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In Spite of

John Cowper Powys has also written

WOLF SOLENT

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OWEN GLENDOWER

PORIUS

THE INMATES

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THE MEANING OF CULTURE

THE PLEASURES OF LITERATURE

RABELAIS

MORWYN

In Spite of

A Philosophy for Everyman

JOHN COWPER POWYS

Macdonald : London

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Dedicated

to my great-nephew

John Francis Cowper Powys

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In Spite of

EXPERTS

What does it mean to an ordinary person to have a philosophy? Well, let us try to agree, at least for our own satisfaction, as to what *we*, anyway, mean when we talk of "having a philosophy". And you might, "whoever you are", as Walt Whitman says, consider for a second, when you open this book, whether you share the peculiarity, confessed by quite a number of eccentric people, of having this queer thing, "a philosophy of your own". There is no need that such a systematic way of life should imply anything elaborately scientific, profoundly technical, startlingly psychological or even subtly metaphysical. It can be quite practical, and yet in a way private, quite personal, and yet in harmony with certain universal tricks of Nature.

The chief thing is to make it so applicable to everybody that anybody could be converted to it, and so elastic in the application of its emotional and sensuous atmosphere that it not only covers the ground of ordinary experience but can reach at least a few of life's less obvious horizons.

If you feel at once and instinctively that such a thing is totally out of your line, and that you have hitherto got on perfectly well without it and expect in the future to get on equally well without it, there's no earthly reason why you should bother with the matter at all. There are plenty of people

who by a happy mixture of heredity and environment are so sane and sensible and shrewd and competent that they can handle life effectively enough, whether in victory or defeat, without recourse to any philosophical lifebelt.

But there are others; and these others are to be found throughout the British Isles and indeed everywhere where English is spoken; and they are people who suffer from many dangerous weaknesses, weaknesses that perhaps escape the usual categories but brim over into manias, vices, neuroses, phobias, and superstitions, that become a real trouble as their victims wrestle with life.

These are the people, and you can call them artistic, sensitive, and poetical, or you can simply call them morbid and eccentric, who are forever listening to magical rumours from the remote past. These are the people who believe they can cure their ills by the dying echoes of ancient incantations and draw wisdom like oasis-water from voices drifting over desert sands. These are the people who fancy they can gather planetary intuitions from inscriptions engraved upon rocks and stones in the very infancy of our race.

These are the people who believe they can find the secrets of life in the broken fragments of galley-slave rhythms from the lost islands of prehistoric seas and in the drumbeats of primeval forests where hieratic barges float upon sacred rivers whose names were lost before history began.

These are the people who in our own day are forever protesting with a positively ghastly naturalness against the inhuman specialization of our time; a specialization which satisfies to the limit the contemptuous pride of the professional expert, pride that grows year by year more rigid in its frozen superiority, more contemptuous in its patronizing irony.

The pretentious facetiousness, unworthy of the great word "humour", with which the expert treats the amateur, conveys a contempt before which we are now brought up to cringe and cower.

But what does this curious mental class-mystery, dividing

contemporaries as the ice epochs divide fossils, which has now taken the place of the older gulf between the privileged and the unprivileged, have to do with our present topic of "every man his own philosopher"?

Well, we all know the cruel facetiousness of academic teachers. We have all suffered from it, not only on the lips of our schoolmasters but of our clever uncles and still cleverer elder sisters and brothers.

But in the British Isles—and I expect it exists in different forms through the world—this abysmal contempt of the initiated for the uninitiated is one of the most irritating things in human life, though it is a contempt which often takes the form of genial and condescending amiability. Only the deepest of philosophic humorists seem able to level out these accurst distinctions.

The whole business is indeed a living stage for Aristophanic comedy. Oh how well we all know it! Oh how wickedly we have all suffered from it! The distinction of cultured erudition, the distinction of artistic taste, the distinction of scientific and mathematical knowledge, all these superiorities produce exactly the same gulf between people, a gulf that brings as much pain and trouble and as much one-sided blindness as do our social, financial and religious superiorities. The attitude of almost all those who have arrived at this platform of superiority to any youthful acquaintance, whether male or female, who presumes to display the popinjay impertinence of thinking they possess a philosophy of their own, is an attitude of condescending facetiousness.

"It would be useless for you"—such would be the implication of their tone—"to ask *me* a question on *my* special subject, and that you could possibly dream of having ideas of your own about life in general would be, of course, preposterously absurd."

The old-fashioned assumptions concerning the natural reactions of the gentry compared with the "amusing" reactions of outsiders were scarcely more fantastic in their

arrogance than the weary contempt of the modernist expert in art for the self-educated student who is passionately seeking to develop some sort of aesthetic taste of his own.

And if this distressing gulf between the cognoscenti and the rest of us is as rampant in art as it used to be in manners, the extravagant specialization of our day bars ordinary people from even approaching the subtleties of psychology and metaphysic, not to speak of the narrow paths of science and mathematics. Thus with the assumption of accepted superiority and inaccessibility along with an almost Nietzschean feeling of the *pathos of difference*, there has come to exist among ordinary people a resigned submission to the doom of hopeless ignorance about everything connected with the fate of humanity upon earth, the doom of crumb-licking dogs.

And yet, after all, we *are* men, and life for us is the same as it is for these specializing know-alls. Even if we ordinary people are ignorant of the new key-words and clue-questions in art and science, we still react with an authentic response of our own to the imaginative elements in art, to the poetic elements in literature, to the presence and pressure upon us of the mysterious forces of Nature.

Surely there is something monstrous in the fact that we normal representative dwellers upon this old earth, we whom Homer and Shakespeare and Rabelais and Dickens thought it no derogation to immortalize, we who are, by right of Nature herself, *unspecializing philosophers*, are not allowed to be philosophers at all? Is all that is allowed to be said about life in general, and about this multiverse in general, and about humanity's existence on this planet in general, only to be uttered by specialists in physics and metaphysics?

Is there nothing for us to think about, or to speculate upon, while we patiently wait for the next of these official oracles? Must we, who are specialists in nothing, and are only philosophizing because we lack the shrewd, practical, hard-headed, thick-skinned toughness of those who have no use for such braces and suspenders, must we, I say, just tighten our leather

belts and wrestle with life, bone to bone, nerve to nerve, spirit to spirit, until we can learn once more from some new discourse on the radio or from some fresh weekly or monthly review what is the latest specialized word upon life and whether we may continue referring to minds and bodies, to selves and not-selves, to subjects and objects, to time and space, to life and death, to reason and intuition, to the known and the unknown, or must cease thinking and speaking in these old-fashioned ignorant ways till we are instructed better?

A dictatorship of specialists—that's what it is; and it is interesting to note that while these mental tyrants of human thought may be themselves anything but experts in each other's special departments they are in complete agreement that philosophy *sans* specialization is like an attempt to substitute Mother Goose for Einstein, or the Brothers Grimm for Pavlov.

Indeed it begins to look as if before being permitted to teach any mortal pupil any mortal thing we shall all soon be subjected to a purge, a purge in the ordinary words we use, a purge to make sure that we are up-to-date in our most careless chatter, and that even in our games we don't let ourselves forget that we live after the day of the split atom.

Those of us who refuse this purge will then perhaps be placed in mental compounds along with idiots and neurotics until our philosophical commissar comes round with his appropriate set of broadcasted records and weekly reviews, to bring us up to date. What we seem too simple to understand is that the alphabet of human wisdom is remade by every new generation and that the capital letters by means of which we sucked up the laws of life are now as antiquated as those on the Rosetta Stone.

Thus for an ordinary person who has not yet been taught the new alphabet to have the gall to philosophize, or, worse impertinence still, to set to work formulating a private system of philosophy of his own based on his readings in Homer and Shakespeare and Cervantes and Rabelais and Goethe and

Dostoievsky, and upon his own private experiences of life, can only strike an academic authority of our time as grotesque.

" How on earth," such an authority would enquire in the mere look he would cast on our reckless friend, " can he imagine for a moment that he could do such a thing ? And why in the devil's name does he *want* to do it ? "

Well, all that our would-be philosopher could answer to this would be to confess that he has felt for quite a long time a curious inner craving to work out some sort of system for himself by means of which he could adjust the " self " within to the " life " without.

But of course no sooner has he whispered this natural wish than one scientific authority tells him this " self " he is talking about doesn't exist ; while another swears that, though it may exist, it is no more than a muddy little pool which contains within it a hidden chasm leading down to a vast subterranean lake full of monsters, a regular Lake of Avernus, called " the unconscious ", whose insatiable inhabitants, when they emerge, each in its horrid hour, take possession of that harmless-looking little pond.

But there are among us other disheartening and discouraging obstacles, when ordinary individuals, young or old, male or female, set out to construct their own philosophy of life. Apart from the experts in physics and metaphysics, in astronomy and mathematics, in biology and anthropology, there are also the great religions.

Here we are confronted by the established traditions, following upon the accepted revelations, of Moses, Laotze, Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet and Jesus. And not only so ; but if we want to be real practising Christians we have to decide whether we ought to join the Roman Catholics, or the Anglicans, or the Lutherans, or the Orthodox Greeks, or the Salvation Army, or the Quakers, or any single one among the Evangelical Free Churches.

Now since all these Christian cults possess written or unwritten creeds, codes of conduct, theological colleges and

subtle ministers, and since all of them, in one way or another, claim to represent the same divine revelation, it is clear that to any adherent of any of these communions the idea of a person, simply out of the depths of his individual consciousness, presuming to formulate a system of philosophy would be a lamentable blasphemy as well as a laughable presumption.

And then there is also, apart from the monumental architecture of these formidable edifices of historic institution, the vaguely floating imponderable pressure of the moral principles and emotions derived from them which, like a cloud of incense-bearing vapour, permeates the whole atmosphere of our daily life, and constitutes the chief essence of what in childhood and youth we are compelled to assume is the right and proper way of feeling and of behaving.

Thus is our deep individual craving—a craving to formulate for ourselves in a rough-and-ready, practical manner some systematized body of philosophy that can supply for us on a plainer, smaller and simpler scale the sort of thing that in the world of academic culture is derived from Plato or Spinoza or Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, even if we do manage to slip past both the scientific and the theological experts—still in danger of frustration.

And the worst of it is we may have to watch our rudimentary edifice, even after it has arisen, crumble and dissolve under the subtle atmospheric encroachments of the ordinary traditional pieties of our everyday national life. But the youthful thinker must remember that it was in this very same atmosphere of accepted values that the famous philosophers of the past had to struggle. They, too, had to overcome or to evade the taboos and the totems, the social stigmas, the class shibboleths and all the vast swaying moral-immoral mass of Sargasso seaweed made up of the accumulated scrupulosities of thousands of years.

Equally with our presumptuous young philosopher these older thinkers had to resist the thick, husky, humming-and-drumming imperatives ground out by the juggernaut car of our

social institutions, ordering us to bow down before inquisitors of convention.

For how can any young person start working out in his inner soul a philosophic method for dealing with life without clashing at point after point with some constituted authority, whether that authority is carved in clear outlines on the tables of the law or is just floating around, like foam as we swim, or like vapour as we climb ?

Any one of us, male or female, young or old, who for the first time is trying to clarify the inmost urge of his philosophic identity in this stubborn and slippery world, will be lucky if he doesn't hear out of the air a thousand voices assuring him that what the most learned and scholarly brains specializing in every direction cannot do—that is to say formulate a living philosophy that starts fresh and is not a mere logical theory but something with nerves and feelings and imagination and intuition, in fact with the feminine as well as the masculine qualities of natural intelligence—will not be done by the like of him, who has not had the advantage of studying——

And then there will follow a list of the names of modern subjects of study, some of which will not even be found in a Concise Oxford Dictionary.

And so the problem for an unprivileged and yet not unintelligent person, deciding to clarify and gather together and bank up and round off the fumblings and gropings of his intelligence as one human animal among a host of other human animals, into what might be called " the philosophy of an ordinary person ", is a problem that implies at the start an audacious recklessness as well as a special mixture of naïveté and subtlety.

In fact he will need just that kind of simplicity and animal shrewdness which is able to protect our natural self-assertion by its instinct for knowing exactly when reserve and reticence have to replace loquacity and when, as Rabelais says, " there is more to be concealed than revealed ".

But our little party of amateur philosophers are now interrupted by the rude question: "What is left for ignoramuses like you to philosophize about when all the professorial academicians are excluded?" And we must boldly answer: "*Everything is left.* Life is left. Nature is left. You are left. I am left. My city, my town, my village, my employment, my employer—all are left."

None of these spheres of activity, none of these worlds of complication have vanished away because you have not been able to grasp the prevailing catchwords of the physical, metaphysical, mathematical, psychological and biological speculation of this present year of grace or disgrace.

All this specialised and microscopic speculation leaves us confronted by the old problem and the old riddle. The confusion that comes from your being yourself, and other people being what they are, and animals, vegetables and minerals being what they are, still remains.

Yes, there is still the ultimate doubt whether it mightn't be better if everything ceased being itself and became something else or nothing at all. But because all these remarkable speculations and inventions have left, for the most simple soul among us, plenty to philosophize about, there is no reason to regard the mystery of our ordinary life on this astounding planet as entirely and hopelessly obscure. A mystery it is; but it is a mystery shot through by gleams of light. To argue otherwise were indeed to be what radical thinkers used to call "obscurantists".

And because we insist on philosophizing "in spite" of specializing experts, we needn't be so bigoted in our view as to deny that the various complicating and enlightening processes of modern speculation and analysis, even if we are too simple to follow them, haven't clarified as well as thickened out the mystery of everything.

Let us admit and allow that they have pushed back the mystery of life a little way, a considerable way, if you like. Our point is only that for human nature as we find it in

ourselves there is a great need for what hitherto has been called "philosophy", and that, however valuable all this specialization is, it is not philosophy. What any ordinary individual anxious for the sake of his own inner life and for the peace of his own soul had better do at the very start of his "philosophizing" is to realize that the prophets he ought to follow if he is to deal with the main stream of human life are not the specialists in metaphysics like Hegel, nor in theology like St. Thomas Aquinas, nor in science like Einstein, but the great imaginative, humorous, poetical masters like Homer and Rabelais and Cervantes and Shakespeare and Goethe and Walt Whitman.

To "philosophize" means, in fact, to wrestle with the whole mad, wild, insanely terrifying chaos of life, as it masquerades for most of us in the ordinary daily labours and endurances and enjoyments into which we are plunged by destiny and chance.

The sort of "philosophy" we were wise to aim at if we really have the heart to formulate such a thing should be a gathering together and a focusing in one organic drive of all the most vital elements in our own nature.

And let us begin by making a bold and unusual assumption. Let us, in fact, assume and take for granted that the "we" who are beginning to formulate the main principles of the way of life we wish to define and make clear are a small body of friends of both sexes and some young, some middle-aged and some old, such a set of friends as ought to be able to establish a small compact body of human thought and feeling which may prove, when we have solidified it and moulded it, of real value, at least to ourselves, if not to others.

What we are fundamentally concerned with in this attempt are the things that the great specialists of our day, though they can hardly escape touching such topics, treat in a very offhand manner: such things as life and death, good and evil, fate and free-will, man and the family, man and the law, man and the State, man and Nature, together with such questions as how

best we can endure what we have to endure, and how best we can enjoy what we are able to enjoy.

In regard to these things our little body of friends seems at least to be agreed that what we are discussing to-day is not so very different, in spite of recent inventions, from what was discussed in different ways all down the ages; discussed by Homer and Shakespeare, by Rabelais and Goethe, by Dostoievsky and Nietzsche, or so very different from what will be discussed in the remote future, when so many of the theories and dogmas of our time have been exploded, refuted and almost forgotten.

It might be as well to make a definite note, before we advance further, of the fact that we are already agreed, as a body of friends, upon certain fundamentals. We are agreed, for instance, that in place of aiming at happiness, that mystery of mysteries which comes and goes like a breath from heaven according to its own unpredictable volition, the thing to do is *to force ourselves to enjoy*, until some extreme physical or mental or emotional pain turns such enjoyment into the tension of simple endurance, each successive set of immediate happenings and surroundings with which our destiny or just pure chance confronts us.

We have also come to the conclusion among ourselves that the Revised Version of the New Testament in translating that mystical Pauline word by our word "love" in place of the Authorised Version's "charity" made a deep and very subtle psychological mistake: for under the mask of this fatal word "love" more deadly hydras of hate and malice and more complicated knots of coagulated cruelty and horror are as a rule concealed than a simple, animal-minded man or woman could ever believe existed in the lowest pit of hell.

Our little body of would-be philosophers have also come to the conclusion that the cleverest theological experts of our time are being deliberately false and treacherous to the natural goodness of ordinary human nature when they craftily argue that there would be no beauty, no magic, no wonder, no mystery,

no poetry, nothing miraculous, nothing marvellous, nothing awe-inspiring left in the world if theology were rooted out.

On the contrary, our contention is that the poetry and mystery of life doesn't depend on theology at all, or upon science at all, or upon art at all. Our conviction is that the mysterious poetry of life would be left untouched if all the "sacred books" in the world were destroyed and every commentary upon every revelation, and every interpretation of every oracle, and every "logos" of every prophet, were burnt by fire or drowned in the sea.

In place of this mystical and theological "love" our small company of simplificators at the beginning of their terrific task have all agreed that they would like to substitute the plain word "kindness," which everybody can understand and about which there is nothing thaumaturgic or miraculous. Nor must anyone suppose that it was without intricate discussion of every aspect of this extremely complicated topic that we finally made up our minds upon exactly what we meant by this key-word to our "Philosophy of In Spite"—namely the word "enjoy".

To this simple word we decided to give a much richer and more elaborate meaning than the word usually contains or implies. We agreed, as far as we ourselves were concerned and as far as any "convertite" of ours, as Shakespeare calls such a person, was concerned, to make the word "enjoy" be as much of a summary and as much of a symbol of our method of thinking as Hegel made the word "becoming" a summary and a symbol of his.

Nor did we stop with thus laying down this axiom of our philosophical edifice. We went on to define all we really meant by it. And before doing so we added a verb to it, namely the verb "to force ourselves". The ultimate clue, therefore, to our "Philosophy of In Spite" is the sentence: "to force ourselves to enjoy."

Our little band of philosophers, composed of male and female persons of all ages, decided that for us the whole

purpose of life must be *to force ourselves to enjoy life*; and we were aided in our momentous decision by our desperate and irrefutable dogma that the very effort of "forcing ourselves" to do anything at all was, in this confused and self-contradictory world, an enjoyable sensation in itself.

And what does our "Philosophy of In Spite" mean by its clue-word "enjoy"? Well, it means to approach, to grasp, to seize upon, to embrace something or other, something that may be a place, a person, a room with all its furniture and all its inhabitants, or a landscape with all its scenery and all its figures, and to embrace this place, person, room, landscape, with all our senses simultaneously.

For instance, we are, let us suppose, inside a house, with the spectacle before us of a pair of well-known elderly relatives on either side of a small coal-fire and beneath a commonplace mantelpiece on which a small metal clock has its hands pointing to five. The scene before us, therefore, is composed of two living human creatures with whose appearance we are probably more familiar than with any others in the world. It is also composed of the no less familiar phenomenon of a wretchedly small fire-in-a-hearth, a clock on an ugly mantelpiece, a dirtily-papered wall on which is hung a couple of cheaply coloured reproductions of well-known biblical events, and in front of the fire an iron fender, and in front of the fender a dark woollen hearthrug.

Now it might well be that some point of magnetic misunderstanding has just arisen between ourselves and those two seated figures such as causes us to feel an inert, weary, disillusioned, unsympathetic disgust with that familiar fireplace, mantelpiece, metal clock, and biblical pictures, evoking from us a groan of hellish ennui and a sigh of abysmal tedium and a feeling as if a grey cloud of scoriac ashes were falling at the end of every vista and avenue of escape that our desperate imagination can conjure up.

And what, under these adverse conditions, has our "Philosophy of In Spite" to say? First of all it would advise us to

exercise a very special kind of control over our impulse of anger. In the second place it would bid us make the aesthetic motion of embracing with all our senses every form and colour, every dimension and level, every curve and hollow, every substance and every stuff, whether that stuff were animal, vegetable, or mineral, to be found and noted in the scene before us. By the time we had accomplished these two triumphs of whatever it may be in our weakness and melancholy that corresponds to what is called will-power, we should be well qualified to reject with energetic insight the whole mystical trick of the wily theologians with their apostolical concept of spiritual love.

The " Philosophy of In Spite " keeps on repeating as its fundamental axioms that we should substitute kindness for love ; and that when, according to the nature of all human beings, we feel a tendency to get angry, we should at once " gather ourselves together " in our secret soul and begin practising a quite special and peculiar sort of self-control that we regard as the chief psychic discovery of our philosophy.

This singular " self-control " of ours, which, combined with the complete obliteration of the word " love " from our vocabulary, is the hall-mark of our system, has nothing to do with ordinary puritanical self-denial. It is as egoistic as it is altruistic ; and if it were not so obviously and humorously on the side of the angels it might even be accused of some devilish mischief.

It has been carefully thought out and meticulously moulded by a set of persons of both sexes and of both extremes of age and experience, and it is not wanting in considerable subtlety in adjusting itself to most kinds of provocation, annoyance, irritation, humiliation and insult. *Not to get angry* is indeed our principle ; but this doesn't mean we are pacifists. Indeed we are fully prepared to use force and even violence for particular purposes of our own. We are even ready to pretend we are angry when in reality we are as calm, and even perhaps as

well-disposed to the object of this restraint as Spinoza himself must have often been, as he sat pondering on the causes of things and polishing his lenses.

We have named our peculiar system the "Philosophy of In Spite" from the oft-repeated expression in Homer: *alla kai empes*, "all the same for that", or, to put it more crudely and less accurately: "in spite of that." And this we have done because of the knowledge, recognized bitterly enough by both our eldest and youngest, that any real philosophy of life is not a branch of theology or of science, or even of modern psychoanalysis, but an everyday mixture of the two most essential tonics and drugs of the human soul, our fighting-power for embracing our satisfactions by mental force and our forgetting-power for obliterating our fears and horrors by the same mental force.

And there is another point for those who may have a faint inclination to be converted to our "Philosophy of In Spite". In our long discussions as to what might be called the Beginning of Wisdom we decided that whatever has happened to us already, or is happening to us now, or is likely to happen to us, the first thing to do is to keep up our spirits in spite of everybody and everything.

This doesn't mean that we must be brave. In fact we can remain cowardly and scared, as long as we don't let our cowardice make us low-spirited and miserable. Nor does it mean that we've got to love our fate or love our friends. We've got to *accept* our fate until we can escape from it; and we've got to be kind to our friends until we can escape from them. All that this ultimately means is that under all circumstances, though we may be reduced to pain and poverty, we've got to keep up our spirits and force ourselves to enjoy something—never mind what!—in our immediate surroundings or in our secretest thoughts.

The final decisions that our little band of philosophy-manufacturers arrived at after its initial insistence on unvanquishable good spirits and imperturbable kindness—and

please remember, courteous reader, that this " we " includes old men and old women, middle-aged men and middle-aged women, boys and girls, as well as young men and young women—were as follows.

We decided to have absolute faith in nothing save in the " self " or consciousness of self within us, however young or old or weak or ignorant we might be, and however doubtful we might be whether this " self " survives the death of its body. And as a further imperative of our " Philosophy of In Spite ", we decided not only to reduce this " self " to its airiest, lightest, humblest, least personal and least self-conscious consciousness; but also to treat every living creature we encountered as if it had very much the same kind of sensitivity that we have ourselves and as if it had a " self " within its body not so very different in its consciousness of itself from the consciousness that we are trying to reduce to this alert receptivity in ourselves.

Our whole idea, in fact, in formulating in definite words this way of life of ours has been " to come to grips ", as the common expression runs, with the everyday reality of our life, the very thing that the old professional philosophers have inscrutably tended to dodge and that the modern specialists " make no bones " about *undermining* in their mania for what they call " the unconscious ".

What we would say at the start to any candidate for conversion to the " In Spite of " system is, in fact, this. " You—whoever you are—are in the middle of the game, or battle, or drama, or mystery, or prison-camp, or schoolyard, or farmyard, or monk's cell, or market-place, or ploughed field, or quarry, or factory, or parlour, or kitchen, of the particular life into which fate or chance has plunged you, and you suddenly feel conscious of your absolutely separate identity, *you, you, you,* completely different from everybody else in the whole world. Now we won't think *just now* how best you can get out of the family, or school, or business, or job, or tribe, or village where you are at this moment. We'll think how you

can separate yourself more and more completely from everybody else *without anybody noticing what you are doing.*

Now the first move to make, O most wary convertite, is clearly to find a post of observation from which you can keep a close watch on everyone and everything within reach. This observation-post can, of course, only be in the " self " within you that says to itself " I am I ".

From this inner self of yours, cautious convertite, you must learn to smile secretly at the stupidity and pomposity and wooden-headed maliciousness and narrowness of almost everybody round you ; but all the while, as you cunningly separate yourself from them, and cease trying to love them and, in place of loving them, force yourself, however reluctantly, to be extremely kind to them, you must at once begin forcing yourself to practise the quite special sort of subtle and impenetrable self-control which our philosophy has invented, so that *nothing*, however infuriating it may be and however dedicated to get on your nerves, can make you angry, and you must always watch and watch and watch ; in fact watch everybody and everything from this secret observation-post in your own hidden self.

And now we come to the inmost core and heart of our " Philosophy of In Spite ". While you watch with a secret smile the characteristic words, expressions, and gestures of your friends and relations, you must remember that, although there is no mystical need at all for you to *love* these vain, proud, conceited, greedy, cunning, pompous, cross, and ridiculous fellow-mortals, it is equally unnecessary to hate them or even despise them. What you must do—and this is the supreme doctrine of our philosophy—is to *force yourself to enjoy them.* You must enjoy their pomposity, their pride, their vanity, their greediness, their silliness : yes, enjoy all this as if it were the colours in a quaint and satisfying picture, or the humorous absurdities in a comic play.

But do not be surprised, watchful convertite, by the next thing we have to reveal to you ; which is as follows. Although

you use your hidden " self " as your *post of observation*, that does *not* mean that our philosophy encourages you *to make a lot of yourself*, as we are always being told the great essayist Montaigne and his English pupil William Hazlitt do; or spend hours " integrating " yourself and hours pondering on yourself. Quite the contrary! What the " Philosophy of In Spite " teaches, as you will see later on, if you follow our lead, is the most extreme opposite way of life to this making a lot of yourself. In fact what the " Philosophy of In Spite " aims at—and this is where it really is an original and new way of life—is how to enjoy your existence *in spite of yourself*; in other words, what you will learn from us is how to lose yourself in your exquisite enjoyment of life.

It is indeed just here that we set ourselves boldly and entirely in direct opposition to some of the chief doctrines that in these days we are taught by our grave and serious teachers. Their favourite word is the word " integrate " and " integration ".

They tell us we must have an " integrated self ". They tell us that we must " realize ourself ", that we must strive to develop our originality, our personality, our uniqueness. They tell us that the whole object of life is this self-realization, this deepening of ourself, this enriching of the integrity of ourself. And not content with bidding us develop ourselves, they go further, and assure us that these preciously integrated little fountains of self are in touch with dark mysterious pools and ponds and lakes and seas and oceans of *selfhood*, communal selves, tribal selves, and the devil only knows what other sorts of selves.

In opposition to all this false prophesying and all these lying oracles, hear the voice of the " Philosophy of In Spite ". The purpose of life for the sons and daughters of life and for all the living things that life brings forth is to enjoy life; and in order to enjoy life, the chief thing to do is to be forever losing yourself in the enjoyment of embracing life. In place of " integrating " yourself the great thing is *to get yourself out of the way* as much as you can.

The great thing is to reduce the *self-element* in our receptive consciousness to the minimum. What we want life on this planet to be is a succession of experiences, to make each of which two things alone are needed: namely, that which experiences and that which is experienced.

The cosmic force behind all that we call Nature, as it flows forth in perpetual streams of life and perpetual whirlpools of death, is forever bringing to birth things that feel and want and desire, as well as things that are felt and are wanted and are desired, and most living things belong to both categories. Instead, however, of putting the chief stress upon the self-consciousness in these innumerable selves, whether in us or in animals or in reptiles, or in birds or in fish or in insects, who, possessed of the power of motion, are feeding not only upon one another but upon the plants and trees and rocks and stones and earth and water of the universe around them, our "Philosophy of In Spite" puts the chief stress upon *the moment of enjoyment itself*, when all these selves are embracing and absorbing and tasting and devouring and ravishing the myriad objects of their hunger, thirst, lust, desire, interest, attraction, fascination, and inexhaustible wonder, such as is offered to all living sentiencies by the spectacle of the world into which they are born.

In fact what the "Philosophy of In Spite" advocates is a removal of our chief attention from the inner phenomenon of our consciousness or self-consciousness, which, in direct opposition to the teaching of the mystics, it regards as a "heavy and weary weight" to be discarded and reduced to a minimum, and the concentration of this same attention of ours upon the act of enjoyment by which we ravish, embrace, absorb, possess, devour, and digest, with every sense we have, all that attracts us in the universal life around us.

Our philosophy holds that the living, vital impulse and leap forward of the self towards what it is absorbing with all its senses, at any particular moment in the recession of time and any particular spot in the gulfs of space, represents the

essential life-stream of the world, at once both creative and destructive.

Our philosophy holds that *at the back of the self*, thus destroying and creating the wonders and marvels upon which it lives as it drinks the blood and devours the flesh of the universe, there is a terrifying void, a nothingness at which it is dangerous to stare; for, as with the head of the Gorgon, "*that* way madness lies".

In shaking off the despotism of the specialists and experts, there is a real danger of insanity if we try to become specializing experts ourselves. The great thing is to recognize, as the oracle commended Socrates for recognizing, that we know nothing and can know nothing, being arrested and stopped in our knowing by the very process of knowing, of the inherent nature of our consciousness.

Let us, therefore, says the "Philosophy of In Spite", seek to be wise, not only in spite of experts, but in spite of those most dangerous of all experts, *ourselves*. But in order to make the purpose of our system clear and its application to the immediate present moment clear, let us return to our imaginary parlour in an imaginary house and emphasize once more how our philosophy might help us in a familiar recurrence of nervous irritation.

Our convertite, let us suppose, is putting little lumps of butter upon rough fragments of bread torn with impatient fingers from a crusty loaf which he has just fetched from the kitchen. Opposite him at the same small table are—well, let us call them for the nonce his great-uncle and great-aunt—for whom his sister is pouring out tea, that patient girl, and carefully spreading with butter the thinnest possible slices that could be cut from a new loaf.

The blinds and curtains are drawn. The biblical pictures on the walls have taken to themselves that familiar smoky solemnity, unconnected with any intention of their academic painters, or with any aspect of their oriental subjects, which from his earliest infancy has suggested to his mind a dreary

repetition of the words " Thou shalt not " ; while the high-pitched tone of his great-aunt's voice and the peculiar sucking sounds, like an ichthyosaurus swallowing a jellyfish, with which his great-uncle disposes of the thin bread-and-butter, have combined to drive him to a point of nervous rage in which he could have flung his bread into the fire and rushed out of the house with the howl of a madman.

But suddenly all is changed. In a flash of desperate enlightenment he realizes to what his friends of the " Philosophy of In Spite " have been slowly converting him. And instead of trying to " love " with a mystical theological occult love this pair of pathetically grotesque old creatures, he sets himself with all the energy of his mind and will and senses to force himself—and it is by no means easy, but it becomes easier as he goes on—to enjoy the repulsive noises made by the old gentleman, to enjoy the rasping voice of the old lady, and even to enjoy that wickedly wearisome " Thou shalt not " of those heavily robed, heavily bearded, solemnly gesticulating figures on the wall.

And our convertite finds, after the first struggle with his disgust at the old man's sub-human noises and his first efforts to control his nervous rage at the old woman's rasping voice, that both these emotions, the angry disgust and the angry irritation, could be transformed, by some demonic power within him that he had no idea he possessed, into a weird intensity of satisfaction, so that the more the bearded figures cried " Thou shalt not ! " and the nearer to an antediluvian saurian his uncle became, and the nearer to an inhuman witch his aunt became, the more indulgent he felt towards them all. By carrying their worst qualities to the limit he seemed to have developed the power of forcing them to endear themselves to him. And this was not all.

As his enjoyment of the whole collection of material substances, organic and inorganic, of which this whole scene was composed went on increasing, it began to include the whole room in which he was enjoying himself ; and since the blinds

and curtains that shut out the twilight of that December afternoon had now begun to allow him, as the wind ruffled them, a glimpse now and again of the trees on the other side of the road, it became possible for him to carry his wholesale embrace of the substances, with all their forms, colours, sounds, silences, atmospheres and suggestions, that were contained within these four walls, into the twilight outside that enclosed space, until he was at last actually forcing himself to embrace in this same manner the whole rondure of elements, air, fire, water and earth, of which our planetary system is composed.

Not to love, not to hate, not to understand, not to worship, not to interpret, not to explain, simply and solely to enjoy: this was the secret of secrets. And when this natural, instinctive enjoyment of the universe immediately around us begins to extend its demands and to enlarge its cravings for yet wider cosmic horizons, it will be perfectly possible for it to refuse to be bound by this hypothetical "oneness" of things, a "oneness" probably based on the simple animal-human logic that, if I am one, the world is one; and if the world were not one, there would be no communicating with anybody and no understanding of anything.

But so little bound by this primitive reasoning will our convert at that crisis find himself, that no sooner does he begin to crave these wider horizons for his cosmic background than he will instinctively feel that he lives in a multiverse rather than in a universe.

The truth is that we need some sort of philosophy, not for the larger issues of our life, not for our work, nor our honesty in business, nor our method of self-education, nor our nationalism or internationalism, nor our attitude to sex or to marriage, or politics, or parents, or drink, or tobacco, or games, or sport. These larger issues will soon settle themselves of themselves. We have found that already. A mixture of fate and chance, a few unpleasant shocks, a few instinctive rebellions, a few crafty submissions, a few shake-ups to our self-esteem, a few snatchings

of unexpected opportunities, and the larger outlines of our outer life are decided for us independently altogether of our philosophy.

It is for the million-and-one moments every day and every night when we and our thoughts and feelings are cheerful or miserable, are dull or lively, are stupidly self-cursing or wretchedly self-pitying, that we need some sort of philosophy, whether of " In Spite " or of " In Despair ", or of " The Devil Take the Hindmost ", or of " Me Imperturbe ".

The " Philosophy of In Spite " has the advantage that it gives full scope to that vein of desperation that lies hidden in us all, and to that fighting spirit in us, independent of love, independent of hope, independent of faith, independent of whether we are male or female, old or young, healthy or sick, which makes it possible for us at any moment of annoyance, or disgust, or distaste, or dullness, as we look at our family, or at our visitors, or at our carpet, or at our chairs and tables, or at the fire in the grate, or at the window of our room, or the sky outside the window, or the frost-marks on the window —possible for us, I say, to force ourselves to embrace all we see in a determined, resolute, strange, desperate, exultant embrace just as if the last moment of the whole world, including ourselves, were upon us, an embrace in which we forget ourselves altogether, and become nothing but an impersonal consciousness, *enjoying*—in our philosophy's quite special use of that word—all that surrounds us at the moment.

The absolute necessity for some sort of everyday philosophy like ours at this juncture of the world's history can quickly be realized by anyone, however little of a scholar or student he or she may be, who will go to a public library and ask, from the shelves of reference books there, for the shortest history of philosophy or the simplest handbook of philosophers that the library possesses.

After an hour's skimming of these condensations of the rationally-rounded-off, logically-ideal mental projections of man's metaphysical imagination, our neophyte will turn—

let us hope with a new interest—to the " Philosophy of In Spite ".

For there will at least be obtainable here that element of constant and concentrated experiment in which our own individual self plays the part of the cosmic explorer, and which has behind it the full pressure of the great stream of planetary evolution. For what, after all, do we nervous, over-sensitive, unworldly, unsuccessful, unpopular, timid, touchy, unconventional, morbidly self-conscious selves want a philosophy for ? To explain the universe ? Not a bit of it ! To distinguish the Good from the Evil ? Not a bit of it ! To dodge Belief on the one hand and Science on the other ? Not a bit of it !

What we want from philosophy is a purpose ; yes, a purpose in our own secret, private, individual life—never mind about the purpose of the universe or the purpose of life in general !

And the " Philosophy of In Spite " gives us such a purpose ; a purpose to follow which, and a purpose to attain which, requires—whether this pleases our old-fashioned masters and pastors or not—a completely new set of categorical imperatives, and also—whether this pleases our new-fashioned psychiatrists and psychoanalysts or not—a whole fresh array of subliminal doubts and sceptical rejections.

We must, in fact, " in spite " of both old-fashioned and new-fashioned experts, embrace the ridiculous self-love and the physically funny ways of our elders and betters to such a point of humorous intensity that we end by stirring up what Heine calls " the Aristophanic spirit of world-destruction "—and although we only do this from the simmering gallipots of our domestic suppressions, the thing swells and swells and swells until it spreads over all of the earth and all of the sky that we can catch from our parlour window, and the destructive enjoyment of Aristophanes coalesces with the creative enjoyment of Rabelais.

In Spite of

LONELINESS

The thing to remember, as we struggle to beat out on the anvil of realistic contact with life, though from elements acquired by divination, some sort of philosophy of our own, is that it is not a sign of superiority to others, but a sign of inferiority to others, that we are occupied in this manner. Lucky indeed are the strong, spirited, devil-may-care buccaneers of life who, as the scriptures might say, " need no philosophy ".

Properly speaking—and don't think we philosophers don't know it !—to do what we are doing now is to apply salves to wounds, unguents to sores, bandages to cuts, oil to stiff joints, nard to bruises. What makes philosophy more precious to men than women is the pathetically logical faith men have in the labels of the medicine-chest and the technology of the textbook.

But the " Philosophy of In Spite " goes to work in a different way and is prepared to dispense with this predominantly masculine advantage. Our idea is that if our system is to be effective it must—and not surreptitiously either—include in it many of those " aids to reflection " which we obtain from the intuitive realism and flashes of instinctive insight naturally introduced by women into the scarcely visible twists and turns of the complicated dance of life.

Well then, beginning at the centre, that is to say at the " I am I " of our individual awareness of " self " and " not self ",

we cannot avoid the recognition—and whoever you are and wherever you are, reading these words, you will, I think, agree with me in this—that there are two degrees of alienation from " self " in the " not-self " in the midst of which our consciousness functions. I refer to the difference between our own animal-body and the rest of the limitless " not-self " round and about us.

Our conscious self certainly feels—and I fancy all of us must share this feeling—that there is a closer connection between *it* (I mean between the self that feels itself to be you or I) and its body, than between it and the remoter mass of the non-self or the remoter collection of non-selves that seem to extend around it into infinity.

But, in spite of this little stepping-stone, or jumping-off place, into finity afforded by our creature-body, our inmost identity (that " I am I " that feels itself to be alone in the enormity of things) has plenty of cause and plenty of occasion to feel what could be, might be, and I daresay often is, a sensation of perfectly ghastly loneliness.

From the possibility of some sensation of loneliness there is no escape save in a vivid, lively and palpable faith in an extremely personal and at the same time an extremely ubiquitous deity. But what I ask myself at this point is the simple question, why should this sensation of loneliness be such a ghastly and unpleasant one ? Why should it not be an agreeable sensation ? If, when we have carefully considered it face to face, and have thoroughly analysed its effect upon us, we actually find it is a ghastly feeling, it seems to me that the best thing we can do is adjust ourselves and adapt ourselves and reconcile ourselves to this ghastly feeling, or set about forcing ourselves to forget it. But I refuse to admit we have reached this desperate point. It is, in fact, in regard to this whole question, as to whether such ultimate loneliness is a terrible thing or a tolerable thing, that what I call " philosophy " comes into play and shows itself able to turn a terrifying situation into a situation that gives us satisfaction rather than horror.

What, in fact, I would suggest we should do in this case, a case which surely is one of the basic and constant situations in any intelligent person's life, is to seize upon it and embrace it and brood over it and for a while think of nothing else. As it happens, our physical body makes quite a convenient jumping-off place into immensity, since it is composed of many of the same elements of which immensity is composed and can be resolved back into these elements by an act of simple imagination. But can we leave our mind, or self, or consciousness of self, naked and self-controlled at a particular point in space? Alas, no! This is impossible, because our mind or consciousness is dependent for its existence upon our body. Although we have thus retreated—and I cannot help clinging to the Homeric word *aleis* in this connection, meaning the "crouching to spring" or the "pulling ourselves together" for some tremendous onset—into this citadel of "I am I" or "myself conscious of myself", it remains that we are still, by the mere fact of being the human animal we cannot escape from being, completely dependent upon our bodily senses for our full awareness of the cosmogonic situation of which we are now—since by a series of intense mental withdrawals we have liberated ourself from all impinging upon us of rival consciousness—the living centre. It is indeed through our bodily sensations, and through the appropriation for its own use by our conscious mind of these same sensations, that we are aware, whether in bedroom, or parlour, or office, or kitchen, or factory, or station, or railway carriage, or bus, or ship's cabin, or anywhere you like in the open air, that the particular point, on or above the surface of the earth, where rests this physical envelope of our consciousness, is surrounded by a boundless immensity of which it is impossible to imagine any limit.

And here there arises for our "human, too-human" method of philosophizing a very interesting point. I refer to the difference between philosophizing with the sort of "physiognomic eye" used, according to Spengler, by Goethe, and the purely

" mathematical eye " by which Einstein reaches his conclusions.

Using our immediate bodily sensations we might be justified in regarding the earth below us as flat ; but the various natural processes of reasoning, observation, and analogy by which we have come to regard it as round cannot be said to have departed very far from what we may be allowed to call the poetic common sense of the Goethean " physiognomic eye ".

But according to the method of philosophizing I am advocating it is a totally different thing when a mathematical dictum from Einstein bids us to cease regarding the depths of space around us as stretching away without end or limit ; and in place of this natural, poetical, commonsensical feeling of the boundless, which has, at least since Galileo, surrounded us with infinite mystery, we are to engrave above the portals of our new *academia* : " Relativity is the Law of Life." Thus the mathematical experts have tried to steal away from us something more actual and palpable than any divine presence, namely the great and terrible liberation from every terrestrial and celestial oppression and from every earthly authority that the basest, poorest, weakest, meanest, most insignificant among us always possesses, second only to sleep and death—the infinite background of space and time. Are we all henceforth like fish in an aquarium to be denied *the sensation of infinity*, that sensation which, like the life-magic and death-magic of the sun and the moon, has been our terrible and sublime refuge all our troubled life ?

And is this imperishably poetical background of the mad farce of our human life to be taken forever from us because some catch-penny algebraical paradox or some tricky geometrical cul-de-sac can prove our life-and-death escape to be a mirage ? Are the figures of an equation to be allowed to destroy that sublime Nothing which from eternity has encompassed our Everything ? The interminable theory-files of the rationally thinkable, the tabulated test-tubes of the physically possible, can never, as long as we have a philosophy founded

on man and Nature, say to us : " The infinity of the sky above your head is a fancy of your falsifying senses, and if it were possible for a numbskull like you to ascend into your imaginary ' above ' or descend into your imaginary ' below ', do you for a second delude yourself into thinking you would advance indefinitely ?

