambling inconsistency. But he does not say so. He goes on to criticise monistic spiritualism, and he pronounces that Lotze, "the most distinguished representative of spiritualism in modern philosophy,"[1] after having insisted on the distinction between phenomenological and metaphysical investigation, "did not hold fast by this distinction, but, on the contrary, put it arbitrarily aside."[2] Observe, however, the difference in tone: Lotze's absolute inconsistency is merely "arbitrary"; the inconsistencies of so-called materialists are "wild and rambling." To one inconsistency you must be civil; to the other you need not be. Professor Höffding's tone is indeed mild compared with the raucous animosity of many other academic writers, who seem to flush with animal passion every time they allude to materialism, indicating pretty clearly to the sociological eye their lineal descent from the theologian, whose specific *odium* is now proverbial. But Professor Höffding, too, indicates, not quite pleasantly, how far social expediency still settles the tone which official teachers allow themselves towards competing doctrines. He disparages Büchner and Moleschott because that is academically a safe thing to do. But while he quotes from Professor Bain many dicta on questions of brain physiology and psychology, he does not attempt to deal with his summing-up of the materialist problem in "Mind and Body," though that is a standard modern statement of one of the materialist positions. Professor Bain is a distinguished expert; the safe policy is to write as if the "Système de la Nature" were a standard work for modern materialists, and Büchner and Moleschott, both popular writers, the latest accredited representatives

[1] This though Lotze has with great energy "defended the mechanical conception of organic phenomena, and......upheld the claims of the notion of mechanism to dominate our entire explanation of nature" (id., p. 63).
[2] Id., pp. 62–3.

of materialism. I need not further illustrate the point; but so much by way of preamble may be useful to our investigation.

II

When we begin with any care to collate teachings we soon realize what is so constantly obscured by the uncritical mode of approach, that "materialism" is not necessarily either for or against what passes for orthodox theism. Voltaire, a keen opponent of all clericalism and revelationism, was a bitter anti-materialist. Hartley, a devout Christian, framed a "materialist" philosophy; and Priestley, a devout Unitarian, followed him. Cabanis, often called a "typical" materialist, "floundered," as M. Lefèvre puts it, "in a mixture of vitalism and pantheism"; and Giordano Bruno, the great pantheist, certainly expressed himself as a materialist, conceiving of the All in terms of matter. Leibnitz, on the other hand, ascribes materiality to his monads, and consequently to his Deity; and Spinoza ascribes extension to the Substance which for him underlies both Mind and Matter: like Descartes, he assumed that the essence of Substance consisted in Extension—whether from "defect of nature or of education" it may be left to Mr. Bradley to say.[1]

In antiquity we find the same promiscuity of systems. As Professor Höffding notes, "Homer and the earliest Greek philosophers (before Socrates and Plato) are materialists; even in the teachings of the Christian Fathers before Augustine materialistic notions predominated."[2] That is to say, early theology distinctly admitted that it conceived of soul and deity as rarefied forms of matter,[3] the very term "spirit" having alike in

[1] Cudworth noted long ago how "some assertors of incorporeal substance denied the minor, whatever is, is extended; others the major of it, whatever is extended is body." "Intellectual System of the Universe," ch. v, sect. iii. Harrison's trans., iii, 221. And Plato clearly ascribed extension to the soul.

[2] "Outlines," p. 59.

[3] The do-nothing Gods of Epicurus were "quasi-corporeal."

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin the significance of "breath" or "breathing." The idea was that a "spiritual body" was simply something finer than a physical one, something aërial, light, vapour-like, which happened to be indestructible.[1] How or where, then, did the conception of a vital feud between spiritualism and materialism arise? We find what looks like a clue in the first chapter of Genesis, where we read that "in the beginning God *created* the heaven and the earth." This conception has reached modern theology in the form of the proposition that God "made all things *out of nothing*." But there is no such proposition in the Old Testament; and it will be quite clear to the candid reader of the second verse of Genesis that the Hebrew compilers did not understand their word *bara* as signifying the making of something out of nothing.[2] What they understood by creation was the making of a given order out of pre-existing and formless or disorderly materials—the common view of the ancients.[3] In *that* conception, however, there lay the germs of a vast dispute, since even here it is assumed that "matter" is primordially something incapable of any *processus* until the "Spirit of God" operates upon it. At the very outset, indeed, the conception involves the positing of two kinds of "matter," as well as the view that one imparts "motion" to the other. "The Spirit (breath) of God *moved* upon the