" Realistic ass ! Long before you realized what was happening you would be switched round full-circle, and be back again at the relative spot on the relative circumference, in plain words ' right here ' whence you started, having had the temerity to imagine you could treat as a living natural reality what is, of course, purely an algebraic symbol."

At this point we must beg our hesitating convertite, from whose half-converted waverings the melancholy Jaques would have sucked shrewd wisdom, to give ear to our small band of simple companions for a few beats of time and a little space while we make a practical retort, not to Professor Einstein of course, but to our own local professor, whose pedantic intelligence, good though it is at algebraic calculations, is not really a philosophic one.

" Look you, Professor," we might begin, " we'll willingly sacrifice our childish words ' up ' and ' down ' if you'll consent to journey with us ' out there ' to that old familiar group of stars called Orion's Belt? *Hey presto !* as the conjurer says : and here we are, with our mathematician in our midst ! Very well. Now we'll convey you, Professor, if you don't mind, to the furthest-known star of the furthest-known galaxy reached until this hour of this day of this year by any astronomer observing ' the divine ether ', as the Aeschylean Prometheus calls it, from the surface of our ancient earth."

Hey presto ! again then, as our village conjurer would say, and once more we have arrived. And here we are, at the furthest-known star of the furthest-known galaxy, and our professor with us. " You have brought your furthest-sighted telescope, Doctor ? Very good ! Look through it, if you please, and if it happens that in the direction you are looking

and at the extreme limit of your telescope's vision there are no more galaxies; if, in fact, there is nothing, as far as your telescope can reach, but what Prometheus calls 'the divine ether', please inform us at once of the precise distance your 'optic glass', as Milton would call your instrument, has the power of extending your vision, and we will proceed on our aerial journey, still advancing, so you must permit us to believe and feel, *in the same straight line* as we were before, until we arrive at the distance indicated. And having, without any possibility of dispute and according to your own precise calculations, Professor, got safely to that point, and got there *in the same straight line*, which you must humanly admit is not a physical, or a physiognomical, or a realistic impossibility, though in the logical altitudes of higher mathematics it may be a theoretical one, we must once more ask your permission, Professor, to transport you, still *in that same straight line* from which your cosmic mathematics, with its mania for curves, longs to flee like a virgin from a ravisher, on yet another lap of our journey through boundless space and so on, and so on, until you yourself, Professor, cry 'Halt, enough!' and implore us to turn clear round, and, when we have done so, to use our penchant for rapid movement along straight lines to get back to the point from which we started." And thus we return home, not because our universe relatively rotates, or our particular dimension relatively revolves, but because we are steering our space-machine, as other physiognomic adventurers have steered so many time-machines, back to our starting-point, in order to carry an exhausted mathematician back to humanity's place in that old dimension of reality we were brought up to call Nature.

One result or issue from the professor's mathematical speculations on his calculating-machine, now so exquisitely balanced on the extreme edge of his desk, we are, I confess, tempted to appropriate to ourselves even at the risk of being caught and challenged. I refer to the staggering mathematical hypothesis of a number of dimensions other than the one with

which we are familiar. This is indeed a stroke for the mental liberation of individual man and woman that cannot be over-praised.

And it is entirely in line with our " Philosophy of In Spite " and with that philosophy's conviction that the secret of life lies in the lonely self's desperate fight to force itself to enjoy the external world, whether universe or multiverse, without the help of any theological " mystique " like the one entitled " love " in the writings of that demoniac genius, Paul of Tarsus. In fact we rebel-companions of a philosophic revolution will be wise to make all we can of this hypothesis of these other dimensions.

But the problem for us is how an individual soul can accept what surrounds it in the enormity of such a multiverse without going mad. It is only a tricky protection from this natural loneliness—a loneliness far more overpowering than that of a dung-beetle upon a mountain—to try to shake off what scares us in the framework of Nature by certain conjuring tricks with a mathematical calculating-machine.

Every single living creature in the vast enormity of Nature is forced at moments to face this horror of loneliness and has to " crouch "—in the heroic tension indicated in the old Homeric word *aleis*—poor tiny knot as it is, as every one of us is, of quivering nerves, while the remote constellations and the far-off clusters of nebulae recede into infinite space. Yes, for us just now the question is the simple one : what to do about the loneliness of our individual soul ? Peculiarities of sex may certainly enhance this loneliness but they are not its only cause.

The sex of the self follows the sex of the body ; but the former's consciousness changes the whole situation. It is in harmony with every experience to which life bears witness to assume that the consciousness in us, the identity or the self that calls itself " I ", shares its sex, whether that sex be homo-sexual, or Lesbian, or androgynous, or double-sexed, or half-sexed, or sub-sexed, with its body. The body can be as abnormal, or as unnatural, as you like to imagine it ; but

whatever it is, the soul is bound to desire to follow its perversity, just as the body may desire, although often in vain, to follow the perversity of its consciousness.

Granting, however, that the sexual proclivities of our consciousness of self are closely linked with those of our body, though the mere fact of the self having consciousness changes the entire situation by introducing not only free-will and self-control but even the possibility of a complete self-re-creation, let us return to our present problem; namely, what to do about the terrible loneliness of the individual self, whether that self be male or female, or old or young.

Some habitual and very drastic attitude of the mind is clearly essential here; for it is obvious that we are confronted here by one of those eternally recurrent situations that must be met, if our loneliness is not to drive us mad, by the development of certain mental, emotional, and practical powers, indeed we might almost use the words " nervous muscles ", to cope with this daily necessity.

The " nervous muscles ", or emotional apparatus, which our " Philosophy of In Spite " is advocating here, demand first of all a full recognition of the actual situation with regard to this ghastly loneliness of each one of us; and we have to take the risk that such a recognition of the actual situation may have dangerous effect upon us.

And from the viewpoint of our " Philosophy of In Spite " it is essential that we should " take our bearings ", as they say, beginning with our immediate surroundings. This means that we must at once isolate ourselves in our minds from the people round us, from the relatives and fellow-workers and household companions who happen to be with us at any particular moment, and from the inanimate objects that happen to be around us. We must isolate the consciousness of being ourself; and we must intensify the gap between our consciousness and all these people and things.

And then, when we have done this, we must seize upon all these people and things, absolutely resolved to force ourself

to enjoy their complete difference from ourself and above all to enjoy all the aspects and characteristics of them that annoy us the most, that we despise the most, and that to us are loathsome, repulsive, horrible, contemptible, and revolting. If you protest, most honest convertite of our " Philosophy of In Spite ", that to force oneself to enjoy the ugly, the repulsive, the disgusting, is impossible, you had better at once give yourself a course in modern painting, modern sculpture and modern poetry, so that you may learn that if you take a certain mental and sensuous attitude to the colours and forms and *grotesqueries* of the repulsive, it is quite possible to enjoy and not only to enjoy, but, as we say, to " revel in " a regular orgy of the horrible.

And just as this is possible with the disgusting in the inanimate, so it is possible with the disgusting in the human and in the personal. Here indeed our " Philosophy of In Spite " reveals one of its deepest secrets. It shows you, O half-converted convertite, an emotion that is much more honest and much more philosophical and much more *creative*—in spite of its superficial aspect of destructiveness—than any conventional play with the " mystique " of theological love.

In fact our philosophy would be justified in declaring that it has real creative power in it just because it renounces this gnostic Johannine thaumaturgy of theological love. For not only does our " Philosophy of In Spite " enable us to enjoy the horrible, it enables us to enjoy the infinitely dull; yes, even the sickening ennui that is exuded from the aura of certain relations and friends.

Our philosophy teaches us not only how to force ourselves to enjoy the ineffable dullness of our relatives' quiescence, but also how to force ourselves to enjoy the malice and meanness that often gleams from those holes in their skulls, as if imprisoned maggots with tiny corpse-candles in their mandibles kept peering out to see how far putrefaction had gone.

But the " Philosophy of In Spite " doesn't stop here. Well enough it knows that the lies we tell ourselves and the lies

we tell each other and the lies we *act* without saying a word—and these are the worst of all—are all the while condemning us, our very selves, quite as much as we can possibly condemn these others.

But the grand point for our philosophy is not how bad things are or what rogues we all are, but what can be done about it. Stoics and cynics—yes, and Christian martyrs with their love-torches in the darkness—have the power of enduring all sorts of abominations, but enduring is a different thing from enjoying. What every living self most of all requires is a philosophy to tell it how to enjoy itself under the immediate circumstances and conditions in which at the moment it finds itself.

The self in us looks desperately round at the inanimate objects about us, at the people about us, feeling, as we say, " like a rat caught in a trap " ; and it is when it feels like this that the " Philosophy of In Spite " tells it exactly what to do and how to do it. What it must do is something that is entirely in its power to do, because it is an action—both " creative " and " destructive " as we poor pawns of destiny love to say—belonging wholly and entirely to our mind and yet giving us the feeling that we are—and so, by the powers, we actually are—working magic as life itself works magic.

Well then, whoever you are, half-convert to our ground-gravel gamble with chance, let us see if we can't hit upon some stream of destiny that, if properly dug and directed, may strengthen our feeble knees and give us fresh heart to shake off our misery. If these experts of ours can turn solid things into vapour and smoke, why cannot we take the body of this tough world and, merging ourself with it, make planetary music ?

Such transformation is what the philosophic physicists are continually challenging us to follow ; but the instructions of these priests of mental magic reach us in such obscure and erudite language that they have lost all intelligible meaning. What we've got to do if we are to turn tedium into exciting

pleasure and dreariness into a thrilling sensation is literally to " start from scratch " and mingle self and not-self in a bed-rock mating.

At the risk of completely antagonizing our poor hesitating convertite and sending him packing to become an existentialist or at least a neophyte in the mysteries of Zen, allow us, O indulgent reader—as metaphysicians so rarely do, and as Hegel only does at the very last, when he knocks us over with a goose-quill by pulling Nature herself out of his logical hat—to return to brass tacks. Here am I or you, here is he or she, tired after a day's work in field or factory, in shop or office, in street or house, on deck or on the dock, at work or at play, imploring fate to bestow a " break " of *some* sort, a bit of a taste of the kind of life wanted so bitterly.

Listen, therefore, to the oracle of " In Spite ", or, to use the actual words of the Homeric muse, of *alla kai empes*. What do you want, you man, you woman, you boy, you girl, you old man, you old woman ? Very good. *Why* do you want to be *there*, to do *that*, to have *this*, to escape *that* ? Do you want it so as to get misery ?

Of course not. You want it so as to get enjoyment. Listen then, my dear friend, for the sake of the most thrilling enjoyment you can possibly imagine. You want what you want so that you can enjoy yourself instead of being miserable. Now if our " In Spite " were a great magician instead of a groping and fumbling and experimenting method, it would say to you: " You there, in your man's body ", or " You there, in your woman's body ", " are " ' crouching ' "—Homer calls it *aleis*—" for a spring at the greatest thing in the world, which is enjoyment." Can't you see, my dear friend, that you want this " love " you pine for, only for the sake of the enjoyment you believe it will bring you ? Your idea is that you want this journey, this trip, this garden, this mate, this job, this prize, this leisure, this triumph, *for its own sake*. Your idea is that *if you only didn't* have to live with those you live with, work with those you work with, look at the things that fate has

placed round you, all would be well and you could enjoy yourself.

Now if I tell you you could enjoy yourself to the limit without having anything but what you have, being anywhere but where you are, seeing anybody but the person or the people you see at this particular moment of time and at this particular point in space, you might, or you might not, laugh in my face. At any rate you probably wouldn't believe me. But you might. And, if you did, your very faith in this miracle, or in this magic, or in your own secret power of forcing yourself to enjoy yourself exactly in the situation you are in, and with the people you are with, might very well make the thing really happen.

And mind you, this secret power has nothing to do with " loving " anybody, not even yourself. Yes, you can despise everybody. You can feel abysmal contempt—loathing and disgust—*for everybody, including yourself*, and yet you will be able to enjoy the present moment exactly as it is. And we are going to tell you exactly how you can do it. This is what philosophy used in ancient days to be supposed to be able to do.

When Alexander the Great enquired of that humorous sage Diogenes what he could give him, the tale runs that Diogenes, enjoying, as it so tickled Rabelais to imagine him, the blessed rays of the sun at the mouth of his tub, begged the conqueror of Asia, more instinctively than politely, to move out of his light. And in truth this unceremonious request might be taken as a planetary symbol of the relation between the men of action of this terraqueous earth and the men of contemplation. Either extreme is loaded with danger; for while the former forget in the dizziness of their achievements what the poet calls " the Something that infects the world ", the latter forget to learn to force themselves to enjoy what they are contemplating before this diabolical " Something " begins to infect themselves.

And what is this " Something " ? Well, it is like the tongues of certain sinister creatures, a forked danger, a double-pointed

danger. On the one side it offers us dullness and disillusionment. On the other side it offers us, in reaction against this dullness and disillusionment, the desperate cure invented by that terrifying genius St. Paul in the ecstatic twist he gave to the Messianic teaching of Jesus.

And it is at this point—yes, at this flickering pulse-point between the deadly disillusionment that fell on the healthy life-instinct of the old paganism and the desperate cure for this blight that sprang up like a sword of flame from the very bowels of Necessity—that our little adventurous band of companions have dared to clasp the great goddess Anagke closer still, and have plucked from her teeming womb our fighting embryo of a new philosophy, already in what Homer calls the *aleis* condition, or the crouching-to-spring attitude.

A human self—any human self, male or female, old or young —is feeling its whole life to be intolerably dull. It feels that it *must* break up this dullness, that it *must* change the things and the people that now surround it for other things and other people.

Now what our " Philosophy of In Spite ", when it can get this poor imprisoned desperado of a self to listen, says in its ear really amounts to this. By all means go on telling yourself the story of your escape from these things and from these people. Nobody who has ever, for a steady and continuous length of time, told himself or told herself a story of escape, has ever, in the whole history of humanity, *not* eventually escaped. Get that into your head. There's no need at all to take any desperate action about it.

The thing to do is perpetually to be telling yourself the story of your escape. Only for pity's sake let it be *the same story*. What our enemies laugh at and love to call " wishful thinking " is often made ineffective by being spasmodic and disordered. " Wishful thinking " obstinately, patiently, tenaciously pursued is one of the most powerful creative forces in the world.

But, my dear man, or my dear woman, or my luckless boy,

or my luckless girl, because by means of this steady, tenacious, obstinate, wishful story-telling of yours, fate or chance, by some absolutely unexpected and unthought-of way, is eventually going to set you free, and because, when you are free, the chances are that you will find, by the contrariness of human nature, that you will soon want to return to your prison, there is nothing in all this to prevent you in the meantime experimenting with our " In Spite " method.

And please, my dear half-converted one, attend to us very carefully while we explain what this method is. In the first place it is *practice*. Yes, you must practise it constantly; practise it till it becomes an instinctive habit of your mind and of your entire self. Practise what? Practise enjoying yourself, and practise it in yourself, for yourself, by yourself, and to yourself; yes, *by yourself alone*, you with your man's body, or woman's body, or boy's or girl's body. Get out of your mind once for all the silly idea that you can only enjoy something outside your mind and body when it is something that you like. I tell you you can force yourself to enjoy yourself quite independently of what may be happening at any moment outside your mind and body, outside your " self ", with its well-known body so fatally attached to it. But you want to know what exactly and precisely we mean when we tell you to force yourself to enjoy yourself?

Well, the effort is a fighting effort of your whole inner self. And the sort of thing to say to yourself is this. Here I am, with this obedient animal, my body. Here I am, *inside* this obedient animal, my body. Here I am enjoying my body's eating and drinking, enjoying my body's relieving itself of urine or of excrement, enjoying its feeling " nice and warm ", or " cool and refreshed ".

But suppose, as is very likely indeed, that you are neither " warm " nor " cool ", nor free from pain, nor eased of discomfort. Suppose you are very uncomfortable.

Well now, listen to me, my friend. Can't you manage to work up in yourself a fighting spirit directed straight against

life itself, just as if life itself were—well, a person, a creature, a monster, a god—oh, anything you like to imagine !—and your business was to show it that it couldn't defeat you ; that it couldn't make you cry, " Hold, enough ! " Don't you see, most honoured master, don't you see, most gracious madam, don't you see, my child, that if you take every annoyance, every pain, every discomfort, every sickness, every humiliation, every disgust, every horror, every fear, as all in the day's wrestling match with this damned monster Life, you'll become, by practice and habit—and I tell you it's all in practice and habit—more artful and cunning than you ever supposed it was possible for you to become ; and more skilful in arranging your attacks and your defences, your advances and your retreats, against this many-headed old enemy than you ever thought you were capable of becoming.

The beginning of wisdom, according to our " Philosophy of In Spite ", is to have acquired the habit of wrestling with life as if life were our personal enemy, and of regarding every moment when we forget our pains, discomforts, humiliations, disgusts, horrors and terrors as a satisfactory victory over a vicious, malicious, and demoniacal antagonist.

And so far from wasting our strength in the unphilosophical manner of those who feel they must lacerate their bodies so as to satisfy their mystical love for others or their mania for power over themselves, we feel we must use our body and all its sensitivities in our struggle to enjoy life at all costs, not by running away from the insufferable dullness of the people and the things that give us the jitters and the jim-jams, but by seizing upon the whole planetary, cosmic, and etheric mass of the world substance which is the undeniable background of all these annoying people and wearisome objects, and, if our self and its body are those of a man or a boy, penetrating this material-immaterial mass with a wild masculine embrace, or, if our self and its body are those of a woman or a girl, giving ourselves up to be embraced by this material-immaterial mass.

Hear, therefore, O wavering convertite, in what our

" Philosophy of In Spite " bids you take refuge as you sit again at breakfast on Monday morning, or bend over your desk, or stand at your counter, or take up your position in the factory as it makes that stuff, or behind the tractor as it ploughs that soil. And note well, my friend, in just wherein your triumph consists. It consists in forcing yourself to enjoy yourself in spite of the combined dullnesses and painful disgusts and agitations of your home, your job, and your own worrying mind and weary body. There, all around you, are material substances and living persons among whom at one moment you feel lost and lonely and at the next moment overpowered by the sheer weight and pressure of their exacting presences.

Well, my lonely friend, well, my overcrowded friend, you are not yet dust and ashes. You are a living creature with a human consciousness ; and moreover you have the power—and in a pulse-beat of time too, so you don't have to risk your boss's or your daddy's displeasure—of ravishing, or of being ravished by, the whole mass of the material-immaterial cosmos around you. Mix yourself with them then, for the sake of all the imprisoned creatures in an overcrowded world that may easily be, for all we know, only a microscopic universe in a vast multiverse of calm and lonely and heavenly and idle universes !

Dive quickly, then, my friend, whoever you are, into these dull, annoying, disgusting people and things round you ! Plunge into them, rapturously, ecstatically, full of mischief and malice, and not with love—no, no, not with love ; but remember you've got to be kind and decent to them, if you want them to be kind and decent to you, and because, after all, poor devils, they have to force themselves to enjoy this monster called Life just as you have.

But plunge in this universal mass, plunge into it, as we say, " in spirit ", but that, of course, only means doing it *in our mind*, as if we were playing a secret game ! Plunge into the colours and forms around you—never mind how ugly and

repellent and solid they look!—and into the unthinkable distances of empty space and impalpable ether behind what is around you. Wherever you are, and whoever you are, ravish the enormity of space and time or be ravished by it!

Our argument, in fact, is this: that among the fears and disgusts and loathings, which horn and scrape at our weakness, we have to regard dullness and the lack of all excitement as conditions heading for misery, madness, and despair, quite as much as fires, floods, famines, fevers and atom-bombs.

Our "Philosophy of In Spite" simply calls us to plunge into the "thick rotundity of the world", that lies behind all that we find so grievous. The cavernous heart of the earth with its liquid fire and scoriac mud ready to belch any presumptuous visitor heels over head to the antipodes is a background not to be despised.

The truth is, our basic human situation demands that this ultimate loneliness of each of us should be frankly and freely accepted with all its implications. If you are the kind of person who can't bear loneliness, the kind of person in whose case actual madness would threaten the acceptance of it—well, there it is! You and our philosophy will have to part.

And if you can't endure such a parting, you will have to create God in your own image, and deepen and deepen your connection with this deity dwelling in the ultimate void, where none can destroy a self's projection of its own creative desire except its desire to destroy what it has created.

It is, in fact, a matter of your own choice. If you have the kind of temperament possessed, for good or ill, by the framers of the "Philosophy of In Spite", you will prefer the sort of world we confront in our absolute loneliness rather than the smaller, more constricted world, wherein love is so near to hate that between the two emotions there is scarcely any conflict at all.

There are people, both young and old, who like being alone, and there are people who cannot abide it. If by any chance you who are now reading this sentence are the sort of man,

woman or youngster to whom such cosmogonic loneliness is full of horror, and yet to whom our philosophy appeals, we suggest that you begin a conversation with yourself, joshing yourself, and fooling yourself, and challenging yourself, and scolding yourself, or in a more persuasive and genial mood cajoling yourself, and, as we say, " jollying yourself along ", till you can persuade yourself to take your cosmic solitude in doses. But the great thing to begin doing at once—at least this is our experience—is forcing yourself to pounce upon, to fall upon, to seize upon, this inorganic, organic, elemental, animal, vegetable, mineral, ethereal chemistry around you, of which indeed and quite literally you are at this moment the conscious centre ; and, having mentally seized upon it, its colours and its forms, its textures, its fragrances, its subtlest atmospheric emanations, its rocks, stones, gravel, sand, mould, moss, foliage, grass, its air, its vapour, its ether, its gas, either embrace it or be embraced by it.

Imagine yourself, whoever you are and wherever you are, arising like an invisible dragon, and without really moving from your present position, imagine yourself embracing or being embraced by, in an irresistible possessive embrace, the whole of this great elemental mass of solid " matter ", as we used innocently to call it, and this still greater expanse of elemental ether shot through with mysterious gaseous flames, and roofed by the encircling orbits of the stars ; and imagine yourself drawing into yourself, with all your senses, every aspect of these colours, these shapes, these elemental substances !

Imagine the consciousness of self within you overbrimming the limits of your body and invading these alien elements, invading them, and taking possession of them—yes, taking possession of them—till you actually have the sensation that you are embracing or being embraced by some rudimentary consciousness in all these rocks and waters and sands and grasses and trees that surround you ; yes, and the sensation of going further still, and even wrestling with some elemental

consciousness in the invisible ether that surrounds all these, of which, as far as we can tell, there is no end!

The great thing, the moment you begin to feel lonely, is to intensify your loneliness in your own mind to the utmost limit. In all these nervous troubles of ours, where the emotions play such a part, the thing to do is to soak up, to sponge up, to drain up all our emotional tremors and nervous shivers by flinging ourselves into Nature as if Nature were a fathomless ocean into which we could dive.

Yes, the thing to do is to soak up and swamp down our nervous shivers and morbid manias in one tremendous immersion and submersion, as if we divided ourself into a baptizer and a baptized, and then, with one tremendous bowing forward of both, plunged into the element that purges all!

A person who is climbing the face of a mountain in a mood of intense exultation, and whose consciousness is taking every portion of his body, his balance, his tense muscles, each breath he draws, into its power, is not the person to feel the sadness of loneliness. What such a person feels is *the passion for loneliness*, and when you are swept away by passion these tender, itching quirks of drooping sorrow dissolve like clouds of flies!

"In the destructive element immerse!" And if you reach the point of being able to *swim* in "the destructive element", like a salamander in fire, you are indeed disporting yourself on the brink of the god-like.

An excellent device if you are bothered by loneliness is to turn yourself "a good companion" of yourself. Fool yourself, chaff yourself, josh yourself, rally yourself, or if you are by nature, as some of us "sensitives" are, too serious a bookworm for such a *pas-de-seul*, just gravely and solemnly murmur to yourself all manner of nonsense.

Nonsense is often a royal life-saver. And you can address this genial stream to either of your two selves; I mean either to your very self of very self, the intimate self to the intimate

self, or to your body—the master-driver, as it were, to his patient ox, the barrel-organ monkey-man to his obedient ape.

We of the " Philosophy of In Spite " have discovered that the self in a man, however many other men it can make itself lord of, can never incarnate itself in another body while its own body is still alive : and its own body once dead it had better expect, and make the most of, annihilation. Yes, let it make the most of annihilation, in praise of which we could say more than all the preciousest papyrus and bejewelled parchment in all the kings' libraries in the world have said in praise of immortality. A feather, a blown straw, a wisp of wave-tossed foam, or even some featureless speck of dust may have its own particular life-dream ; and so may every atom of our dust : who dare deny it ? But the self we have hitherto known as ourself is gone forever—and a good thing too. And not only has that self we have learnt to think of as " I " gone for good. Its whole vision of life has dissolved into something so absolutely different from anything we have ever imagined that it would be hard even to call it " another dimension " !

The worst of what most of us can understand best of the various " relativity " theories presented to our attention is that they obscure and bewilder our natural human sense of the most awe-inspiring and startling experience, common to the wise and the simple, to the old and the young, of all our daily earth-life, the experience, in fact, that covers our most ordinary day with a veritable roof of miracle. Nor is there anything comparable with it in the whole of our human experience.

It is not merely a mystery. Everything is a mystery. That there should be such a thing at all as a body that can think, or such a thing at all as a creature that can feel, whether erroneously or not, that it has a self inside its body, a self whose death is unavoidable when the body is dead ; all these things are mysteries.

But that above our heads as we go about our affairs, above our heads as we are puzzled by our children's actions, and as

we are bewildered by our parents' actions, above our heads as we pursue delights " that have no relish of salvation in them " there should be this incredible, this startling, this miraculous reality of an air, of an ether, or a sky, not only surrounding us *upwards*, but also surrounding us north, south, east, and west, and also surrounding us *downwards*, when, through the whole thickness of the solid earth, we come out the other side, an air, an ether, a space of which, do what we can, short of calling in the help of mathematics to make the real unreal and settle it by a conjuring trick, we can imagine no end, is a wonder that can make the horror of loneliness into a very little thing.

But here we are, every one of us, a man, a woman, a child, a unique mind in a unique body ; for you, whoever you are, whether man or woman, boy or girl, are like nobody else : standing, sitting, kneeling, lying, or, as the poet says, " walking with slow steps along the gleaming and humming sands where windy surges wend ", you are absolutely unique. Your mind has its own secret thoughts, fancies, ideas, impulses, caprices, humours, terrors, horrors, manias, illusions.

It has fearful apprehensions, disgusting memories, appalling visions. And not one single one of these is identical, or even nearly identical, with anyone else's. You were born alone, and alone you will die. Why in earth's name, then, do you let yourself give way to this dislike of loneliness ? *Practise loneliness !* Never let a day pass without making a defiant effort to snatch at least a few moments of precious loneliness, of sacred loneliness, of divine loneliness, of the loneliness of air, of fire, of water, of the earth, of the sun, of the moon, of the planets, of every star in space, and of heavenly annihilation when you and your body are both dead.

Even if destiny has made you a waitress or an office-boy, let it be *a secret mania of yours*, known to no living soul but yourself, to repeat to yourself as if it were a luck-bearing phrase out of a fairy-tale, or from some ancient ceremony : " Alone with endless space ! Alone with endless space !

Nothing can hurt me when I'm alone with endless space ! " as you hurry from room to room, or from door to door, or loiter across the yard, or race down the street to the post-box or paper-shop.

Another very important aspect of this *philosophy of real life*, this philosophy of enjoying oneself *in spite of real life*, is the art of associating the pleasure of eating and drinking, and the pleasure of letting oneself fall asleep at night, with the feeling of this ultimate loneliness of our soul surrounded by endless space.

As we sit in the particular corner to which fate, or necessity, or pure chance, or our own will, has led us, and eat our meal and drink our tea or coffee with the best relish that the time and the place allow, we ought, according to the " Philosophy of in Spite ", to make this casual local loneliness harmonize with our absolute loneliness in unending space.

At such times our enjoyment has an elemental and abysmal right to be as selfish and as concentrated on self as we can possibly make it. Why, as that admirable writer Emma Smith makes one of her characters ask, why have we been given an entirely personal backbone of our very own if we're not to have an entirely personal happiness of our very own ?

And exactly the same cosmogonic oracle from the unending recesses of space, that space to which we must allow no specialist's cyphers of paradoxical algebra to set a limit, offers its plenary indulgence to our total and absolute right to enjoy, with a heart absolved from every flicker of responsibility, the unequalled satisfaction, a satisfaction too deep for any speech to utter, a satisfaction shared with all the tidal seas and sandy deserts and mossy heights of our long-wearied, nigh-exhausted planetary parent, the deepest and subtlest and most unutterable satisfaction known to man and beast and bird and fish and to all the myriad multitudes of lesser lives, the satisfaction of forgetting in sleep that things are as they are.

In Spite of

PRIDE

What exactly are we aiming at in this "Philosophy of In Spite"? Well, let us put it as plainly and as simply as we can. We are trying to scrape together and to mould into some sort of rough-and-ready cohesion a quantity of mole-hills of a kind of earth and clay—I speak of course of philosophic earths and clays, such as in the remote past have proved useful to the makers of images and may be of use to other weaklings of similar nerves who like ourselves find a curious relief in moulding clay and mud, as well as sand and snow and what you will, into human figures, and in giving to these figures a great number of subtle lines and curves and delicately carved rondures and exquisitely modelled hollows such as can only be acquired by a daily resistance to all tribal totems and taboos.

Nor is that enough. If we discovered the best metaphysical sand and the most philosophic clay ever found on our planet, and if we succeeded, like old Nestor in his palace in the sand-dunes, in outliving three generations of mortal men while we scraped and polished these figures, there would still remain, in the moulding of our puppet sages, one final thing to do; nothing less—shocking though it may sound—than the cutting down, whittling down, dissolving down, every one of them, which for years we have been moulding, until to some eyes there is nothing there.

But there, all the same, is everything. What in plain words we've got to do if our " Philosophy of In Spite " is to serve us as we want it to serve us, is to practise hourly and daily a very special imaginative gesture. By this gesture, and remember that it is an act of the mind, and that we speak of it as philosophers and not as scientists, what we really do is to lessen the size and importance of our body.

Some sort of a body our mind must have, but we can easily imagine it as very small indeed. Come then ! Let us in our imagination reduce our body to a vanishing-point, reduce it, in fact, to such minute proportions as to make it untouchable, impalpable, and practically non-existent. A pin-point of substance is all that an individual mind requires. This pin-point of a material body the mind must have, for a pure mind, or a disembodied consciousness drifting here and there on the wind or darting about at its own volition, is a thing impossible to conceive. The moment you try to conceive it you are compelled to endow your disembodied mind with something resembling the substance, though thinned out, of course, into some sort of a grey vapour, of a material body. To our human intelligence, mind in the abstract, or consciousness in its essence, apart from any embodiment, may not be *unthinkable*, but it is impossible to *imagine*.

A mind cannot exist without a body, nor thought without a thinker : to get rid of pride, therefore, we must constantly use our imagination to lessen the size and importance of our material envelope or inescapable embodiment. We must go on imagining it smaller and smaller till it is only a little more than a suppositional Euclidian point in an inescapable category of space.

Nor is this yet the central point of our philosophy where pride is concerned. We are now a conscious " self " whose bodily structure is reduced to an invisible pin-point, or rather let us say to some weed-spawned atomy floating on the tidal scum of the Sargasso Sea.

Let us now immerse this infinitesimal animalcule, thus

floating on the outer mystery of space and on the inner mystery of time, both of which now beckon to it, from past and future, let us, I say, immerse it in the particular vision of things in which, at the moment, it may happen to be absorbed. We have still, of course, to reduce the pride of the consciousness of this speck of matter; but we can let the process of that reduction wait for a bit, as in any case its activities are limited by both time and space, for, being fatally bound to its pin-point of a body, it is unable *even to think* save through the medium of these two ultimates.

Assuming then that some form of enjoyment is the sole purpose of this space-time-limited mind with its invisibly small body, we are now in a position to see the people and things round us quite differently and a great deal clearer than before.

It has become obvious to us now that every worm and midge and gnat among us is unique, though we cannot go so far as to say that we see them "as they are", for that theological-scientific illusion leads nowhere; and only implies that an attempt is being made to outrage and disfigure the very instrument upon which all our vision, limited as it may be, depends, namely the absolute subjectivity and individuality of the vision of things of every worm and midge and gnat and of every animal and of every man.

Indeed I doubt if you could find any philosopher of any age who would deny the proposition that human insight, however much assisted by scientific inventions, must be always to a large extent subjective.

And thus we arrive at our conclusion that since our human minds are limited by time and space, and since—in spite of the shameful cruelties of vivisectionists—we are not in a position to know what sub-human organisms think and feel, it is impossible to "know things as they are". Indeed the more we philosophize the more there grows a doubt at the back of our minds as to whether such terrifying monstrosities as "things as they are" exist at all, or could possibly exist.

We should be coming a little nearer to reality, though without coming very close, if we declared that what we ought to look for are " things as they feel to themselves ". We say " subjectivity " in place of " relativity " because, while the word " relativity " has recently acquired a technical, super-physical, almost super-mathematical significance, the word " subjectivity " continues to indicate the thousand-and-one quirks and whimsies, caprices and manias, twists and turns, of *an individual "self"* to whatever species it happens to belong. The theory of relativity may quite possibly, we feel, only last for a few hundred years and prove quite as misleading as the conclusions derived from Pavlov's experiments on dogs. But we can find all the trouble we are at present able to cope with indicated by the word " subjectivity ".

Here indeed lurk those mists and fogs, those jolts and jars, those tricky illusions and trickier disillusions, those nasty tastes and morbid horrors, that spoil the innocence of the simple sensations which, according to the " Philosophy of In Spite ", are the proper purpose of our struggle with the mystery of existence.

And one of the worst of these curst twists and turns of " subjectivity " which destroy the divine pleasure of pure sensation is the intrusive fuss with all its preoccupied gravity of the emotion we call pride. Every candle from our most childish Christmas of irresponsible fooling has to be re-lit if we are to drive away this solemn devil.

In a world like ours, where every leap of every flea in a slum-privy may possibly ruffle to an incalculable extent the feathers of every eagle above every Snowdonian ridge, all that we unscientific, untheological, unmathematical weaklings can do in our simple " Philosophy of In Spite " is to use our imagination *negatively* as well as *positively*.

Yes, we can use it as the old god of the winds used his wild progeny. *Imaginatio generat causas* and our imagination is only acting in an appropriately god-like if *negative part* when as our faithful bodyguard it protects us from evil. Yes, our imagination—and this is one of the subtlest secrets of all real poetry—

must be made to march round us as a bodyguard as we force ourselves to enjoy the simplest sensations! These are the sensations that are always, such is the great paradox of existence, the deepest, the most natural, and the most mysterious of all, for they—at any rate, so our imagination assures us, as it drives off our solemn devil of self-worship—for *they* are the sensations enjoyed by the four great elements themselves, that is to say by air, earth, fire and water. They are the sensations of the sun and the moon and of all the planets, the sensations of every star in the zodiac, the sensations of the remotest galaxy in space, and finally the sensations of infinite space itself, of that divine ether that sustains and supports them all, of that ultimate ether which is the only dimension in this inscrutable multiverse of which we really know anything.

Thus it is true to say that as long as our poetical imagination faithfully and loyally continues on the march round our camp of simple sensation, we shall really and truly be sharing with the elements themselves their god-like enjoyment of the life of which we are all both the offspring and the victims.

But no man—nor woman either—can completely lose themselves in the elements, or even lose himself in those primitive ways of enjoying the elements such as eating and drinking and feeling the warm sun or the cool wind on his body, as long as he is distracted by pride or vanity or conceit.

Nothing in the wide world destroys the pleasure of pure sensation so quickly as these portentous exaltations and solemn puffings-up of our ridiculous ego. How on earth *can* an honest human animal enjoy what it is seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling, when it is busy comparing itself with others of the same species?

Directly it grows aware that others are envying its momentary satisfaction, lo! that satisfaction is already half gone. The luckless creature is now on its guard. It is growling angrily or gazing round it with furtive and suspicious eyes. To get the best out of our struggle with life we have to forget ourselves completely and live so entirely in the sensation of

the moment that there is in the strictest sense *nothing left of us but a sensation*; a sensation suspended at a particular point between the unending procession and the unending regression of space and time.

Of the three forms of pride, that is to say, pride proper, vanity, and conceit, vanity is by far the most harmless, and conceit by far the most dangerous. The meaning of vanity is to think too much of our bodily advantages, whether real or unreal, over others: while the meaning of conceit is to believe we are cleverer, wiser, grander, and more important than we really are.

In our process of forcing ourselves to enjoy life we must practise every day the imaginative and poetical humility which is so absolutely essential. We must, in fact, purge ourselves of everything that hinders us from losing ourselves in the sensation we are enjoying. Pride, however, is a very different thing from vanity and conceit, and goes much deeper than either of these.

Considering pride to be the *persona perdita* or third person of this demonic trinity, it can be described as the condition of being too vividly and continually conscious of any sort of moral or mental or spiritual superiority. A person can derive his deepest pride from his artful success in concealing his pride; and this can apply to his superior blood, his superior taste, his superior virtue, his superior wisdom. But the thing goes deeper even than that. Of the three devils it certainly might be said without a moment's hesitation that, compared with pride, vanity is rather a silly imp than a devil, whereas conceit is rather a stupid fool than a devil.

But we will bring forward a practical example to elucidate our ideas on this matter. You are a man, let us pretend, making your way in springtime through a wood that is " preserved ". As you proceed you notice a strange bird, and one entirely unfamiliar to you, leaving its nest. At the same moment you become aware of another man—obviously a gamekeeper, but who has not yet caught sight of you—coming down a narrow

path between the trees straight towards the spot where you stand.

Now your chief personal motive at that moment, a portion, we'll say, of your intense interest in birds, is to climb up to that nest and peer into it; not with the intention of taking the eggs but simply to see them. You are, however, a conceited person, with a great sense of your importance; so the idea of being caught by a gamekeeper halfway up a tree decides you to relinquish the whole quest and clear off.

But conceit is not your only weakness; you are also proud. And the thing of which you are most of all proud is your sympathy with the feelings of birds. This sympathy is entirely genuine; but, genuine though it is, your pride in having such a feeling is stronger than the feeling itself.

At this moment you fear that the unknown bird might be troubled by the sight of a man peering into its nest even if this intruder didn't touch an egg or disturb a twig. Your pride, however, in being so sensitive about the feelings of birds is like a second gamekeeper coming down an interior path, and so between the two of them you decide to clear off as discreetly but with as much dignity as the situation permits.

Suppose, however, that although free from moral pride about your attitude to birds and free from the conceit of self-important dignity with regard to gamekeepers, your especial weakness is to be extremely vain about your personal appearance, especially about the elegance, let us say, of your figure and the classic outline, allow us to imagine, of your profile.

Well, on this occasion it will be instantaneously revealed to you that neither the mother-bird, if she be still on the scene, nor the gamekeeper, intent on scaring you out of his preserve, will " give a damn ", as we say, about your face or figure. So, urged on by your intense desire to reach that unknown nest, and completely untroubled by any kind of pride or conceit, you scramble up the tree, and having discovered that you've been invading the domain, not of an ordinary wood-pigeon but of a stock-dove or a turtle-dove, you quickly swing yourself

down, and are off, long before anything but a straight shot from the man's gun could interrupt your escape. So there you are, strolling peacefully home, with no particular sense of triumph but with your knowledge of the nests of doves definitely increased.

There is, of course, as our imaginary convertite has probably detected, one little flaw in our argument. I refer to my tree-climber's moral pride in his superior susceptibility. How do we know that it was not his pride in himself as the possessor of this righteous sympathy with birds and his feeling of being superior to less sympathetic bird-lovers that stopped him from robbing not only this nest but many other rare nests? Well, we simply *don't* know. It is one of those nice points that forever are evading us.

The idea that our pride in our virtue is the chief upholder and sustainer of our virtue is one of those fundamental paradoxes of human psychology which we have to face. The " Philosophy of In Spite " holds the view that the help which our virtue gets from our pride varies very greatly according to the disposition of the person concerned.

But let us be bold and carry our complicated and secret investigation a little further. In fact let us dig down to the actual underground roots of our ordinary human pride in what virtue we may possess and examine for ourselves whether there really is some devilish worm coiled up down there, or only an innocent maggot with the stare of a cherub, or an imbecile grub that doesn't know its head from its tail.

This whole matter of pride is of the utmost importance in establishing our " Philosophy of In Spite " upon firm ground. Let us speak quite plainly. We would say that if your chief and main desire, as we hope it is and as we think it ought to be, is to enjoy life and behave in such a way as to increase rather than diminish other people's chance of enjoying life, the thing to aim at is the complete destruction in yourself of pride, vanity, and conceit. This is a difficult and drastic undertaking; but it is at the extreme opposite pole from the wicked,

cruel, evil, vicious, Manichean puritanism with which you might at first glance connect it.

But, you may argue, does not this sweeping away of pride cut at the root of competition, which is, in some shape or other, one of the main causes of human happiness? No. On the contrary, we hold that the complete elimination of personal pride can co-exist with plenty of enjoyable competition.

Enjoyable competition can become so entirely a game played for its own sake and with no ulterior motive that a philosophical enjoyer of games does actually—though to certain natures this would seem an almost incredible paradox—does actually enjoy the game as much when he loses as when he wins! I would even go so far as to summon up the ghost of Homer and to point out that, in spite of this perpetual talk about *kudos* and *euchos*, " glory " and " renown ", in the *Iliad*, there can always be caught on the waves and winds of his unequalled music an undertone of tragic recognition that, though necessity drives these warriors to kill and be killed and though to think of being famous " among men as yet unborn " is a solace that softens the cruelty of " tearful war ", the poetic stress is never upon the worship of sorrow but always upon enjoying the sweet light of the sun *while there is yet time*.

" Ah, friend," says Sarpedon to Glaucus, at the end of the twelfth book, " if once escaped from this battle we were for ever to be ageless and immortal, neither would I fight myself amid the foremost, nor would I send thee into battle where men win glory; but now—for in any case fates of death beset us, fates past counting, which no mortal can escape or avoid—now let us go forward, whether we shall give glory to another, or another to us."

But what we ought to consider at this moment is not the solace we can extract from the glory of heroism when necessity drives. It is the abysmal relief of a complete escape from dependence on the opinion of us held by others. This escape can only be attained when we make a clean sweep of pride.

Nor is there lacking a most excellent substitute for this damnable and life-destroying dependence on what others think of us. I refer to our private satisfaction, quite apart from other people, in all forms of technical skill and in every kind of deftness of touch that we may be able to bring to bear in our handling of things.

This satisfaction in the sensation of dealing with the obduracy of material substances—a satisfaction, surely, that all honest workmen know quite as well as the most skilled craftsmen—need have no connection at all with pride, vanity, or conceit. It is hard to see, as long as it remains *a pure sensation of skill* only known perhaps to ourselves, how skill of this kind can lead us into these dangerous vices.

Nor, surely, are we deceiving ourselves when we include in the harmlessness of our technical skill in the art of handling matter a similar harmlessness in handling what, after all, demand kindred qualities of skill and self-control. I refer to the tribulations of existence and the troublesome obsessions in our own minds.

Such trained and patient skill, such deft devices, whether directed towards the outer universe or towards ourselves, are an essential part of that adjustment to life and Nature which in the animal and vegetable worlds are instinctive and with us are partly instinctive and partly premeditated; and we can enjoy them without any of that awareness of others' views of us, upon which the perilous sorts of pride and vanity and conceit depend.

What we *must* do if our "Philosophy of In Spite" is to be a real port of embarkation on a fresh voyage, and not a pitiful patched-together raft after a shipwreck, is to make sure that the keel of our boat and the ribs of its whole body are "tenon'd and mortised" in humility.

Humility itself is one of the most powerful weapons we possess in our life-battle to enjoy ourselves. Here, in fact, is the whole crux and rub of the situation. We all *want* to enjoy ourselves, but we are so fatally unphilosophical that we are

always being tempted to substitute the conventional satisfaction of other people's ideas of enjoyment for the richer, deeper, fuller satisfaction of enjoying life for ourselves in our own way.

In a short-sighted craving for what Homer calls *kudos* and *euchos*—and it must be admitted that most of Homer's heroes took the same unphilosophical view—we are tempted to sacrifice our life of contemplative sensation for a life of outward success. But the " Philosophy of In Spite " takes the risk of differing not only from the view of life of the conventional world of our day, but from the view of life of the conventional world of Homer's day, and continues obstinately to insist that, though when you are dead you may only be remembered by your mate or your children or at best by a very few friends and neighbours, if you live the life of contemplative sensation that the " Philosophy of In Spite " is trying to portray in clear outlines and at least in three dimensions, when the moment and the place meet together that are destined to throw your death into focus, you will have proved yourself wiser than King Agamemnon and luckier than swift-footed Achilles.

And for the sake of all you hold most dear, do not let any of these vicious, cruel, sadistic, puritanical haters of others' enjoyment interfere with what they always love to call *your* " *self-indulgence* ", which is one of those words invented by the most cunningly and craftily *wicked* of all human emotions, the emotion of envy masquerading as virtue !

These obsessed maniacs of envy have produced another word, also from their devil's crucible, where in their fiends' laboratory they supply " spiritual armour " for animated corpses, namely the word " materialism ". But whenever you hear yourself, O hesitating convertite, accused of " self-indulgence " or of " materialism ", turn a sharp look upon your accuser, whether a man or a woman, and you will see the green light in that serpent-glance !

No need to be afraid of those accusations from that quarter ! Go ahead, and be as " self-indulgent " and as " materialistic " as you possibly can. Life will see to it—since life is made up

of " selves " struggling to enjoy themselves—that you won't be so " favoured of Heaven " as to be left to enjoy yourself for very long. Life will see to it. Life can be trusted for that. What our little band of " good companions ", as Pantagruel would regard us, and remember we are young and middle-aged and old and of both sexes, really need—and don't think we don't know it!—is some satisfactory substitute for those particular supernatural, spiritual, miraculous beliefs which Christendom has offered in its day but which have *lost their magic* by reason of—but we need not go into all that now!—some inner ritual of life in fact, such as can be studied in all the ancient historical beliefs. The police-state element in the Russia and China of to-day can, of course, be easily used as a satanic laboratory for forging angelic armour for devils, and as we hear the tune of " Slaves! You are free! " we slaves ought to catch on the wind the deadly words that match that tune: " You have hitherto been chastised with whips; but now you shall feel what it is to be chastised with scorpions! "

Well, let us try to face some imaginary situation into which any of us may have drifted and see whether we can really shake off some of the false, conventional impressions produced by the look, touch, sound, smell, taste, of this whole phantasmagoria of a cosmos!

What our small band of would-be philosophers is trying to work out really amounts to a sort of secret and private diary of your deepest feelings as day follows day in your ordinary routine, combined with the cautious beginning of some sort of method by which your feelings can be guided by your own deepest will to force yourself to enjoy yourself.

We have an instinct that you will discover that the moments when you are most happy are not the moments when you notice what people think of you, or say about you, or how they look at you; but are the moments when your work itself, whatever it may be, is going well. Money, of course, plays an important part. It is nonsense to pretend otherwise. But we all feel that we want to *deserve* from society, from the human

race, the comforts and enjoyments we earn. But this is not pride. This is self-respect. This is a profound instinct that we share with horses and dogs and possibly with camels and oxen.

And in the manual crafts, it isn't morality or piety that makes an artisan a good workman. It is something much deeper. It is something that has its roots in Nature herself and in the mysterious urges that drive her to such incredible perfections in *her* arts and crafts, in *her* inventions and intentions. We have only to think of some of Nature's methods and devices as we see them around us in the ways of living creatures and living organisms to realize that what we human beings call pride, vanity, and conceit, though we lightly attribute these human reactions to the preening of glossy feathers, the stretching of woolly and hairy limbs, the waving of gleaming fins, the curving of scaly spines, the licking with wet tongues, are in reality something completely different.

Nature's children are out to enjoy themselves as much as they can, that is to say as much as is consistent with fulfilling those functions of fecundity and those provisions for security that are necessary to the continuity of the species.

To be a true philosopher implies selfishness; but selfishness of a special and peculiar kind. A philosopher has, in the first place, like the silliest of fools, to earn his living. And to earn your living, you simply must—there's no choice about it unless you want to become a criminal or a parasite—placate your fellow-workmen and please your boss. To this the only alternative is to find another boss and another group of mates. To avoid infuriating your mates you've got to cease giving yourself airs, assuming any "quiet superiority", or showing off; while to satisfy your employer, or boss, or editor, or manager—that is to say if you're not a pretty girl and out for a crafty flirtation—all you've got to do is to do exactly what he requires of you, which is not necessarily *good* work, for you and he may very easily differ on this nice and ticklish point, but which is simply the kind of work required of you. Your object, as a novice or convertite to the "Philosophy of In

Spite ", is entirely a selfish one, namely to force yourself to enjoy yourself.

And it makes it much harder to force yourself to enjoy yourself if you loathe every second you are at your job and hate everything connected with it. Mind you, most dear neophyte, we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " don't say that you have to love your work. We do not even say that you have to *like* your work in any particular way or in any especial sense. A convert to the " Philosophy of In Spite " can enjoy the process of doing a thing that in itself, in its essence, he doesn't like at all. Suppose you are a woman and your job is to tidy rooms and scrub floors or to work in an office copying letters and figures. Or suppose you are a man, and your job is to weed gravel paths, clip hedges and bushes, cut grass, and plant seedlings.

Because you, a woman, are tidying and dusting and scrubbing, or copying and sorting and filing, you're not prevented by any of these activities from giving yourself up in your imagination to the feelings, emotions, sensations that stir you the most. Your hands and brain are doing tedious, automatic, mechanical labour, but that needn't prevent the material and chemical substances with which your body is in contact from associating themselves as they touch you and as you touch them with the feelings and emotions you enjoy most of all. As long as we have some choice, some free movement of our minds and muscles, nothing can prevent us from giving ourselves up to the embrace of the whole universe, certainly of the living elements around us ; and around us they surely are even if we're in a scullery reeking of cabbage-water or an office stinking of mouldy ledgers.

And because you, a man, are digging weeds out of gravel and raking leaves into heaps ready for the wheelbarrow and the bonfire, does *that* mean that you cannot, at some blessed moment, resting on your rake, use your tactile imagination and embrace the whole mysterious cosmos around you ?

Nor can we, in spite of our entire rejection of mystical

love, find anything to quarrel with in the unequivocal vibration that connects two lovers who from adjoining buildings are exchanging at this very moment quivering waves of magnetic currents that are charged as much with the ecstasy of romance as they are with the calmer emotion of contemplative sensation. Only let us pray that their rapture won't turn to despair like the rapture of that Queen of Carthage " with a willow in her hand upon the wild sea-banks " or to a wailing on the wind on one of those two roads to Loch Lomond.

Aye, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to have an effective philosophy of our own that it should be infinitely elastic ; at once able to expand to the limits of time and space, and to diminish to a point as small as the eye of the smallest insect. *Humility* is the word ; but if we are really to be blest with true philosophic cunning, it will be an antique and, if you like to put it so, a paleolithic humility, rather than any of the Buddhist sort.

Yes, if we want to enjoy ourselves in a real cosmic-comic manner—for we have *got* to laugh at ourselves to keep ourselves light enough to enjoy, as we might imagine the air itself enjoying, if the air had human senses, the overcrowded world into which we have been flung—we must force ourselves to swallow the funny side of things and exaggerate our comical humiliations, our ridiculous lapses, to the extreme limit, and if we can't make our situation humorous to ourselves in any other way, we'd better boldly start playing the fool in earnest. For if in this escape from pride, vanity, and conceit, which is so essential if we're to enjoy ourselves, *humility* is Prospero's wand, some sort of irresistible humour, of any kind at all, is the " Open Sesame ".

Yes, we must repeat to ourselves over and over again that we are gnats and midges and worms and beetles if we're not monkeys and marmosets. We must assure you that in the end something, if not everything, in the mental attitude we are emphasizing will stick like a burr to our grotesquely smooth and absurdly pompous human brain.

Our more spiritual-minded friends will interrupt us here by protesting for the hundred-and-ninetieth time that we are " spiritual beings in a spiritual world ". Our answer is that if this were true it would be more necessary and not less necessary to feel the extent of our littleness. Surely it is unphilosophical to go on stressing the superiority of half of Nature to the other half; " rats and mice and such small deer " on one side, and ourselves, with our superiority not only to worms and beetles, but to dogs and cats and monkeys, living our lives of spiritual pride on the other?

What our " Philosophy of In Spite " teaches is surely the true wisdom of our universal mother the Earth: namely that we must get this matter of superiority clear and straight without any more waste of time. We are not denying that a salmon is larger and possibly more striking in appearance than a stickleback.

We are not denying that you, a handsome young man perhaps, or a good-looking young woman, are more beautiful, more intellectual, more complicated in your nervous organism than a monkey, and a good deal more so than a caterpillar or a slug.

What we are denying is your right to be proud or vain or conceited because of this fact. You are a self, a self-conscious human being. The slug is also a self, different from other slugselves, unique in its sluggishness as you are in your humanity. But you have no more right to feel proud and vain over your superiority to that black slug you have just lifted out of the path and placed in the hedge than you have to vaunt yourself, as a successful man or as a successful woman, or as a handsome man or as a handsome woman, over men and women with less lucky stars or less fortunate destinies. It is all—our philosophy teaches us—a pure matter of chance, how, or when, or of whom, *you*, a blown feather, a wisp of straw, were carried from the mists of limbo to your mother's bed.

So why this damned " glorying " at all? O my good friend, don't you see the gulf of difference between " glorying in your strength " as a private, secret, perfectly legitimate

sensation, a sensation belonging to your inalienable body in its own right, and this other kind of glorying when you glory over somebody whose manly or womanly trunk happens to be a trifle less imbued with the glory-bearing sap?

Young people saturated in the "Philosophy of In Spite" would be perfectly justified in protesting against the way Homer's victors glory over the vanquished. Such young people are "quicker in the uptake" as a rule than any philosopher, because, free from logical steps, they can "jump"—not a bad habit sometimes—"to conclusions".

Such young scholars, therefore, will find no difficulty in following our philosophy when we explain that while we have no quarrel with men, or gods, or beasts, or birds who "glory in their strength", it is only when they glory over the lack of strength in others that we "take", as the saying is, "exception" to such unphilosophied vaunting.

The whole business of our struggle to formulate this "In Spite" philosophy of ours is undertaken because, while we see people *improving themselves daily by patient practice*, in cricket, in hockey, in football, in sewing, in knitting, in washing, in cooking, in rowing, in swimming, in climbing, in collecting, in writing, in studying, in preaching, in gardening, in handwriting, in typing, we know perfectly well from our personal contact with them that these people *are not* becoming steadily more philosophical as they get older but simply a bit tougher. We, on the contrary, want to become, not tougher, but more philosophical.

As they grow out of childhood, as they grow out of youth, as they grow out of middle-age, we watch them—we cannot help watching them—never mind what their belief, or party, or institution, or sect may be!—growing less and less happy in themselves, enjoying fewer and ever fewer moments of pleasure, and obviously—"O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!"—steadily finding life more cruel and finding their fate in life less endurable.

It is for these people that we philosophers of "In Spite" have "risen up", or have "horned in", or have "crept under

the fence " into your yard. And what we are bringing to you is really and truly an entirely new assuagement. It teaches you to narrow down your whole technique of life to yourself and to your own sensations. " Disgustingly selfish ! " our stupid enemies will cry.

On the contrary, if you will take the trouble to observe your companions and neighbours a little closer, you will notice that those among them who have by long and patient practice acquired the difficult art of secretly, selfishly, constantly and by all sorts of subtle devices of their own, *forcing themselves to enjoy themselves*, are the ones who are the pleasant ones to live with. They *may* be selfish. They *are* selfish. You are perfectly correct in accusing them of that ! But what the devil would you have a *self* be but *selfish* ?

And the fact remains that our " Philosophy of In Spite " has discovered a new way of taking life ; a way that isn't exactly stoical, nor exactly epicurean ; a way that remains, above all, *profoundly agnostic with regard to science*, a way, in fact, that is absolutely certain of one thing ; namely that every cosmological theory about what used to be called " matter " in its relation to what used to be called " mind ", every theory that is based upon mathematics, whether considered as " number " or as " structure " or as " relation ", will be relinquished in so many years for a different one, and *that* different one for *another* different one, and that again for yet another, each returning with a difference as some mysterious cycle of fate brings the peculiar method of some past system into the resurrected experiment of a new system.

The " Philosophy of In Spite " believes that the beginning of wisdom is humility. It believes that the prime obstacle to the sort of *selfishness* it advocates is the pride, vanity and conceit of moralists. It has reached the conclusion that of all people in the world moralists have always been the most conceited, in the true sense of conceit, that is to say in really and truly believing that they are far wiser and far more important than they are.

And the " Philosophy of In Spite " has found out that the best of all cures for pride, vanity and conceit is *sensation.* Resolve to live entirely for sensation and you will soon find that you will be living the life of a human animal—watch a sheep chewing the cud—there's the secret of life for you ! Or, as Rabelais says, watch a dog with a bone ! Walt Whitman, Keats, Charles Lamb, Goethe—there you have at heart four life-lovers who knew how to be agnostic about the fitful time-serving oracles of science !

And the point is that when you come to examine the essence of the metaphysical wisdom of Spinoza, and we may shrewdly suspect in a lesser degree of all the metaphysicians, you will find that ulteriorly and ultimately what we get is a *particular kind of sensation,* a special sort of cosmogonic sensation ; not cosmic emotion at all : no, no, *cosmic sensation* is what we get.

And how does a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, actually go to work in this mental concentration upon physical sensation ? Well, the self in us, the living centre of our being, takes hold of our physical body and uses it for its own particular moment of intense sensation.

This ego, this self, this " I am I ", which *feels*—and who can tell whether this is an illusion or the inevitable result of being a conscious living creature ?—*as if it were inside our body,* now compels this same body, with its powers of hearing, seeing, tasting, feeling, smelling, to enjoy the particular sensation or particular set of sensations in which it wants to lose itself.

And if you cry out to us at this point : " But aren't you encouraging our mind to treat our body in the manner of a sadist ? " we reply : " Not at all ! Our body is only our old brother, the ass, who completely understands us ; and, when we make it attend to this sound, this sight, this taste, this feeling, this scent, we are giving to our docile and faithful old companion exactly the same pleasure that we are giving to our conscious self, and our body thoroughly deserves its half of the pleasure since it is through the senses of this humble servant

that our umbilical enjoyment, if we innocents may be allowed such grand words, of hyper-sensuous contemplation is reached.

And the whole triumph of the thing, mark you, is a triumph for humility, and for humility carried to the extreme limit. It is indeed a perfect example of how egoism, or "selfishness" if you like, when carried to its extreme point and to its uttermost excess, ceases to be itself, and loses itself in something else!

What it loses itself in, in this case, is pure sensation, the most lovely, beautiful, divine, heavenly thing you can possibly be lost in! Not only has all pride, vanity, and conceit in yourself gone, but *you* have gone—yes, *you*, Charles, or Walter, or Wolfgang, or Etienne, or Livio, or Susan, or Celia, or Rosamond, or Mary, have completely melted away!

What is left then? Nothing is left but an impersonal vibration of sensation enjoyed to the limit of enjoyment by a pair of impersonal complementaries who used to be called mind and matter, self and not-self, or even subject and object

In fact, to put it differently, the "you" in the case, the ego, the self, the Johnny, the Jenny, the Herr, the Frau, has actually become the sound of the wood-pigeon's murmuring, become the sight of the green meadow with the purple hedge-shadow, become the scent of the smoke from that burning rubbish, become the taste of the first blackberry, become the clasp of your companion's fingers!

And as this conscious self of yours, thus deliberately thinned out to a next-to-nothing, continues its ecstasy of attention, lo and behold! its next-to-nothing becomes a next-to-everything!

In simpler language, *you*, alone in infinite time and space, you, who are lost in that heavenly sound, that divine colour, that paradisic taste, that enchanted odour, that indescribable touch, are at this moment experiencing, in its simpler, gentler, quieter, less disturbing first stage, the ecstasy which men and women feel at the moment of the consummation of their sex-love, and the ecstasy which poets feel, when, like Prometheus at the end of the tragic Aeschylean play, they fling themselves

into some indescribable response to their defiant sacrifice, made by the mother of all life and all death.

Think of it for a little while, before you reject this " philosophy " of " In Spite ". Think, O unknown reader, how much of your present life is absorbed in the worries and agitations caused by other people. As *that Frenchman* said not so long since : " It is *other people who are our hell.*"

Well, then, what is it that we require most of all from philosophy ? A system like Hegel's all about being and not-being and becoming, and all about " the idea ", and how out of the " idea " all the obvious things with which we are familiar, so comical, so tragical, so tantalizingly lovely and so appallingly unpleasant, come popping forth, like cats and mice and pythons and rabbits, out of a magician's pocket ?

Is this what will save us from turning on the gas ? I admit it comes nearer to our need to learn from the great Kant that time and space are only categories of thought and that there is *something else*, a thing called a " categorical imperative ", in our divided conscience, that shoots in upon us, like a spear of fire from a dimension totally outside this inescapable, temporal-spacious omnibus !

Yes, Kant helps us at a crisis a good deal more than Hegel ; but oh so much less than we need to be helped ! And although the tremendous Spinoza, who has applied the irresistible necessity of mathematics to the incurable necessity of the nature of God and both of these enormities to our daily human behaviour, may have been able to liberate a many-sided genius like Goethe from the teasing duty of daily self-sacrifice, it will only be a few of us, I fancy, who will be able to share this liberation.

Of course you could say, when your father, or mother, or wife, or husband, or son, or daughter have made you bite the carpet, that if you had been a Stoic or a Platonist, or a disciple of Socrates, instead of what you are, a nervous young man with a passion for reading Nietzsche or a touchy young woman whose favourite writer is Dostoievsky, you would have been

able to avoid such paroxysms of fury when your relations proved annoying, but I could argue in reply that you have an advantage over both Plato and Socrates, namely the advantage of having been saturated for two thousand years with the Jewish scriptures and with the worship of Jesus of Nazareth as the incarnation of the Absolute.

The philosophy of Socrates, at least as interpreted by Plato, can hardly be described as a philosophy of humility; whereas humility, at least so we have intermittently believed for nineteen hundred years, is one of the main elements of the teaching of Jesus.

The tantalizing thing about so many philosophies is that they are more concerned with their logical or scientific immunity to intellectual criticism than they are with their power to take the sting and the throb and the bite and the poison out of the pressure upon a living creature of the immediate moment!

Aye, and it is from our pride and vanity and conceit that these poisonous pains increase upon us and blister and fester and turn into ulcerous and malodorous sores. Cut out the sufferings of our pride, conceit, and vanity from any "hurt" as we say "to our feelings" and lo! we are half-cured already!

What our "Philosophy of In Spite" or some similar "philosophy of life-tricks" ought to do is to fill a stupid gap, a lamentable and disgraceful gap in what might be called the art of legitimate egoism. No religion that I know of, no system of metaphysic of which I have ever heard, comes *in detail* to the rescue of anyone whose desire is simply and solely to adjust himself or adjust herself to the particular life, from their waking up in the morning to their lying down at night, that he or she is fated just now to endure with all its convoluted problems and all its concentrated shocks.

The first thing to do, according to our "Philosophy of In Spite", is to treat all such resounding opposites as good and evil, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, with every kind of caution. Yes, our philosophy constantly, unscrupulously,

and cunningly insists that these conventional opposites should be treated with analytical caution, with commonsense caution, with humorous caution, and although we will not end with diabolical caution, we might be reckless enough to use the word—Pantagruelian. The unfortunate thing is that we, the founders of this " Philosophy of In Spite ", are ourselves—and that is precisely why we are so cautiously working it out—hypersensitive weaklings who in our naïve honesty have to confess that we cling to our ideas just because, in our nervous and bookish fears, we lack the toughness to take life at its face value.

We have certainly arrived at a moment in human history when a new philosophy is needed as it has never been needed before ; but although many of us have been giving alert and hopeful and sympathetic attention to such existentialist " logoi" as our libraries and reviews have enabled us to arrange into wavering patterns like reflections in water, we have not yet met a person of either sex, whether young or elderly, whose daily life has been sustained and comforted and inspired by existentialist insight.

We feel at this moment as if we were the ambassadors of a scattered host of people too simple to understand the subtleties of any complicated and difficult philosophy. We have outgrown, so to speak, both God and the Devil, and are still slipping about on the ice of the immediate moment and finding it anything but an Aristippian *monochronos hedone.*

As ambassadors for such people we feel it imperative to insist that our " Philosophy of In Spite " must be at bottom absolutely egoistic. If you insist on driving us to use that unfairly abused word we shall not hesitate to blurt it out in the courage of our cowardice and shall boldy say " absolutely selfish ".

No, no, idealistic convertite, your weak-minded son and his flighty sister are in no danger of being corrupted by reading this little book which is no more a " Devil's handbook " than it is a preface to Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying.*

This book is the essence of the life-experience of a serious-minded gathering of kindred spirits whose quite special

advantage for their particular undertaking is that, although of different ages and of both sexes and although taking their work with intense seriousness, their attitude towards the rank and file of ordinary humanity displays, not only a shameless and so far uncensored feeling for the comic, but a mischievous delight in letting seventy cats out of seventy bags, and in arguments with all and sundry as to which of the old circus-tricks and market-tricks should be allowed to persist and which should be destroyed.

Imagine yourself, whoever you are, man or woman, young or old, waking up in the morning in some small bedroom of your own, and with no necessity to begin dressing for several minutes yet. You have just become aware of the warmth of the bedclothes round you and aware that this warmth, on a chilly foggy morning in a great city, with grey light wearily and mechanically moving like an elemental policeman about your four walls, is an extremely desirable and enjoyable thing.

Out of your square window you can see three drainpipes, two chimney-pots, and one roof-corner of sloping slates; and through your square window there reaches you at irregular intervals when the wind blows from the north the sound of a train's whistle.

Aye, but what a delicious sensation of divine warmth you are now enjoying; warmth for itself and in itself and to itself; just purely the perfect sensation of warmth, and you, the conscious self who are using your body to enjoy this warmth, this particular kind of warmth which can only be enjoyed by us who are creatures of the northern half of this round world! But what is this? Your enjoyment, whether you are a man or a woman, soon begins to be totally spoilt by your thoughts, by your indignant, biting, scraping, itching, gnawing thoughts.

And what particular chain of thoughts? Ah, there's the rub! It is the thought of how your father, your mother, your child, your friend, your master, your neighbour, your boss, *has hurt your feelings*. Your "feelings"? That is what you tell yourself. But analyse these "feelings" that have been so

cruelly hurt that the rancour, the bitterness, the smouldering indignation you feel is far stronger than the thrice-blessed warmth of the sensation you have been enjoying! Yes, analyse these hurt feelings; and what do you find? You find that your hurt is entirely due to your pride, your vanity, your conceit! Your parent has given your pride a cruel affront, an affront that is intolerable, unbearable, monstrous! Your child has "hurt your feelings". Very well then, we proceed to analyse this cruel hurt; and lo! it turns out to be purely and simply a hurt to your pride.

But now let us make matters worse still for your poor feelings! Let us imagine the blows to have come from your mate or from your lover. Ah, this sort of blow is more branding, more corrosive, more blistering, more blighting, than any other. Your feelings have *now* been hurt by your lover, your partner, your mate!

But here also it has been your pride, your deepest, uttermost pride, that has received this piercing stab, this rending shock. Now therefore, whoever you are, bring to bear on this hurt the balm, the nard, the precious ointment, of our philosophy. Catch this touchy pride of yours by the hair of its head, "and break its neck", as Verlaine tells us to do with mere eloquence if we want to write poetry.

"But how can we break the neck of our pride?" Well, that is naturally your simple question; and the "Philosophy of In Spite" must give you a simple answer; and the answer is this. Analyse calmly, realistically, and quite coldly the hurt to your feelings in each particular case. And the thing to do is to push the person who has hurt your feelings, your parent, your mate, your child, your friend, the person who employs you or the person you employ, as far away in your imagination as you can, so far away that it is as if they were in another country or even dead.

If your imagination lacks the power to do this, visualise them asleep. Human beings are always more disarming and pathetic when asleep than awake; just as they are when dead

than alive. But all this is only the beginning of what you had better do in your mind to get rid of this hurt.

What you were wise to do at once is to carry this image, or mask, or *eidolon* of your mate, or parent, or child, or companion, or employer, or fellow-worker, reduced by your imagination to a pathetic parody of the person's real self, made indeed as pitifully lacking in all dignity and grace as if they were caught completely off-guard or grotesquely asleep, or even grossly comical in the moment of death.

Very well then, you have got them as you want them: safe in some pitiful posture that has stripped them of all dignity and grace. But now they are waking up or coming to life. And you feel as if you couldn't say enough to flatter them into good spirits about themselves.

And there you have the whole secret of what you must decide to do in the depths of your own mind where all the really important and really tragi-comic issues of your life ought to be decided—*not by Chance alone* as they generally are, but by Chance happening to a mind *that is prepared in advance* for Chance's tricks and turns; and indeed has plenty of its own tricks and turns wherewith to hit back!

I tell you it is for you in the depths of your own mind to decide how you are going to feel towards your husband, your father, your son, or towards your wife, your mother, your daughter.

But instead of deciding to feel in the philosophical manner we are now constructing together as a new philosophy for poor Master Everyman and poorer Mistress Everywoman, we keep on, simple fools that we are, worrying and fretting *as to how we actually do feel* and what is the truth of our feeling. What nonsense all that is!

Our "Philosophy of In Spite" can tell you exactly what you feel, without ever having seen you or your husband. You feel love-hate and tenderness-fury, and these opposites are mingled in different proportions at each minute of each hour of each day: and every season of every year deepens, exasperates, mellows, refines, subtilizes and complicates your past feeling.

And now for pity's sake, Jack Who-ever-you-are, or Jill Who-ever-you-are, get this into your mind, since, as that wise novelist Emma Smith says, it is for a very good reason that we all have our own backbone. We *must* cultivate the power of seeing the object or objects of our love-hate and tenderness-fury as heartbreakingly funny and absurd and as infinitely tragic and grotesque.

If, while we do this, we ferociously cut out all the pride, vanity and conceit we can get our knife into *in ourselves*, we shall be in a position to see life in its proper perspective, not as a " spiritual " arena, with us all *as* " spiritual beings " struggling against armies of devils, but as we really are, tragically and humorously human as well as grotesquely and pitifully animal.

Yes, we must learn to see the self-love of our relations and friends as something which is almost heartbreaking in the naïve simplicity of its preposterous assumptions. It is our pathetic human cult of what we call " dignity " that starts us on the wrong track. Ah, convertites, convertites, can't you see that this damned human dignity is the thing that is blighting all our glorious cosmogonic sensations ?

We must learn to see ourselves as comical animals all busy at *face-saving*, just like the Chinese. If you have cultivated a real sense of the tragic absurdity of us all, and of the special grotesqueness of the persons who are your tribulation at this moment, whoever *they* are and whoever *you* are, you will have recognized also the pathetic heroism of their struggles with the monstrous dragon we call Life. When you have come to realize this in its true proportions you will feel a throb of serious and silent respect for every single wrestler in the whole world who is struggling with this demogorgonish monster.

What you will wake up one day to see, and never mind how many dawns pass over your sleepy skull till you do see it, is that if you praise your friends and relations, as, from your knowledge of what you've gone through yourself, you realize they have a right to be praised, there are some who would call it flattery.

Never you mind if it *is* flattery. Uttering it you will be inspired by the most thrilling sensation you have ever had in all your days—namely the sensation that you and they and all of us are players in the final dream-farce of time and space.

It is the supreme example of pride, vanity and conceit for us to pretend to be " spiritual beings in a spiritual world ". Goethe says that a person quickly *becomes* what you assume him to be if you go far enough with him ; and we are pretty sure if you continue subtly and steadily doing what the world calls " flattering people "—which is the extreme opposite of making them think they are " spiritual beings "—you will find that not only are *they* taking fresh heart but that *you yourself* are taking fresh heart for the common struggle with Life the dragon.

If there has been, and there easily may have been, a wicked little drop of rascally teasing in your flattery of your mates and your fellow-factory-girls, or of your father, or grandfather, or even of your great-grandfather, you need not take it too seriously.

We swear to you, O faithful convertite, you will suddenly be amazed by a startling and wholly unexpected revelation. The final stroke of the highest art of flattery is, of course, to flatter the poor hard-worked overburdened animal *which at bottom we all are*, and to do this without any thought of superiority, one way or the other ; just simply glorying in your secret success at the greatest of all arts and crafts, the art of giving thrilling pleasure to another human being. Well, then, let us now pretend that you have reduced your hurt feelings to the vanishing point, and are now legitimately glorying, in yourself and to yourself, at your success in this subtle art of life as you lie peacefully in bed enjoying that primeval luxury of all northerners, the simple sensation of " feeling nice and warm ".

As the ancient Greeks knew well, there is a subtle wisdom in the mere repetition of a shrewd oracle : and so the " Philosophy of In Spite " hesitates not to repeat once more that sound " logos " of the modern Frenchman : " Hell is simply other people."

But let us pretend that you who have been lying in bed so " nice and warm " and have been permitted by destiny and encouraged by philosophy to enjoy what Aristippus of Cyrene called *monochronos hedone*, " the pleasure of the perfect moment ", are about to be compelled by the unavoidable routine of *anagke*, or " necessity "—prove to yourself that you are a real philosopher. In plain words you now find yourself having breakfast with your family in a room where the sun, at that particular hour, is faintly but unquestionably visible through the mist.

Gallantly you begin practising our philosophy by forcing yourself to enjoy yourself and to plunge into that Aristippian essence of self-indulgent bliss he advocates for you even when you are under the eye of your extremely greedy grandfather.

The craftiest and cleverest argument used by our spiritual-minded antagonists is that, when we desert their dogmas for ours, we are becoming what they always call " materialists ". They have used this word so often in their diatribes that it has come to resemble the habitual terms of abuse with which we have grown familiar in quite different contexts.

But as an example of the grotesque and pathetic way in which our afflicted race beats its fists against the pricks instead of concentrating on its struggle with the Minotaur Life, this term of curious abuse, this word " materialism ", is the most pitiful. For, of course, the actual connotation of this word in the present argument is the extreme opposite of the particular use to which our opponents, in their pride of " spirituality", apply it.

For as we build up in further and further detail our practical " Philosophy of In Spite ", the form and shape and structure, in sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, of this extraordinary *something* we are embracing, this " something " which used to be called " matter ", are found to be more god-like in their terrible mystery and magnetic attraction than any conceivable " spiritual being ".

To talk contemptuously of " matter " calls down upon us

Goethe's great word—" *the name is sound and smoke* ", for, after all, it is the living substance of the only world we and our children are ever likely to know.

Returning, however, to our breakfast with our family, what our " Philosophy of In Spite " suggests is that, even while with jest and gesture among our relatives we are at once flattering them and deliberately making a fool of ourself to please them, we fail not to glance now and again at the window where between two dark chimneys we can look straight into the blurred and misty circle of a yellowish-red sun whose outer rim is streaked with the colour of blood.

Now, listen, my good friend. Have our relatives any inkling of the vast change in us produced by our philosophy as we practise it upon ourselves and them ? We, of course, have got great benefit from the change ; *but have the others noticed it* ? Have they noticed that we are no longer worried and fretted and rendered peevish by the family's lack of interest in us and lack of respect for us and lack of admiration for us ?

This lack of admiration still goes on. But do they notice the change in our reception of it ? Has our crafty and subtle flattery of each one of them made them so well pleased with themselves that they have no thought left to waste on any change in us ? Do they still take us so entirely for granted that they still think no more highly of us than we think of them ?

Or do they perhaps just faintly wonder why we are so extra cheerful this morning and put it down in their minds to the fact that we are anticipating some agreeable event about which we have been secretive ?

But let us suppose that one of our relatives at this ordinary domestic meal is himself or herself the half-converted soul who is slowly becoming one of us ; or let us go further and pretend that one of them, along with ourself—and it certainly would be amusing if it turned out to be the oldest of all of us ; yes, actually the grandad of our cantankerous family—has been all the time occupied with working out in all these careful realistic details, so forgotten by most philosophical systematizers, this

important method of ours for getting rid of the pride, vanity and conceit that are such devilish spoil-sports and destroyers of that delicious contemplative enjoyment of pure sensation at which we aim.

It certainly would be amusing if our silent old grandad had been helping our little band of neurotic eccentrics in formulating the "Philosophy of In Spite". But why not? If our philosophy is to be really effective, it must include among its experimental progenitors both the very old and the very young.

Is the heavy conceit of the middle-aged to carry it off and lay down the laws for our wrestling with Life? Come on then. Let us assume that Grandad *is* one of our backroom boys who are now revealing a method by which we can embrace and worship the *matter* of which the cosmos is composed by reducing the pride-element in our consciousness to a minimum.

Well then! Now that the first appearance of the sun, as we eat our breakfast, is like a gamboge-yellow port-hole in the iron-grey side of a vast tellurian liner, whereof those two indigo-dark chimneystacks are the twin funnels, and which is now, through the rent body of the mist, driving forward into unknown seas, let us, I say, assume, that on this ordinary morning our grandad's "ego" *has* learnt the trick of reducing its personal importance as an individual of weight and dignity; though we may also be allowed to assume for our present purpose that the old gentleman has never been anything more formidable than a trusted workman in a workshop, where they make, let us say, telescopes and microscopes and all those other instruments with polished lenses such as the eccentric friend of the still "undrowned" Walter in *Dombey and Son* used to keep on sale.

But whoever "we" are, and whoever "you" are, we are all poor human mammals of this weird terraqueous globe who are taught to regard ourselves as "spiritual beings", half angels and half devils, just because we see a few fathoms deeper into Nature than our scaly and feathery cousins who break into life from egg-shells!

But whether it is Grandad, or young Tom, or Dad, or Mummy, or Sister Bess, whose interior "self" or "ego" or inmost "I" is now practising its "Philosophy of In Spite", what it is doing is very simple. It is forcing itself to enjoy itself unbothered by the "hell" of other people's admiration, suspicion, envy, contempt, attraction, repulsion.

To attain this enjoyment, which it holds with Aristippus of Cyrene to be the end and purpose of all life, it snatches a leaf, several "leaves", from the psychological secrets of the Christian saints, in order to appropriate them to its own heathen purpose.

We shall be indeed extremely stupid pachyderms if we fancy in our rationalistic conceit that our race can afford to waste all the subtle psychic and super-psychic experiences of centuries of Christian experiment with the human heart and nerves and feelings. And one of the rarest and most subtly winnowed of these experiences is unquestionably to be found in the Christian *art of humility*.

The "Philosophy of In Spite" should indeed, I think, endeavour to carry the idea of humility, as practised by the Christian saints, a little further still. And there is scope for its doing so in the fact that, while what we might call "the humility of the saints" is to be rewarded by a future life after death, the humility we are advocating is its own reward, in that it enables *the conscious life of man*, which is the most complicated point yet reached by Nature as she shakes the dice of chance and plays her lonely card-game with the tarot-cards of Necessity, to make it possible for a human creature really and truly to enjoy itself.

The achievement of this enjoyment is reached by the annihilation of all that the "self" carries with it of natural pride and conceit, and by the annihilation of all that it has gathered together from outside by means of which it has quickened itself in its grandiose culture.

What, therefore, has this reduced ego got left? Absolutely nothing except the undiluted power of observing, recording,

and remembering the impressions presented to it. What, in fact, the essential self in you has now done is to turn itself into the only kind of sensitive plate by which the whole universe can record its impression of itself.

It does not matter whether you with your senses and your feelings render back a *correct* reflection of the cosmos. That is not the point. What we want for the purpose of enjoyment is not a correct reflection but just a reflection.

Our ego is an indiscriminate cosmos-enjoyer. It embraces and ravishes and devours any sort of universe. In the matter of universes it doesn't pick and choose or bother whether the shapes and colours it beholds are what our experts call " objective " or " subjective ", " absolute " or " relative ". It's enough for our humiliated self, for our purged, winnowed, stripped, and *reduced-to-pure-perception self*, if it can embrace, swallow and enjoy.

Come then ! Let us read Walt Whitman together : " Melange, my own, the seen and the unseen, mysterious ocean where the streams empty ". Something of this kind, only with infinite variations according to the particular situation, we are enjoying now, as we munch our bread with as much butter as can be allowed and sip our tea and josh our relatives, or flatter them with a flattery like a " melange " of Walt Whitman and Charlie Chaplin.

Our humiliated and whittled-down and light-travelling " ego ", unburdened by any conceited preconception about spiritual beings in spiritual worlds or by any wish to appear grand to itself or to anyone else, can now enjoy the sensation of chewing the cud of a swallowed universe ; while in the mill-wheel iteration and reiteration of its mastication, past, present, and future can meet and can be lost like ripples at high tide.

Of course in the imaginary family we have conjured up it isn't very likely that the eldest of them should be one who is wondering whether to practise or not the " Philosophy of In Spite ". As a matter of fact in this particular case it would

probably be the young lady upon whose mind we have made an impression rather than either of her parents or her brothers. Well, let us accept the view that it is the girl whose consciousness of enjoyment in this random tenement and under these conditions is at present occupied in absorbing quite tolerable bread-and-butter and exceptionally well-made tea, and in " melanging " these delights—if we may borrow the word from Whitman who perhaps followed Buffon in its use, and even make a verb of it, as we gather from Littré was done by Voltaire—" melanging ", say, these two delights with that yellow sun-circle between those dark chimneys !

But play this " melanging " game of mixing various levels of enjoyment as artfully as she may, anyone who knows anything of a young girl's worries will agree with us that our little sister will have to make more than one effort of mind and will before these troubles and difficulties of school-life are obliterated in this golden " melange " of breakfast and sunrise.

And everybody, every man and every woman, has an inner life of worry as well as an inner life of enjoyment. But it is our grand philosophic method to work out a certain mental conjuring trick by which our inner sanctuary of enjoyment can be sealed off from the other.

And we must be cat-like or dog-like or even mouse-like enough to preserve this hiding-place in our soul undiscovered ; and if we cannot do this like an animal we must do it like a mediaeval saint. Yes, if *you*, my little sister, are to close your mind to your school-worries, you really must find some secret talisman of magic humility that can cover you with an invisible cloak more subtle than the skin of the softest mouse.

In spite of all the honour that we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " are bound by decent politeness to offer to the famous psychiatrists for their psychoanalytical palliations of our erotic vices as against all the puritanical conventions of society, it is essential to receive these palliatives with much sceptical caution.

Take, for example, the expression " inferiority complex ".

How hard we ought to struggle to acquire the profound wisdom of possessing this " inferiority complex " ! The worst of it is we all have at heart its extreme opposite, a blind, wicked, cruel, stupid, silly, comical, ridiculous, pompous, priggish, contemptible, crazy " superiority complex ".

The truth is, the sooner we learn to flee away instinctively from the faintest tendency in ourselves to be hermits, or saints, or dedicated persons, or persons looked up to because of our superior manner of life, the sooner, I say, we learn to flee from these things the better for the sanity and profundity of our philosophy !

To have so fine a sense of moral values that we can't live as ordinary people do, but must eat different things, wear different things and do different things, is to try to dig the earth away from under our own feet. To feel the earth under our feet and infinite space above our head is the only way of keeping sane. In many things the poetry of Homer can be of enormous moral help to us. But this great poet's mania for *kudos* or " glory ", as if all the world were Wimbledon, becomes too thick.

Poetry in itself never betrays us, but the poets who write it do. The way some of the greatest of them, all down the ages, strained and yearned and pined and ached for fame has something tragic and pathetic in it. But the desire to be a great saint is more dangerous than the desire to be a great poet. The pride of spiritual superiority is more dangerous than any other pride. The pride of blood, the pride of taste, the pride of wealth, the pride of intellect are none of them as blighting and withering to the enjoyment of life as is this accursed sense of spiritual superiority.

The indescribable sensation of peace that comes with the enjoyment of fate and chance, this abysmal peace at the heart of tumult concerning which Walt Whitman wrote all his poetry, is wholly destroyed, though our crafty preachers and prayer-mongers and even a few wily old rascals among " holy men " hide this from us, by any feeling of superiority. This

damned superiority simply blights our enjoyment of fate and chance; for if you think of yourself as spiritually superior, how can you possibly go through the process of reducing your ego to that negation of weight which is the only way by which the merging of yourself in the cosmos and in the magic flow of all that happens to you can be achieved?

This process in which you embrace the present moment of time with its accompanying presentation of all the forms and colours and elements and living creatures that surround you at that particular point in space, and not only embrace it all but force yourself, however difficult this may be, to enjoy it all—this process, I say, can only *work* when the weight of what our conscious self is carrying, and whereof it is compounded, is reduced to a minimum! It must also be insisted that the plenitude of what we embrace at this happy moment need not of necessity be extended so very far.

It would indeed perhaps be more proper and more in harmony with the creative magic of our present humility, if we ceased to introduce these grandiose terms "cosmos" and "universe", and ceased to attempt to imagine their boundless gulfs as the inevitable background of the details we are contemplating at this second.

It would be really too much if, after bringing ourselves to the point of reducing our self-luggage to the smallest limit of attenuation, we began boasting grandly about being one with the cosmos, and commenced exalting ourselves, like a tadpole the wrong way round, with the cosmos for its tail, and with our individual self for its head.

And really for our purpose, that is to say for the purpose of the "Philosophy of In Spite", the forms and colours of what confronts us at this moment are completely sufficient. By the head of our mother, this foreground is mysterious enough without going an inch further! In fact by gradual degrees our little band of "In Spite" crusaders is awakening to the possibility of an extremely exciting idea; namely that out of any foreground in the world, however walled in, or banked

up, all possible universes can be created and all possible infinities can be plunged into !

What we are aiming at in our " In Spite " campaign is to combine something of the exciting "aura " emanating for unscholarly and unacademic people like ourselves from the word Epicurean and the word Stoic with the particular emotional atmosphere associated with more metaphysical systems of philosophy, and then to bring *our* unscholarly, unacademic conclusions to bear on ordinary life. It is with the wild idea of really trying to think out a practical philosophy of our own such as *can* be made applicable to ordinary human life that we are now formulating the various mental, emotional, and aesthetic tricks by which we can wrestle with life and grow less miserable as month follows month and year year.