[1] Mosheim, in his notes on Cudworth's "Intellectual System," rightly insists that the Greek term *asomatos*, "incorporeal," had not the meaning latterly associated with it by Christian spiritists (Notes on ch. i, § 26, and ch. iii, ed. cited, i, 54; iii, 237). Cp. Maspero, "Histoire Ancienne des peuples de l'Orient," 4e édit., p. 36, as to the material though aërial character of the Egyptian *ka* or double of the body.

[2] So clear is the implication of the context there, to say nothing of the common use of the term, that M. Le Savoureux, in his "Etudes sur l'ancien Testament," can support the orthodox view only by pointing to the implications of passages in later books.

[3] This is shown with great learning by Mosheim in his "Dissertation on Creation out of Nothing," app. to ch. v, sect. ii, of Cudworth's "Intellectual System" (vol. iii. of Harrison's ed.). In the present sketch I trace slightly only one line of evolution of the debate. Mosheim's Cudworth should be studied by those who would realize how extensive it was. Cp. J. S. Mill, "System of Logic," bk. iii, ch. vi, and note supplementary.

face of the deep." For the pre-Hebraic thinkers the expression had evidently meant some species of generation analogous to the act of reproduction in living things; and here we may remember that ancient physiology regarded the act of sexual generation as one in which the male contributed a living principle and the female *did not.*[1] Always the idea is to insist on the paramountcy, superiority, and essentialness of the assumed separate Spirit. For the Hebrews this was enough. They certainly conceived of their Deity as in some way material: man is "made in his image"; he moves from place to place, has "back parts," is visible, and has nearly all the human passions, those only being denied him which a growing pessimism vaguely regarded as fundamentally evil.

This very pessimism seems to have set up the first clear crux in the development of the ideas of "Spirit" and "matter." Pre-Hebraic thought, we know, had not only recognized the presumptive "eternity of matter"—of gross or ponderable matter, that is—but had identified such matter somehow with a principle of evil in the universe. Thus the Good God came to be conceived as operating on something inherently intractable to goodness; and there follows the belief that in the universe there are two opposed Great Spirits, and that the opposition will either subsist for ever or be solved one day by a vast cataclysm in which gross matter shall be destroyed by fire. But when primitive science began to realize that "destruction by fire" is only a changing of the forms of matter, the partizans of the Good Spirit were gradually driven to a new formula. They revoked the admission that matter was eternal: God, they insisted, had "made it out of nothing";[2] and, *still conceiving of "God" as himself rarefied matter, and of souls as*

[1] Cp. Koran, Sura ii, 223.

[2] Such a view is implied in Psalm xc, 2, and Prov. viii, 22, 26; but even there it is not explicitly put.

similarly material, they predicated a spiritual world in which only good emotions could subsist, and love should be relieved of the carnality which among men seemed to degrade it from a spiritual to a bodily appetite.

At this stage we can realize to what a long logomachy the civilized world was committed. The indestructibility of "matter" was clear to all men who would let themselves think; and "nothing from nothing" was a primary axiom for the materialists. Sheer self-will, sheer determination to "praise God," set the spiritists on denying what they themselves had affirmed, and on making out that what their own teachers had conceived as a form of matter was not a form of matter at all. Roughly speaking, the two forms of bias differentiated into science and religion, an imperfect but always rationalizing science, and a religion which more or less avowedly sought to tread reason under foot. On the face of the case, there was no line of cleavage which would logically separate theists from atheists. Plato, writing before the negation of reason became distinctly a religious virtue, led the way in dogmatism for the Gentiles. Furious at the "materialists" who affirmed that the sun was merely a vast red-hot mass, he insisted that the sun was a God,[1] thus making Deity as much material as "spiritual." Yet concerning the relations of Deity and matter his teaching varied constantly, at one time setting forth[2] a Demiourgos or Artificer who (like the Deity in Genesis) reduced a pre-existing Chaos to Cosmos and animated it; at another affirming that Mind is older than Matter, and is essential to its movement.[3] At the same time he posited good and bad primordial spirits, yet finally insisted that all the heavenly bodies were separately animated by good spirits.[4] He would not check his conflicting pre-

[1] "Laws," Jowett's tr., 3rd ed., v, 271–2; and "Epinomis."

[2] In the "Timæus." In this treatise itself, however, there is inconsistency. Cp. Grote's "Plato," small ed., iv, pp. 222, 223, 238.

[3] "Laws," bk. x.

[4] "Epinomis."

possessions; he must affirm with vehemence whatever he had learned from his nurses, as well as what he reached by speculation; and in his passion he would if he could have finally put his gainsayers to death.[1] This stress of animal passion, we shall see, is the normal note of the teaching of those who most revolt at the suggestion of their kinship with animals.

Plato had thus capitulated to the old moral dilemma by accepting a spiritistic dualism; while he finally evaded the physical or cosmic dilemma by simply asseverating that matter was in itself inert, and could be moved only by mind. Both solutions, as it happened, were pre-Hebraic; but the quasi-monotheism of the later Hebrews, bent on glorifying a primarily tribal God, led them to prefer a God who created a Devil to a God baffled by a Devil of his own status. They thus burked the moral dilemma altogether, but accepted the arbitrary physical solution which recommended itself to Plato, and so finally adopted the reason-wronging position that an intangible power made tangible things out of nothing whatever. Against these positions stood out the ill-developed but relatively conscientious doctrine of the materialists, that an eternal mindless matter acted in certain ways by "chance" or "necessity"—a kind of formula that only too obviously bared itself to the negations of those whose own irrationalities it negated.[2]

On the other hand, when the first Judaic Christians, following Judaism on the spiritist path, insisted as a first principle that one God had made all things "out of nothing," Gnostic Christians like the painter Hermogenes, before mentioned, while believing confidently in "spirits"

[1] I here assume that Plato wrote the "Laws." This, however, is disputed by Zeller and other high authorities, as against the testimony of Aristotle. The "Epinomis" is still more strongly suspected.

[2] I am here assuming that the ancient materialists *did* say what Plato and others say they did. But the constant falsification of the atheistic position by modern spiritists gives us fair ground for doubting whether they did so express themselves.

and a spiritual God and world, calmly but firmly insisted also that gross matter was eternal, and that in its inherent intractability to good lay the only explanation of physical and moral evil. If God had made all matter out of nothing, they cogently insisted, he had clearly created evil, since in the terms of the case there existed nothing before matter save his own goodness. It was better to hold that evil had always existed than that Goodness had invented a Devil. To all such reasoning orthodox spiritism presented a lawless opposition which fully justified the Gnostic hypothesis. The spiritists would have it that God had created all things, and yet had not created evil; just as they insisted that he was a Father and that his Son was co-eternal with him;[1] that he had sex without sexuality; that he was omnipotent, yet was constantly disobeyed; that he foreordained all acts, and still did not foreordain sin. Those orthodox minds for which the countersense was too impudently naked caught eagerly at the thin pretence that evil was *non-ens*, a non-existence, being the mere privation of good; as if good were not equally definable as the mere privation of evil; and as if either were cogitable save in correlation.