The only great " system " of philosophy that seems to be able to offer us, sometimes even by a mere physical contact with the volume containing it, a magic to help us in the actual contacts and crises of life is the " Ethics of Spinoza " of which Goethe made such deep and inscrutable use.

Well, let it be in this practical spirit—the spirit, let us be bold enough to say, of Spinoza's influence over Goethe—that we assume we are now, either as a young man or a young woman, working in an office in a big city and at a job which by this time has become so familiar that it can be performed almost automatically, and for this very reason frequently strikes us, whether we are male or female, as deplorably dull and uninteresting.

Well, the chief business of philosophy is to deal with the dull and the uninteresting ; and it would certainly be a queer thing to have as our philosophy of life a system that refused to touch life at any point at all. What some condemn as " escapism " ought to be the main purpose of all our lives ; for the best " escapism " is expressed in that deepest of all sayings : " In the destructive element immerse ! " and the shortest and the only final way of escaping our chief enemy is to eat him.

At this point we, with our " Philosophy of In Spite ", are

in our familiar office. We have just returned, let us pretend, from a cup of tea or of Nescafé in the basement of the building, and are feeling in the mood to practise a little of what we've just been reading as we add " logos " to " logos " in our " Philosophy of In Spite ". In accordance, therefore, with this innocent and harmless though perhaps rather naïve intention, let us suppose we set ourselves to observe things in this office of ours with the sort of observation that has no weight of personality in it, and no moral, or aesthetic, or religious, or ideal intention behind it, but is as near to absolutely pure observation—say to the naked state of a conscious self confronting one particular foreground of an unfathomable and chaotic world—as it is possible to attain.

Let us observe the chairs, desks, walls, carpets, the filing-cases, the book-cases, and the particular chair with its particular tilt in which our boss is now so substantially fixed. And above all let us observe the window with its special square of sky across which to-day the wind is driving an extraordinary herd of animal-shaped clouds, some like camels, some like polar bears, some like reindeer, some like moose and mammoths and walruses and seals, and some like whales and dolphins.

And you observe the chair on which your employer is seated, and you wonder whether there can possibly be any truth in all the fairy-tales that endow such inanimates with varying degrees of consciousness. And you observe the particular kind of forehead possessed by your boss, whose eyes, after all, are kindly and even friendly, and yet you know, none better than you, what rascality and pompous skullduggery and scallywag roguery exists in some cell of that brain along with the kindly friendliness that unmistakably does dart forth from the man's eyes.

And what does our " Philosophy of In Spite " recommend us to do with our free mind in the brief interval before, with our imprisoned hand and pen and typewriter and paper, we mechanically get on with our work ? Well, it does *not* recommend us to think how superior we are to our fellow-workers,

or how much more useful to the boss than any of them we could be if we had the chance.

Nor does it recommend us to think how much more of an honest fellow we would be than the boss if we occupied that chair with the polished arms. The " Philosophy of In Spite " doesn't even encourage us to imagine the boss's chair suddenly possessed by an imp of devilish mischief and rising up from under him and throwing him to the ground and dancing round him, *tippity-tap, tippity-tap*, on one straight wooden leg. What it does tell us to do with our consciousness when we have purged it of all its grand ideas about its being more aesthetic and more cosmic than the boss, and when we have made it realize how much wiser and more human it is to be comic rather than cosmic, is simply this. And at this point we will, if you will let us do so, O almost converted one, address you in person and implore you to lose yourself in those " long long thoughts " full of the mysterious energy of that " wishful thinking ", which the experts love to attack, but which we hold creates the future. And if you have finished your work, but cannot go to get on your things till the clock strikes, our philosophy implores you to prepare every pulse of fighting receptivity you can call into action to enjoy with delight, rather than suffer with misery, the wet pavements and vacant lots between this building and the bus for home.

But you are free now ; and as, on your way to the street, you pass that gaping crack in the top step leading down to the basement which has so often made you think of a similar crack in one of the steps leading to your dentist, two opposite tastes, the horrid taste of disinfectant and the delicious taste of Nescafé, mingle at that point and make you go through a familiar but disturbing moment.

Now we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " ask you frankly to tell us if you know of any other " habit " or " drive " or "dynamic direction", offered to you under the name of "philosophy", that makes itself responsible for our attitude to such ordinary and everyday feelings ? If not, how can the

conclusion be avoided that what hitherto has been called "philosophy" is one thing, and the art of handling *real life* quite another thing?

Here we have the whole situation. Even those great opposed and yet complementary habits of thought in the Roman times, the Epicurean way of life and the Stoic way of life, though more realistic than our modern metaphysical systems and far more so than Platonism or Neo-Platonism, are not close enough to the passing stream of things or the details of everyday existence. All the great systems of belief, where the supernatural enters and where the miraculous is taken for granted, gather up into their doctrinal, mystical, and sacramental bosoms every smallest detail of our experience of ordinary life. Their very traditions, chock-full of homely customs and historic observances, and crowded with totems and taboos of every sort, have already grown "thick and slab" in "the dark backward and abysm of time" with all the mandragoras and nepenthes adapted to the familiar occasions and crises of human weakness into which we poor victims of the Minotaur Life have fallen for uncounted generations.

"Come to our bosom, little man! Come to our bosom, little woman! Here are hands stretched out to you, my precious lad, my darling lassie! Here are mighty breasts upon which you can cast your smallest care—and not only for *this* life either!" Well—there it is. If you want to believe, you *can* believe—and the whole thing is settled and the burden lifted from your back.

Settled, is it? No, no, Monsieur le Curé! No, no, Inspired Preacher of the Revival! No, no, Father Zosima of the Holiest of Monastic Sanctuaries! No, no, Great Guru from India! No, no, Mighty Descendant of the Prophet from Mecca!

Our philosophy may be a poor thing; but it is our own. We belong to that vast anonymous crowd to whom Homer, when he wants to quote their humble and simple and downright words, refers as *tis*—as a "somebody"—any old bystander at the show, any Jack Sprat or Dolly Titmouse in the

crowd. We belong to the nameless ones who are not kept awake by thinking of the atom-bomb, but who, " in smoky cribs and upon uneasy pallets stretching them, are hush'd with buzzing night-flies to their slumber ". No, no ! The great supernatural, theological, metaphysical, miraculous beliefs, old and sacred and experienced as they are, ask too much of us.

We refuse to give up our poetical, our humorous, and indeed our Shakespearean right to remain uncommitted to anything but our struggle to deal in our own way with the blessedness and damnableness of this particular dimension of *mysterious matter*, which is the world in which we live.

And we intend to continue forcing ourselves to enjoy ourselves, worried as little as possible by pride, vanity, and conceit, and helped out by the writings of such unspiritual comforters as Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Charles Dickens.

For we need not be possessed of any unusual will-power, or of any unusual conscience, or of any unusual goodness. All we have got to do in our weakness, in our feebleness, in our nervousness, in our restless imagination, is to keep secret and hidden in the depths of our nature an absolute refusal to be " squared " by life and a resolve to remain wrestlers with life and fighters against life until the last. Because of our weakness life may make us its slaves. But though with our hands and feet and heads and tongues we derive a mischievous pleasure from flattering our master, *anagke*, or " Necessity ", in our hearts, below all our submissive gestures, we shall go on defying it, and forcing ourselves to enjoy our defiance of it, until the end ; so that, although with the help of its powerful ally death it succeeds in annihilating us, it never succeeds in overcoming us.

In Spite of

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

The " Philosophy of In Spite " is an attempt in these confusing days to satisfy a natural desire of which a good many of us have recently become conscious, namely a desire to formulate and accentuate, even if it is only in our minds and never articulated in words or written down in intelligible sentences, *some self-developed system of life* which we have come more or less deliberately to mould into a method simple enough to become a habit.

In roughly formulating the general principles on which the " Philosophy of In Spite " has come to be based, our little company of friends fully recognize that every other creature in the world, whether male or female, whether old or young—and we purposely say " creature " because we would like to lay special stress on our close affiliation with what are sometimes spoken of as the " lower animals "—yes, that every other creature in the world possesses a " habit " or a " way " of life in certain essentials parallel with ours ; and it is this link with the other living creatures of the earth that is such a natural help to us in formulating our own method in the life-dance.

Our main idea, in fact, is really and truly to follow Nature's order of things and to obey those rules of seemliness and naturalness and considerate decency towards others which the old Greeks symbolized in the person of the goddess Themis,

while in ourselves we " pull ourselves together ", as we say, or " crouch " (*aleis* is the Homeric word for it, which really means " crouch to spring "), with the whole of our philosophy gathered right round us—oh no, more than tight " round " us, tight *to* us, like a second skin—to take the brunt of the next wild wave of life's foaming and flowing tide.

Our chief principle is the *physical recognition*, with every sense and every supersense and sub-sense we can muster up, of the material things immediately around us, the indoor things if we're indoors and the out-of-door things if we are out-of-doors, and, following upon this, a recognition of both our customary indoor background and our customary out-of-door background brought mentally into close association. Then, starting from these forms and colours and lights and shades, these substances hard and soft, including the persons of our life, ugly or pretty, or weird or queer as it happens—to none of which, whether things or people, we need feel a grain, or a drop, or a jot, or a tittle of this tricky and mystical emotion that certain types of people love to bully us with, under the questionable name of " love ", but to which we must behave decently and act kindly—we must force our consciousness, or awareness, or whatever you like to call it, from the surface of this planet into outer space with all its visible or invisible constellations and its visible or invisible sun and moon. Into these forms and colours, into these substances and elements, we have got to plunge if we want to experience the greatest thrill possible to a man or a woman, to a boy or a girl.

And then, having plunged, we must follow the natural urge of our sex and as women or girls give ourselves up to the embrace of all these things, not necessarily fused together into any oneness, even if we have imagination enough to think of Nature as one gigantic male creature desperately in love with us, and, as men or boys, ourselves embrace all these things, in their separate identities, as mysterious nymph-like beings, rather than try to fuse them together into the oneness of a single feminine creature, a deliciously-yielding, cosmogonic bride.

What we've got to learn, don't you see, is the grand trick of what has come to be called " cosmic emotion ", a thing a lot simpler and nearer, and a lot nicer too, than it sounds. The persons around us, who no doubt—for such is their invariable custom—think themselves greatly superior to us, must be relegated in this process of " cosmic emotion " to so much human flesh and blood, dressed as time and place and money and occasion and custom and personal choice happens to dictate at the moment, but beautifully and easily reducible to figures in the immediate earth-picture, and scarcely more intrusive upon your secret soul than figures in a picture by the elder Breughel might be as you give yourself up to them in a gallery.

But aye, dearest of wavering convertites, we must inform you that at our last general meeting of Simple Simons we decided that it would be a great help to hesitating neophytes like yourself if we invented a special term—yes, a philosophical-sounding technical-sounding term—for this plunging into the apparent " matter " of the cosmos or into the appearance of such " matter ", whether indoors or out-of-doors, as it superficially presents itself to our attention.

What we concluded was—and you can see from this what innocents we are, for, if in the world of intellectual religious discussion anything has come to be accepted as basic, it is the knowledge that to the orthodox nothing is more dangerous than pantheism or the worship of everything, with nothing left outside, as one divine being—that we must invent a word that suggested something of the delicious abandonment so full of sensuous satisfaction that Goethe expressed so eloquently in portions of *Faust* and yet a word that stopped short of treating " matter ", or the chemistry of the planetary elements, as if it were divine.

The word we invented for this purpose is the queer-sounding verb to " cosmogonize ". You must put the accent—and forgive the homely sound—upon the syllable " mog " and *not* on the " on " ; nor must this " on " be pronounced like " tone ".

What our " Philosophy of In Spite " teaches us to do, then, is to " cosmogonize ", and we define this cosmogonizing as the enjoyment of an abandoned thrill to be got out of embracing, or being embraced by, what you might call the " stuff " of the cosmos, in the sense that makes Prospero sigh : " We are such stuff as dreams are made on."

Where our " Philosophy of In Spite " is really different from all other philosophies, whether ancient or modern, is in its insistence upon a very special and entirely peculiar kind of sensuous feeling for these planetary surroundings and for their atmospheric auras, which have so much of "personality" in them, though not of human personality.

The deepest proof we can offer here of the power and attraction of the feeling evoked by this " cosmogonizing " of ours amid the " stuff " of Nature's dreams is the fact that philosophers of " In Spite " regard any sort of belief in a life after death as something as much to be fled away from as we regard the insinuating ripples of the great subtle sea of supernatural religion. Our feeling is that the whole history-old quarrel between orthodoxy and heresy, as well as the whole subject of religion, are deeply connected with human pride, vanity, and conceit.

In our practice of the desperate enjoyment of " cosmogonizing " amid the stuff of Nature's elemental dreams, it is our habit to reduce the personal and egoistic element in human consciousness to such a minimum that it is only as if there were always occurring at certain points in space and time sensations of such exquisite enjoyment that the personality of the creature, and any proud belief of the creature that its soul could survive the death of its body, become like vanished ripples when the wind has left the surface of the water.

To our philosophy life is a dangerous bridegroom or a fatal bride, and the art of life from beginning to end is the art of war. The closer we live in harmony with Nature, the closer grows our link with the other children of Nature who are fighting and suffering even as we are fighting and suffering. It is this

that encourages us to lay special stress on some of those primitive responses of the particular *mind-body* whereof our identity is composed, such as we share with animals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects, and even, though in a less degree, with plants and trees.

And it must be remembered that, if we have any decent and humorous humility in the presence of the most primitive of these fellow-mortals, we have no right to assume that we are the only species where each individual has his or her private and peculiar idiosyncrasies of reaction to life. " When we enter life we enter war " ; and this applies to men and beasts and birds and fish and insects and plants alike.

And what our " Philosophy of In Spite " has to emphasize and insist upon at this moment is the enjoyment we can get—whether we are successful or not in our application of our discoveries—from the mere formulation of certain particular habits in our mind-and-body struggle with existence.

And what would *you* say was the most important of all the habits we have to aim at acquiring if we are to escape this confused quarrel, that nothing seems able to bring to an end, between one form of belief and another ?

We say at once, the habit of humility. Yes, we declare emphatically and oracularly that we place, as Goethe did, according to Professor Seeley, a thin film of white light under every theory we hold, so that it cannot, even to ourselves, look like anything final, conclusive, or absolute, or appear as the sort of thing for whose " truth " we would be prepared to quarrel fiercely. "*A thin film of white light beneath*" every one of our opinions would make clear what our opinions were worth, valuable, certainly, as one play of form and colour among others, *but that is all.* As Dickens makes one restaurant-waiter say of another : " *The claim of this slave is nil !* "

Our topic in this chapter is undoubtedly, with the possible exception of sex and class, the most difficult with which we have to deal. It is, in fact, the problem of religion ; and what makes this so particularly difficult is that it is mingled in an intricate and subtle manner with almost all our individual reactions to life.

The truth is that when it comes to religion, whether the attitude we are struggling to assume is a flexible and elastic one, or a clear-cut and tough-grained one, it will inevitably risk being bent and bruised and distorted in the battle, and we shall be lucky if we can make it retain at least the general outlines of the form and shape we have been so persistently trying to create for it.

And what *is* that form and shape? What, in plain words, is the general purpose, intention, and outline of what the "Philosophy of In Spite" is struggling to create, or, to put it in a less grandiose manner, is struggling to formulate and visualize, in regard to this problem of religion?

Well, we will answer, as quickly and clearly as we can. Let us assume that there are four main attitudes towards religion: the orthodox one, the heretical one, the agnostic one, and the atheist one. We may also assume, it seems to me, that the world's greatest writers—that is to say Aristophanes, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Goethe—retain on the whole an agnostic attitude, and while Dante and Milton support the orthodox Catholic and the orthodox Protestant attitude, Walt Whitman and Dostoievsky the heretical one, and Nietzsche the atheist one, our purely aesthetic writers like Walter Pater enjoy them all as works of art and are committed to none of them.

And now we must hasten to announce to you the reassuring news—for no doubt you are weary of all these five familiar avenues through the thick wood—that the "Philosophy of In Spite" has discovered a sixth way of dealing with religion, a way that is neither agnostic like Shakespeare's, nor orthodox like Dante's, nor heretical like Dostoievsky's or Whitman's, nor atheistic like Nietzsche's, nor aesthetic and critical like Pater's. It simply refuses to think about the subject at all!

In plain words, it regards religion as something dangerous, like a sheepfold built above a volcano, to which, if you want to live wisely and happily, it is best to give a wide berth.

But the "Philosophy of In Spite" never announces pontifically to its disciples: "There is no God; no fiend with names

divine made us to torture us : if we must pine it is to satiate no Being's gall ", as the poet says in " The City of Dreadful Night ". It never declares with absolute Shakespearean agnosticism : " We are such stuff as dreams are made on ; and our little life is rounded with a sleep." It refuses to discuss the truth or the falseness of Dante's assumptions and Milton's prejudices. It refuses to mix its own delicately intoxicating draught of Lethe.

Its attitude to religion resembles the attitude of many active and practical persons towards what is called " Spiritualism ". It contains an instinctive dread of being led into contact with a whole dimension of strange, unruly, disorderly forces that can be very dangerous to our natural peace of mind and to our normal human activities.

What the " Philosophy of In Spite " has, in fact, come to recognize is that the natural test as to the value of a thing in our personal life is not the pragmatic one, " Does it work ? ", but " *Does it increase, or does it diminish* our enjoyment of life ? "

It is undeniable that endless people have found, and doubtless will find again, ecstatic pleasure from religion. The fact also remains that in many cases it has caused deep and horrible suffering. We make, therefore, no excuse for the fact that the attitude of our " Philosophy of In Spite " to religion is the reverse of a subtle or a complicated one. As human beings we inherit far too many subtle, complicated, involved and intricate responses to this extraordinary phenomenon.

Our feeling is that we must avoid these subtle responses like temptations and only hope that our naïve and pathetic relatives in the lower orders of creation are immune to them. Our way, in fact, is simply, bluntly, starkly, stoically, cheerfully, to have " no truck ", as the saying is, with these things ; and if some formidable atheist curses us for cowardice in the face of the enemy, the disciples of the " Philosophy of In Spite " had better retort that, since the whole topic, whatever line, for or against, you are inclined to take, is dangerous as the plague, we

see no reason in such foolhardiness. Impiety is dangerous. Sanctity is dangerous.

Better not give either of these dangerous extremes a chance of hurting us! Never mind whether we are honouring a madness that is fatally catching by running away from it. Is it an honour to the plague to avoid it, or to a deadly fever to get out of its way, or to a volcano to flee from its scoriac streams? Remember always that we have to strip from our inmost being all these fanatical and categorical notions that we've *got* to pursue truth and expose lies. We've "got" to do nothing of the kind! We've got to avoid the plague and enjoy our life.

If once you start meddling with this thing you'll find it hard to escape. All the meanest, all the most vicious, all the proudest, vainest and most conceited impulses we possess, all the complicated cruelties, morbidities, phobias and manias that dog our darkest moments, come crowding into our heads and quivering along our nerves the moment we begin attacking religion or defending religion! There is only one thing to do, however much the distinguished atheist and the subtle Jesuits curse us for our depraved indifference. And that is *to let it go*! Happy is the man who knows not the difference between orthodoxy and heresy!

The whole purpose of our "Philosophy of In Spite" is a practical one—to help us to enjoy life more than we do at present. We are, of course, inventing it as we go along and as we struggle to make it more elastic and workable. We are also endeavouring to turn it into a series of habits, habits which it would be unwise to carry to the extent of making them entirely automatic; for just as it is essential to form habits and to live by them fairly closely, so it is essential to be free to treat our habits *as* habits, and not as "categorical imperatives".

But if, in accordance with our "Philosophy of In Spite", we avoid the whole subject of religion, whether in its orthodox form as with Dante, or in its heretical form as with Walt Whitman and Dostoievsky, or in its atheistic form as with

Neitzsche, or in its agnostic form as with Shakespeare, will there not be a yawning gulf left in the natural field and scope of our common experience? Most certainly there will be! Indeed it is to make sure that the average sensitive person like you and me recognizes fully what a gulf is left in our whole imaginative background when we turn away from religion that our religious writers and even a certain number of our serious thinkers use, just as St. Paul did, and just as Dante did, and just as General Booth and Cardinal Newman did, all the imaginative power they possess to scare us back into the fold.

But come! We have freely confessed to this bare and bleeding attrition. We have admitted that the world has lost a certain traditional atmosphere, an obscure mist of the marvellous. We really do feel a bit lost, like nursery kids without their nanny, exactly as our religious teachers hoped to make us feel. But what can we do?

Well, this is exactly where the "Philosophy of In Spite" comes in. We can fill the gap. And our grand point is that, in reality and truth, the gap is imaginary! *It is not there.* The whole thing is the subtlest and the deepest *lie* ever perpetrated by the particular mind, of all minds, most deft and adept in such psychic and mystic and conscience-quivering lies, the mind of the medicine-man of the tribe, of the medicine-men of all the tribes of men.

What these profoundly crafty devils have done—I say "devils"; but, as I have hinted, they include some of the most fatally powerful and most tragically poignant of human imaginations—is to mesmerise us sensitive and highly-strung and neurotic fools into the totally false idea that all the magical wonder and haunting mystery, and all the evasive loveliness and heartbreaking sublimity of the human drama with the elements of Nature as a background, that the whole thing, I say, is due to religion, and that, if we gave religion the go-by and organized our life without it, all the poetry of existence would vanish away! *This* is what the "Philosophy of In Spite" declares here and now to be a subtle lie.

What has been done to us has taken a long time to do. It has taken nearly two thousand years. All the *atmospheric feelings* of men, women, and children, as they have gone through the tragic and recurrent ritual of the basic necessities of human life against the background of the wonder and magic of the elements, and all the poetical associations of our racial experience of centuries upon centuries, drawn from the remote past, and linked with the lives of our parents and their parents and *their* parents, have come inevitably to be confused in our minds with religion and with these angry disputes between the orthodox and the heretical in religion.

But in reality these grand aspects of our human life, with their sublime far-stretching horizons, are pure poetry and have absolutely nothing to do with religion, whether orthodox or heretical.

But let us examine more closely the yawning hole that would be left if both orthodoxy and heresy were cut clean out of our life. It would be both objective and subjective. It would be a hole in us who look at life and a hole in the life we look at.

The simple reason why it makes such a hole is that during this enormous period of time the imaginative element in poetry has got itself mixed up with the imaginative element in religion. Well, we must become psychic chemists of devastating insight and use some very powerful separating ingredients in our own minds.

These subtle medicine-men of our race, who have been working upon us for two thousand years, have mixed poetry with orthodoxy, poetry with heresy, poetry with every aspect of the whole of our nervous and mystical life in these dimensions ; and it is now the business of the " Philosophy of In Spite " to *unmix* these cunning and comfortable mixtures ! We must strain through a clean, simple, honest, *heathen* sieve some of these perilous mixtures and hold up to the blessed light of the sun a few of the worst of these age-old deceptions. We must unravel some of the leading threads in this vast, fluctuating, wavering, trailing, atmospheric garment of mist made up

partly of the deepest and truest wavelengths of our nervous feelings, and partly of supernatural interpolations.

With the poetical strands and fibres in this garment of mist our ancestors from the earliest days have dimmed the austerities, enveloped the cruelties, mellowed the atrocities, symbolized the grotesqueries, monumentalized the innocences, of long aeons of human experience.

These medicine-men have taken the silence of the forest and the long monotone of the waves breaking on the shore, and have woven them into the tapestry of the Love and Wrath of Heaven; and we must boldly unweave them and retrieve them; and restore them to their rightful owners, the mysteries of life and Nature and the equal mystery of our human response to these.

Yes, what we are called upon to do—not, as these subtle apologists will hasten to assure you, by the Devil, but by the inscrutable movement of evolution itself: what Matthew Arnold calls " the stream of tendency that makes for righteousness "—is to set to work, after these two thousand years of what we might call the " new supernaturalism ", to disentangle —no easy task—the emotion of *piety*, or what became so in the Middle Ages and has nothing to do with the old Roman *pietas*, from the innumerable *other* emotions of reverence and awe and wonder and admiration which quiver through us, or rise up solemnly in us, or catch us by the throat and render us dumb, in the presence of the magic of Nature and of the overwhelming poignance of the pity and tragedy of human life.

It will be noted that we " In-Spitists " are profoundly lucky in one thing: namely that there is no need for us to disentangle *the emotion of humour* from this veil of the temple into which our high-priests have craftily sewn so much " natural magic " that belongs by immemorial right to our mother the Earth, and not to any Queen of Heaven, for the simple reason that humour is the one thing that they could not incorporate there; thanks be to all the host of the little gods who lived

in the groves and fountains of human experience aeons before the " new supernaturalism " arose, and will live in them aeons after the " new supernaturalism " has melted into the air !

Yes, humour is the one and only thing that in its essential nature cannot betray its genial birth in the human heart, any more than the infant Pantagruel could betray the natural freedom of his spirit by enduring the chains that bound him to his cradle. " As soon as he was unchained they made him sit at table and gave him a rare feast ; and as for his cradle, by one furious blow of his fist that he struck in the centre of it, venting upon it long months of pent-up hatred, he broke it into more than five hundred thousand pieces, affirming in terms absolute and final that he would never under any circumstances come within its clutch again."

As we have been driven to suggest in a great variety of ways, what our cunning and sophisticated apologists are now aiming at is to make the philosophy of any free-thinker outrageously foolish, preposterously narrow-minded and, if this also can possibly be added unto it, portentously heavy and dull. But anything less foolish, anything less narrow-minded, anything less dull than the struggle that, with desperate adventurousness, our " Philosophy of In Spite " is now embarked upon, can hardly be imagined. To liberate our " mind ", or " soul ", or " ego ", or " conscious self "—for it doesn't matter in the least what we call it as long as we know with our brain, and feel with our nerves and our instincts, what we are talking about—from the constant impression, felt momently, hourly, daily, that supernatural beings are watching us, listening to our thoughts, putting their thoughts into us, and even at certain crises deliberately testing our faithfulness to them and to the laws of behaviour which for two thousand years they have been putting into our heads, is an evolutionary transformation, a psychological metempsychosis for highly-strung nerves, like those of our little band, though to most of the confraternity of the hard-boiled it would probably only seem like imploring grown-up people

to stop saying grace before meat or kneeling down by their bed before getting into it.

But we are not working out the life-method of our " Philosophy of In Spite " for the tough ones of this world : though you must not suppose from this remark that we imagine we are supplying our friends with a rival system to existentialism.

The " Philosophy of In Spite " is designed to be a support and comfort to Everyman ; and if it needed a model in what it is aiming at it would find it rather in *Marius the Epicurean* than in Bunyan or Jeremy Taylor.

What, in fact, we are concerned with is that complicated flow of sense-impressions and emotional reactions that pass through us every single day from the moment we wake till the moment we are again asleep ; " the stream ", as it is called, " of consciousness ". Our revolutionary idea is that this stream of consciousness can not only be regulated and interfered with, but can be actually superseded by a totally different " stream ", the essence of whose existence consists in the sensitivity of its elusive substance to what might be called our " re-creative will ".

This " re-creative will " is nothing less than the living energy of the " self " or " soul " within us, when we exert it in the process of *forcing ourselves to enjoy* whatever it may be that our consciousness, like the clear flow of a river, is at the moment reflecting.

What our philosophy is aiming at is indeed something that no system, no drive, no orientation of purpose, has ever attempted, something that even religion, for the special reason that it is so preoccupied with our reaction to other personalities and with theirs to us that it tends to grow blind and deaf to the magic of Nature, has never concentrated on, and what this mysterious " something " in its essence consists of is nothing more nor less than the palpable essence of " matter ", as through its impact upon our senses it is seized upon by " mind ".

But though no outrush of religious thought or feeling has

ever concentrated purely and simply upon the daily stream of sensations which the ego receives from the visible world, the stream is inevitably chequered with religious impressions that have slipped, like dangerously tinted dyes, among the innocuous colours in that bewitching flow. But: " Out with them all ! " must be our edict, even if in the rending and the tearing certain precious, though perhaps morbid, blends and hybrids are lost.

And there arises a very nice point just here ; for it is obvious that a vast amount of imaginative art, not only in memorable and eloquent prose and verse, but in a multitudinous mass of works of art, in painting and sculpture and everything else, in fact the whole world of imaginative art has been the background, side by side with the classical art of Greece and Rome, of our whole aesthetic education ; speaking, of course, of those among us who have been rich enough to have that sort of education at all !

And the subtle point that we, the simple founders of the " Philosophy of In Spite ", are driven by the logic of our situation to emphasize here is that these " rendings and tearings " of ours, as we deal with the rich mass of the whole art-world of Christendom, have a close resemblance to a very curious ritualistic dance—no, we had better call it a metaphysical rather than a ritualistic dance—though we have no wish to bring to your mind, O most receptive, if still a little wavering, of semi-convertites, the antics of those heathen " priests of Baal " who are said to have " cut themselves with knives ". What we actually have to do as we move to and fro—and you must remember that our little band of philosophers includes a granny and grandaddy, as well as a mummy and an ordinary daddy, in addition to a young man and a young girl—is to " rend and tear ", not the images or *eidola* of Europe's response to two thousand years of the religionizing of art as these things are reflected in the stream of our consciousness, but the clinging roots and fibres and tentacles and prehensile filaments and tendrils belonging to our own inner

being, with which until now we have clung to these imaginative works of art, trying to suck, like so many obsessed yet platitudinous vampires, the life-blood out of them.

Yes, the "rending and tearing" of which we speak, and the unhieratic knife, if we put the priests of Baal out of our thoughts, with which we dance our completely new metaphysical dance in this Temple of Art, have to do *not* with these historic works themselves, which we are now enjoying as intensely, more intensely, probably, than they have ever been enjoyed before, but with certain proud, lonely, sensitive, tenacious feelers belonging to our own consciousness, which we must cut down and throw away before some wandering "demon of love" smells them out and fastens its suckers upon them like a vampire in the form of a leech.

Yes, to dance rapidly, dangerously, deftly, dexterously, between the aesthetic paps which are feeding our vital force and these psychic tendrils which must be pruned away lest some demon begin lapping up this "milk of Paradise", is no wild dance of maenads and bacchanals. It is the oldest and most difficult art in human history.

It will now become, perhaps, plainer to our bewildered convertite why it is that such naïve and simple philosophers as we are have already mentioned Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* as a book in line with our ideas. We might also mention the poetry of Matthew Arnold, the art-studies of Berenson, the essays of Remy de Gourmont, as leading us in the same direction: while a book like Len Howard's on the individuality of birds helps us to extend our responses beyond the human race.

This "direction", if we may speak in such a way, simply means the giving ourselves up to such intense enjoyment of these works of art at their face value that, instead of growing plump on their blood in the sense of using them to support our orthodoxy or our heresy, we lose ourselves completely in them, as Len Howard's blackbirds lose themselves in *their* art. Yes, forget ourselves completely, and in rapt trances of

hypnotized humility *become*, as the great artists who made these things became, the forms and colours, the patterns and designs, of these things, and the vital unities into which they are absorbed.

What our simple " Philosophy of In Spite " is, in fact, attempting to do—this philosophy which is neither for the tough of this world nor for the sophisticated expert and yet has the audacity to set itself up as a living rival of existentialism —is to restore to both Nature and art the mysterious magic that, thread by purple thread, halo by golden halo, ripple by silver ripple, has been so completely appropriated by the apologists for supernatural religion that they have given us the impression that what is left—we ought rather to say what *would* be left—when " they ", these cunning appropriators of the magic of life, have folded their tents and have departed, would be a world of spiritless, colourless, comfortless, chemical forces, governed by physical and mathematical laws and with nothing left in it, around it, above it or beneath it which is not subject to causes and effects that can be exhaustively analysed on scientific principles.

Now what our " Philosophy of In Spite " contends is that these crafty apologists for the supernaturalist interpretation of life have given a wholly false picture of the human situation. We hold that there most certainly exists, naturally, inevitably and universally, both in human life and in nature, an element that can never be explained away, *or in any adequate manner explained at all.* This element we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " insist on calling " the poetic ". It can, we are fully aware, be described in other terms and in very much more scientific language; but the word " poetic " strikes us as being more universally human and much less suggestive of special privilege than the word " aesthetic " or " artistic ".

Our idea is that what we have in mind as " the poetic " is something that, like the old songs and ballads, is a tremendous leveller; and though, of course, it offers us its kings and beggar-maids, its knight-at-arms and belles-dames-sans-merci,

its master-saints and its Feast-of-Stephen-Gatherers-of-winter-fuel, the appeal it makes is as much to our childish mania for fairy-tales as to our boy-and-girl adolescent daydreams.

If only—so we tell ourselves—we could substitute the simple poetry of life for all these crafty ecclesiastical cults of the supernatural we should have won the battle; for we should have won back our "thunder", as we might call it, which the cunning pious ones stole from the natural life of men upon earth with its magical background of the elements, swearing falsely, in the tricky jargon of their spiritual law-court, that this poetry of human life could never survive the loss of supernatural religion.

In its true and eternal essence the poetry of life does not depend on the supernatural at all. And it is totally independent of religion. But both these things, the supernatural and religion—whether orthodox or heretical—have been deftly injected by the most artful instruments round the very genitals and into the very womb of our deepest poetical feelings. What we of the "Philosophy of In Spite" must now aim for is an authentic, creative, *driving-force* in full harmony with that mysteriously secret movement in things that we have come to call "evolution". If existentialism "deduces its lineage", as *Burke's Peerage* used to say, from startling theologians and subtle metaphysicians, we, more simple thinkers, must try to associate our "In Spite" ideas with the easily-understood theory of "evolution", a word just at present under a curious cloud.

We have indeed been quite recently conducted into a symposium of our island professors, where the actual living processes of evolution have been discussed, and it has clearly presented itself to our "Philosophy-of-In-Spite" mind that the gulf between ordinary intelligent persons like ourselves, who are struggling to formulate a series of more or less philosophic habits of thought, and all our contemporary specialists in mathematics and biology is so wide to-day that we on our side are confronted by an absolutely mysterious

language of occult symbols, in the presence of which we feel like African blacks confronted by officials of the *Apartheid*, and they on their side must feel like Platonic students in the Athenian Academy stared at, not only by a puzzled and languid crowd of *nouveaux riches* from Rome, but by a much more puzzled, but at the same time much more interested, crowd of extremely plain and rustic students of philosophy from Boeotia.

Of course the whole idea of evolution in ordinary time, and upon this earth as the earth floats in ordinary space, is an idea that theologians are always itching to drown under their millrace, *diipetes*, or " dropt from God ", that flooding void made up entirely of negations which they call "eternity ". But if the theologians make our simple philosophizing a mortal offence and a foolishness before eternity, the scientists make it seem the very babbling of babes.

We have quite recently heard a scientific suggestion at a scientific conference that the modern urge for inventions, especially those connected with the air, has taken the *élan vital* out of our will to grow anything resembling fins, or wings, or scales, or fingers, and driven it in the direction of more and ever more amazing machines !

Hear, therefore, O convertites to our great Pantagruelian quest for a pleasanter life, in what direction the " Philosophy of In Spite " proposes to put its papyraceous shoulder to the rusty wheel of psychic-corporeal evolution. " Let us," groans this forgotten wheel, as it begins to move, " let us turn from these fatal and fanatical furies, flapping their devils' wings between orthodoxy and heresy, and begin, without the help of angel or devil, begetting and conceiving, willing and creating, a new organ of research, a new member of adhesion, an invisible navel-string of absorption, a new biological-psychological telepathic medium."

We shall most certainly prove formidable rivals—queer bunch of Simple Simons from the stick-house though we are—not only to the metaphysical subtlety of existentialism, but to the austere logic of the old and the new positivism, if we can

actually prove ourselves to be the only body of philosophers in the " corpus " or " summa " of whose teaching there actually exists the rules for evolving out of ourselves—out of an ordinary commonplace, practical, pathetically natural human person, young or old, male or female—a completely new psycho-physical power, which in its day and age may prove just as important to our history as did the first emergence of our earlier ancestors from the sea to the sand or of our later ancestors from the trees to the ground.

It is not without interest to note how intimately, in the case of religion, the tenacious hold upon their believers of both the Roman and the Greek tradition, of both our Church of England and our Protestant Free Churches, is really due to a particular element in the teaching of St. Paul that not only comes near to the *rebirth secret* in the Eleusinian Mysteries, but also comes near to something extremely like a psycho-somatic leap forward in evolution.

But to return to our illustrative commentary upon the " Philosophy of In Spite " ; let us suppose we are walking along a dusty path by the side of the main high-road between Derby and Nottingham. We are about as near the heart of our island as it is possible to be and about as far as it is possible to be from any of those sea-sands and sea-beaches, those rock-pools and salt-marshes, those shell-strewn windrows and gull-swept sand-dunes, where so many of our ancestors began to escape from, or began to return to, the oceans of their far sailings.

The sun is hot. Our shadows are short and thick. The white dust of the month of July sprinkles the grass. Under our feet as we walk are bits of straw, bits of stick, bits of fern, broken snailshells, wisps of sheep's wool, fragments of moss, crumpled dead leaves, and now and again a far-drifted feather from the wing of a harassed bird, or a much-travelled scrap of illegible newspaper from God knows where.

And now as we gossip lightly about the various peoples and races of which we know anything and steadily resist the

temptation to work ourselves up into a deadly fury of hatred for some anti-Christ or some anti-Buddha or some anti-Laotze or some anti-Mahomet or some anti-Moses, and as we force ourselves to turn away from the whole business of religious emotion—for or against—as if the thing were an infectious fever, the terrific question arises once more, with what particular feeling, or more than feeling, can we fill the bleeding hollow in our nerves and imagination that was formerly filled by religion?

And here our philosophy has its answer. What we have got to do is to concentrate on developing the power, a power we already possess to a limited extent, of flinging our consciousness, as if it really *were* that "soul" or "psyche" or "entity" independent of our body, such as it so often *feels itself to be*, into the exterior objects at which we are now glancing so casually. We are looking, as a matter of fact, at this moment of time into a certain patch of tall grasses and yellow hawkweed with which a discarded fragment of coloured cardboard has got itself entangled.

The closer we look at this patch of grass, mixed with those yellow hawkweeds, and with an extraordinarily delicate clambering plant with intricately moulded foliage and tiny whitish flowers, the more sharply we are struck by something startling—we might say more than that, only there's a gap in our available words at that point and the word "miraculous" would be misleading—about the way the plant called *corydalis claviculata* twines itself round a dead segment of tree-root amid those living grasses, and has even included in its embrace this crude fragment of coloured cardboard.

Between the dead root to which the *corydalis claviculata* clings and the dusty grasses overshadowing it grows a badly bitten-into fungus of an unappealing dusky brown; while clinging very closely to the tallest of the grasses is one of those torpedo-shaped, white blobs of foaming liquid which, in that part of the Midlands anyway, and probably in most parts of our island, are known as cuckoo-spit.

Over this little world of wonder at our feet, across which the white dust of the road has drifted, blows a refreshing wind from the north-west, that wind which in " Hiawatha " is called *keewaydin* and is there affectionately styled " the home wind ".

And now there is offered to us by the great goddess Chance, the only deity whose worshippers are, in the wisdom of Nature, liberated from the hateful fever of orthodoxy *versus* heresy and of belief *versus* unbelief, a real opportunity for practising this new creative art which the " Philosophy of In Spite " offers as a substitute for religion.

This substitute of ours—to which through all our fumblings and gropings we so obstinately adhere—contains within itself all those ancient and natural urges to which the evolutionary pressure at work in all living things gives free scope. And how in actual detail does our philosophy advise us to use our will ? Well, it advises us to seize hold of that mysterious entity within us that, when it wants to assert its identity, calls itself " self ", or " ego ", or " I ", and then with a straining effort—and please do not forget it was by this very effort that the Titans rose to defy Zeus, for the word for " straining " is identical with the word " Titan "—try to force this consciousness of ours to leave its own body, which contains not only all the means by which it lives but all the five senses by which it responds to life ; to force it, in fact, to cross a gulf of intervening air, and, having done so, to concentrate intensely upon any particular group of external objects, some of them with, some of them without, rudimentary consciousnesses of their own.

Once having pitched its tent so to speak in the centre of this group of objects, we must struggle, so says our philosophy, either to lose ourselves in these things and be absorbed by them, or to hug them to us and absorb them in ourselves.

And now we come to the chief point in this whole proceeding—and " proceeding " is the proper word for it, for what we are doing is to force our consciousness to " proceed "

or to emanate or to radiate or to extend a certain distance *out of its proper body* while it is still drawing on the senses and on the life of that same body.

A consciousness without a body is simply unthinkable, for such a consciousness, by the very necessity of its being only consciousness, could not exist *at* any particular moment of time or *in* any particular position in space ; and thus we hardly need Kant's *Critique* to make us realize that we cannot have *thought* independently of a *thinker*.

But though we require our body as the reservoir from which to feed our consciousness, there is no reason why we should not have the power—and, mind you, this " we " is that " self ", or " I ", or " ego ", or " entity " possessed by all the living creatures on this terrestrial globe—of projecting our consciousness, from its base, or *point d'appui*, or jumping-off place in our body, till it stretches forth, like a quivering antenna or an elastic psychological navel-string, towards the particular object of its concentration.

We use the expression " elastic navel-string " because we want to emphasize the close connection between our physical body and its human consciousness. But, as a matter of fact, what the " Philosophy of In Spite " would encourage us to start trying to do is to project our consciousness—in this case like a living stream of vibrating magnetism—towards the object that has especially attracted our attention.

We need not bother ourselves just at present with the question as to exactly where in our body and brain is located the centre from which our will gives its commands, and where the will itself, for all we know, may be obeying some obscure planetary pressure from something outside the confusion of our present struggle, outside our insect-identities, outside our fish-identities, outside our bird-and-beast identities, outside even our human identities, something that might even exist, as William James's favourite philosopher Fechner suggested, without being in the least supernatural, in the living identity of the planet itself.

Our philosophy begs us to " read, mark, and inwardly digest " every aspect of this particular group of objects into the midst of which, with a good deal of " Titanic " straining, we have projected ourselves. It is indeed a point of the utmost importance that we should forget ourselves in the forms and colours and atmospheres and auras of the objects of our contemplation.

And when we fling ourselves into this intense yet natural evolutionary game, and plunge our identity so deeply into the objects over which we are hovering that it is almost as if we lost ourselves in them, we find that our " Philosophy of In Spite " enjoys the satisfaction not only of discovering a substitute for this accursed plague of heresy *versus* orthodoxy but also of discovering in this very substitute itself many of those marvels and wonders of poetry such as our religious apologists have seduced us into believing would be lost if religion were lost.

But there can be no doubt that this power of flinging our consciousness—some people would call it our "soul "—into things or persons at a distance, would, if we really got it into working order, be a great evolutionary advance.

But according to our philosophy this advance will work the better in proportion as it liberates the projected consciousness from the weight of personal egotism and pride. The more depersonalized and de-subjectivized our consciousness becomes, and the more it becomes what might be called " pure and undiluted awareness ", the further and faster it will be able to evolve, and the further from its base in our body and brain it will be able to carry its vibration. The first thing to remember, as you struggle and strain to fling your consciousness further, is that its base and the reservoir of its receptivity must always remain lodged in your body. The " you ", in fact, involved in this evolutionary gesture, is your *body's brain* using the mysterious power we call " will " to shoot forth your consciousness towards the object of its attention. But the second thing to remember is also very important; namely that the

less *heavy with self* your consciousness is—in other words the lighter it is travelling—the farther you will be able to force it to move!

When it reaches the object at which it is aimed if the self-consciousness in it has been dissolved into the purer consciousness of direct, unimpeded, unimplicated observation, you will be able to bring to bear upon the object of your contemplation all the resources of your five senses, and you will be able to fix every aspect of the thing upon your memory.

In the case of this particular patch of grass so near this root-stump which has been invaded by the incredibly delicate foliage of the plant called *corydalis*, if only you succeed in keeping your heavily charged self out of your consciousness, the satisfaction you will be able to enjoy by noticing every detail of the way these things have fallen by pure chance into a relation with one another, that was never foreseen by any creative divinity, will be an impressive experience.

Here and now, as we calmly contemplate this patch of grass, we discover that such a peculiar kind of beauty has been given to it by pure chance that an aspect of Nature is revealed which is the more mysteriously significant just because it is so entirely accidental. But since our " Philosophy of In Spite " is, from its conception and creation, a system of theory and practice adapted to ordinary persons who feel a need for a philosophic method in life but certainly are not trained experts in such matters, it seems we would be wise to select a totally different example to illustrate our evolutionary experiment, an example that has to do with something more simply human than any revelation of a special sort of beauty revealed by chance.

Let us, therefore, convey ourselves through the air with appropriate speed to the familiar Dorset headland known as the White Nose, and from this headland let us fly across Weymouth Bay till we reach, on the further side of the harbour-mouth, the fortified promontory locally known as the Nothe, which might easily be regarded as a feminine counterpart to the more formidable male organ we have just left.

But let us advance yet further and follow the much-frequented stretch of low-lying cliffs that lead to the picturesque ruin known as Sandsfoot Castle. At this spot let us look round a little until we've found some small elevation, whether a grassy slope or an embattled ridge, from which it is possible to visualize clearly, away to the west and about mid-distance between our present vantage-ground and the long line of Chesil Beach banked up against the Atlantic, the white classical-looking and Italy-suggesting roadway between the parish church of Wyke Regis and a certain prominent white gate close to an unassuming bridge over an inlet of salt water between that white road and the dark ridge of Chesil Beach.

Our observation-post decided upon, the next thing we must do in preparation for our telepathic experiment is to invent some kind of romantic plot as if for—shall we say—a novel by Thomas Hardy. It must be a changeable plot, however, because it is essential to adapt it to an imaginary protagonist of either sex and to a person who may be old or may be young.

The best way, it seems to us now, would be to pretend that there is a family living near Wyke Regis churchyard, any single member of which can easily be imagined taking at this particular time of day a Hardyesque stroll, with a heart full of suppressed feelings, from this grey churchyard to this solitary white gate. It therefore behoves one of our group of simple people who are slowly building up the " Philosophy of In Spite " to imagine himself or herself following every step of this solitary figure through the twilight between the churchyard and the white gate.

Whoever it is who undertakes this quest must imagine himself anxious above all things to catch a clear glimpse of the lonely pedestrian's face. It is indeed in this medium-like art of ours, whereby our little band of extremely naïve and simple persons of both sexes and of every period of human life are always setting out afresh to " imagine themselves " in this or that ordinary yet memorable situation, that we feel we ought to be able, as our convertites increase in numbers and let us

hope in intelligence, to hoist our flag on at least one little island in the tossing sea of unphilosophic confusion.

But perhaps it would be wiser in this particular instance to allow our experiment to be made by one of our convertites—if you will permit us to use the Shakespearean term yet once again—rather than by one of ourselves.

And how is this inspired convert of ours to make this momentous experiment? Well, we have decided that what is required is a clear sight of the face of a human figure in the twilight against the background of Chesil Beach. Our pursuer or tracker-down has no fieldglass. All depends on his own Red-Indian-like skill. Or does it? Could we not make it depend on the astonishing success of a real evolutionary fresh start? *This* we shall have to think out.

Meanwhile you must not forget of what kind of people our little band of evolutionary philosophers is composed. We have old people and young people among us. We have grandfathers and grandmothers as well as ordinary parents, and we have young men and maidens as well as men and women in the prime of life.

And now comes the real "rub", as the poet says, of the whole business. Whoever it may be among the converts to our "down-to-bedrock" practical philosophy who at this moment is tracking this person between Wyke Regis and Chesil Beach, we must remember that we have no right to endow him with any unusual power of will. He will have to strain like a Titan; but the Titans had to "strain" just because, like ourselves, they lacked the will and the supernatural power of the divine Olympians. It is likely enough that to establish an important evolutionary change of this sort, which is partly psychological and partly physical, unusual and exceptional "straining", just because of human feebleness, will have to be used for many generations along the same lines; but some creature—in this case some human person—has to make the original motion at the beginning of this leap forward in planetary evolution. Yes, if we are really to have faith in ourselves

rather than in anything supernatural, there must be a particular moment in our history when, to speak roughly and crudely, a living human consciousness " jumps out of its own skin".

We are only transporting our hesitating convertite, as we like to call him in the tone of the philosopher in *As You Like It*, to this particular strip of white road and to this particular white gate above the stretches of forlorn tidal mud and of desolate salt-pools, in order that his wavering mind may be impressed by the dramatic importance in human history of what we are aiming at. Above all we hope, by the romantic, Hardyesque background of our experiment, to free his mind entirely from associating it in any way at all with experiments in hypnosis.

What we are concerned with is the projection of a natural human consciousness while it still makes full use of all its bodily senses, the projection of it, we repeat, to a certain specified distance where it can function in its normal manner and where it is free from any intention of hypnotising, or obsessing, or of dominating anyone, but where it may well feel a desperate desire to comfort, sustain, and support, and save from unhappiness, perhaps even from suicide, some particular person who is clearly dejected to an extreme degree if not quite distraught.

What we are hoping our convertite will in his weakness strain to do, as he gets nearer to the man who is now leaning over the white gate, is to project his " consciousness "—or his " soul ", if he likes, or his "ego ", or his inmost " self ", for, as long as he makes the effort to project it, we do not care what name he gives it : " feeling is all in all ", as Goethe says ; " the name is sound and smoke "—near enough to the man at the gate to see every change in his expression.

We cannot repeat too often that we are not thinking about hypnotic or mesmeric domination or anything of that sort. We are thinking of one thing only : the projection of the consciousness of a human being farther from his body than has ever yet been done. Such a " consciousness " must use the

senses of the body to which it belongs. Every single one of the body's five senses it *must* use. It cannot float around like a disembodied spirit for a very simple reason. For the reason, in fact, that there is no such thing as a disembodied spirit.

Our little band of both sexes and of extremely mixed ages feels most strongly that it must risk annoying any possible convertite by its rustic habit of repetition; for it is only by constant repetition—that, at least, is what it believes—and by a constant return to the initial foundation of its method, that it can build up what seems to it a satisfactory philosophy.

Let us, therefore, repeat that we have decided that the only way to launch a system of life that can give interest, pleasure, and comfort to ordinary men and women is to dodge, avoid, and circumvent all the specializing experts of both the religious camp and the scientific camp. At this particular moment of human history, when the Kremlin in the pure interest of Russian nationalism is craftily offering itself as the leader of the " blacks " and " yellows " who have for so long been exploited by us " whites ", it is natural that, in proportion as our side aims at getting help from religion, their side should aim at getting help from irreligion.

Of course there is devilish cruelty on both sides; and to the collective mind of our little group of " good companions ", to compare orthodox cruelty with heretical cruelty is like comparing that monster of unspeakable horrors, of the age of Joan of Arc, Gilles de Retz, who tortured to death one hundred and fifty children, with the far less infernal Marquis de Sade, whose " labours of love " coincided with the fall of the Bastille.

So far from our attitude being an unscrupulous and shameless one, still less one that is indulgent to cruelty because it wholly and utterly dispenses with what is called " love " in the religious meaning of that tricky and misleading syllable, no hesitating convertite to our system must forget that we lay all the stress at our command upon natural kindness and fellow-feeling.

In fact our " In Spite " philosophy plunges into the vortex

of this confused world with its cosmogonic bowsprit directed first towards our own sensations, which we obstinately hold we must force ourselves to enjoy to the utmost limit. The outer world of what used to be called "matter"—not only where grass and hedges and trees and moss and mould make our planet's material substance rich and soft and yielding, but also where walls and masonry and slates and tiles and chimneys and pavements and hard-sounding roads—though offering to a person's "soul" a less attractive mass of material to plunge into, or be absorbed by, contains in reality, with all its dramatic slants of tangential light and all its exotic paraphernalia of fantastic shapes and colours, enough corporeal stuff to satisfy the maw of a veritable dragon of sensation—the outer world, I say, is the natural bride and natural bridegroom of every creature's soul.

But our small band of men and women pioneers and of young and old adventurers cannot rest satisfied on these lotus-eating shores of quiescence. For two thousand years we have been ensorcerized by the musical cadence of Hebrew Scripture, translated into Latin invocation and Greek metaphysic, until the quivering psychic arrows of the New Testament have finally worked upon us in such dulcet unison, like the strokes of a master-conductor's baton, that every thought which comes into our head dealing with anything in the universe that isn't sport, or politics, or business, or murder, if it isn't side-tracked by some new scientific revelation, has been sealed with the seal of religion.

What we have got to do, therefore—as we force ourselves to enjoy, whether it is "enjoyable" or the reverse, everything that presents itself in the forms and colours of the *material outward*—is to concentrate, in season and out of season as we say, upon this actual daring evolutionary transformation and metempsychosis of our very own. Why not? Some creature at some time started every vital change in things that has ever happened. Why not *our* modest little band at *this* moment in time and space?

But in what direction is our private and feeble desire *to evolve* to feel its way out of the present vortex ? Can it rival the new machines for flying ? Can it appropriate to its simple purpose the new mathematics ? Can it explore the other side of the moon ? It can do none of these things. But why should it not move, even a little way, in the direction we are here considering, namely that of acquiring the trick of projecting our consciousness out of our body while it still remains in touch with our bodily senses ?

And why not take advantage of our natural human fellow-feeling—the emotion, in fact, of which every mother's son and daughter shares something—and begin to think of using this projected consciousness of ours to comfort and support and sustain and heal the wounded consciousness of somebody else, perhaps of a person of whom we are uniquely fond ?

May we not claim that it was with a view to what even might be called an emotional experiment in evolution that we followed our evening walker as he wandered between the ancient churchyard and the tremendous beach ?

We of the " Philosophy of In Spite " have already made a few hesitant and tentative " strainings " with this experiment on behalf of one particularly unhappy person—and several of us have at this moment this special person in our mind—whom fate seems to have thrown in our path, as if with the deliberate intention of testing our faithfulness to our principles, especially to the principle that we ought to help anyone to a bold escape from any sort of wretched entanglement that only needs the drastic cutting of some terribly emotional knot.

What we are aiming at, in fact, as we have already hinted, is nothing less than an entirely human and, if possible, an authentic evolutionary *substitute* for the influence of the supernatural. Staggering and terrible is the power of the mind to invent the supernatural : still more startling its power to believe in what it has invented.

Well, here we have a real substitute for the supernatural actually at work. Here is nothing frantic, or desperate, or

hysterical. Here is a calm, deliberate attempt to carry the "creative evolution" of this terrestrial dimension a little farther than it has yet been carried. And why should that not be done by a band of simple philosophers like ourselves? Let us suppose, for example, that the object of our present experiment, the twilight walker whom our emissary is following, has felt the impact of our interest to such a tune that it has made him extend his walk from the Wyke Regis churchyard a bit farther than he originally intended.

This has led both the walker and our friend who is following him to disappear completely out of our sight as they walk on, apparently with the view of crossing the bridge that leads to Chesil Beach itself, over all those channels of sea-pools and seaweed that render Portland a semi-island.

So be it then! Our philosophic protagonist proceeds now to follow our solitary fugitive to the bridge over that salt estuary with its shallow pools full of trailing masses of black and amber-coloured seaweed, and at the farther end of the bridge pauses to watch the man ascend the beach itself, that enchanted rampart of magical pebbles, so many of which, when you hold them up to the sun, you find to be transparent. Our pursuer can see nothing of the Atlantic from his present position; but he can see the sun resting for a minute on that enormous ridge of pebbles, before sinking, with all the tragedy of the East blurring its rondure in blood, into the waves of the West.

What we are trying to establish in this philosophy of ours is that while every human being, male or female, comes into life only to find a weight of thousands upon thousands of years of accumulated pressure ready to mould his or her soul, a weight of pressure that has absorbed into itself a whole massed avalanche of energies, intuitions, intimations, instincts, inklings, in one great path-sweeping juggernaut car, it is still within our power, in spite of all our weakness and timidity, to defy the monster and avoid it. Yes, above everything else, O wariest of sensitive convertites, we must dodge like the

most infectious plague the whole business of religious argument. *Humility* is the word. A certain humorous humility is the quality we must hug to ourselves, or perish in our solemn and morbid pride !

We must remember our close connection with things like insects, pterodactyls, saurians, slow-worms, moles, skunks, and those little flying squirrels called polatouches.

People get so proud of themselves, either as believers or rationalists, the moment any sort of talk introduces the supernatural. It certainly seems to our simple direct minds that the only alternative for the faith in a supernatural power hearing us, watching us, listening to us, whispering to us, supporting us, which to some of us is such an irresistible temptation, is to obey old Nature herself, and, following her here, as we do in voiding our excrements and begetting and conceiving our offspring, to use an earth-bound faith, even as trees and plants and animals do, obscurely trusting that the condition of life for which we crave and ache and yearn and groan, not only for ourselves but for our offshoots, for our progeny, for our brood of little ones, or, if so it has happened for our childless mate, shall arrive at last, before we perish utterly.

Every philosophy that is worthy of the name ought to possess a spearhead by which it can obey the great heave and surge and pressure of the vast evolutionary wave behind it. A philosophy ought obviously to have the power to render its adherents what is called " philosophical " ; but if you think this is the sole purpose of our " In Spite " system you are grossly mistaken.

There is indeed no " sole purpose " in our system of thought and feeling, any more than there is any "sole purpose" in the life of a midge, or a stickleback, or a worm. Every living creature in the multiverse is not only a living creature ; it is a creative god and a destructive devil. It does not only inhabit its own world ; it creates and destroys its own world.

At this point we would recommend any wavering convertite to our philosophy to note how desperately we have learnt the

lesson of fleeing from egoistic pride. Nobody had better call himself a convert of ours who hasn't—we won't say " taken humility as his bride ", for we know the pride of bridegrooms —but so purged his consciousness of every awareness of self that it has become a pure instrument for the reception of a thrilling sensation.

According to us, in fact, the thing that *is*, the thing that *exists*, is not a person enjoying something or a something being enjoyed by a person. There is, in fact, nothing of a person there at all, and damned little of a thing. There is nothing at all there except a sensation being intensely enjoyed ; or, more precisely though more clumsily, except an instrument for the *forcing* of the consciousness of a certain body, a body whose senses are being used by this same consciousness which has now deliberately made itself into a complete blank except for the pure and simple enjoyment of *a particular sensation* derived from contact with a particular thing.

Nor must our wavering convertite fail to notice that, when our consciousness thus deliberately makes a planetary spearhead of " the groaning and travailing " of life upon this earth and struggles to project itself from its body without losing touch with its body's senses for the express purpose of supporting, comforting, and sustaining another person's consciousness, it takes damned good care that there should be no bloated little spider of pride in some high corner of the occasion sucking the blood from every nerve of pity in us to enhance our feeling of virtue.

The important thing for us who really want to follow the " Philosophy of In Spite " is to keep its whole system of life or way of living clearly in our mind at every hour of every day. This is much pleasanter, and yet much more reckless, much easier, and yet much more self-possessed, much wilder, and yet much more self-controlled, much freer, and yet much more balanced, than what any orthodoxy or heresy teaches its disciples.

And what exactly, precisely, and realistically *is* this rounded

and yet pointed projectile of a system that our " Philosophy of In Spite " becomes, when we have made it smooth by our handling and got it well fitted into our grasp as our life-purpose, hour by hour ?

Well, let us try to make it absolutely clear. The difficulty about all these mental things is that we are so dependent upon our bodily senses that, when we try to imagine our consciousness as we plunge it into the heart of *this* scene or of *that* scene, we cannot escape the illusion of thinking of it as a cloud of visible or invisible vapour, enveloping, when we are out-of-doors, some rocky ridge, or dusty road, or wood path, or mossy lane ; or when we are indoors, enveloping the walls, the furniture, the pictures, the rugs, the cushions, the ornaments, of any room in the house. But our philosophy, as we now regard it, is driven by the necessity of its purpose to make us feel both the impressions of the " out-of-doors " and of the " indoors ", interpenetrating each other although not fused into oneness, so that we can enjoy both aspects of our present life mingled together, our life " out-of-doors " following us " indoors ", and our life " indoors " following us " out-of-doors ", and the impressions of both worlds thus intermingled making up together the ever-present pressure of that vast floating multitudinousness of the multiple not-self, to embrace which, with all our senses in a strong magnetic impulse of intense enjoyment, is the abiding background of our purpose.

And it is only when this background of sensation has been achieved that the further and more adventurous movement of life begins. But the thing to do, before we play any further games with this old recurrent opposition of self and not-self, is to realize in the most simple, direct, and natural manner possible, what exactly our present situation is.

For instance we must realize that wherever we are resting on the surface of this round earth, whether in the heart of a great city, or under canvas in a vast wilderness, or in a cabin at sea, there will always be the shapes and textures and colours

of what used to be called " matter " round us, either belonging to the *interior* of our tent, or caravan, or hut, or house, or vessel, or to its *exterior* with all the forms and colours belonging to that particular spot in outward nature.

Now although many of the substances represented by these forms and colours around us, such as rocks and stones under the open sky or rafters and tent-poles protected from the open sky, are rough and hard and unyielding, this hardness and unyieldingness is a quality ultimately answering to only one of our senses, namely the sense of touch. But in the presence of our power of chemical analysis, a power which we can easily use in imagination, for just as all substances can be dissolved by some process of chemical dissolution, so all substances can be made to dissolve and melt into the most porous of the elements, into water and into thin air by the use of our imagination, we must imagine our consciousness pouring itself through these objects and permeating them like some penetrating mist or vapour, till we enjoy either one or the other of two marvellous sensations *according to our sex*. For in these ultimate contacts of self with non-self, although our power to enjoy such contacts to the limit can be forced and re-enforced by a super-sexual or a sub-sexual imagination in us, the nature of the sensation we naturally enjoy differs according to our sex : for if our sex is male we enjoy *possessing* these forms and colours of the elemental world, whereas, if it is female, we enjoy *being possessed* by these things.

And now let us come to our great evolutionary gesture, a gesture, we can assure you, though no doubt it will take many years to start what it aims at starting, has got about it all the marks and tokens, all the signs and omens, all the premonitions and prognostications, that in the case of such an evolutionary advance would inevitably appear.

As things are at present it is clear enough that for all of us living creatures, from our human selves down to the lowest sub-human self, and up to all sorts of higher selves, in this or in other dimensions, as superior to us as we are to reptiles and

plants, our consciousness, such as it is, is the consciousness of our particular form of body and cannot escape from this particular form of body.

But when we are dominated by this most human of all emotions, our longing to fling our consciousness beyond the limit imposed by our body, so that we can rush through the air to some place or to some person where at the moment we long to find ourselves, an emotional evolutionary leap forward might surely be brought about, if only the situation and its urge were repeated often enough?

Here there is a perfect field for an important biological experiment; for what renders this experiment especially important is that we can verify at any stage of it what success we are having in this escape from our body. I mean by this that, if we are flinging our consciousness into a particular place at a particular time or into the consciousness of a particular person at a particular time, it would be, of course, entirely possible to verify the reality of this daring excursion of the body's consciousness to a point outside the body. But there are two essential points in this exciting experiment which we must never let ourselves forget. First, that we have to be desperately careful not to get " out of range ", so to speak, of the bodily senses from which our consciousness emanates and on which it depends : and secondly that our body when we leave it must be comfortably seated. What we ourselves feel at this moment is that, since such a terrific evolutionary move as this would probably take several hundred years to establish itself, the wise course at the present time is simply to make the mental motion of the experiment, as if our consciousness were trying its wings by imagining itself approaching a certain person or entering a certain house, but while we do this to eliminate from our mind every idea of proof, or of verification, or even of any personal realization.

The thing to do is to play this game simply for the pleasure of playing it. If we do really manage to cross the intervening space and to penetrate the particular room or the particular

mind at which we have been projecting this " self ", or " ego ", or " I am I ", with its elastic navel-string stretched as far as it will go from the senses of our body, the safest thing is to enjoy this success of ours as if we had won a game of tennis, and hope we will be able to repeat the victory many times again before the end of our life ; but as for boasting or insisting on some pseudo-scientific " verification " of it, as if we had achieved some grand scoop in psychical research, we other philosophers of " In Spite " would know at once that among us there was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Because, don't you see, O most clever convertite, this whole business of making this particular effort again and again with varying approximate success is only a natural portion of our whole art of life. We don't do it for spectacular reasons. We do it because our whole philosophy is one of dynamic activity and not of abstract logic.

The one great thing to remember in regard to this evolutionary fresh start of ours—which, more than anything else we could possibly do, undermines the whole emotional atmosphere of this imaginary supernatural world which has been spell-binding us for two thousand years—is that it is in full harmony with Nature. As Rabelais would say, it is *pro-phusis* or " with nature ", whereas all religious activity, whether orthodox or heretical, is *anti-phusis* or " against nature ".

It is for this reason that we have no cause to ask the question : " What happens to our body when we are projecting our ' soul ' or ' consciousness ' to some distance ? " The answer would be : " Nothing out of the way happens." There is no need to think of a deserted body lying in a trance till the soul returns to it.

The truth is we are only using our will to do a little more regularly and a little more intensely *what we do every day in a natural and ordinary way* : that is to say, *imagine ourselves by the side* of the person or the thing about whom or about which we are concerned. We do this daily and constantly without falling into trances and without hypnotizing anybody or being

hypnotized by anybody ! Well, we must throw more " strain " into making this titanic or " straining " revolt against the existing world-order ; and that is all we can do, in this generation anyway.

Yes, the " Philosophy of In Spite " rivals, and, we naturally hold, surpasses, all the most lively experiences of the religious life, whether orthodox or heretical. We fly from these, as we fly from the plague, just because, in our opinion, there is about them all an odour of deadly infection leading to madness. But at the same time we are prepared to admit that all these cults, where the supernatural is " caught and bottled ", to speak grossly, and used as steam, or as oil, or as atomic energy in the day-by-day and hour-by-hour struggle with existence, are far more effective in giving the lost and wounded " selves " of our troubled race the strength they need if they are to go on with the game than all the abstract logic of the more purely metaphysical systems.

We are not algebraical equations. We are not Euclidian propositions. We are men and women. And what we need are methods and tricks and devices and subtle expedients such as can help a person who is " wrestling for a fall " with that old demon who calls himself Life.

In Spite of

MADNESS

There is no such thing as a completely sane human being. Men, women and children, of every race in the world, are all a little mad. To be human is to be mad. But if it is natural to us all to be a little mad, it is also natural to us to grow dangerously hostile to any particular person, man, woman, or child, whose little drop of madness has been increased to such a degree that the individual in question has become a trial to friends and relations, a tribulation to neighbours, a nuisance to strangers, and a general affliction to all of us as we pursue our lawful labours and legitimate recreation.

A little mad as we all are, there come times when to be interfered with at work or play by someone whose natural drop of this perilous stuff has grown too large becomes intolerable; and rising in our wrath and appealing to public opinion, to the civic authorities, and finally, to the police, we insist on such a person being, as the phrase is, "put away"; in plain words being shut up in a lunatic asylum.

But this by no means covers the whole field. As in the case of so many other complications in real life, human persons and their peculiarities cannot be dealt with in accordance with any fixed principles or any final rules. Even our judges—the best, surely, in the wide world, and as superior in human wisdom to our local unpaid magistrates as dogs are to cats, and

horses to goats—find themselves puzzled sometimes as to whether an accused person was, on a given occasion, mad or bad, or simply a bit drunk.

And indeed we have to face the annoying truth that there are some of us who, although quite definitely " funny ones ", as nobody knows better than ourselves, are expected to struggle on as best we can among our normal friends and relations, sometimes treating them despitefully, and sometimes being treated despitefully by them.

For it is no joke being, as people call it, " a bit touched ", and yet having to live exactly as the rest of us do who are " untouched ". Of course the forms that our insanity can take are numerous and incalculable. But they are not infinitely various ; and they tend to follow particular patterns of aberration, some of which are so common as to make it possible to draw a few very definite conclusions from watching them at work.

But let us come to the practical and ticklish point at once. What is the initial attitude or jumping-off place in this matter of insanity assumed by our " Philosophy of In Spite " ?

This, I think, can be put very clearly. Our philosophy is entirely, and without reservation, on the side of the insane person, and, as far as the insane person is concerned, against the rest of the world ; that is to say as long as his insanity is not homicidal.

Assuming, therefore, that we are on the side, or that our philosophy is on the side, of the mad person, how do we begin our case on his behalf? Well, by begging him to analyse, for himself alone, every aspect of his mania, and to ponder and weigh exactly in the depths of his own secret soul how he would like to fulfil it, where he would like to prune it down and thin it out, and where he would like, if that were possible, to obliterate it altogether.

Speaking for the " Philosophy of In Spite ", I should strongly recommend our friend to hide in the recesses of his own soul, " deeper than did ever plummet sound ", the whole of his

insanity. I should assure him that the " Philosophy of In Spite " is so entirely on his side against the world that it would dissuade him from blurting out his secrets to any psychiatrist, or blabbing of them to any doctor, or revealing them in any of those warm, cosy, relaxed, melting, cushiony confessionals, where our obscure memories of childish knocks and shocks and thrills and chills are dropped like wriggling worms on fish-hooks into a purely imaginary subterranean tank under the floor of our soul, absurdly and paradoxically called, though our jailers know every inch of its mud and its monsters, " the unconscious ".

In short, what our " Philosophy of In Spite " would say to one of these queer ones, who are not crazy enough to be " put away ", and yet have become a serious affliction both to themselves and their worried relations, is something of this sort: You, my good soul, whether in your inmost citadel you are a male or a female soul, are completely alone—I won't say in an unfathomable and boundless world, for what do we know of " worlds " ? I will only say in unfathomableness and boundlessness—and your chief concern, let the raging prophets and the weeping saviours say what they like, is, rightly, properly, naturally, whether you yourself are happy or miserable.

You have mixed with the rest of us of all classes in this island quite sufficiently to recognize the fact that in certain matters and on certain topics, especially in regard to semi-physical, semi-mental peculiarities, you are different from most of us, and you have discovered by unhappy experience that we others, we normal ones, are worried, disturbed, troubled, and even indignant with you for this divergence.

Well then, strange and weird one, *daimoniee*, as Homer always says when he wants to speak both tenderly and rallyingly, the best counsel I can give you under these curious conditions is—whether you like it or not—clear and definite. Hide from every living soul that you are, as these normal people call it, " out of your mind ", crazy, demented, " funny ", " dotty "—there is no lack of words to describe the hostility of the normal

towards the abnormal—hide it, I tell you, my friend, so deeply, so cunningly, so undiscoverably, that no one will know you are different from the rest of us !

Now don't, for the sake of all the gods that have ever been invented and then corrupted by human madness, don't tell me you lack the self-control to conceal this thing ! You may lack it at this first second of my telling you about it. But try for a few days and you'll soon find out what you can do. Crazy woman, or crazy man, whichever you are, I tell you you have simply no idea how powerful your own secrecy can be when once you have called it into action and begun experimenting with it !

And how lovely it will be, each night, as you turn over to go to sleep, to think how you've hidden from every single person you've seen and spoken to that day the most important secret of your whole existence, the fact that you are insane !

What heavenly pleasure you will enjoy as you say to yourself: " Ah ha, they don't know ! They don't know ! They don't know ! " But now, my good sir, or my dear lady, our " Philosophy of In Spite " invites us to come closer to this madness of yours. And in order to examine it from a nearer position, it becomes necessary for us to presuppose certain conceivable fantasies that might quite possibly, judging from what we already know of the phantasmagoric imagination of the insane, have been seized upon by an inventive man's mind or an inventive woman's mind, at this particular moment of history, to satisfy certain megalomaniacal urges and erotic obsessions together with all sorts of provoked, tantalized, and brooded-over perversities to which few of us, save under the aegis of insanity, would care to confess.

But here our philosophy takes a very clear and definite and simple line. It recommends, along with profound and absolute secrecy, a free indulgence for all the solitary ecstasies of the imagination ; that is to say for all but one imaginative ecstasy, namely the ecstasy of homicide. Mad as we have been, and mad as we intend to be, as creators of the " Philosophy of In

Spite ", we intend to treat homicide as we treat the battle between orthodoxy and heresy, namely as something resembling the Plague or the Black Death, something that must be avoided at all cost.

Who are we, with our obsessions and our manias, that we should take away another person's life ? Let us suppose you have only just, after intermittently suspecting it for several years, reached the conclusion that you really are mad. Very well, then. The thing to do now is to accept this madness of yours as a basic fact, and add to your philosophy of life, that is to say to the " Philosophy of In Spite", as many little definite particular points as may seem to you necessary.

What we are aiming at is a body of mental and physical and psychic habits, so melted and moulded and pounded and fused together that they congeal and harden into something resembling what we too easily call a " second nature ", but which really is a new self-created self.

If, therefore, we discover that we really are mad and that some inner necessity compels us to go on imagining ourselves a horse, or a cow, or an ox, or a fox, or a bear, or a sea-lion, the thing we've got to do, according to our " Philosophy of In Spite ", is to conceal our discovery. If our husband insists that it's an instep he is treading on under the table and not a cloven hoof—very good, all the better—we have kept our secret from him. If our wife doesn't realize that the hairy arms that embrace her are those of a gorilla—very good, all the better—we have kept our secret from her !

The great thing is to enjoy ourselves to the full in our imagination ; but to conceal our delicious ecstatic, secret, cerebral, imaginative inner life from everybody but ourselves.

It does not matter in the least what our particular insanity is, as long as we conceal it, and as long as it is not homicidal. We know well that concealing it is difficult ; but we swear to you from our personal experience it is not impossible. It is hardest, perhaps, when we are obsessed by the idea that we are a particular person in history. I may, for instance, as a man,

" labour ", as we so wrongly express it, " under the illusion " that I am the poet Dante.

Well, it's easy enough to act a *silent* Dante, chivalrous and polite, if a little proud and contemptuous. It's when the Dante we represent is dragged into conversation that the difficulties begin. Outsiders have simply not got the very faintest idea of what it's like to be a well-known historical person. They don't understand the profoundly subtle reservations there are in this business of being somebody about whom everybody knows something. When in our own madness we feel ourselves, for instance, to be a creature rather like that terrific deep-sea monster of archaeological mythology that has been called a kraken, you must understand that we are also perfectly well aware that we are a grandpapa who is living with Grandma in a pleasant little group of seaside houses in a north country resort.

It has indeed never been analysed as deeply as it deserves, this profoundly fascinating and complicated subject—what it is exactly that we mad ones actually feel when we cry out: " I am a bear ! " or when we announce with the calmest assurance that we are Napoleon or Julius Caesar, or take it for granted that our interlocutor, who has just accepted a cigarette from us, understands that he is having a chat with the Second Person of the Trinity.

Our doctors are always too occupied with their own therapeutic experiments to bother about the exact feelings of their patients. Is it not a curious thing that the *feelings* of patients on any subject at all, particularly on the subject of their insanity, are always the last words of tediousness and boredom to their doctors; who are all on the *qui vive* for any *memories* or *anecdotes* of childhood they can get out of them, but the moment they—I mean *we*—begin enlarging on *the feelings of the moment*, which, of course, is all that matters to *us*, the learned man's attention perceptibly wanders.

What we mental patients long for is an investigation of the whole subject from the other end; not with the assumption

that the abnormal are seeing things falsely while the normal are seeing them as they are, but with the assumption that Nature has revealed to the abnormal, through various poetical signs and symbolic hallucinations, certain profound secrets of reality which she has concealed from the normal.

Of course the favourite investigations of most psychiatrists have to do with the unpleasant shocks and horrid experiences we all have as children. But what of the feelings of children as they play their games? When an infant goes puffing down the path with one hand clenched and the other holding a stick and repeating the syllables "chew-chew" over and over, it doesn't say to itself: "I am pretending to be a train!"

It really *feels* in a very peculiar and very special way that it *is* a train. How have our psychiatrists managed to force themselves to forget so completely their own feelings when they were children? They have succeeded in this triumphantly; and the art of forgetting is one of the supreme arts we possess. Those of us who are gradually working out the "Philosophy of In Spite" for ordinary and simple people are not entire fools either in this mysterious art!

We have at least learnt how to forget the pleasures of homicide, and also how to forget the perilous attraction of the supernatural and all the subtle joys of the battle between orthodoxy and heresy.

The more difficult it is to hide our particular mania the more essential it is that we should hide it. What we have got to do is to "gather ourselves together" and become what Homer calls *aleis*, "crouched to spring". We must, in fact, use our wits twice as intensely as sane people are in the habit of using theirs. We must take upon ourselves a double layer, so to speak, of self-consciousness. One part of our mind must occupy itself in clinging desperately, fiercely, obstinately, defiantly, to our particular madness; while the other part of our mind must realize, as vividly as we can possibly force it to realize, the vast and limitless enormity of the abysses of space and time which surround us at this very moment.

We are thus embracing, or being embraced by, the whole strung-along multiplicity and elemental congeries of all we can imagine or conceive of the surrounding multiverse, while at the same time we are hugging to ourselves, in defiance of the entire race to which we belong, the sacred madness which is weighing us down and beneath which we are staggering. We are absolutely alone in a time without beginning or end and in a space without boundary or limit.

And we are face to face with a human society that is set upon taking away our most cherished possession. Society is our enemy. What society wants to do is to " cure " us, which simply means *kill* us ; for, as Shylock says : " You take my life when you do take the means whereby I live."

What we, who are obstinately working out our " Philosophy of In Spite ", have to do when we discover that our particular mania or special form of madness has roused such hostility in our circle that they have resolved to " cure " us is to keep up a battle—oh, more than a " battle ", a campaign—on three fronts at the same time. We must fight against our fear of loneliness. That is our first fight. We must fight against society. That is our second fight. And we must fight *to keep our madness concealed.*

That is our third fight. And this third fight is not against our madness but against our own weakness, just as our first one was. Indeed you might call this third front a battle against the pride, vanity and conceit of our manias themselves ; for these maniacal pets, or these tenderly-nourished madnesses of ours, have an unlucky way of getting loose—yes, a way of leaving the comfortable hiding-places wherein we have concealed them from those who would kill them and cure us—and of appearing at extremely unseemly and inappropriate moments and boasting about themselves and showing off and swaggering and totally forgetting that it is they who are the guests of honour in our consciousness, not we in theirs.

The truth is we must compel these " alter egos " or " second selves " of ours to pick up what we are struggling to learn

ourselves. We refer, O hesitating convertite, to the peculiarity called " humility ". It would be obviously unfair if our " consciousness "—or the continuous " selves " in us who are being coaxed by our anything but powerful will to acquire this particular human peculiarity called " humility "—had to look on while this same feeble will-power humoured and indulged our madness and encouraged it to assert itself to the limit and to send " humility " to the devil.

It is not as if we were fighting our madness. That is the last thing our philosophy advises us to do. What we are doing is hiding our madness. But, of course, if our madness takes upon itself to become rampant and to begin showing off, it very quickly makes it impossible for us to hide it.

Our madness is our pet, and as our pet we will hide it from its enemies, who, *ipso facto*, are ours also ; but if our pet takes upon itself the privilege of " bossing ", as we call it, " the whole show ", it had better look out for itself. A shy, retiring, too-proud-to-fight madness is a pet we could hide from our enemy—that is to say from society—without any of this violent " kill or cure " purge.

But when once our own ugly mug, so well known to our contemporaries, begins to take upon itself the pride of Cæsar, the implacableness of Napoleon, the despair of Judas, the Messianic isolation of Jesus, the majestic mysteriousness of Merlin, or—still worse—if there begins to flow from it as from a living mask (sketched more in science than in anger by Leonardo) of the contorted features of St. Paul, a torrent of poignant, mystical, penetrating, healing, hurting, terrifying, ensorcerized words, would not our whole technique of life as we are struggling to work it out be destroyed ?

No, we must cherish our mania, or our madness if you prefer that word, as we would cherish a second self ; for our madness *is* our second self ; but we must not let this cherished "alter ego " indulge in pride, vanity and conceit on its own—no, not even with the mad introverted " glorying " of St. Paul —while we ourselves, with the portion of our consciousness

that overlaps and underpins our insanity and remains in touch with the wider horizons of Nature and her often much more dreadful sanity, are rather pathetically, though in the best wisdom we have yet acquired, cultivating humility.

This would be as unwise as it would be injurious both to us and to our " second self ". Our mania or madness *can* be an inspiring pet, an illuminating pet, a really prophetic pet ; but, alas, as we who have suffered having such a pet thrust upon us by fate know only too well, it can also be the very devil.

But there is no doubt that, in certain aspects of the particular philosophy our little band is working so hard at rounding off, more than one of these manias and madnesses are doing us a great benefit in our patient and obstinately industrious philosophizing.

They are helping us by the horrors they give us, by the abominable and loathsome disgusts they love to throw into the pure fountain of our consciousness, by the appalling thoughts they put into our heads, by the unspeakable images they dangle before our shrinking imagination. They are, in fact, we can assure you, startling and shocking and jolting us out of the completely false ideal of human life in which we have been steeped and saturated—both sexes of us—from infancy ; namely the ideal of *developing our personality*, the idea that we should *cultivate originality* ; as though it were possible to do anything with our damned personality but accept the confounded thing and see to it that its power of making us unhappy—a power in which this curst bully of a " developing personality " delights—is nipped in the bud every spring ; and as we all, both male and female philosophers of " In Spite ", know to our cost, for a developing personality there is a new springtime every quarter-day.

Yes indeed ! Here is the one supreme advantage that our little band of " In Spite " philosophers have derived from our madnesses and our manias : we have been forced to purge our " souls ", our " selves ", or just simply our " consciousness ", of all this " heavy and weary weight " of " developed

personality " and of cultivated " originality " and of all this curst load of " self-expression " and " self-realization ", so that we can become, what our philosophy has concluded we should be wise to become, namely an anonymous harp-string of pure, undefiled, unconfused, unentangled, undistracted *sensation.*

The special kind of mania or madness, which has attached itself to some of our little band of philosophy-builders, has at its command such loathsome horrors and such appalling disgusts that we are soon ready to purify our consciousness—if we only could ! Oh, if we only could !—of all these insanely-evoked horrors, and to turn our total awareness of everything outside ourselves into this one single vibrant harp-string, quivering under the transmutation of all the glittering receding scales of the hieroglyphical dragon of infinite space into the wholly-satisfying *here*, and of all the abysmal interlockings of the swaying chain of infinite time into the wholly-satisfying *now.*

And there is another form of intolerable pride and conceit from which our madnesses and our manias have saved our little shipload of adventurers in philosophic planning : and that is " the abominable snowman " of utilitarian thinking, namely the thing that's called " enlightened self-interest ".

Here's a cold-blooded monster worse than any implacable orthodoxy invaded by any ranting and raving heresy. For the " mortmain " of a " turn-you-to-stone-with-a-glance " Gorgonian bore, the hand and eye of " enlightened self-interest " is the worst.

So profound indeed is the distaste with which we philosophers of " In Spite " regard " enlightened self-interest " that it has become for us among all other mental tags the ultimate extreme of comical anathema : you see, our whole purpose in life being *sensation*, what possible truck, in the name of all the saints and of all the heathen idols, could we have with a cold-blooded calculating cult like this ?

Because we abhor all this holy talk about the sacredness of " love " and because we believe in substituting courtesy and

decency and kindness for this whole business of " love ", save, of course, when anyone's *in* love, when obviously, if you're not Dante, or Shelley, or a Brontë sister, or a Spanish Carmen, things will have to work themselves out according to Nature, we need not become misanthropists.

Whatever may be the neurotic afflictions, or nervous manias, or insane obsessions that we Simple Simons and Jaunty Janes of " In Spite " have yet to deal with, what has helped us tremendously hitherto has been our skill in keeping them secret—secret from our relations, our friends, our neighbours, and from the people where we work. And we have discovered this : that if you hide your pet aversion, your cherished horror, your intolerable thought, your loathsome imagination, from everybody but yourself, and only when you are entirely alone press the frightful abortion against your ribs or against your breast till it melts into you and becomes part of you or you melt into it and become part of it, there comes a time when you and your horror—and this may prove to be a thing that is already worse than any abortion engendered by a Frankenstein upon a lamia—*will be so entirely one* that, when with your hand you touch yourself, you touch *it*, and when from your shoulders you bend your neck or nod you head, *it* bends *its* neck and nods *its* head.

But be not afraid, O most cautious of convertites ! For it is now our privilege to reveal to your more sophisticated ears another curious discovery made by us philosophers of ordinary life.

We have discovered that, although, as male victims of neurotic manias, we may know for certain that we are—well, let us soften the shock a little by saying " a reincarnation of " —St. Paul, and yet are also nothing less than Cerberus, the dog-faced fiend of Tartarus, and as female victims of such fancies, that we are both St. Catharine and also Eurybia, the monstrous Titaness who was the mother-in-law of Styx and the grandmother of Hecate, it still remains that in our human consciousness *as ourselves* we secretly know for an absolute

and constant certainty that the part which is *permanently ourselves* overlaps and surrounds and includes, if we are males, both St. Paul and the terrible Cerberus, and, if we are females, both St. Catharine and the appalling Eurybia, and that by means of this overlapping and encircling we are in a sort of way only *playing at* being saints and monsters.

And we have further discovered that when we have grown thoroughly accustomed to the concealment of St. Paul, or St. Catharine, or of Cerberus, or Eurybia in our furtive and yet capacious consciousness, we can often live for many a long day without so much as giving a thought to these " second selves " which we are so craftily carrying about with us as if we were smugglers with some precious kind of lace.

Of course there are an immense number of horrible things and loathsome things among the manias from which we suffer that, even with our most philosophic powers of metempsychosis and transformation, we cannot incorporate into ourselves, and in regard to these we have invented a very effective way of keeping them under control.

We have, in fact, decided to call into existence an entirely imaginary bundle, itself made of anything you like, but able to contain a vast assortment of horrible things. This imaginary bundle of horrors is totally invisible to anyone but the person who carries it, and it is held together by imaginary cords whose peculiarity is that, the more horrible and disgusting the contents of the bundle, the more unbreakable and the more difficult to unloose do they become.