It cannot be too often repeated that spiritism has thus been at all times the inconsistency of inconsistencies, inconsistency raised into a superhuman code. The very Church which insisted on the "spirituality" of deity insisted equally on the physical resurrection of the human body to live in communion with that deity "face to face"; and the Gnostics who repudiated the idea of a physical resurrection were denounced as wicked heretics. So in our own day the most devoutly religious persons and poets speak of the "face" and the "bosom" and the "hand" of God; and the spiritualists specially so-called not only undertake to "materialize" their spirits on occasion—that is, to transubstantiate them from ethereal

[1] On this Tertullian guarded himself by plunging into gross heresy, affirming that God was not a Father until he had a Son.

to gross matter—but habitually describe them in terms of *dress* and physical qualities. It is not the instinct of propriety that thus gives the visible spirit of visible clothes to the spirit which is alleged to have no body to be clothed; it is that other "spirit" of intellectual lawlessness which has kept men obstinate and complacent in self-contradiction since religion first took dogmatic form. Every countersense of modern spiritism, whether professional or unlicensed, has been implicit in theism from the first.

If we add to this heritage of theological bias and doctrine the special ground of strife set up by the doctrine of human immortality, we shall realize how far the modern issue between spiritism and materialism has been on one side predetermined. Ancient Christianity at first selected from the competing Greek philosophies that of Plato as being, despite his polytheism and dualism, most compatible with its tenets. When, however, the Platonist Origen came to be ranked, centuries after his death, with the heretics (chiefly, perhaps, on the score of his humaner ideas about future punishments), Platonism underwent a certain discredit, and Aristotle became for many studious Churchmen the "only wear." From Aristotle, as from parts of Plato, they learned that matter is eternal—the fundamental pagan tenet, as against the Christians—and they did not learn from Aristotle that either bodies or souls are capable of resurrection after death. And when, later, Aristotle reached and influenced Western Europe through the medium of the Saracens, a tendency to hold on the one hand the eternity of matter and on the other hand to deny the immortality of the "soul" seems to have been widespread. Thus "materialism" came to be associated with the denial of a future life, the most emotional of religious tenets. The two heretical ideas were really consequent, the conception of the endless transmutation of matter leading to (1) the realization that the buried corpse soon becomes something else,

passing into other bodies; and (2) the reflection that the personality without the body is inconceivable. On the other side was sheer inconsequence. With characteristic obstinacy the Church stood to both positions: God, "a Spirit," had made all material things out of nothing; Man is, or has, a spirit, but it is not his spirit that is to live with God; it is his original body! What became of the spirit between death and resurrection, and why a partly decayed or superannuated body should be resurrected at all, were questions left discreetly undetermined; a contradiction must not be made gratuitously plain. But inconsistency remained, so to speak, the law of spiritistic thought; and the spontaneous animus of the believer against the heretic remained its characteristic temper. Dante[1] becomes rabid in his wrath against those who say the soul dies with the body; and to this day religious men imitate his language.

III

It would take a long treatise to trace even briefly all the stages of the development of the antithesis between Platonic or Christian spiritism and dualistic or monistic materialism. Here it must suffice to note that with the revival of physical science the dispute came to be practically between the scientific and the anti-scientific view of all the processes of nature. And now begins to be apparent the practical ground for the term materialism, which only at this period came into use. The materialist *par excellence* was one who saw or tended to see everywhere in Nature an impersonal and infrangible law, and who accordingly conceived of "matter" as something of infinite potencies; the opposing spiritist was one who insisted that everything happened by the "will of God." And here it may be said at once that modern spiritism has been beaten from pillar to post till its more philo-

[1] In "Il Convito."

sophic forms are an absolute repudiation of its more popular or religious forms. However scornfully spiritists may write of materialism, they have accepted at least half the "materialist's" doctrine; ancient or Christian spiritism is simply done with for instructed men, even if they call themselves Christian.