You see, O most cautious and sophisticated of convertites, that our little band of " good companions ", as Rabelais would put it, have worked at our humble philosophy of life till we have really got things pretty well " down to brass tacks ". And what we have discovered is this: that it is absolutely essential to fight this coiling dragon Life, with his two devastating horns, one called space and the other called time, in two completely different ways. The first way is to fight him with our philosophy compact and whole, and all

welded and fused together into one deadly and slippery thunderbolt; whereas the second way is to fight him as if our individual consciousness were like a swarm of separate consciousnesses, every separate one of which possesses its own slippery engine of assault, which has been designed a little differently and must be employed a little differently in the struggle, in accordance with our sex.

But the important thing is to remember that our primary and instinctive reaction to Life's devilish tricks is a reaction undertaken in a friendly, humorous, indulgent attitude to our relations, friends, neighbours, and mates, and even, with certain qualifications, to our employers.

The chief point, of course, in the whole business lies in the phrase "*force ourselves in spite of*". We are surrounded at every second of the day by the forms and colours of surrounding objects and obtruding persons. Well, it is our affair to force ourselves to enjoy to the limit, by seeing, by smelling, by hearing, by touching, by tasting, and by using all these senses in rapid combination as if driven by the sex-instinct to ravish, or be ravished by, as many of the dimensions of this seething and swirling multiverse as we have the gall to embrace.

Our experience has discovered that the whole dilemma and paradox of time and space is under our eyes when we watch a newt sink down to the bottom of a pond. And when we munch a piece of dry bread, we have learnt the trick of feeling that, insignificant as we are, we have actually become for the moment the whole of nothingness feeding ravenously upon the whole of existence.

What our "Philosophy of In Spite" is actually aiming at is what an ancient Epicurean or an ancient Stoic would be aiming at with *his* philosophy. The difference is that after the sweet, mad, wicked, desperate, treacherous experiment of two thousand years of orthodox mystical love-hate and of heretical mystical love-hate, though as individuals we may be as simple as innocent cattle, our whole emotional situation is necessarily an extremely more complicated one.

Though we are trying to acquire some mood or temper, or at least some method of mood or temper, that will help us in the battle of life, we have kept enough ordinary common sense to recognize that extreme pain, or extreme pity, or extreme terror, may at any moment jerk us out of this "blessed mood".

But because no mortal creature can cater for every conceivable situation, there is no reason why we should not cultivate a frame of mind which will be a match for most of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". And in cultivating this mood, whether our fellow men regard us as out of our minds or not, we have a perfect right to invent some sort of system, however rough-and-ready it may be, that will assist our peculiar nature. In fact we have more than a "right"; we have an imperative and compulsory necessity.

And if our peculiar nature is in many respects a mad one, our "Philosophy of In Spite" must adapt itself to these mad elements in our peculiar nature, or we might just as well have no "philosophy" at all, have nothing, in fact, but blind, violent, reckless, jerks and plunges under the fitful shocks of circumstance.

What we each have to do is to practise making a bold, strong, resolute, but extremely patient and crafty, movement of the mind, that allows for every single one of our lesser manias as well as for our grand particular mania.

And we must acquire the trick of treating the immediate impressions—that go on mounting up as they recede till they reach that conglomeration which it is correct to call a "multiverse"—as an enemy; yes, as an enemy that in every one of its advancing, or stationary, or fleeing battalions, it is essential we should conquer, and by the word "conquer" I mean enjoy to the uttermost; yes, "enjoy" in the sense of eating, drinking, ravishing, possessing, being possessed by, and melting into, until there are only two things in the world, the consciousness that is ourselves and the thing which is the preoccupation of our consciousness.

And as it is necessary for us to keep recalling, in every new case with which our " Philosophy of In Spite " deals, the particular nature of this enjoyment about which we talk all the time and which remains the dominant object of our human experience, so it is also necessary for us to revert again and again to the method we have devised for lessening the misery of all those thousand-and-one pains, worries, hurts, uglinesses, obsessions, terrors, illusions, horrors, disgusts, loathings, that spoil so much of even this very special kind of enjoyment, the overtones and undertones of which hold cosmogonic implications that don't always go with our customary high spirits when " a good time is had by all ".

This method is one that we fear many people will fiercely reject, purely because, to win its victory, it makes use of an invisible weapon. To such angry critics we can only reply that, when half of the battalions of the enemy are invisible, it is natural if not inevitable that we should arm ourselves from a kindred arsenal.

But let us return to our previous account of this invisible weapon of ours. What we do is to get hold of an invisible piece of sacking or any other tough and rough material; find some invisible cords or invisible leather straps of similar toughness; and then boldly go to work filling this bundle of sacking with all the abominable worries and disgusting horrors that are spoiling our enjoyment of the forms and colours of the elements round us, and of the voices and gestures, the expressions and confessions of our human companions.

The instinctive common sense of our little band of " good companions ", if you will allow us, O subtlest of indulgent convertites, to drop our modesty for a moment, is surely borne witness to by the fact that, when we squeeze our physical pains, our financial worries, our medical apprehensions, our professional and emotional frustrations with such furious twists and knots so tightly against our neurotic hauntings and maniacal horrors and our messianic and historic obsessions and our imaginative disgusts, the first set of devildoms, although they

don't actually form " one blot " with the other, dissolve into something much less pernicious ; while the raw, gross, foul, bloody, excremental horrors, when squeezed against such innocent alarms as the fear of cancer, or of losing our pension, or of being landed in jail, though they are not exactly cancelled out, do really seem to get compounded into a less infernal lump.

The whole idea of this devil's bundle, which, of course, has its resemblance to what Bunyan's Pilgrim had to carry till he threw it into the hole that descended straight to hell, is for the easement of a harassed mind ; for it is always a relief to a troubled person to do something with hands and fingers, and we can very easily imagine ourselves tightening with some force the magic cord that surrounds this gruesome though invisible bundle of horror and terror and fever and fret.

People who pride themselves on being normal and having no tinge of insanity in them will, we must confess, be a bit slower than our less well-balanced friends in recognizing the fact that, in this whole matter of elemental enjoyment, which our philosophy contends is the chief purpose of life, the male self and the female self are compelled by necessity to follow somewhat different methods.

Let us, therefore, according to our practical method of philosophizing, consider the case of a person on a warm September afternoon, standing by the roadside, and enjoying the rich sunlight and the deep shadow falling on a patch of long grass on the other side of a ditch. If this imaginary person be a female, she will feel impelled to give herself up till she is deliciously absorbed into the very essence of this sunlight and shadow which summons her so irresistibly from across the ditch. If, on the contrary, the person is a male, his enjoyment will take the form of what might be called a diffused ravishing of this exquisite patch of sun and shadow.

In either case, whether we are the man or the woman, the boy or the girl, what we now plunge into and embrace, or are drawn into and embraced by, is, according to our " Philosophy

of In Spite ", the whole mass and volume and ethereal space of our nebular and zodiacal dimensions of the " multiverse ", as we prefer to call *all that is*, or, to put it bluntly in our simple, homely, unmystical, irreligious, inartistic, unscientific manner, the *whole of life*. No, it needs no literary trick to explain how it is that a patch of extra-green grass, upon which has happened to fall a long, rich, late-afternoon stream of warm sunlight, should produce upon either a male or a female of our race this rapturous sense of hugging to *our* heart, or being hugged to *its* heart, the entire life-dream, or life-vision, or life-illusion, or the whole of what we have regarded since our infancy as the shocking, staggering, delicious, appalling, monotonous, exhausting, but only too natural experience of being alive on this earth.

But as we two persons, one of us a male person and the other a female person, gaze ensorcerized at that illuminated patch of waving grass on the other side of the ditch, you can imagine, O most alert and cautious of all half-converted convertites, how by that curious " law ", as we so absurdly call what is really, of course, no " law " at all but only an observed sequence, the " law " of *the association of opposites*, the mere mounting up, within each of us, of this wave of delicious sensation automatically calls down upon us a veritable wagon-load of disgusting and loathsome images.

Then it is, just as the disgust-demon has begun disturbing us, the male in one way and the female in another, and the inevitable thought has come into our heads that our pleasure is entirely spoilt for the rest of that day, we suddenly recall our devil's bundle and proceed to shake it and rattle it and bang it against our side, holding it firmly and securely by those unbreakable cords.

Now we have discovered by experience that the mere rattling and banging of this totally invisible bundle, tied fast with those magic cords, is enough in itself to free us from our worst mental obsession, and though we would hardly dare to hope that the mere shaking and thumping of our invisible bundle

will bring back that cosmogonic thrill we originally received from the way the sun fell on those tall grasses on the other side of the ditch, we do actually find that the two extremes of exquisite deliciousness and loathsome disgust have cancelled each other out and that we are free to press forward with minds more or less at peace.

There is something really ghastly in the incredible variety of insanities and manias that exist in the human nerves of the gentlest and most retiring among us. Not one of us is really normal. If a really normal person appeared among us, we should all regard him with speechless astonishment.

Nor is the reason for this astonishment hard to find. Such a person would be perpetually amazing us by his eccentricity. It is not properly understood that the sort of conventional liveliness, with which in ordinary social life we "jolly each other along", is an indispensable safety device.

It is indeed the only absolutely secure way of hiding up the black plague-spots, the bleeding pustules, the hairy excrescences, the bestial deformities, that would appear the moment we acted naturally and freely, the moment we said what we thought and told what we saw, the moment we really laughed and really cried.

It is only the normal person who can afford to be eccentric and original. We, simple founders of the downright "Philosophy of In Spite", the only philosophy that has a positive mania for the exact, particular, minute, once-lost-never-caught-again truth of our feelings as separate and unique and never-returning again individual creatures, dare not start being eccentric lest we end by revealing the well-kept secret that we are mad.

What we neurotic ones are perhaps most shy of revealing—and this applies more strongly to the younger among us, for, as we have confessed to you, we have among us sages of extremely varying ages—is our addiction to a certain disregard of that most ancient of all taboos, the tendency to mate with creatures of this or that other species from our own.

In Spite of Madness

In ancient days the sex-attraction between beings of different species led to very remarkable happenings, one of which was the appearance in the world of that noble race of creatures called Centaurs. But there were other and very different results ; and if some of us are unduly attracted to the shadowy purlieus of that queer no-man's-land or border-limbo between the human and the sub-human, the queer underworld which was also an overworld, that the ancient Britons called Caer Sidi, we find it necessary to walk very warily down those " alleys titanic " ; for there can be detected there sometimes no merely fancied phantoms flitting between the huge, long-dead trunks of a species of lime trees that have been completely unknown for fifty thousand years, but Minotaur-like and Medusa-like *eidola*, such as are far too monstrous to be cynically squeezed into any devil's bundle that we could " carry ", even in our most megalomaniacal imagination, and indeed would seem more likely to think of carrying us, as inventions of their dreams.

What our little band of old people and young people of both sexes—yes, and, by heaven, a sprinkling of shrewd middle-aged people too !—have learnt, if we have learnt anything in our fierce battle with the mixed experience of being alive, is that if our philosophy doesn't help us to bear neuralgia and dyspepsia, and to deal with the loathsome fancies that are hard to shake off, and absolutely to refuse to submit to any sort of acceptance of dullness and flatness and boringness, it is not worthy to be compared with the most fanatical and fantastical of orthodoxies and heresies.

There is little use in our teaching ourselves to flee religion like the plague until we have learnt the psychic trick of a real continuity in the creation of a *vita nuova* for ourselves. This is our affair.

By " curing " us, what our doctors mean is killing our mania ; but what *we* feel is that *our mania is us*, and that by killing our mania they don't cure us ; on the contrary, they kill us by inches.

You will perhaps say we are under a delusion, victims of hallucination, fooled by a mirage, and you will be right. But the whole wisdom of life, as Goethe hinted, is to distinguish between those illusions that carry with them the intentions and purposes of Nature, and those others that either cramp and restrict us, or start us off on wild-goose chases down side-alleys and criss-cross vistas leading to swamps of unutterable boredom and precipices of stark catastrophe.

What these enemies of ours, these therapeutic killers of our life's happiness, do not realize is that we are perfectly justified in rejecting their " normal " world, or their world of " objective reality ", on purely metaphysical grounds, or, if you care to face the deep-down truth of this business, on a ground that is one of the basic assumptions of a really philosophical attitude to life.

What I am trying to say is briefly this. Every human being —I will go further still and use the phrase " every earthly creature "—is a living unit of a great wave of creative power ; in fact is an integral unit of the energy that actually creates the future. We possess, therefore, a perfectly valid metaphysical reason for rejecting this objective world, or this world of external realistic truth. For if every living creature is actually creating out of the world that already exists the world that is going to exist, we, the creators of a world that under our will and our skill, under our weakness and our wilfulness, is even now essentially changing, cannot be said to be faced by any fixed objective truth, but, being ourselves the creators of change, are surrounded by change.

Let us, therefore, be real philosophers, that is to say creative philosophers, and as such let us, at every moment of our life's consciousness, go steadily, obstinately, resolutely forward with the creation we have undertaken—perhaps too impetuously and recklessly undertaken—namely the creation, not of ourselves, but of the world.

One of the first things we discover, nevertheless, as we go forward on this daring enterprise, is that out of each of the

four elements and from each of the four winds—we speak in the natural language of human beings such as has gone on, not for a mere two thousand, but for more than twenty thousand years of earth-life—there reaches us, and settles on us, and works upon us, some deadly bane or other, it may be too small to be seen with the naked eye, whose purpose is the extreme opposite of creation, namely *destruction.*

But we have won our philosophy's main and supreme test already in undertaking this creative quest at all; for there is an extremely significant difference between the destructive forces that leap out upon us from air, earth, fire and water and the creative force we are using, since the former settle upon us from outside in separate and particular assaults and are doomed each one of them to perish in the corruption they cause; while the latter, although it frequently has to move with incredible rapidity from battle to battle on many fronts, draws its living force from that floating, pendulous, hovering consciousness within us that depends on our senses. Give us then, O indulgent if still hesitating convertite, permission to repeat ourselves just once more. And our repeated word is this: That the only madness we must cut out of our soul and our nerves and our emotions once for all is a tendency to homicide.

We ourselves live; and even if our besetting madness has in it a vein of miserable despair, *that* gives us no right to remove from others, even though they are infinitely crazier than we are, the one and only thing that gives us all a chance in this arena of chances, and a chance, too, of *intense enjoyment*, which is the purpose of our whole system, namely a short and slippery seat of swaying and swinging and see-sawing stability before the series of shivering shocks ending with the final slide.

But short of homicide, and of cruelty heading for homicide, there seems no sense in " curing " us when we are so abysmally one with our madness that the end of *it* means the last of *us.*

But the prime folly of the fashion we call psychiatry is

evident in the attitude of our modern medicine-men to the admirable obsession called the " Messiah-Complex ". It is in the special kind of ferocity—easily recognizable by the savagery of its jeering tone—wherewith our fashionable healers regard this inspiring malady, that you can see how justified we are in contemplating their efforts with suspicion.

But they have " given ", as we call it, " the show away ", after long consultation of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek dictionaries and lexicons, by their very adaptation and adoption of this particular phrase, " Messiah-Complex ". For the real truth of the matter is that our fashionable psychiatrists are the least philosophical of all experts. Anything less philosophical than their invention of the whole idea of what they have come to call " the unconscious ", that tank of monsters shaped like the excrement of antidiluvian sea-serpents, could hardly be imagined, or anything more grotesquely mediaeval and luridly fantastic than the human faces of these excremental abortions as they bob up and down out of their bloodstained excrescences, just as certain gargoyles, that most frequenters of cathedrals can remember, emerge from the choir-stalls, at particular moments of riddling and ransacking emotion, and then retreat again into the recesses of their green-black woodwork.

But if our experts emphasize the monstrous water-demons that coil round each other in *that tank* we all are accused of concealing in the depths of our being, it begins to grow clearer and clearer why of all illusions of the human mind the one about which our soul-physicians are most deeply concerned and most anxious to cure is the " Messiah-Complex ".

The more Messiahs there are in our mad world the more of us mad ones will be cured, and cured *not* by science but by magic; for it has now, after prolonged initial studies by our bisexual and diverse-aged band of honest Pantagruelian " good companions ", become quite clear for the " Philosophy of In Spite" that, since our two world-wars have slid into what exists to-day, the medical science of our time has returned full circle to all the cruel, horrid, disgusting, black-magical

dabblings in methodical witchcraft, in hypnotism, in vivisection, in experimental medicine-making from excrescences ejected from every conceivable organ of beast-organism that can be squeezed or wrung out, against which the prophetic Paraceleus warned us in vain.

What our philosophy teaches is simply that *everything is within us*; not only the "kingdoms of heaven" but all the "kingdoms of hell"; so that when any among us shows signs of being obsessed by what our modern psychiatrists or soul-healers love to jeer at as the "Messiah-complex", instead of being disturbed by this event or treating it as a lapse from wisdom, our "Philosophy of In Spite" welcomes it with pride and joy.

To our view of things—and mark you, simple-minded as we are, we are not idiots, and we have several wise "old wives" and several experienced "elder statesmen" among us, as well as our extremely youthful oracles of both sexes—nothing could be better for our relatives and friends, and nothing luckier for our neighbours, than to have a few live prophets in our midst.

For *everything is within us*. These four words indeed might be taken as the metaphysical motto or the essential message of our philosophy. They sound like a "logos" of Pythagoras, and they correspond with the Pythagorean number *four* against the odd number *three*, as an explanation of the secrets of life.

What we feel is that it is out of our own heart that Jesus and Buddha and Mahomet and Confucius and Laotze come—yes, and even that remarkable-looking little being, whose name we are told was Gudea and who was the most powerful deity of those mysterious Sumerians, the first, perhaps, of all planetary races to possess a proper pantheon; and since we are the god-makers, and since it is out of us they spring, have we not the right to call ourselves the natural creators of the supernatural? And if we flee, as we certainly do, from every orthodoxy and every heresy as if they were dangerous plagues or

contaminating fevers, the sooner we grow accustomed to taking for granted that all these god-like persons have the same place of origin and that that place is the human heart, the better we shall be able to cope with those other powerful, frightening, and more obsessing powers that also have their home within us, namely the *eidola* of vanished great ones, and the horrors of all the manias we give birth to in ourselves.

For there is a curious aspect of these madnesses of ours that has not been given its proper weight in the orthodox treatment of insanity; namely the fact that our manias are easier to bear if we are masculine than if we are feminine. It is as if the mere fact of being masculine carried with it, in its separation from Nature, something innately mad, so that in a sense all males are used to that feeling of lonely isolation. This suggests our pre-human origin in the womb of some zodiacal, etheric, elemental "Great Mother", some unutterable *Bona Dea* of our terraqueous dimension in this infinitely receding multiverse.

Let us be real philosophers, therefore, and take as our fighting-password that grand saying: "I am a man. God is no more. Our own humanity let us adore". And let us search out what it really means to be obsessed by the notion that we ourselves actually are, in our own person, some famous historic figure, some figure whose influence on the world has been terrific.

In fact let us boldly suppose here and now that our illusion is that we actually are St. Paul. Of course such an obsession is entirely mad from the viewpoint of objective truth. But, as we have seen, so strong is our creative impulse and so malleable the world-stuff we work upon, that if we have the minimum amount of intelligence necessary to carry the illusion along without making complete fools of ourselves, there is a great deal of some kind of reality in this mad notion of ours.

In spite of legend piled on legend, no one really knows what was the corporeal appearance of St. Paul, and we need

not take for granted that he was as physically repulsive as some legends report, nor need we accept any of the more startling suggestions that drift our way as to the precise nature of his " thorn in the flesh ".

If we are to play at being St. Paul with the intense interior satisfaction which the sublimely mad notion that we actually are the man should give us, it is clear that the metamorphosis must be from the centre outwards and not from the circumference inwards. In plain words, we must to a very considerable extent really *be* St. Paul. That desperately driving demonic power, one of the most creative forces that our planet has known, which carried the body of this extraordinary man—in our opinion after Homer and Shakespeare the greatest man who ever lived—just as if it were a decayed leaf and yet used that body's five senses as if they were five chariots of fire, must be the desperate pressure of a secret urge in ourself.

When St. Paul yields to that volcanic upheaval which brings crashing and thundering down all the ancient values of the outer world's pride and pomp, and then proceeds to work that peculiar magic by which the things that are invisible and inward—yes, the things that *are not* as compared with those that are—are transported into a mysterious atmosphere that is yet part of Nature, we recognize that something has happened to us that is beyond all explanation and all analysis.

Feeling in ourselves what St. Paul felt, and inwardly obsessed by these indescribably new values, we are compelled by necessity to indulge to the limit the mad idea that we actually *are* St. Paul. Well, and why not? Was not this precisely what St. Paul himself did with Christ; only he was less confused in his mind by this transformation of himself into his Idol than we are when, as now, we are feeling ourselves to actually *be* St. Paul.

But if we are obsessed by this new vision of the secret essence of life, as we must be if in our madness we become St. Paul and feel as he did, we must be wise enough to keep our head in the midst of our illumination, and, like St.

Paul himself, to go about our business in the manner of an ordinary person who yet is possessed of an extraordinary revelation.

There is no earthly reason why we should not be able to conceal completely from our friends and relations that we are St. Paul. St. Paul never claimed to be Christ and yet he was forever talking about " the Christ within him ", and in the same way we ought to be able to talk about the *St. Paul within us* without claiming publicly to be what privately we know we are.

Besides, because we are St. Paul, is that any reason against saturating ourselves with the words he used when he—that is to say when we—wrote the Epistles ? But there is no reason why, in expressing his ideas as ours, we should use the man's exact words. In fact there could be no greater proof of our real identity with the man than our use of rather different words to the same effect.

Since we are the man himself, we naturally possess the man's dynamic and magnetic technique ; but the words and expressions he used on particular occasions—there is no reason why we should repeat all those. Let us put it bluntly and plainly. We are St. Paul. It is nobody's business just how we've come to know it ! The point is that we do know it. And if by knowing it we betray the fact that we are mad, this only proves that we are on the right track. What St. Paul felt was that the mystery he called " Christ " was actually dwelling within his consciousness and becoming more and more the real soul within him, while his normal personality was being gradually absorbed by this divine intruder and little by little dwindling away !

Thus we, who are the real St. Paul, however much our appearance contradicts it, feel that we are, just as he was, completely dominated by some unfathomable spirit within us that is ourselves and yet not ourselves.

In the old days St. Paul's name for this mystery was " Jesus Christ ", but since we are St. Paul to-day, we have a perfect

right to use any other name for this *mysterium tremendum* that may suit it to-day better than our old one.

As we ransack our old writings for every hint we can get of how we felt when we wrote the Epistles—for we feel confident that the same spirit inspires us now as inspired us then—we get certain glimpses of absolutely fearful insight, beautiful, terrible, piercing, startling, shattering, shocking, into the secret layers of our own nature as well as into the hidden forces of the cosmic vibrations above and beneath us.

Thus we revel in our insane but quite possibly correct knowledge that we are St. Paul. And then, all of a sudden, as we, who are really St. Paul, are going about our daily business, we find ourselves in the midst of a savage and deadly conflict, a conflict in which we are abominably and hopelessly involved, a conflict it might easily be, and let us for the moment pretend it is, with St. Peter, a conflict concerning the precise relation between the person of Jesus and the person of the Being whom Jesus speaks of as his Father in Heaven. And before we know what is happening to us we find we are entangled in a desperate and savage controversy with a parent, a brother, a sister, a friend, a neighbour, a visitor, as to the correct view to take upon this delicate point. And then the plague is upon us! Some Monophysite or Pelagian heresy surges up in our heart against the orthodoxy of Athanasius or the predestination views or the baptismal views of Augustine—and behold, swirling up from the pit of our stomach and from the pit of our antagonist's stomach, like smoke from the nethermost stomach of hell, rises the devil's own frenzy of rage, a rage, whatever its actual outlet may be on this particular occasion, naturally pointing to violence and cruelty, if not to homicide.

Well, the only thing to do when *that* plague-cart rumbles is to run. But there are, alas, and alas, manias much nearer home from which it is impossible to run. I refer to those especially horrid ones that have to do with our own private, secret, personal, bodily, peculiarities. Fear of cancer can very quickly grow into one of these. Another, and this is one of the most

troublesome of all, has to do with a morbid and most unpleasant super-consciousness of some of the natural and inevitable functions of a living body.

Suffering from such an affliction, we become horribly aware of the beating of our heart and of the throbbing of our pulse and appallingly aware of the blinking of our eyelids, and finally—and I am inclined to regard this as the most ghastly of all—chokingly and suffocatingly aware of the normally unconscious process of breathing; yes, of simply drawing our breath, and, moreover, painfully aware whether we are doing this through our mouth or through our nose.

Naturally and instinctively indeed do we hide these horrors from everybody, even from those with whom we live. The peculiar kind of shrinking and disgust which they excite in us is a phenomenon by itself in the long unhappy history of human nerves.

Well, and what has the unprofessional shrewdness of our "Philosophy of In Spite" to say on this subject?

Whether what our madness is concentrating on at this moment is the idea that we are beginning to share certain physical peculiarities of the opposite sex, or the idea that we have already developed some of the symptoms of cancer, or whether what it is forcing us to do is to exaggerate the beat of our hearts, the throb of our pulses, the flickering of our eyelids, the indraw and outsigh of our breath, what we had better do is as follows: and we of the "Philosophy of In Spite" have devoted to this particular malady, which we might perhaps call "super-consciousness of the hyper-robotical dynamo", so much special time and attention that we feel we can claim the right to be called upon as the leading authorities on its symptoms: the thing to do, we have finally concluded, is to start imagining ourselves fighting this particular mania by getting out of our chair, or up from our bed, and, whatever hour of day or night it may be, setting off at a run along the nearest high-road with milestones, and to continue running till we've touched with our hand the second milestone; so

that when we reach home exhausted we shall have run four miles.

In our race with madness we will ourselves to carry the bundle to which we have already referred, that bundle of a traveller's odds and ends, picked up none knows where! Yes, out of breath as we now are, and with a bundle weighed down by the recent addition of a " hyper-robotical dynamo ", we are too exhausted to think of our heart, or pulse, or breath, or eye-blinking, however much this automatic dynamo may still be throbbing with its horrid energy. All we know is that we have banged and shaken and rattled and thumped that devil's bundle, till all the imaginations that have caused us most discomfort in our whole migration through life have been pounded into a stinking blot. These dustcart rags and tags are conquered enemies. They are no more living entities: they are shreds and patches; they are garbage and offscouring, broken bits of every mortal thought and every mortal thing that in Nature's great workshop are cast away to form part once again of the " background material " from which the innumerable works of our fathomless multiverse are replenished.

There is nothing in the whole arsenal of psychological and psychoanalytical cures for madness that approaches in efficacy this panting race with this invisible bundle to be shaken as we run, especially if we have resolutely filled it—just as we may imagine that " bundle " of Bunyan's hero to be filled—with all our deepest horrors and with all our most gnawing and biting worries—and above all if we have been scrupulously careful to keep it hidden from our friends and relations, so carefully hidden that they may say of us: " Well, of course So-and-so is an absolute nincompoop; but at least he burns his own smoke."

It is the fact that in our invisible bundle we have crowded together such appalling supernatural horrors with those heaps of itching, scratching, fretting, scraping, jarrings and apprehensions, which so often ruin the peace of our happiest days,

and finally that we have thrust into their midst the " hyper-robotical dynamo " of heart, pulse and breath, that renders it so burstingly full.

A few bangs against the second milestone will have broken that robot dynamo to bits. Thus we shall return from our four-miles run " happy and glorious " with a sense of a living victory over all this down-dragging weight of organic and inorganic junk. We can indeed almost regard our devil's bundle as the private museum of a neurotic collector who overcomes his personal disgusts and horrors by roping his whole collection together.

And so we also make one grand devil's bundle of all our manias; jumbling up in one collection the whole wretched amorphous mass of defeated horror pressed down tight upon all the night-mare terrors of former times.

Tie your invisible bundle of devil's excrement with strong cords. There's the secret of your escape! And when you've got it corded up tight don't, for heaven's sake, let its contents be spilt. *It* belongs to you, remember, not *you* to it. Swing its invisible bulk lightly and airily in one hand. And never once allow yourself to forget that everyone in the world, even your nearest and dearest, *is a doctor desirous of curing you*—while *your* purpose, absolutely alone as you are in a world far madder than yourself, is to conceal your insanity.

Oh, it is so important never to forget that this bundle we carry is not only invisible to others but to ourselves as well, and that, since it resembles vapour or mist, there is no danger of its colliding with cups, or saucers, or tables, or chairs indoors, or with trees, or bushes, or walls, or gates, or hedges, or cars, or anything else, out-of-doors.

The mere fact that what feeds a person's madness is that person's creative imagination renders certain attempts at curing such a person both absurd and revengeful.

To sum it all up: the best attitude for a man or a woman to take, who is, as we say, "peculiar", is to treat everybody as a potential doctor, and, while concealing our " peculiarity " in

the depths of our soul, to make use of an invisible and tightly tied-up bundle of all we suffer from so as to give ourselves the feeling that we have got our mental trouble well under control. Yes, the thing to do is to *accept*, not to try to cure our mental abnormality, and to be continually telling ourselves that the whole and sole purpose of our life is to wrestle with what surrounds us and thus to force ourselves to enjoy ourselves until at last we are wholesomely and contentedly, even if finally and absolutely—dead.

In Spite of

CLASS

Granting that our philosophy is wise in putting more stress on sensation than on emotion, and granting that what we call our will, however feeble, plays such a dominant part in the enjoyment of each particular sensation in our sense-life that it would be true to say that we can force ourselves to enjoy ourselves in spite of the most teasing, ridiculous, and hateful emotions, it becomes abundantly clear that one of the worst hindrances to this life of pure sensation, so longed-for by our planetary instinct, comes from our class system.

What ordinary people have got to acquire then, and the sooner we persuade our boys and girls to begin practising the alphabet of this evolutionary change the better, is a deep individual detachment from class.

What we fumblers after a philosophic life are most anxious to avoid is playing into the hands of class by taking one side or the other side, in such a way as to start among us the sort of class war which has resulted in the "dictatorship of the proletariat", as that phenomenon assumes its now fatally familiar features in Russia and China and among their satellites.

In the startling results of scientific invention—such, for instance, as those that have led to our whole industrial life and now have culminated in radio and television—we are apt to forget those other characteristics of civilization, such

as the evolution of the law of the land and of all the legal customs in accordance with which our normal life has been built up.

The effect of these legal customs, and of the judicial system that has been built on their foundation, is quite as evident when we are observing the difference between ourselves and any tribe of primitive men and women as are the clothes we wear, or our ways of eating and drinking, or our cars and airplanes, or anything else belonging to the complicated paraphernalia that has arrived with the extended use of oil and electricity, quite as evident and none the less serious for being mental and psychological rather than technical or mechanical.

And surely, from the evolution of those legal rights that have slowly solidified among us from the natural rights of the earlier times, what to-day is the sturdiest and toughest support of individual liberty, support of liberty of thought, speech and writing, support of the right to move from place to place, to choose the nature of our work, to have something to say about our hours of work and hours of leisure, is our right to consider whatever it is we make by our daily work, whether in the form of wages or in any other form, *as our own to do with as we like*; to save as much of it for emergencies as we like; to live as cheaply as we like; and above all to be protected by all the forces of the law from being robbed.

It was a Frenchman, we believe, who declared that all "private property" was robbery. Robbery from whom? We must presume he meant from our public; in other words from the State; in other words from the totalitarian police-state; in which each individual is a hopeless slave, and the ruling bureaucracy nothing but an oligarchy of drugged policemen.

What we "Philosophers of In Spite" have in our minds, and, mind you, we are only going to make public the points upon which we are all, men and women, old and young, absolutely agreed so far, is a concentrated and concerted attack upon our class system from what we regard as a new angle;

and not only so, but an angle where the accursed thing is more vulnerable than from any other.

We must remember that class in these islands—and it is important to use the plural, since it is from Ireland and Scotland that the most self-consciously superior " gentleness " descend upon us—is profoundly affected by our system of primogeniture.

Since in any particular family all the available cash is required to do what is called " keep up the title "—and this means " keep up ", if it is at all possible, a big house, a goodly garden, and a fine park—it is obvious that the younger sons have to wander about the world, either serving their country or picking up a living as best they can.

Anyone might suppose that this system would render the British aristocracy a lot weaker than their peers in France and Germany, but such by no means seems to be the case. What it does is to strengthen the power of the class just below the aristocracy, that is to say what we roughly call the upper middle class. This class, including most of our professionals and the bulk of our Army and Navy and Civil Service leaders, has been throughout the nineteenth century the real ruler of the British Empire, and it has been noticeable that its fall, which has been going on now for half this present century, instead of bringing down with a final crash the remnants of the aristocracy from above it, has put new life into that redoubtable old tree which still seems able to draw fresh sap for its green top branches from its roots in the deep soil.

The truth of the matter seems to be that this top class of all has managed to remain, possibly because it philosophizes less than the rest, the most practical and competent of all: and we may imagine—but of course this imagination may be a dangerous crack of perilous snobbishness in our own philosophical bed-rock—that the reason for this is the one which Nietzsche gave for what he regarded as the inferiority of the contemporaries of Socrates and Euripides and Plato to those of the age before them, when the heroic mood was more

spontaneous and less analytical, namely that certain kinds of self-consciousness corrupt the very sources of the will.

Of course we must remember that the most spirited plunge into action is quite often, from a philosophical point of view, just an unlucky experiment, while it always remains possible that a certain fatal lethargy that some of us suffer from indicates a mood in us where there is a curious reversion, away from our ancestral arboreal lemurs, back down some overgrown side-track of atavism to the antediluvian saurians.

Then again it might well be argued that the way we are now stressing the competent shrewdness of the top class in these islands is simply a proof of snobbishness in ourselves and is likely enough to be followed by a disgusting fit of impassioned inferiority. We are in any case compelled to face the question as to how far any admiration we are unable to resist for the top class endangers the sense-life we keep advocating, since it implies a latent and furtive emergence of the deadliest kind of pride, that is to say pride in superior taste, when taste itself, by being applied to anything that is surrounded by an imponderable atmosphere of class, mingles moral taste, artistic taste, cultural taste, and, speaking generally, displays a preference for the sexually abnormal, since there is no greater leveller in the world and smoother-out of distinctions than the act of copulation, just as there has never been a wiser defender of the barriers of class than the old-fashioned nanny, who guards and nourishes, waters and manures, so to speak, the tree of class at its tender root.

But life in this businesss, as in everything else, works by opposites and by contradictions. At the heart of everything good and great there is, as William Blake taught, a marriage of heaven and hell. The reason why we " Philosophers of In Spite " have decided to make a wholesale war upon class in these islands is not that it is a breeder of pride, but, on the contrary, that it is a breeder of that subtle and morbid kind of inferiority which, like the plague-spots of the Black Death and like the curious hatreds implicit in all religious hostility,

could kill, would love to kill, and one day will kill, if our common sense, as common sense prompted by Nature has done ere this, doesn't work a miracle, the nicest things that evolution has yet given us. Yes, there is a self-depreciation which is a caricature of real humility and which dwells at the threshold to an underground corridor that descends very far indeed.

This self-depreciation always tends to be excessively self-conscious, and, short of intolerable pain, it is a cause of some of the worst misery human beings have to endure. It is worse than pride, vanity and conceit, because it is more treacherous, more complicated and much more false.

Every living creature has a perfect right to be proud of being itself, because pride in being ourselves is indistinguishable from enjoyment in being ourselves. Every creature has its own unique identity of which it can be proud without spoiling its enjoyment in itself.

How far does any sort of permanent acceptance of belonging to an inferior class—even though such acceptance does not go quite as far as the amazing attitude of an " Untouchable " in Aryan India—compare with the shock to our personal feelings and the hurt to our individual pride of being beaten in temporary competition by a rival of our own kidney and kind ? This is a most significant question and our " Philosophy of In Spite " answers it by suggesting that the cold, heavy, numb, impervious, crustacean-like taking-for-granted that as an " Untouchable " you are fatally, wholly, inescapably inferior to some other kind of person, whom at the moment you have to supplicate for a drop of water from the well, can never cause us quite the same sharp anguish as is caused by the victory of a rival over us in some special struggle.

" All the same for that "—which is another version of the great Homeric phrase we have adopted as our war-cry, *alla kai empes*, and have turned into " In Spite Of "—we must here and now confess that it has taken long days of discussion among us to " find ", or rather to " make ", some kind of adjustment between the old simple heathen virtues of courage

and endurance and the profoundly subtle and much more complicated self-lacerations and self-mortifications of the terrific and formidable Pauline " mythus " of " the Christ in us ".

And now having stolen from the Christian " mysteries " several of their subtlest secrets, and having robbed the heathen shrines of a few of the simpler qualities of their ancient heroes, and having mixed these two essences together, we are wondering how to apply this " divine unction " to the devilish cracks in the various vessels' keels above which we've landed ourselves high and dry on the sand-dunes of class distinction.

We simple-minded philosophers must somehow acquire the philosophic insight to see that a living creature's pride in being what Nature has made it flows naturally and easily along with all the sensations that Nature has given it, and for the sake of which, rather than for a life of emotion, or a life of service, or a life of sanctity, or a life of science, or a life of preparation for a life after death, it is our wisdom and purpose to live.

But just as a true philosopher can regard with equanimity his defeat in any athletic contest, so in our curious island, as both its supporters and its detractors must have already observed, while the system in itself is deadly to the particular sense-life we aim at obtaining, this deadliness can be overcome up to a certain point.

The psychology of the situation is indeed a great deal simpler than those " whose pastime it is to make midnight mushrooms" of plain toadstools would lead us to suppose. We have already indicated clearly enough that what the " Philosophy of In Spite " is an adept in, and what it would make all its convertites adepts in, is the simplest of all psychological arts, namely light-fingered thievery, and in this case thievery like that of the wing-heeled deity Hermes ; the art, in plain words, of stealing from the New Testament sufficient wisdom to help us get what we need in our primeval animal struggle to enjoy ourselves.

What, in fact, we feel we are most wholly justified in trying to do, and what we try to do all the time, is to make use of the

psychological insight of the saints to defend, support, and guard us naïve children of Nature in our elemental and primordial desire to enjoy the sensations of eating and drinking and sleeping and waking and smelling and touching and tasting and above all feasting our vision, among all the organic and inorganic growths around us and all the elemental, imponderable and atmospheric influences around what are around us.

Listening to what we are always telling them about how much we have gained in the simple art of being responsive to Nature from our almost desperate cultivation of *humility*, people might well ask us how on earth does the class system in this country hurt anybody's enjoyment or spoil anyone's sensations, if the worst it can do to us is to bring down our pride?

Ah, my wise sir, but you can never have been a boy or a girl, or you would know by this time that there is a deep gulf between pride in being ourself and pride in being superior to another person. Do you not see, O too-clever convertite, that while our philosophy *can* enable us to endure and *does* enable us to endure the humiliation of being beaten in any ordinary competition, however childish, with another person, there is a certain condescending good nature and a certain polite assumption of imponderable superiority that, in the most subtle manner, deprives us of every weapon of retort save the old simple French Revolution one of bloody violence?

This whole class business is the inherited superiority of people who have beaten other people—never mind with what weapons!—in the struggle of life, so that their descendants can lie back on this old victory with a delicious feeling of being *too superior to have to do anything about it.*

Oh, how different from all this is the simple, natural, direct humiliation of being defeated in any kind of competition by any kind of rival! In sex rivalry the hurt goes deeper than in most; but we of the "Philosophy of In Spite" hold the view that the humiliation of being defeated by a rival in that quarter

has all sorts of subtle ointments and healing unguents unknown to those of us who have been socially ostracized.

It is then, much more than in any case of sexual rivalry, that an appalling feeling of self-contempt holds us in a perpetual Slough of Despond, where the mud is so sticky and the reeds so thick that we cannot find enough of a *point d'appui* under our feet even to rise high enough to get the shock of falling down!

And one of the worst "tools that shape our sorrow", one of the worst "engines" that cause the pain of our humiliation when this is the case, is our knowledge that there is nothing we can do about it except, as my friend Hywel the Welshman says: "Press on regardless!"

Oh, how much better it is to be a little sceptical, a little frivolous, a little ironical, even a little simple, than to take too seriously our mind's power of reason, power of intellect, power of logic! Hear, therefore, the last word of the "Philosophy of In Spite": Whither do we have to go to hear the real truth about human life? To the old wives' tales! *There* is the wisdom that is rooted and grounded in experience! *There* is the wisdom that is nursed in common sense, in common sense interpreting experience!

Here in simple childish prose is embodied the essence of Homer and Shakespeare and Rabelais and Cervantes. Yes, from Mother Goose to the Brothers Grimm, all these seem to have been flung into our tragic and laborious world from a kindlier, more humorous, more indulgent planet!

But when we say that the philosophy expressed in these rich summaries of human life is the philosophy of an old woman rather than of an old man, I am thinking how much more of the prejudices of the feminine attitude to life can be found in Shakespeare than can be found, let us say, in Fielding, or Thackeray, or Trollope, or Tolstoy, or any other great writer of prose-fiction save Rabelais in his Pantagruel and Cervantes in his Don Quixote.

And why is this? Why do Homer and Shakespeare come nearer to the deeper levels of immortal feminine wisdom than

such inspired psychologists, so terrifying in their demonic insight, as Euripides and St. Paul and Dostoievsky and Nietzsche? Because the eternal essence of poetry is not, as Matthew Arnold so beautifully but so erroneously declares, the "natural magic" of the elements—though that, thanks be to the gods, will always play its part as the thing's imperishable background—but is to be found in the human body.

Now the primary concern of women, directly or indirectly, in connection with themselves or in connection with others, has to do with human bodies and with all the organic or inorganic substances that, within the four walls of a house and between the markets in a town and the privies in the yards and the ovens in the kitchens, are connected with human bodies. Here and nowhere else is the dwelling of true poetry; that is why, with all their cleverness and subtlety, modern poets are comparatively uninspiring.

There seems to be a law of Nature that only subjects which have for a very long time indeed, in fact from what we call "time immemorial", been associated with human life upon earth, subjects such as love and war and sleep and birth and death and washing and burying and eating and drinking, and with the four ancient elements—never mind about uranium or radium!—subjects that have to do with earth, air, fire, water, and with the three terrestrial recurrences we call animal, vegetable, and mineral, that only such subjects have the power to inspire what we call the poetical mood and to become what we call poetry. Whether a thing is attractive or repulsive, whether it is gracious or disgusting, matters nothing to the mother of the Muses. What matters is one thing only—a long, long, long, long association with human life upon the earth. "The light that never was on land or sea" can be thrown upon anything that is so old that we have forgotten its beginning.

Yes, there are thousands of lovely things that have not existed long enough to have the power of giving us the authentic poetical thrill. The mother of the Muses is memory, the

memory of old association, of association so old that its beginnings are lost. Yes, extremely disgusting things and extremely repulsive things can be *poetical* when there is absolutely nothing *artistic* about them, or clever about them, or subtle about them, or distinguished or prophetic about them.

How poetical can old rags be! How poetical can cow-dung be! Fire and water, bread and meat, milk and butter, honey and blood; all these things and the appurtenances thereof belong to the simple dimension where alone the dry bones of human experience have their recurrent resurrection. This is the common highway; and in many a fairground upon this highway, so familiar to us that we forget when we first behold it, we encounter Mother Goose and the Brothers Grimm.