In the Christian interregnum spiritism had been carried to the point of delirium, taking aspects that would have moved Plato to loathing. He, inconsistently enough, had denounced as the worst sort of irreligion the belief that the Gods could be propitiated by either prayers or sacrifices.[1] Christian spiritism had turned the universe into a merry-andrew's booth, making every saint capable of controlling the heavens and reversing the processes of nature on invocation, or even as a mortal on earth. Only slowly and painfully did science deliver itself from this primitive form of error. Renascent medicine had to struggle till late in the seventeenth century with the belief in witchcraft, to which such a mind as Bodin's clung when lesser spirits had begun to discard it. Even in the skeptical period of the English Restoration, Glanvil, a professed exponent of "skeptical" (in the sense of critical) method, eagerly defended it; and many grave men held by the belief that storms were made by devils at the behest of sorcerers. In astronomy, again, the great Kepler could not conceive of the stars as fulfilling their courses without tenant angels as guides and time-keepers. To all such fancies the rationalism which looked for causation in the nature of things and not in external agencies was "materialism"; and Newton was thus in the practical sense a materialist when he framed his law of gravitation, though he sought to parry the charge of atheism by the theorem that the property of gravity had been conferred upon "inert" matter by deity. From this stage forward, too, all science *as such* is materialistic,

[1] "Laws," bk. x.

in that it constantly seeks for law in the process of things, and absolutely rejects (for scientific purposes) the religious conception of special interference by deity. As Laplace said to Napoleon, it had "no need of that hypothesis."

Practically, then, materialism has meant the substitution of (1) the Newtonian for the Platonic and Keplerian hypothesis of sidereal motion; (2) the nebular hypothesis and geology for the fables of Genesis; (3) Darwinism for the Biblical or deistic conception of special creation; and (4) sociology for the theological conception of "providential" rule in history. And at every stage spiritism has furiously revolted: it is in full revolt now against "materialistic" sociology, after reluctantly accepting the previous steps in the reduction of Nature to the category of law. All along, of course, the primary conception of "spirit" as a separate entity has been maintained in regard to the human personality; and after spiritism has submitted—as it probably will—to sociology, even as it did to Darwinism, it will doubtless battle for the notion of the soul as a separate entity, not only by way of safeguarding the doctrine of a future life, but by way of vindicating the notion of a Supreme Being. And yet, on the showing of some scientific men, not even the notion of personal immortality is dependent on a dualistic hypothesis; while the vague hypothesis of a Supreme Being may very well continue to exist, in a pantheistic guise, after dualism is abandoned! So hand-to-mouth are spiritistic methods, now as ever.

Let us particularize. The doctrine of "The Unseen Universe," a treatise by Professors Tait and Balfour Stewart, is that the psychic life of each individual may build up a new personality in an unseen and at present unknown and unimaginable universe, as one form of matter may pass into another. Now, this doctrine is really a form of "materialism," though it scouts that name in the ordinary fashion. It is certainly not more

materialistic than we have seen the ordinary religious theory to be; but it conceives of immortality as a physical sequence to life, and thus substitutes once more a conception of evolution by law for the two competing theological views of (*a*) arbitrary creation of immortal personalities, and (*b*) arbitrary selection by deity of certain personalities for immortality. (It must be kept in mind that the doctrine of "Conditional Immortality"—that is, immortality as conditional on faith in the Christian creed, is still affirmed by some, was held by Locke, and was once virtually orthodox Christianity.) True, the Tait-Stewart hypothesis is far remote from human emotion, and offers small "comfort" for the bereaved or any one else, inasmuch as it offers no foothold for imagination; but then the current credence is itself profoundly comfortless when we seek to reduce it to anything like clearness (e.g., it either promises to an old man, whose young mother died at his birth, that he, an old man, will meet a young mother, or it promises him that something-not-himself will meet something-of-which-he-has-no-idea). Then the doctrine of immortality, on the basis of a new "materialism," may survive the old dualistic notion of "spirit." Democritus, the typical "materialist" of antiquity, hated as such by Plato, was later jeered at by Pliny as having taught that the human mind would live after death. Modern "science" can offer the same cold comfort.

Equally futile is the persistent polemic over the phenomena of "mind and matter" in the individual. To keep an opening for the doctrine of personal immortality men doggedly go on refusing to accept as applying to their own psychic life the principles of causation they apply in every other sphere of observation. Forced to admit that for every process of thought, every item of psychic life, there is a counterpart in cerebration, a molecular movement in brain and nerve, they yet solemnly affirm that the relation is not one of cause and effect. Solemnly they aver, with unwearied iteration, that we "cannot