But what has all this to do with snobbishness? Not a little, my friend; for if we are going to attack this confounded thing root and branch and hip and thigh, we must know which of the sexes is responsible for starting it in the world and for continuing it now that it is so deeply established. And we hold that men and not women are the guilty ones. I know that at first glance and superficially it doesn't look like that. Women are the mistresses in our houses, at our parties, if we can afford such things, and in the handling of our neighbours. And this applies to all classes. There's not a man in Great Britain—no, not among the simplest of farm-labourers or factory-hands—who doesn't contemplate the woman of his house with a mixture of cave-man bewilderment, frightened awe, and condescending amusement, mingled, as it may chance in the case of any particular couple, with more or less proud satisfaction at being the possessor of such a deft manœuvrer in all the awkward manipulation of bed and board and the dropping in and out of neighbours!

Oh yes! In all our daily intercourse with our neighbours, and in all our daily adjustments to the capricious rivalries between our various friends and acquaintances, women play the dominant part. They are, so to speak, the starters, timers, umpires and referees, even if they are not the judges. Yes, I

admit it. From the highest to the lowest, and in every subdivision of the highest and the lowest, for there are amazing differences of class among such as are roughly called working people, women are the manipulators of the daily round of life.

But though they play this part in the cursive flux of ordinary life and move so naturally through its bewildering complications, they may be wholly absolved from the charge of having at the start set the class-game and the snob-game going. Nature herself must be held responsible for this ; and however artificial and unnatural the system has become as the effect of that *anti-nature rebel*, the male-animal, meddling with it, the primal element in it, due to Nature and to what women derive directly from Nature, remains sound. Yes, the male animal, though he may be the one who fights and hunts and drives and rides and sails and migrates and invades, is at the start, in his greater isolation from Nature, the originator of the perverse artificiality of snobbishness.

But never mind *what* started or *who* started the class system under which we live to-day ; the point for our " Philosophy of In Spite " is not only how to keep our heads, and how to enjoy our life under the elaborate and vicious clutch of its absurd conventions, but how to set to work to bring the damned thing to an end.

The ideal figures of the " perfect gentleman " and the " perfect lady "—ask the first tramp you meet to-day if we are not absolutely right—are the crafty devils whose good nature has reached such a second nature that they would make poor old Caliban believe that " God had called him " to curry favour with Trinculo.

Of course what gives *our* class system its special quality is our system of primogeniture and the special connection of that system with landed property. It is this system that by creating the " younger son " creates our peculiar ideal of the " perfect gentleman ". For whatever " courtesy title " this precious younger son may boast, or his father may boast, his lack of

money and the fact that *his* children must lack even the " courtesy title " which buoys him up a bit, compels him to fall back upon his unchallengeable gentle blood.

This primogeniture business in Britain—so different from the custom of continental Europe—naturally emphasizes to its extreme limit and beyond its extreme limit the imponderable, magical, invisible, atmospheric, almost supernatural distinction of being a " real gentleman ". But how are we to know a gentleman when we see him? " Gentlemen ", like starlings or chaffinches, can be met with anywhere. A solitary specimen can be encountered on the beach, in a train, on a bus, on the esplanade, in a public-house, in a café, in a lane, on a moorland, on the downs.

Well, go up to the worthy fellow and speak to him. You needn't say, " Are you a gentleman? " You can ask him the time or beg him for a light. Is he a gentleman, or is he not a gentleman? Everybody in our island knows the answer to that question! Firstly by his voice, secondly by his voice, thirdly by his voice. And after that, only a long distance behind, by his clothes, which are, as everybody knows over here, a tiny bit, though rather picturesquely so, *shabby*.

And after his clothes, though even a bold "In Spite" will add these things a little hesitatingly, by his manner, his air, his way of behaving, his response to our suddenly-intruded personality, his courtesy, his consideration, his tact, his kindliness.

Well, it was to endow the sons of the " new rich " of the Industrial Revolution with these excellent virtues that Thomas Arnold—though, as his free-thinking son Matthew explained once in some Oxford common-room, " the dear doctor is not infallible "—gave our famous public schools their special send-off with his ideal Rugby. There is a very nice point just here that may bring down upon us the charge of dabbling ignorantly in nuances and niceties totally outside our experience. We refer to the difference between the aristocracy and the upper middle class. Now the latter is the class—though things are

rapidly changing—from which a couple of decades ago the bulk of doctors, lawyers, clergymen, schoolmasters, professors, not to mention the officers in Army and Navy, were drawn.

And it is from this class, with their uneasy respect for the aristocracy, whose ways always a little bewilder them, that the more painful aspects of the mystery of snobbishness rise to articulation in satiric story and verse.

It would appear from such cursory plunges into social life as we can afford that Matthew Arnold's division of us into barbarians, philistines, and populace is even yet pretty correct. The aristocracy in these days certainly seem able to come down, as we say, to bed-rock and brass-tacks, in their rapid and efficient adjustment to modern conditions, letting half of their dwellings with fair success, bargaining over death-duties without getting into jail, farming the most promising portions of their land. Shrewd, sensual, easy-going, selfish, good-natured, completely self-confident, and with infinitely more knowledge of the way to get good meat, good butter, milk, good wool, good hay, good water, than the professional class possesses, they are able, much more quickly than the rank and file of the upper middle class, to adapt themselves to a struggle for life that is rapidly becoming more like the Dark Ages than the Middle Ages.

But the persons who are engaged here in formulating out of their own bad and good experience some sort of handbook of a practical life-philosophy must be regarded—though, of course, they can include isolated individuals from either of the two upper classes—as belonging to the mass of the people of Great Britain who would be included in Matthew Arnold's definition as "populace".

We might pretty safely be assumed to belong to that great wavering, fluctuating, shifting and changing mass of ordinary people who would not, in the modern technical sense, rank precisely as " proletarian ", but on the other hand are not necessarily small shopkeepers, or shop assistants in large shops, or clerks in office buildings, all of whom would count as the typical white-collar crowd of the lower middle class.

But, " whoever we are ", as Walt Whitman would say, it is absolutely essential that we should formulate a resolute, well-considered, calm-blooded, unimpassioned, if not too coldly logical, attitude of our own towards the whole problem of class-consciousness.

One thing is certain. Though our friends may pretend in order to please us that they think of us as belonging to the class above our own ; or our enemies, in order to enjoy their own spleen, place us in a class several pegs down the scale, we ourselves in our secret heart know to a nicety where, as we say in Wessex, " us do bide ".

Moreover, the traditionally conventional and the habitually constituted manner of behaving in any class you please is the custom that we, who belong to that class, instinctively obey, even if it stigmatizes us as being clearly not up to the level of some among our neighbours.

And this applies not only to our behaviour but even to the way we arrange our furniture. The place, for example, of our looking-glass in our bedroom, if we belong to a certain class, is as rigorously ordained as the position of knife or fork or spoon when the white cloth is on the table.

What so many ironical novelists of our time don't realize is that it is extremely unusual for ordinary people, even when they are not excessively conventional, to want to change their class either by sinking to the one just below it or by rising to the one just above it. When we do want to get out of the class in which we've been brought up, it is generally from some emotional revolutionary feeling or from some unusually ambitious and careerist instinct in us driving us forward.

What the " Philosophy of In Spite " advocates is quite different from this and much more drastic. It does not aim at the hasty abolition of all class-distinction, such as leads to the " dictatorship of the proletariat " as we have it to-day in Russia and her satellites. In fact our little Pantagruelian band of " good companions " is busy creating in the " Philosophy of In Spite " a secret, and you might almost call it an *atmospheric*,

system of life that, like Christianity or Taoism, could be practised under any political method of government.

Our idea is to destroy the class system from within, and do it gradually rather than by any revolutionary violence. Some important and very curious changes in regard to our class system are already, as all intelligent people have become aware, beginning to happen; and it is in harmony with these that we are anxious to make our particular philosophical suggestion: and our suggestion is that we should follow the hint of that best of all possible "sayings": "In the destructive element immerse!"

Now what is the "destructive element" in this problem of class-distinction? Surely we have a right to answer: "The most privileged type of human being that we are able to imagine!" Well then, let us use our imagination, and use also, if our critical convertite is willing to allow us such a liberty, a little of what might be called the "white magic of the mixing-bowl", and make up our minds to pursue a line of action as crafty as Metternich's or Talleyrand's, and yet at the same time as principled as Tom Paine's or Jean Jacques Rousseau's, as patriotic as Cicero's, and at the same time as desperate as Nietzsche's, and just see what happens!

What we have, in plain words, made up our minds to do is to devote all our *imitative power* to copying the tone, manner, dress, habits, ways, interests, prejudices, indifferences, avoidances, of the top class in these islands, for when it comes to our aristocracy they really are not very different in the Hebrides, or Man, or Wight, or Thanet, or the Orkneys, or Sark, or even Ireland, from what they are in the most snobbish counties of England. You will soon, therefore, astonished convertite, observe in our small group the temper, ways, customs, habits, peculiarities, clothes, food, interests, newspapers, smokes, tastes, prejudices, limitations, ignorances, and, above all, first and last, *the tone of voice*, for that in the final upshot is invariably what settles it, of the highest class in the land! And do not be so nanny-ish, dear friend, as to fancy all this to be out of our

power. It is well within our power. And *now* do you, O patient and attentive convertite, begin to " catch on ", as we say ? The point is this. If we could only start a definite crusade among a clever group of mischievous reformers—do not misunderstand me or be horrified at such anthropological levity—whose purpose would be to mimic every single characteristic of our true aristocracy and practise this mimicry wherever they went, isn't it possible that, as time went on, more and more young people would do the same ? Isn't it possible that it might become quite a fashion ?

And, if it did, isn't it possible also that the imponderable self-satisfaction in these top-notch gentry, this hitherto unruffled automatism of superiority to the rest of us, would receive a shock ? And if it did, what then ?

Alas, this " copying " of aristocratic ways, whatever shock it might give to their subtle, etheric, and imponderable assumption of superiority over us, would never " do the trick ". No, along with all our " copying " and along with all our clever propitiation, we must cultivate down in the depths of ourselves an emotional French-Revolution conviction of the " equality of all souls ".

Without this emotional conviction our rather flippant if intensely sincere loathing of such superiority wouldn't work. But supposing we could feel in this deeply impassioned way about the " equality of all souls ", isn't there a danger that we should be only substituting a worse domination than the one we have just escaped ? We have to keep our minds fixed steadily upon *the* essential thing in this mad life of ours and the " essential thing " is not the " equality of all souls ", however true this may be, but the manner in which we can assert ourselves with regard to these other " equal souls ". It's no good defying the Absolute and dodging the Vatican only to be ruled by M. Stalin's police-state.

But, quite apart from the danger of falling into the hands of the Kremlin, there is a very interesting and very curious phenomenon to be considered here, and it is this. It has become

both a matter of historical psychology, and also a matter for some of us of personal experience, that simultaneously with any extra-powerful recognition of the " equality of all souls " there recedes and withdraws and lessens and dwindles, almost in ironical proportion, a person's warm, kindly, friendly, overbrimming, humorous delight in being nice to his wife, his family, his parents, his children, his brothers, his sisters and his neighbours. It would almost seem sometimes that the more a person realizes the " equality of all souls " and the more he sets himself to struggle for it and fight for it with every weapon in his control, the less pleasant, easy, friendly, forgiving, indulgent, lenient, unexacting he is in his relaxation with the people he sees every day.

That all souls are equal is a legitimate and inspiring doctrine, but for some queer psychological reason it seems to vampirize and suck the life-blood out of our " bowels of compassion ". It seems to corrupt our kindly reception, for instance, of Cousin Jane's stertorous breathing and of the repulsive way Uncle John swallows his porridge.

Is it perhaps because there is something so agreeable in yielding ourselves up to what Matthew Arnold calls " the stream of tendency that makes for righteousness " that this yielding becomes a sensation of such delicious sweetness as to enervate our power of initiative? It will be considerably disconcerting to quite a lot of us if we find that there is a force in Nature that punishes us for evading personal decisions and for submitting with relaxed relief to any sort of emotional tide that relieves us from the tension of thought, the strain of will, and the terrible pang of responsibility.

Thus precisely in the way we were accustomed to give ourselves up to the old class-consciousness, dodging thereby all need of examining the real nature of the sacrifice we were making of originality, for the sake of gentility it now would seem—if we yield to this heavenly conviction of the " equality of all souls "—that we shall be yielding up our freedom of individual criticism.

We shall find ourselves dominated by the luxuriously lazy excuse that because " all souls are equal " we are absolved from following our private and personal conscience. Our secret relapse has been induced by the delicious feeling that we, a small unit of the life-force, are now absorbed in a *greater whole*. But is this Nature's way ? Surely it is not. Nature confines herself with a terrible and appalling persistence to particulars and allows all these " wholes ", whether near or far, to look after themselves !

As Goethe says somewhere, Nature does not speak with one voice but with a multitude of voices ; and when we remember what false directions in our slow, winding, undulating, hesitating pilgrimage over the Alps of Experience we have so often taken, and how frequently we have had to wheel about and return, only not quite full circle, to our last halt, but in wavering half-circles and three-quarter-circles, and how all our real advances have been led and inspired, precisely not by vast tidal consensuses of general human instincts, but by the peculiar genius and the almost weird and magical ascendancy of individual migrating races, it really does seem a grotesque proceeding to make such volcanic upheavals to shake off the trappings of gentility only to thrust our innocent necks into the collars of oxen and the bridles of asses !

What we have imagined we were doing was escaping from the consciousness of our particular class, whatever that may have been, into the consciousness of the bulk of humanity. But this whole business of regarding " consciousness " as a vagabond entity floating about in space without any naturally attached body, this whole notion of an eidolonian-entelechian ghost, blown about on the winds of an ubiquitous limbo, in some weird dimension that interpenetrates our ordinary one, may easily be—though in these spheres of the imagery of metaphysic anything is possible—a notion that will eventually vanish completely from human thought, along with our present fancy notion of what psychiatrists love to call " the unconscious ", that gurgling and sobbing phantom-pool of writhing water-snakes !

And the chances are that Nature in her evolutionary wisdom has other and extremely different methods of carrying forward her secret intentions. Certainly we must, mentally and emotionally and as soon as possible, free ourselves from this damned class-system that in these islands squeezes us into such quaint shapes; but when we call up the idea of a consciousness of humanity as a whole, and try to get the feeling of lying back upon that majestic but purely imaginary wave, of mounting and sinking with that wave, of rising and falling with that wave, of shifting and veering with that wave, of swirling and towering with that wave, we have missed, *not* found, the secret of the best way of handling life.

For what says our " Philosophy of In Spite " ? If we must renounce gentility, it says, as savouring too directly of our six-times-accurst system, for you can divide each one of our three classes into a couple of subdivisions and all six are implied in, just because they are triumphed over by, this top-notch aristocratic class, we must also renounce this vague and facile ideal of the universal consciousness of humanity.

Our class system is hateful, but it is a real thing. Whereas this consciousness of humanity as a whole has less reality than the sea-serpent. Have we learnt nothing from Nature ? Have we not even learnt that Nature never does anything except by making use of two things: first of some event that has happened by pure chance or accident; and in the second place of some longing, or craving, or desire, or wish, so intense that it *feels* as if it were made, and perhaps even comes eventually to be made, of the very stuff of reality, a wish that seems born to be used by the ultimate illusion life makes for itself, as it settles itself to do battle with death. But please note this, O half-converted one. When we reject as unrealistic this consciousness of humanity as a whole, we do not mean for a second that if, like Robinson Crusoe, we suddenly met a red man or a black man or a yellow man, we would not at once feel a sense of meeting a fellow-creature that belonged to our human species and was not an ape or a monster.

No, no ! If our individual self escapes from the class system it must absolutely refuse to enter any other system. " Get rid of all systems ! " must be its oracle ; and since some superwise philosopher-king invented for our race the idea of money as a medium of exchange, whether in the form of bits of gold, or silver, or iron, or copper, or slips of carefully printed paper money, we can all be free, if the ruling customs and habits don't interfere, and if the law of the land remains just and fair, to work when and where we like and to save and spend as we like.

Yes, the cunning and skill and shrewdness of the individual mind is the only pivot and the only satisfactory " entelecheia " from the balanced position of which, whether formally and outwardly we belong to the highest or to the lowest class or to any of the intervening ones, we are in a position to free ourselves from the fatally subtle, the fatally penetrating, the fatally ubiquitous *atmosphere* of our British class system.

As St. Paul reminds us in connection with his own desperate Christ-cause—*yr achos*, as we call it in North Wales—we are not fighting, in this matter of class, " against flesh and blood ".

Only by *clearing our minds of it*, as Dr. Johnson warns us to do in the matter of cant, can we get rid of this unphilosophical perfume or " eau-de-comme-il-faut ".

The truth is that our quarters are so confined in this old battleship of an island that there are few professional men who haven't some drops of aristocratic blood, few business men who haven't got some drops of professional blood, while the historical surnames we're always coming upon in every corner of our island prove that our country people retain, as surnames, names that are milestones of generative atomies not yet christened by ordinary dictionaries for common use, but which carry germs of life within them that have evidently been transmitted for centuries from baronial loins more than just mentioned in Shakespeare.

Yes, what we have to do in this struggle to get rid of class distinctions is to fight the battle with the most refined weapons

of our most refined enemies. If anyone in this fight is driven to be gross, brutal, vulgar, blatant, let it be on their side that this happens, not on ours. Let them be the ones to call us names. Let them talk of treacherous intellectuals, clever cads, affected townees, and pedantic bounders.

No, we must boldly recognize that this philosophy we are articulating and formulating at this devilishly important juncture of planetary history has to thread its way by crafty shifts and delicate mockeries into the Cretan maze and out again. Our first idea that we could *imitate* the voice, tone, style, air, manner of this highest class has much to be said for it: only it would take at least a couple of generations; and that is too long to wait! They would think we couldn't do it, of course! But we could do it all right. Let there be no mistake about that. We could do it. And we should win over some of the best of them to our side as soon as we made the more conventional and more stupid ones look really comical.

They think they can't be made comical. That is the whole point. But they can: oh, they can! And that right thoroughly! Well then, let us plunge into the maze of the Minotaur; and carve on his contented belly a slashing caricature of the phantasmagoria of his damned superiority!

Make no mistake, most careful convertite! We can break these invisible chains of class, if we only go for them *at the top* and make the giant's head look dwarf-like and his comfortable casual-careless expression turn into a crazy scarecrow one. The illusions of class are certainly complicated and subtle; and in order to undermine them we must be more subtle than they are. Yes, our adversary's mirages and illusions are rich and deep. But his allies are gross, brutal, and essentially vulgar.

Our business, therefore, is to outwit his complicated sophistications and to put to shame his brutal allies. We must treat the innocent-looking mushroom-beds, with which these devilish class-gardeners surround their most exquisite toadstools, as if we were soft-skinned moles burrowing through

heavily-smelling leaf-mould. What we must recognize is that the whole class system is propped up by popular fallacies and plausible assumptions, many of which are just simply pure lies. Let us, therefore, whisper to ourselves a philosophical exorcism and plunge through this paper screen!

It is, however, no use pretending that our anti-class campaign can be a matter of one frontal attack after another! We can plunge through screen after screen of painted stage-sets; there will still remain the obdurate, the incorrigible, the invisible atmosphere. And we are not just yet provided with a spiritual atom-bomb capable of blowing this whole atmosphere sky-high, as St. Paul did with his own Pharisaic scruples while he submitted to "the powers that were".

No, we must flit in and out of very simple and stupid skulls. We must penetrate our more innocent neighbours' frontal lobes, and sprinkle their brains from our little silver-mounted chrysolite phials of white magic with potent drops of Paracelsian disenchantment.

But aye the day, and woe the day! Through it all, "by Gis and by St. Charity, alack, and fie for shame", we ourselves are so terribly apt to forget, in the clever strategy and lively tactics of our crusade against convention, the main purpose of our whole effort, which is, of course, not so much to reduce Great Britain to one single class, as to enable every individual to free himself from the whole conception of class.

This, according to our philosophy, is what he will naturally do as he gradually acquires the art of a receptivity which reduces to a minimum everything proudly personal in everybody's self-consciousness. The worst of it is that so many of the most ardent and most intense of the enemies of the class system in Great Britain hold that the only way to abolish it is simply and purely the communist way; the way of that wholesale tyranny euphemistically called the "dictatorship of the proletariat". Our way, the individualistic one, is much slower. What M. Stalin with his secret police could do in five years, we would take fifty to accomplish!

However, there are compensations for slowness where human animals are concerned; and there are other interesting subtleties in this particular dimension of space and time that have nothing whatever to do with upper class, middle class, or working class; subtleties that haven't anything to do even with the evolutionary aristocracy of *homo sapiens*.

We male and female men and women had better stop taking it for granted that, if we can't find a substitute for the police-state, we must submit to being barbarians like the gentry, like the Philistines, like the business-men, or just working-class like the rest.

What we have to do is to discover some definite line of attack upon the class system, such as we could use both as permanent strategy and in all quick tactical moves.

Now answer us this, good reader, answer us this. "What has been found to be, under all conditions, the best line to take when you are confronted by any sort of hostile body?" Surely the answer is to be found in that memorable saying: "In the destructive element immerse!"

And what precisely would that sentence mean in this particular case? Well, we will tell you what, according to our philosophy, it might mean. And, mark you, this applies whether you are a man or a woman, whether you are young or old. Be ready for everybody and be prepared for all imaginable situations. Start with your own mind cleared of everything save the idea that you are out to fight our class system to the bitter end.

You are, as a matter of course, as we have hinted before, like everybody else in these islands, conscious from the depths of your soul to your finger-tips of your own personal precise place in the class system.

At a moment's notice you can think of your Cousin So-and-so who is a lord, of your Cousin So-and-so who is a gentleman of leisure, of your Cousin So-and-so who deals in gin, of Uncle Dick who keeps a shop, of Uncle Ted who

works on a farm, of Aunt Eliza who is a nanny, and of Great-uncle John who is a wanderer with no fixed abode.

Yes, such is what you are when you think about it for a second in your own mind. But in the next second it is all gone. Bag and baggage, lock, stock, and the other thing, you've dissolved the whole business into thin air.

And now, stark naked of class, you find yourself face to face with some conventional friend or relative; and then the thing to do is to begin the battle at once. But you must be a regular Machiavel, a shameless Jesuit, a Talleyrand, a Metternich, a moral thimble-rigger of an astuteness that would make Mr. Gladstone seem a naïve stump-orator!

You must convey to your relative's intelligence that the surest of all ways of impressing people with your gentility is to pretend that you are absolutely unaware of being a gentleman or a lady! Talk to them about the probability of your getting this or that job, which in old days no lady or gentleman or even the offspring of a well-to-do shopkeeper would think of taking for a moment, and get it into their alert consciousness—for when it comes to these matters of class we all have our ears to the ground—that, as things go now in the great world, the only sure sign of being a true and unmistakable aristocrat, and recognized as such by everybody you meet, is to be perfectly prepared to accept any menial job you can get and not give the thing a second thought!

Yes, the subtlest and most Machiavellian trick you can play upon the class system—always remembering "In the destructive element immerse!"—is to pretend to possess the pure social standard which our system assumes is regarded at the highest aristocratic level to be the sublime test of the superior person.

In reality, of course, in our own class-naked private soul, we know very well it would be much more agreeable, and much more the sort of thing that would suit us, to be the boss of a country club than the assistant gardener who weeds its flower-beds, or to be the wife of the boss than the woman

who looks after its ladies' lavatory ; but if we are really artful enough, and have enough in us of the Ovidian power of metamorphosis, we can assume the perfect gentleman's taste, while, parallel with this genteel immunity to all vulgarity, the devil's own imp in us can dance its abandoned dance and mock the whole business.

And the point is, of course, that the perfect gentleman's complete indifference to the snobbishness of the world's conventional view enables us to be a soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, rich man, poor man, apothecary, thief, while remaining the perfect gentleman.

An intelligent reader will have already begun to see why we have made our " Philosophy of In Spite " plunge with such abandonment into the arms of the class system.

The point is that if we can only be clever enough to pretend —and you really must believe us, O half-converted reader, when we swear to you that it's far easier than you imagine to pretend this—to pretend, we say, to be dominated by aristocratic taste, while really we are plotting with devilish cunning to abolish aristocracy *while we keep its taste*, we shall be in the position of holding the trump card.

Save for what Matthew Arnold would call its " barbarism ", that is to say its mania for blood-sports and so forth, our landed aristocracy has the most individualistic taste in the whole community. And I need hardly tell you that to us of the " Philosophy of In Spite " an individualistic taste is the only taste worth having.

Well then, let us assume that our aristocracy possesses the potentiality of an individualistic taste such as no clever obscurantism or fashionable "mystique" can corrupt or make false and affected. Our upper-middle-class taste, though generally far more learned, and you might even say more scholarly, than the aristocratic one, tends so easily to grow odiously fashionable and to assume that particular tone of academic facetiousness that is a sign of the dullest kind of aesthetic conventionality.

You may ask why, in this matter of waging war upon the class system, it has been necessary to introduce the problem of taste at all. Because taste is the grand class-shibboleth! Every class—even those into which the widespread working class automatically divides—has its own shibboleth.

Watch a pair of upper-middle-class ex-soldiers suddenly encountering each other in the market-place where they are both trying to earn a pacific living; and you'll not fail to be struck by the peculiar creaking in their psychic machinery as they jerk themselves back into a sort of public-school commemoration attitude. They'll be the ones—you need make no mistake about it—who will rally to you with an irresistible click of their heels when you assume, to the finest nicety and nuance, the manner of the aristocracy you are out to destroy.

If we could only start, in the mysterious way these fashions often do get started, a mania among our young people of the lower middle class, that is to say of the "white-collar class", in offices, behind counters, and even in certain shops and factories, all over the country, for copying, yes, for actually mimicking and imitating until it comes easy to us, the tone and manner—not very subtle or hard to imitate!—of the aristocracy, the thing would in a few years be achieved.

The difficulty is, however, that in this country we are all so wrapt up in our class conventions that the sort of crusade of mocking imitations such as I have tried to indicate would be no easy undertaking.

What we enjoy feeling in our particular class—and it must be remembered that both the lower middle class and the working class are themselves sub-divided into further classes—is a sense of social security and ease. But this delicious sense is a vague one, like some indescribable fragrance in the air. It is sweet, but it would be very difficult to define its precise flavour.

We might say that an agreeable feeling of being correctly and suitably housed, furnished, clothed, fed and surrounded by the social atmosphere to which we have always been

accustomed accounts for most of it; but there is a subtle something else in it which can only be described as a sense of permanent superiority.

But if you began asking me, as you very naturally might, "Superiority over whom?" I could only answer with a reply equally gnomic and oracular: "Over all who know without knowing." The worst and the most horrible example of the class system carried to its logical limit is the East Indian caste system with its "Untouchables". Than these "Untouchables", though all of us white races are guilty of the same sort of thing, there is surely nothing on this planet more absolutely monstrous.

Well then, what is our final conclusion upon this matter of the class system in these islands? Our final conclusion is that every man and woman, whether old or young, who has the sort of mind that is commonly called philosophical, must, from this moment on, recognize the abominable affront to life itself, and to all that is most vital in Nature, offered by the contemptible narrowness and the cramping burden of this rotten and evil-smelling tradition. And, further, we have decided that, having recognized how much happier, livelier, gayer, kindlier, wiser and more subtle-minded we should all be if we purged ourselves of the stinking scurf and horny scales and festering sores of this loathsome skin-disease of the soul, we are each of us, male and female, old and young, resolved to slough off this accursed thing even as certain healthy snakes slough off their skins.

And we here and now resolve to do this by every sort of method, and in all manner of crafty and cunning ways. The first and cleverest of these ways is to mimic the tone of voice and assume the natural taste of the top class in our social system, which is, of course, the aristocratic class.

But while we humorously mimic the manners of this top class, especially their tone of voice, which is much easier to mimic than most people suppose, we must in our secret hearts be true philosophers and detach ourselves completely from the

whole business of class. And we must always remember that the mystery of Christian love is as dangerous an alternative to the domination of class as the police-state of Russia or China.

In fact it plays exactly the same role in the invisible moral world as the Kremlin's secret police play in the visible physical world. It is absolutely essential that we should cultivate the simple, direct, honest, friendly, heathen virtue of *kindness to other people*, if for no other reason, simply because it is absolutely essential to us to be treated kindly *by* other people without having to appeal either to the " mystery of love " or to the secret police. In plain words, we have decided that we must hold in friendly and kindly regard all our fellow-creatures, not only those who are what Homer calls " mortal men " as opposed to the immortals but beasts and birds and reptiles and even insects. Yes, we have decided that, while we cleanse ourselves of all trace of this contemptible superiority over other men, we must go through this purification without a grain, or drop, or faintest tincture of the " mystical love " advocated with such seductive and dangerous eloquence by the saints and by others who are far from sanctity.

The truth is that the " mystique ", as people call it nowadays, of Christian love is the subtlest trick that has ever been practised on our pathetically stupid human race. St. Paul was one of the greatest geniuses that have ever lived, and this " love " of his was a terrific psychological experiment, absolutely authentic, horribly sincere, and part of the desperate spiritual " leap in the dark " which he was compelled to make when inspired by the appalling magical power with which the personality of Jesus seized on him like a physical obsession.

In St. Paul's case the experience was a living fact, and for him there was no escape from its sublime and intoxicating doom. The magic of Jesus so dominated him that for him Christ was actually hung like a humanly dead but divinely living albatross about his neck until, as he would say, " God should be all in all "

But just as St. Paul was smitten by the lightning of the spirit of Jesus into that sublime substitution of the soul of Jesus for his own soul, a substitution which it is possible to regard in two ways, either as the most dreadful self-murder that man's consciousness has ever committed, or as the most sublime and most terrifying miracle of the will to create that has ever been achieved, a miracle greater than anything ever undertaken by Jesus, so let us swallow the sweat of St. Paul!

Why, oh why should we not treat the imagination of St. Paul as *he* treated the imagination of Jesus and transform it as he transformed the other? And thus we arrive at what is the psychic "hub", if you will permit us, O most cautious of wavering convertites, to use such a homely expression, of our whole struggle against this devilish serpent, this thousand-headed hydra of class.

Let us, if you please, most precious of converts, go yet further still and for the word "hub" substitute the word "crux" as being more—more—how shall we put it?—*more visible from all sides* and less likely to go round in a circle, but which has a tendency, unless we lift it out of the ground and carry it, or set it on fire and brandish it, to become horribly static. We are speaking, of course, of the possibility of following our terrific oracle, "In the destructive element immerse!", to a length it has never been followed before.

What, in downright plain words, we mean is simply this. Just as we have deliberately mimicked the barbarian hunting-code of the healthy-minded top class in order to *level up every other* and get rid of the whole lot as maps and blackboards are got rid of when we leave school and college to begin earning our living, why not *mimic*—we deliberately use the word here, mark you, in a very special and original way of our own, making it mean a certain mental *assumption-of*, or a certain mental *experiment-with*, or a certain mental (but in cold deliberate intention, you must understand) *incarnation-in*—the suicidal but also creative *energeia* of St. Paul for our own special purpose?

Of course the theologians would call this the very extreme of blasphemous devilry; but that accusation must simply be expected, as the natural indignation of our side in any struggle, when the other side use their strongest weapon! To the theologians our use of the genius of St. Paul must, of course, appear as if we were using their spiritual atomic stock-pile. *And so we are.*

And we are wholly and absolutely justified in so doing. Let them repeat their parrot-word: "The Devil can quote Scripture to his purpose." He can. And so can we. Let us appeal to Nature as Paul did to Cæsar. No religious tradition has any monopoly with regard to the inspired insight of its founders. We, therefore, O wavering half-converts, intend to use all that suits us, and quite a good deal suits us, of the Dostoievskyish impassioned mole-runs of St. Paul!

Yes, there is an immense amount of spiritual ammunition for us in our war against class in the psychological discoveries made down there in those labyrinthine slate-quarries of the complicated human heart by St. Paul.

We have the intelligence to see where he digs deeper than either Kierkegaard or Kafka, where he anticipates Dostoievsky, revives Pascal, wrestles with Nietzsche, and, if we may make a shrewd guess, where he supplies existentialism with some of its most dramatic sorceries!

Why, in the name of all the inspired burdeners of that ancient pack-horse-pilgrim, the human heart, should not a few weapons be stolen from this two-thousand-years-old arsenal of psychic secrets, without in the least committing us to its supernatural worship and without removing anything of our profound suspicion as to the real worth of this mystical love?

As simple-minded lovers of sensation, and as fumblers and gropers after a philosophy that shall give us richer and subtler and deeper sensations, it strikes us as if it might really be possible to increase our power for undermining the barriers that divide human beings by stealing from the genius of St.

Paul something of the same sort of thaumaturgical radio-activity that won for him his influence over us: and it has struck us that St. Paul obtained this explosive spiritual radium by *immersing himself* in what, to his unconverted mind as a persecuting pharisee, must have seemed the most perilously destructive force he had ever faced.

Yes, that is what our "Philosophy of In Spite" must do at all costs, if it is to be a formidable support in our struggle with the class system. It must seek and it must find all manner of unexpected allies. And it must look for these allies " on both sides ", as we would say in Parliament, " of the House "; that is to say the more spiritual " radium " we steal from St. Paul, the more outrageous humour we must appropriate from Rabelais.

In a word, what we modern crusaders against class have got to do is to help forward the economic river that is already beginning to wash away all those lies about " that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us "; whereas in reality all it has " pleased " have been the few among our masters that have made us really useful, and the few competent ones among us who enjoy being good servants.

Well, if we are able, without being committed to orthodoxy or heresy, to steal a little Pauline magic from this two-thousand-year-old tradition, and yet dodge the supernatural and yet fight shy of mystical love, let us try the experiment of mixing together, as the astute Athenians did in a quaint word they coined, the sentiment of Euripides and the humour of Aristophanes. Yes, let us sink into our souls as individual men and women and bring to bear against class this greatest of all possible weapons, namely an honest, direct, and simple *humour*: and there really is a vein of humour we can tap that is even more powerful than the sport of mimicking the aristocratic voice; namely the humour of mocking our own lapses into snobbishness and making a joke of ourselves for yielding to them.

What we've got to catch here is *the understatement style* with

which our public schools—after their own fashion quite as creative in their psychic cunning as the Kremlin or the Vatican —teach us to conceal the rhetorical gestures of our natural vainglory. Oh, but this crafty affectation, which is itself the direct product of the pride of superiority against which it is making war, can only be undermined *by the mind*, as soon as that python-jaguar-tiger-crocodile offspring of great Nature's jungle-cradle of evolution begins " to get a line ", as we say, on what's going on.

Oyez ! Oyez ! Here is the mental pivot—while *money* is the material one—upon which this whole business of class, as far as these islands are concerned, actually turns, namely *our sense of humour*. Read Dickens ; read any of our livelier, wittier, and more sagacious modern novelists, especially those that are women, and it will become clearer and clearer that, in the destruction of the barriers of class, humour is the jet-bomb.

Yes, in Great Britain the whole question of how to abolish class without accepting communism turns upon humour. What the least thought of class stirs up in our British consciousness is a mixture of humorous contempt, humorous enjoyment, humorous malice, humorous superiority, humorous discomfort, humorous pity, and just pure humorous amusement.

And if we are to abolish all class-distinctions, it is humour, not satire, that is required. Humour, in fact, might be defined as " philosophy enjoying itself ", for it could easily claim to be, though in atmospheric diffusion, the essence of life's wisdom, a claim that neither Faith nor Love, and certainly not Hope, to name the three apostolic wishing-wells, could properly make.

Back, then, we have to come to the individual man and woman, if our fight against class is to be a matter of the mind and not an affair of mere force, reducing us all to the level of slaves in a police-state. Let us, therefore, sum up the whole thing as dependent upon the power of our own secret soul to detach itself from the whole business of class, and to encourage

as many other souls as we can possibly influence, to do the same.

The great thing is to regard our own class with so much humorous detachment that, when we are actually talking to people of some other class, we can reduce *their* class and *our* class to the same unimportance, and become one human being exchanging ideas with another human being; or rather one islander with another islander, or one Britisher with another Britisher; for though we would, let us hope, have the good nature and decency to treat a black, or red, or yellow man as a fellow-mortal, we have to treat our fellow-islander like a real relation.

A good trick for keeping this detachment from class free from all contamination—for the influence of class is like that curious kind of slime left on your fingers by those big black slugs you meet at certain seasons of the year, slime that refuses to come off, however much you rub your fingers in the grass or the moss, and indeed clings steadily to them till you rub them against some rough-surfaced rock!—is deliberately to turn the conversation to such basically physical and animal subjects as our bodily sensations of heat and cold, and what we like best to eat and drink, and how many blankets and sheets we need to cover us at night, and what our favourite underclothes and shirts are, and whether we prefer to swim in salt water or fresh water.

Having exhausted the topics of food and drink and sleep and such universal aberrations as insomnia, dyspepsia, nervousness, the discomfort of catching feverish colds, and the rising or falling in the cost of the necessities of life, the next basic topics of human interest we can select are football, horse-racing, and film-stars. In the light of these universals, cricket, though, of course, widely spread, seems more of a law of Nature in a public school than it is in a national school, and how far a cricket-ball can be regarded as quite as much of a national "totem" as a football, whether this latter be of the rounder circumference or not, is a nice point.

In regard to this extremely delicate issue concerning the universal topics of interest that in themselves, as their devoted adherents exchange views, lift us into a happy, classless dimension, our industrious philosophers of " In Spite " have been disturbed by the startling discovery that there's hardly, as things go, a single sport or game that isn't, in the Devil's own sense, *classified.*

But one they have found ; yes, there is one sport, O incredulously hesitating convertite, that can be freely discussed between all of us islanders without the faintest involvement in this damnable black-slug slime of class. And that this should be the case proves clearly that at least one of the main causes of our being caught by this accursed sticky stuff *is lack of space* ; for we are indeed an island, and an island is like a ship on the sea. Water, water, water, water !

And here is the really " destructive element " in which we must " immerse ". For it is the creative element too, from out of which the great *unsupernatural force* of evolution has lifted us all up ! What, therefore, we have decided to recommend to the disciples of the " Philosophy of In Spite " as the best sport to discuss when we want to escape the involvements of class is *fishing.* Of all forms of all human activity the catching of fish seems at once the oldest and—except for the fish—the most harmless. Water seems to be the element in connection with which the struggle to de-class ourselves seems most easily and naturally victorious. And here we close with the help we can claim in our struggle from the natural force of evolution.

It is indeed, when you think of it, a very curious thing that in our serious efforts to abolish these accurst relics from the Age of Superstition, we fail to recognize any pressure outside the pressure of our own indignant rebellion. Some of us are tempted, perhaps, in our secret hearts to appeal to conscience and to justice, but why should not this pressure within us, though working through the soul of a man or a woman, be nothing less than the great evolutionary force itself, that

mysterious force that formerly worked through the bodies of its transformed creatures but now works through the minds and instincts of men and women ?

If we are bold enough to accept this view, we can feel we have on our side in our struggle to obliterate class a force much more vital and formidable than any Marxian economic determinism ; in fact the ultimate cosmic force itself, which forever galvanizes into new patterns of thought the physical brain it has evolved.

If it is indeed nothing less than the evolutionary energy itself which is the impetus behind our mental determination to get rid of class, that curst incubus is doomed.

It is only a question of how long we shall be able to endure the rags and tatters of its worm-eaten totem-pole, with those half a dozen ghastly grotesques ogling us and jeering at us in the manner of a death-dance by Goya.

But perhaps our " Philosophy of In Spite " would do well to visualize, as the next epoch in the evolution of social relations, a leisurely interval before the class system entirely disappears, during which it is treated by satirists of every kind, by painters, cartoonists, caricaturists, journalists, dramatists, and novelists, as a rich opportunity for a unique comedy—yes, for a comedy that is not at the expense of the bourgeois class alone, as the communists would like it to be, or at the expense of the aristocrats or, as Matthew Arnold called them, the " barbarians ", as we would like it to be, but a comedy that " catches " all the classes of the whole crazy spectacle *on the hop* before they all pass away together, and " like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind", as they sink into that sunset of dramatic oblivion upon which we have fastened the label " history ".

In Spite of

INSECURITY

There is no doubt that, among the causes that make ordinary persons like ourselves in this particular poppy-field of the " iniquity of oblivion " shiver and shake during the day and cry out during the night, one of the very worst is insecurity in the matter of earning our living. As long as we are earning, as we say, " an honest living " and are in no immediate danger of losing our job, it is wonderful with how much we can put up.

Heavens, yes ! We can put up with all the thousand-and-one jerks and jolts and jars that our fellow-creatures give us for their private purposes, and that the great goddess Chance, for no purpose at all, inflicts upon us.

Yes, these common upsets were included in the original unilateral treaty we are assumed to have signed on the dotted line—though in those days we couldn't write our name and even the dots were blurred—with the mummy-dragon who spawned us ; and we can take them in our shuffle if not in our stride.

Yes, we can take them. We can quarrel with our dearest in the evening and make it up in the morning. We can fall ill, go to bed for a week, and, when we are up again, either find that we are ready to plunge into life with a new and completely fresh zest, or are forced to reconcile ourselves to the fact that from now on we shall never be really cured, no, not

really cured, for whether the bell that tolls for us at the end will be heard from the north or the south, or the east or the west, heard it will be, and probably heard a good deal sooner than we or anybody else expected. But we are men and women; and it is really rather surprising how well we can behave under all that the gods put upon us.

But insecurity—ah, that is a different thing! The thought of losing the job we have until now managed, as they say in America—and what an expressive phrase it is!—to "hold down", there is something about the mere imagination of such a thing that is far more terrifying than any threat of death.

So many horrible feelings are connected with the idea of it, so many shocks of the sort we have always dreaded—most of all since we grew to manhood—are associated with it, that it takes the heart out of life as nothing else in the world could do since we were first self-conscious.

In this sickening terror of insecurity the male nerves and the female nerves are played upon somewhat differently; the female being more directly fearful of the physical effect of the threatened disaster upon the family's actual bodies, the male being more perturbed over his own mental and moral reactions; over the horrid menace to his self-respect, for instance, of not being able to support his wife and children.

In any case this appalling threat to the very foundations of the family's normal life hits the parents much harder than the children. Children are, of course, always excited by the atmospheric vibrations of disturbing, startling, and tragic possibilities. Regular meals are of the first importance to them, regular meals that are also well-regulated meals; but what they actually feel under the dramatic tensions evoked by what the old Shakespearean stage-directions call "alarums and excursions" is impossible for older people to imagine.

All that our little group of patient compilers of a realistic philosophy suggest, as we struggle to plumb a "dark backward" which may not be so very long ago, since though some

of us are over seventy, others are not much beyond seventeen, is that what terrified us far the most were not extraordinary things so much as ordinary things taken in an extraordinary way. What, for instance, are called " the facts of life " can haunt children of both sexes with absolute horror. One of us, by no means one of the youngest among us either, can remember suffering from a nightmarish panic at the idea of the bishop in confirmation laying his hands on the neophytes' heads.

Another can remember being rendered sick with paralysing terror lest, like Herod, he might be " eaten by worms ". He used to imagine these devourers issuing from the potato-garden, entering the house by a rat-hole, and wriggling up the stairs into his bedroom. But these extreme terrors are not the rule with children ; and when a sudden shock of financial insecurity—" Daddy may lose his job "—brings into the family an atmosphere charged with electric disturbance, the scampering advances and scuttling retreats of childish nerves tend to be so inarticulate and secretive that, in most cases, if grown-up words could have been found for each particular childish apprehension and for each particular outward sign or apparent omen of impending catastrophe, as these innocent young nerves reacted to it, the result would almost always have been a pathetic anticlimax.

Yes, the muffled drums and elfin fifes of children's nerves are evoking all the time, little as we grown-up people realize it, scene after scene, vignette after vignette, mirage after mirage, of what would be to us, if we could find the grown-up words for them, extremely unexpected events, not because of their shockingness, but for the opposite reason, because of their dullness, homeliness, naturalness and ordinariness. They would, in fact, present themselves now to our adult perception with the touching meagreness and ragged paucity of the stage-backgrounds, such as children find quite sufficient when they play at shop or school or church.

Yes, our little band of realistic philosophers, in spite of the

fact that some of us are over seventy and some barely seventeen, find it extremely difficult to recall or to imagine what actually we felt as children when we heard Mum say to Dad: "What'll we do if you lose your job?"

But what we felt was, we are now pretty sure, as grotesque, and you might almost say as Gothic, in its mental fantasy as it was stripped, plain, stark, simple, and you might almost say classic, in its stage-set.

And if as parents we are baffled when we try to realize the secret reactions of our children to such a seismic shiver as a serious threat to the bread-winner's job, it is difficult enough for the father of the household himself under the slightest warning of such catastrophe to analyse his own precise feelings. What our philosophical discussions on this point have almost decided is that there are two main currents of emotion that are liable to seize upon a man's consciousness at these moments. These tides of feeling have been known to take possession of us simultaneously; but as a rule they come separately, perhaps even in succession.

According to the first of these streams of natural reaction we feel illused by fate. We feel we have never been given a fair chance. We feel that there is something in the universe bent on thwarting us, on frustrating us, on watching us squirm and writhe while it gets sadistic delight in our various plagues and discomfitures.

And we grow aware, with all this, of a strange sapping of our vitality, and a voice seems to be whispering to us about easy and painless ways of bringing the struggle to an end.

According to the second stream of reaction this threat of losing our job becomes a challenge, and it is as if we had been called upon by a fanfare of mediæval trumpets to settle ourselves in the saddle, point our lance at the throat of our adversary, and plunge forward, hell for leather, and come what may!

The two opposite tendencies in adult human nature under an appalling life-and-death threat of this kind are bound to

show themselves differently in women from the way they do in men, because under the most normal conditions every woman is the ruler of a realm, a realm that is forever under her eyes and hands and feet, a realm that is in any case so constantly in danger from the primordial forces of corruption and decay and dirt and disease and sickness and accident and plague and famine that this new earthquake shock of the horrible possibility of her man losing his job is only " one more thing ", while to the male it is an exclusive preoccupation.

What we have at last decided, after protracted and somewhat heated arguments between male and female and old and young, is that our " Philosophy of In Spite " must be perpetually reminding its votaries that, whatever happens to us, there is not one of us who can escape from death, not one of us who can possibly live very long after his eightieth birthday, and that when we are dead, dead indeed we are, dead, gone, lost, vanished, out of it for good and all, obliterated forever, as completely erased from the scroll of being as if we had never been.

Yes, our " Philosophy of In Spite " must every morning and every evening, as it utters the war-cry of its battle with life, murmur also its acceptance of annihilation.

Our idea is that, when we have once reconciled ourselves to ultimate annihilation, these lesser shocks to our temporary security are much easier to endure. In fact our endurance of them ceases to be either Stoic fortitude or Epicurean passivity : it becomes something totally different. It becomes the alert vigilance of an explorer or a hunter living by his wits in a strange land.

Yes, better regard our familiar everyday world as a strange land made up of dark forests, desolate sand-dunes, treacherous swamps, precipitous mountains, than become so imbued with its security and safe monotony that our nerves begin to scream at a creak in the door or a moan in the chimney.

What we've got to do, as we make our philosophy tougher and more pliant in the face of the horrible possibilities that

exist for every creature born into this tricky life of ours, is to look at the world as a weird and astounding place through which we must advance with a weapon in hand and an eye on every shadow.

If we take our everyday world in every one of its aspects, in its shapes, in its colours, in its airy spaces, in its opacities and solidities, in the various effects of its tangible objects upon us, whether inside or outside our houses, and refuse to be fooled by any religious hang-over into taking it as a holy oneness, whose pantheistic totality can be worshipped, but on the contrary insist on regarding it as an elemental collection of beings, any one of which we can embrace or be embraced by, why then we are giving ourselves up to what our " Philosophy of In Spite " regards as the cosmological enjoyment that makes the world go round.

We shall indeed in this manner be fulfilling the ultimate planetary gesture, if so I may call it, of the human race. For it will be " in spite " of our timid and nervous apprehensions that we shall do it at all, and it will probably be also " in spite " of the fact that at the very moment we are struggling to make this gesture which is at the same time so intensely mental and so intensely sensuous, some other human being, someone of our own house most likely, perhaps a parent, or a child, or perhaps a brother or a sister, will be interrupting us by a fit of anger, or by a fit of tears, or it may be by an indignant protest, possibly a violent protest, against our self-absorption, or, let us say, our self-and-universe absorption.

If we cannot succeed in making clear to you, O most well-intentioned convertite, what exactly it is we are struggling to describe to you in our simple language, our whole " In Spite " philosophy has missed fire.

You know what our artistic teachers want us to do when we visit a picture-gallery ? We are expected, of course, to gaze in fascinated enjoyment at each particular famous picture. Well now, these gallery-pictures include almost every kind of picture where there's a background of scenery ; and if you

treat the appearance of the chairs and tables and walls and curtains and kitchenware and pots and pans and fireplaces indoors, as you treat the appearance of the rocks and stones and trees out-of-doors, and if you include the figures of the human beings and the animals who belong to both these backgrounds, you can absorb these material vistas both out-of-doors and within-doors, and absorb them, too, in the particular manner that we, of our " In Spite " philosophy, regard as the supreme act of life-enjoyment. What our senses actually do for us in these cases is to render the hard, glazed, glossy, glassy, woodenish, velvety, leathery background, or, if it so happens, the mossy and rocky, or sandy and seaweedy background, porous as the air or water.

A considerable number of the pictures of Nature—and, in some cases, we are thinking of open windows and doors, a smaller portion of the pictures of the insides of rooms—are already composed of a background of air and water; but we are now thinking of something quite different from this. We are rendering solid walls and fireplaces and kitchen utensils, along with rocks and stones and trees and pavements and buildings and ploughed fields and harvest fields and mountains and deserts, porous as air and water.

Why do we have to make all this material of the visible world into something as insubstantial as an unreal mirage? We have to make it like this so as to bring it a layer or two, a dimension or two, a level or two, nearer to the essential dream-like reality of this great incomprehensible collection of things, swaying to and fro within, though for all we know at the uttermost confines of, the unfathomable gulfs—no, after Kant we'd better not say " gulfs "—the unfathomable *limitations* of space and time.

If you ask *why* we have to make the background of our ordinary world, whether indoors or out-of-doors, whether composed of masonry and furniture, or of rocks and grass and trees, *so immaterial*, our reply can only be that, since it has to serve us for every horizon we need—since, in fact, it has

to serve us as a background for all our "long, long thoughts", and as a vista for all our desperate, mysterious, enigmatic, romantic cravings, and as the incalculable subject of all our imaginative stories, the inexhaustible reservoir of all our aesthetic intimations, the impregnable arsenal of all our creative ideas—this quality of *immateriality* is for us a necessity of our nature, and, as such, a corresponding creation of our nature; for just as both orthodox and heretical believers need a supra-mundane, transcendental deity for their theological and emotional satisfaction, so we need, for our psychic, our sensuous, and our poetical satisfaction, a cosmos, or, as we prefer to say, a multiverse, around us, towards which any conceivable feeling, normal or abnormal, that may possess us, can be directed with a complete impunity.

Think for a moment, O most cautious and captious of critical convertites, how necessary it is in your life—for we are assuming you are not one of those happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care, reckless, thick-skinned pirates who need no chart, no calendar, no North Star, no map, no mainsail, no lifebelt, no mascot, as they chance it by wind and wave—to have some interior method of keeping up your spirit and retaining some sort of chart to sail by or even drift by as fate tosses you about, and a method, too, that you can feel growing more formidable and more effective "as days and months and years pass by", to speak in the manner of the most clerkly of our callers at the little dock below the stairs of Child Rowland's dark tower, some method that is between yourself and your own heart, and by means of which you create the only thing any of us can create, namely our shield of reception for the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune".

And this porous "immateriality" about us is in no danger of vanishing away, for it re-creates itself constantly if infinitesimally from that inexhaustible self-creating supply of "background material" about which our most convincing of professors has told us.

No, it is in no danger of vanishing; and there is many a last

ditch and final fox-hole and crater-edge and swaying tight-rope in its immaterial recesses, not to mention the theatres and fair-grounds and street-corners, towards which the wisest of all oracles might call us, crying to us by day and by night, " In the destructive element immerse ! "

Thus it might be with us if our present job were really lost. We would simply have to throw ourselves on whatever sort of " parish relief " our circumstances suggested or could claim : and when *that* was exhausted hunt about for another job ! But what of our humiliation and self-contempt ? What of our deep and bitter grievance against the universe at whose hands we felt we deserved something so very different from this cruel devilry ?

" Deserved ", did we ? Well, these are precisely the thoughts and feelings from which our " Philosophy of In Spite " delivers us ! But it insists on our loneliness and on our acceptance of loneliness. Self-pitying or life-defying, *we are alone.*

But let us now consider the family that happens to be ours. Ah, too lightly we use the expression " a typical family ". Of course really there isn't such a thing as a typical anything. Everything is a peculiar case, a very peculiar case. There are no two sheep alike, except to wolves ; and there are no two wolves alike, except to hunters.

Few religious people would call the Holy Family a typical family ; though we can imagine some pious persons calling it an ideal family. In reality the Holy Family is neither typical nor ideal. It is the one divinely human family in the world. It is unique. It is the Christian creed made visible and palpable. That is why, in certain perfectly legitimate and philosophical moods, we find the Holy Family irritating rather than inspiring.

But let us consider in detail the extremely human family now under the threat of its daddy losing his job. Daddy's own feelings are like those of most of us with a family to support, more purely individual than anybody, *except another man,* would believe possible. They are professional feelings, technical

feelings, class feelings, political feelings, competitive feelings : but above all they are profoundly personal feelings.

And moreover in their personality they are desperately mental. They are concentrated on the supreme art of all male creatures, especially male creatures in danger of being exposed in their naked weakness, the art of face-saving.

How will his dismissal strike mate Bill and partner Bob and boss Billy and super-boss Bobby ? The last image to flit across his frowning frontal lobe is Ethel's piano ; and if the flap-flap of Tom's patched mackintosh reaches him at all it taps at his occiput like a leaf on a closed door.

The part of Mummy's mind, on the contrary, that isn't full of pantry, scullery, cupboard, store-room and the corner shop, is already balancing Daddy's tobacco against Tom's ice-cream, and wondering whether, if she herself gave up her Saturday nights at the pictures, Ethel could go on with her music lessons.

But now let us be bold enough to suppose that both Ethel and Tom are old enough to have, at least now and then, something approaching philosophic thoughts ; and let us ask ourselves what, if we were invisible spirits possessed of the power to waylay such youths and maidens and waft ideas into their heads, would we suggest to these two young beings as the best manner of countering the obscure fits of blank dismay which thoughts of Daddy losing his job and everything being different bring down upon them ?

Well, it seems that, when we come to these grim and ghastly possibilities, there is not such a great gulf between young skulls and old skulls, between Mummy's skull with its empty cupboards and Ethel's skull with no visit this week or next week to Miss Cringleford's cosy flat, or between Daddy's skull bowed down with face-saving expedients and Tom's skull screwed awry with angry doubt as to whether that last tale told him by " old man Poppoy " about the possibilities of Sloper's Lane would be of any use to him if Dad were to lose his job.

But when we come closer still to all these four persons, and begin seriously to consider their nervous fear, it seems as if the pathetically conscious living self in each of them was isolating itself from the others and concentrating on its own fears, even when, as in the case of Mummy, this fear embraced them all. Yes, the shock of it undoubtedly accentuates the loneliness of Mummy as a person, though she is always the wife of Dad and the mother of Tom and Ethel, and it accentuates all the face-saving loneliness of Dad, though he is the husband of Mum and though Tom and Ethel *are* his children.

Yes, loneliness, absolute loneliness, surrounds them all; and surrounds them now more than ever. Tom's terribly secret scare that Dad's sudden poverty might destroy the possibilities of Sloper's Lane is surrounded by an abyss of isolating loneliness. And the same gulf of un-invaded loneliness recedes into infinity around Ethel's quivering romantic craving for Miss Cringleford's cosy flat and for those mysteriougly long-drawn-out piano-notes that carry her away over the roofs of London. So it is. So let it be. The real inmost self of every one of us, the inmost self of Mum, of Dad, of Tom, of Ethel, the self that is independent of our age, independent of our cleverness, of our stupidity, independent of all our psychiatrists' fancies and inventions, especially that horrid one they do so love in their lurid morbidity to call " the unconscious ", though we are all as conscious of it as we are of the tune of " Onward Christian Soldiers ", is a self whose essential loneliness is not only unassailable: it is *unapproachable* by any other living self. When it desires to be secret, it is secret.

It is indeed one of the most important discoveries of our " Philosophy of In Spite ", this use of the ultimate loneliness of the self, a loneliness that the most money-grubbing of swaggering rake-hells, as well as the most pitifully dribbling of trampish idiots, can use to his advantage.

For our great point about it is this—that the self can escape completely and with equal ease from its best friends and worst enemies.

What we have found out is this : that every self among us, however happily adjusted to its mate, to its relations, to its neighbours, to its boss, to its fellow-workers, and to its nation, retains the power of withdrawing from its contact with all other human beings, and withdrawing, too, without these others, whether old or young, having the faintest idea that we have flown, or, as the poet says, " stept off ", into a mental stratosphere whither nobody can follow us.

And the great thing is that we can practise this trick and escape into this " esplumeoir ", the old Merlinish word for it, when such loneliness is an escape from the mental inventions of other people as much as from these persons themselves ! For instance we can absolutely and most happily escape from the very idea of this same wicked invention of " the unconscious ", however long it may have been corrupting our mind, so that the horrid fancy of this dark tank of slimy monsters, this Avernus of Gorgonian serpents and Lamian cuttlefish and Orthic dogfish and Lernean hydras, is left behind in a " space-time " out of which for the nonce we have vanished.

The whole purpose of this chapter is to show that we crafty " In Spiteists " possess a conjuring-trick by which, whatever frightening rumour may reach our ears as to the complete loss of our place in the world, we shall be able to take the threat like true philosophers. And surely if we can dart away from the liveliest conversation and from the most affectionate group of friends with this sort of absolute finality, and even dart away in the same manner from an image in our own mind as horrible as that of "the unconscious", it is clear that the invisible navel-string that connects us with our bodily senses is already extremely elastic.

What we are concerned with just now is nothing less than acquiring and practising the power of concealing the fact that our body has for the moment been left in abeyance, or in a local trance, while we ourselves, that is to say our consciousness, are or is *on the move*. What devilish difficulties there are

in connection with certain key-words in the life of our daily consciousness! What, for instance, is this self of ours really doing when it imagines things? How near to creating reality does it go?

No doubt to our mate and to our relatives and friends we shall simply be like one who, in the midst of a waking moment, has suddenly fallen asleep. They will speak and we shall hear nothing; and although our eyes may be open they will be lost in a blind stare! We shall have escaped the false and unreal "unconscious" of that tank of horrors under the floor of the "Chapel of Consciousness" by deliberately plunging into the real "unconscious" of being *non est*, that is to say, *not here at all.*

And, mark thee, O critical convertite, this is quite a different "jump into nothingness" from that mathematical idea of finding that, whenever we set off into receding infinity, we simply *come full circle* and are soon back again at the precise point from which we started.

That is, of course, a pure mathematical conjuring trick. But neither does this mental dive, or flight, or plunge, or escape of ours, *while we are still alive*, carry us into some metaphysical "country of the blest", like those of which the disciples of the mysteries of Orpheus or the priests of Eleusis speak.

But let the disciples of Orpheus and the priests of the mysteries of Eleusis cry out their cogent magic words as they please: the recourse of the "Philosophy of In Spite" is to the much-enduring self in each of us timid, ordinary human beings. Out of the human heart sprang all the gods and all the paradises as well as all the devils and all the hells; and back into the human heart, when their loan of time and their lease of space are exhausted, they will return.

Meanwhile, thanks to the sea-chance and the sea-change that gave us our human consciousness and our human will, we have the power of ourselves creating around ourselves the most blest of all states of being, *the state of being alone.* And it is as absolutely alone, O most wavering and most hesitating

of all convertites, that the four persons in our present imaginary family, under this impending menace of the man's loss of his job, must be considered, and considered one by one, as they realize this terrible threat to their accustomed life, and do their best to deal with it.

And how would we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " advise each separate one of these four people to deal with this thing ? We would advise them to let it fall from them, drift from them, be shaken off by them, as completely as they each possess the power to throw off their whole habitual personality and become a barely personal though intensely sensitized, a barely personal though by no means disembodied, human consciousness.

Let the man shake off his nervous, lazy, incompetent, timid, fussy mask. We mean only for a moment, of course, and as his momentary retort to this threat to his life. Let the woman shake off her anxious, worried, overworked, plain-featured, middle-aged mask. Let the girl shake off her concentrated, intense, staring-eyed, romantic mask with its quaint little face and its nose as narrow as a kitchen knife and its pathetic mouth as dream-open to the beyond-the-horizon as any figurehead of a ship of Jason.

But how on earth can—for that is the chief point now—how on earth can the sickening ache of insecurity, the appalling terror of being left in the world without a cent, without a friend, without a job, rouse to heroic temper the purged consciousness of our young friend Tom, when, though only for the moment, that snub-nosed, mocking-mouthed challenging young profile with its proudly-tossed-back bird-crest of wavy hair thins itself out into a de-personalized, though again, we must add, *not* disembodied, image of desperately strung-up receptivity ?

Before any single one of our four persons has been reduced from a poignant human personality to a minimum of acute consciousness, it would be a queer experience for some of us invisible onlookers if we could see the quickly appearing and

equally quickly vanishing procession of surprising objects that followed one another through the disturbed minds of Tom and Ethel, neither of whom had ever crossed the threshold of a pawnshop but who were both at this moment simultaneously seized by the idea of selling some of their old birthday presents in this last refuge of ruined respectability.

But there were moments, even after the rumour of this possible calamity had established itself in their minds, when the untroubled " I " hidden under the everyday surface-life of each separate member of this threatened family, the particular " I " that was, in its safe, secretive, unapproachable, etheric remoteness, drawing its life-blood from an old man's timid heart and face-saving brain, the particular " I " that was, in its elemental detachment, emanating from the midst of a worn-out Mummy's jumpy nerves, the particular " I " that was, in its terraqueous independence, falling like a meteoric lump of lead from a shy little chit of a girl's fantastic dream, and finally the " I " that was, in its huge oceanic freedom, shooting one silly little catapult-shot after another at some absurdly-conventional bear-garden nine-pin in Sloper's Alley——

Yes, there were moments, and we can swear to you we have seen them, when everyone of these harassed and hunted " I "s recognized and acknowledged their eternal security in the midst of insecurity—yes, *felt*, as well as *knew*, that they were outside the radius even of planetary disaster, totally safe from any merely human catastrophe, and indeed what might be called impenetrably immune to the most hypocaustic heat beneath the most celestial floor of the most god-like empyrean.

And all this wholly apart from any human immortality, wholly apart from any belief in the supernatural, wholly apart from any divinity but itself: and finally all this realized in one single flash of unholy recognition that the next moment this sacred " I " must be annihilated.

The reality of natural life, as we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " see it, and, though we are not Hospitallers, one of our chief rôles is the curing of the nerves of our neophytes,

consists wholly and entirely of imagination. For us imagination is reality, and reality is imagination. And we hold that everybody, every man, woman, and child, of every section of the community, possesses this reality-creating god-like gift.

And the great thing we insist upon is that every person creates the whole world afresh as soon as he or she comes into the world. Into what sort of a thing do we " come ", then, when we are born ? Into the chaotic fragments of as many worlds as there have been human creatures—not to speak of other creatures—born before us on our particular planetary orb ! And we also hold that the meanest, vulgarest, silliest, foolishest, most contemptible person ever born is the person who, because he is a bit cleverer and because he is a bit more voluble and because he is or she is a bit " quicker ", as we say, " at the uptake ", seriously thinks himself, or herself, really, actually, unquestionably, obviously, superior to the heavier-witted and more simple-minded individual whose intelligence works more slowly.

We philosophers of " In Spite " hold that in the presence of such a miracle as the creation of the world it is perfectly absurd to regard one *divine creator* as superior to another *divine creator*. We all possess the imagination required for this one supreme miracle. Well then, that is enough. A divine creator has created a mysterious and enchanted universe. You've done it : I've done it : he's done it : she's done it : we've all done it.

Well, the thing is to hold up the world we've created, as the Titan Atlas was forced to hold up a world he hadn't created, even if we've got to balance it on our heads. And just what sort of thing *is* this imagination which we've all got, and which is so god-like in its job of world-creating ?

Nobody knows what it is. It is one of those confounded mysteries in which all philosophic exploration ends. Our professors can tell us about those little fellows they call " neutrons ", and those other little fellows with similar-sounding names ; but between the look of the seven letters

that form " neutron " as you see it in print and what you look at when you look into the fire, or out of the window, or even at the tea-leaves at the bottom of your cup, there isn't much connection—eh, convertite of high degree? The great thing about this imagination we all possess which is a creator of worlds is that it can go to unlimited distances in any direction; that is to say it can leave our consciousness in a manner in which it is quite impossible for our consciousness to leave our body.

The " Philosophy of In Spite " has certain daring notions of its own on the subject of the distance from the human body which is permitted to the movements of the human mind; but the imagination has no such limits.

Our consciousness is bound to our body, that is to say to our senses; and although this restriction ties it down, it also makes it into a veritable arsenal of implements and weapons; and as such it lends itself to the furthest flights of the imagination. And the beauty of it is that these far flights can be taken from the starting-point of the smallest and most grotesquely inappropriate physical object.

Yes, any mortal thing will serve, however unromantic, unpicturesque, insignificant, meaningless, ridiculous. A queer-looking blot on a map, a squashed fly on a wall, a crack in a door, an odd-shaped trailing scriggle in the dust of an unscrubbed fragment of linoleum, a piece of skin that keeps on semi-detaching itself from a sore place on one of our fingers, a particular chip at the edge of a cup that enabled us to get it cheap at the Oswestry Fair but which has something about its appearance that offends our sense of decency.

Yes, and you don't have to be penetrating, or intellectual, or what the critics call " imaginative "—which implies, of course, the possession of an artistic quality completely different from the sort of crude, natural, Grimm's fairy-story imagination with which we all, grossly and earthily, go about the business of creating, like God, our own world, in spite of the Devil, who is simply, of course, everybody else, all busy in the same way.

Nor is it only from the jumping-off ground of grotesquely absurd little nothings that this gross, earthy, simple, human, rank-and-file, Homeric, Shakespearean, unclever, animal-like, proverb-bred and cliché-fed imagination of ours can bang its head against the limits of the universe: it can get a perfect start sometimes from pure fear. Oh no, we haven't to be heroes or heroines to drink the elixir of life or to catch the dragon guarding the apples of the Hesperides napping.

And this is where we can mount up like warring angels when the worry, the dread, the horror, the ghastly terror, the frightful shock of the thought of Dad's losing his job hits us. Where our "Philosophy of In Spite" is really different from all other philosophies is in the fact that it assumes at the start, *not* that we are cleverer or more intellectual than others, *but less so.*

It is, in fact, a philosophy for the under-dog, but for the under-dog who is set upon enjoying himself in spite of weakness, stupidity, thin-skinned sensitiveness to humiliation; yes, in spite of his lack of manly pride, or her lack of feminine tact and wisdom. What, in fact, would we advise the *him* or the *her* thus suddenly threatened to do? We are speaking of our friend's *mind,* of course: for when it comes to physical action each situation is so totally different from every other that while in one case we'd have to cry: "Trip him up and kneel on his chest!" in another case we'd have to cry: "Do a bunk! Scoot off! Run for dear life!"

Well, we would advise him to let his simple, homely, hoi-polloi-ish imagination "fly off the handle" to the limit. Let him imagine himself in jail, in the workhouse, begging in the street, praying at a bakery for a stale loaf, ringing the bell at the vicar's door, at the doctor's door, going to the police-station, sitting under a tree in the park eating a stale loaf, setting off to walk to the address of an old friend on the other side of the River Severn. Let him, let her, indulge in the wildest imaginations. "In the destructive element immerse!"

But remind him, as he tells himself these frightening stories

of what he considers the worst, that he must not—no, not for a moment as he looks about him in these newly created worlds of unpleasantness—*give up his defiance*. Let him imagine the worst but refuse to be downhearted; imagine the worst, but defy life and *force himself to enjoy defying life* to the very end.

> *. . . lay on, Macduff;*
> *And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"*

Don't you see, cautious convertite, when you imagine the worst, you create a world that is hostile to you; but when you force yourself to enjoy this hostile world which you yourself have created, to enjoy it, and to enjoy defying it, you have got things pretty well under control? The truth is, if you don't enjoy fighting, you've got to learn to enjoy fighting; for whatever else it is, and whatever else it isn't, life is a battle from first to last.

Thus to Mummy in her pantry whispers our "Philosophy of In Spite": "Come, old lady, and risk it! Your imagination has created the world in which you live; and you've begun to find it a bit too tiring, this world! Destroy it then, destroy it; and set your imagination to work creating another!"

Oh yes, and you also, Daddy Save-Face, give up your dream of a master-craftsman's hands at the beck and call of an arch-statesman's brain, and both brain and hands subjected to saintly modesty. Give it up! Let it all go! And begin creating an absolutely fascinating hobby and a hobby-maniac—yourself!

And as for you, young Ethel, you timid, sylph-like adorer of Miss Cringleford, stop, oh stop, my dear child, pretending to yourself that one day you will be given by Nature, or God, or some invisible archangel, the power of escaping into some completely different world, a world where a girl like you will be yourself worshipped—yes, worshipped with far more cause and reason than you have ever had for idealizing Miss C.!

Turn from all this and give your days and nights to the study of those fourteen-lined masterpieces of poetry they call " sonnets " : and when you have mastered the precise forms of these wonders, start composing a sequence of them yourself. And as for *you*, son Tom, get out of your plotting and conspiring and crazily corticated occiput the whole idea that you are destined to be the most admired and most dreaded emperor of the secretest underworld below all underworlds, and call back the spirit of philosophical enquiry that led you as a little boy to ask Auntie Tassel in the vein of Protagoras why everything was everything and why there should be anything at all !

What you should aim at, Tom, my dear friend, is what Daddy and Mummy and Ethel should also aim at, each in their own way, whether they are hit by their miserable anxiety on a parlour-sofa, or in a pub-corner, or on a music-stool in Miss C.'s artistic flat, namely to *enjoy* the dread of horrible insecurity as you would enjoy a cup of tea, a glass of beer, an ice-cream or a cigarette, along with shakes and shivers and shudders and the shadows of shots and shells !

Force yourself to enjoy this spice of horror, Tom, my lad ; but take up the sport of fishing for coarse fish for a change, and drop your gangsterism. Our " Philosophy of In Spite " may have its serious limitations ; and it is still as vague as to where the cosmic rays come from as it is concerning the squaring of the circle and the calling up from the depths of Tartarus, as the Thunderer did, an hundred-armed monster like Briaraeus ; but what it can do it can do ; and what it can do can be curiously satisfying.

And what it can do, though it cannot stop disaster from coming, and though it cannot stop Daddy Save-Face from losing his job, is something that, if anyone is willing to make use of it, can reduce dread and horror and shivering awe and sick panic, *at least as far as any single person is concerned*, whether that person be a woman or a man, or a boy or a girl, or very young or very old, to a clout of unseemly rags round the neck

of a scarecrow. And how does it work this miracle? Our "Philosophy of In Spite" shall tell you; and tell you quite slowly and quietly.

And let us admit at once that, though you may be uttering the word "miracle" in a tone of mockery, the simple ritual, into which we shall now proceed to initiate you, does indeed quite naturally and in all truth work a miracle. Hear, therefore, thou man, woman, or child, thou boy or girl, thou cantankerous old curmudgeon, thou gutter-scraping old crone, hear, therefore, our deep oracle, and place yourself in the magical power of the "Philosophy of In Spite", and you will soon find yourself crying aloud like Goethe's Faust in that opening scene: "Am I a god? Such light on me hath broken!"

But the first thing to do is to hold tight to the idea that the strongest creative force in the world to-day is your own private, personal, individual imagination! It does not make this imagination of yours less powerful, it makes it more powerful, the fact that it has behind it the imagination of all the generations of all the tribes of the human race, who before you, from the time when man was first evolved, have created the dice-box—yes, created everything to do with the dice-box, except the numbers on the dice when the great goddess Chance rattles the box.

Hold firm to your imagination then; and imagine yourself alone; alone wherever you may be, alone whether you are walking, or sitting, or lying down, absolutely alone and absolutely independent of father, mother, children, grandparents, grandchildren, or aunties, or uncles, cousins or any other relatives or friends. Have you done that? Very well! Imagine yourself—the self "*within you*", as we always say, always stressing this "within" when we might just as well say "*the self outside you*"—imagine yourself, the self that you feel to be you when you say "I", projecting itself, that is to say the conscious you projecting the conscious you a little way out of your body; not very far; mind you, only a little way, and as it hovers there—hold your imagination, remember,

firmly to this one point—compel yourself to feel that *it*, that is to say that *you*, are definitely using all the senses of your body, such, for example, as the smoothness of the sapling you are clutching with your fingers, such, for example, as that queer oblong reflection of moving sunlight upon that trickling stream, such, for example, as that long-drawn-out sound which is coming to your ears from the gusts of wind in those fir trees, such, for example, as that peculiar smell of rotten apples which Goethe tells us the poet Schiller found such an inspiring background when he was writing.

But what the " Philosophy of In Spite " is now trying to get into your head, O wavering one, is more, oh much more, than an escape from a loss that may never befall you. It is one of those mysterious obediences to an evolutionary stir in Nature herself that may lead to anything. Hang on desperately to your senses then, and press forward, leaving your body, though only a little way, behind.

Have you got a fast hold on your senses still, as if through a navel-string ? Move forward very slowly then ! Remember it isn't less true than reality, but more true, what you are doing now with your imagination. Have you the strength of will to go on with it a moment or two longer? It isn't merely an escape from your family's ruin, all this, my friend ; it is *evolution at work*. Hold on a second or two longer, then, if you can, my friend, whether you are Mummy, or Daddy, or Tom, or Ethel. Are you really out of your body and yet using all the senses of your body ? Think for a moment of the millions and millions of people who will come after you and will have their little hour of life when you are dead. Are you doing that now ? Are you thinking of those people ?

Well, concentrate, if you please, on one particular one among all those millions—anyone you like—another man, another woman, another girl, another boy. Imagine that you have the power of throwing your thought down the stream of time and into the remote future. Are you doing that ? Are you keeping your imagination fixed upon this one single

isolated self, who until this moment has had no existence for you at all, but who is now in close contact with you, while its isolated consciousness, whosever consciousness it is, is in close contact with your isolated consciousness ?

Well, say goodbye to this remote one now, and come back to bring a medium for practical evolution. But relax a bit while our philosophy insists that if you search yourself you must feel—though, of course, it is possible that this feeling is an entire illusion—that you have the power of extricating yourself from your body and of projecting your consciousness out of your body.

Yes, you can relax now ; for we mustn't let our philosophy exhaust you at the very start ! But you've got the idea of it, haven't you ? The self that is you, your consciousness, for we needn't complicate matters by calling your consciousness by the name of " soul ", must be forced by your will to project itself just a little way, only a few yards perhaps, out of your body while you make use of all your bodily senses.

But you may reasonably ask what has all this to do with overcoming the panic-terror of Dad's losing his job and the appalling prospect of the whole lot of you being completely destitute ?

I will tell you the connection. The emotion of fear is more reduced and overcome by intense and concentrated effort than by anything else. Manual work, however, and even office work of an automatic kind, allows our mind to wander to our troubles.

Our hands may be fully engaged. Our brains may be performing some automatic task with skill and ability. But where are our thoughts ? Alas, we all know only too well where they have got to—over the barbed-wire fence and fairly on the rampage through all the dark herbaceous borders of " Daddy losing his job ".

But when the " self " in us, or the " I " in us, however indestructible may be the navel-string binding it to our bodily senses, concentrates its energy and its imagination upon a vital

spurt forward of the life-sap of our vertiginous consciousness, and this time through our own intention, there is a complete alienation of our thoughts from Daddy and his loss of a job.

A miracle it is and a miracle worked by magic; but the magic we have summoned up has been hidden all the while in our own nature, somewhere between the centre and circumference of that fleering, fleeting, fanciful self within us that is as unaccountable, irresponsible, and unpredictable, as the one-in-a-thousand-million flings of the dice that gave it its chance to assert itself. It is—our "Philosophy of In Spite" is still speaking of the whimsical entity within each of us that answers to the name of self—it is only when we realize the full extent of our loneliness between the boundlessness outward and the boundlessness inward, only when we realize that the history of mankind in general is as indetermined and irrational and arbitrary and disassimilated as the history of every individual man and woman, that we are in a position to wash our hands forever of the lie of economic determination.

Free-will is the great word of the "Philosophy of In Spite". Neither mankind in general nor any individual specimen of mankind in particular, whether that specimen is as weak and face-saving as Daddy or as emotional and face-losing as Mummy, as romantic as Ethel or as reckless as Tom, is devoid of the power of creating its future independent of any heredity and of any environment.

The truth is that to the magic of free-will, whether of mankind in general or man in particular, there is simply no limit save our own lack of faith in our own power. In our power to be what? "Ay, there's the rub... There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life." The difficulty lies not in our lack of power, but in our lack of wisdom. We are not all on the same stage, or in the same theatre, or in the same universe.

Slabs of the aboriginal void, blocks of the primordial nothingness, surround each one of us like invisible armour; armour that has the power to freeze—freeze, do I say?—the power to

petrify, into stalagmitical immobility each person who approaches another person.

This isolation of every individual mind from every other individual mind is one of those absolutely basic facts of which our " Philosophy of In Spite " has to remind us when we are facing the danger of Daddy's losing his job.

Each separate one of us has to face this fear alone. Daddy has to feel it absolutely alone and distinct from Mummy. Ethel and Tom have to feel it absolutely alone and distinct from both their parents. But at this point there comes to our convertite, as he tries to follow us, the greatest shock our philosophy has yet given him. For Nature follows no logic: not even such semi-organic logic as our philosophy struggles to extricate from the mad dance of life.

And in consequence of this crazy chaoticism at the heart of life there is danger for us all under any condition, and we are always in danger of the enemy capturing our last rampart and driving us to retreat in rout and disaster. And this last rampart is not our loneliness.

Alas and alas, no! It is our fatal pity and our feeling for the others. Yes, the final shudder and the most appalling shock to the whole edifice of our life brought about by this fear of Daddy losing his job comes, curiously enough—for our selfishness is as prodigious as our loneliness—from thinking about the others.

Yes, if you are Ethel, you will be thinking of Daddy and Mummy and Tom; and if you are Tom, you will be thinking of Daddy and Mummy and Ethel; and if you are Daddy, you will be thinking of Mummy and Tom and Ethel. For a weird thing has now happened contrary to our healthy, natural, animal selfishness.

The thing has become more than an individual terror: it has become a family terror. It has even gathered to itself a little, not much, but a little, of the obsession of a mob-terror. And not only so, but strange to relate, the insecurity-dread from which Daddy is suffering has added to itself something of

Mummy's special fear, and with this amalgam there has now come to be mingled not only the peculiar scare of Ethel but the quite special anxiety of Tom. Things always get dangerous when they lose their separateness in any sort of oneness.

" Break it up again, my dears ! " That's what the " Philosophy of In Spite " keeps telling us. And it is right ! The only way to deal with this fear is first to sink into the depths of our individual self: then to transform our individual self into pure consciousness: then, with the whole force of cosmic evolution behind us, working now through our individual self alone, to project our consciousness, dependent though it be upon the senses of the body, a few paces, perhaps no further than through a wall, or through the prickly thickness of a blackthorn hedge, away from our body.

Well, let us suppose we have been successful; and that, extended in this manner and adequately linked to our bodily senses and to all the complicated mechanism of our brain, through some sort of invisible navel-string deliberately elongated in our struggle to evolve a new psycho-physical power, our consciousness can now feel, see, smell, listen and taste, just as it did when it was diffused through our whole body or was concentrated at some particular point in the body. Our pleasure in this achievement would, you must agree, largely absorb our attention even if the news about Daddy's job grew still worse.

But even if we found it impossible to take this evolutionary game seriously, we should at least have learnt in our solitary playing with it that one of the chief peculiarities of our present dimension is the absolute loneliness of every living creature within its boundaries, and that to let pity interfere to any large extent with this natural loneliness is a most dangerous form of spiritual self-laceration. To those who give way to it it does not feel like self-laceration. It is painful; but what it feels like is identification of ourselves with others. That is what we think it is; and that is what we love to call it when we speak of it to others.

And we are proud of it. We think it is a sign that our nature is Shakespearean if not Protean ; whereas in reality it is simply a sign that we have refused to undergo a certain necessary hardening. We could pity Mummy and Ethel and Tom if Daddy lost his job ; but if simultaneously with hearing of this catastrophe we learnt that we ourselves, Uncle James, let us say, had cancer, it is doubtful whether our spiritual identification of ourselves with these others would continue.

The truth is there is something about loneliness that throws this contrast between the vague terror of losing our home and the desperate certainty that we've got cancer into its proper perspective. Our " Philosophy of In Spite " has indeed reached the profane conclusion that the Christian ideal of " lovingness ", the ideal of loving our neighbour at least as as much as we love ourselves, if not more, confuses the whole issue so abominably that we can't see the wood for the trees.

What we individuals have got to do is to go forward with obstinate persistence ; yes, to " press on regardless ", as our friend Hywel used to cry, and to do this with a certain hardening of our hearts, not only towards our nearest and dearest, but towards our neighbours, and indeed towards the mass of our fellow-creatures.

This absolutely necessary hardening of our hearts at certain moments of our life, and under certain conditions, is a thing that a great many of us have discovered for ourselves beneath the ordinary pressure of experience ; but the atmospheric influence of moral tradition brought to bear upon us out of the air and under the accumulated memory of all that our masters and parents and teachers have taught us—though they have not themselves always acted upon it—has forced our suspicion that there is something dangerous, tricky, false, *anti-phusis*, anti-earthy, anti-natural, anti-commonsense, anti-occidental about this spiritual ideal, something almost indecently unnatural—yes, has forced this healthy suspicion out of sight into the deepest recesses of our souls.

But the truth is we would be much kinder to people on ordinary occasions, and much more stoical and cheerful in our dealings with people, if we boldly and honestly defended to ourselves in our secret soul this absolute necessity of hardening our hearts.

This is indeed the only way to kill in our bones and our blood and our nerves these deadly shivers and jitters that spoil our days and trouble our nights with vague imaginings of calamity. " Harden your hearts ", whispers our " Philosophy of In Spite ", " to every living thing ", sometimes including—now shall we say it ? —parts and portions of yourself.

Such counsel sounds purely wicked and devilish. It even sounds a little insane. But it is the one and only way by which this awful feeling of insecurity can be killed. Once it *is* killed you will be surprised, and all your family will be surprised—I speak in the person of Uncle James—by the unspeakable relief you will feel.

What you have done is indeed a thing that is absolutely necessary to do if you really want to deal with life wisely. You have turned the tables on the Devil. In place of " doing evil that good may come " you have swung the whole situation out of that accurst, treacherous, and superficial duality with its two forces facing each other : on one side calculated hate and convoluted hypocrisy, with all the wrinkles round our mouth and chin gathered up in folds upon folds, layers upon layers, of complicated betrayal, and on the other side the even subtler cunning of absolutely shameless idiocy.

The lies " on the side of the angels ", which—as all the really subtle observers of human nature know—is always the side of the " haves ", are deep, complicated, ideal, while the lies on the side of the Devil are the far subtler deceptions and equivocations which naughty children and famished beggars and hunted animals and crafty gangsters and tricky poachers and all " have-nots " so often " get ", as we indulgently put it, " away with ".

Our ungullible " Philosophy of In Spite " is not ignorant of the arguments advanced by Nietzsche concerning the " resentment " of the ill-constituted against the well-constituted, but just now we are thinking, not so much about the physical health and the genial ability of the successful compared with the sick envy and distorted spiritual malignity of the unsuccessful, as about the significant historic fact that, quite contrary to all our moral fables and popular fairy-tales, the long list of actual saints and saviours in the annals of humanity consists almost invariably of the sons of at least fairly well-to-do parents.

It is, alas, natural enough that, when it becomes the duty of the " Philosophy of In Spite " to give us a few hints as to how to enjoy our life in spite of insecurity, we should be forced to philosophize in a manner counter to so many moral and spiritual teachers. These gentry are motivated, and very often inspired, by what might be called the " atmospheric ethics of the lucky " ; for this is precisely the ethical atmosphere in which the imaginatively sympathetic progeny of practical parents have been brought up, for the obvious reason that every lucky begetter and every fortunate mother longs to have a clever, a spiritual, and an artistic pet.

What we have to do, therefore, according to our " Philosophy of In Spite ", in order to destroy this shiver of miserable dread at the idea of our Dad losing his income, and at the thought of the effect of this loss upon each member of our family, is to isolate ourself, whether we are Dad, or Mummy, or Ethel, or Tom, from the others, and concentrate purely and entirely upon ourself. Isolated thus from the rest the wise thing to do is to go further and further in the process of isolation, until we have stripped our ego of all its trappings—yes, of all its qualities that are not absolutely essential to our being the final " I am I ", the innermost and most ultimate " self " that can possibly be reached by any human introspection.

The advantage of this isolated nakedness lies in our being able to confront the two supreme vistas of mystery at the same

moment—boundless space carried to the infinite and unending time carried to the infinite.

The only exception to this escape is the case of a well-mated pair of many years ; for here the man and the woman, instead of being joined together so closely that they have almost become one person, have, on the contrary, carried their separate identities and peculiar eccentricities so far that they have become two persons more entirely and completely than it would have been possible for them to become had they remained single. This has happened because the male in the old man has imbibed so much of the female in the old woman and she so much of the male in him that the original male-female soul in each, which, after all, is the fullest and completest self in each, has attained a triumphant self-realization.

Yes, we all feel instinctively that it isn't the he-man or the she-woman who is the fullest and ripest development of each sex, but, on the contrary, the man who is the completest all-round human being and the woman who is the completest all-round human being. Thus when our philosophy assures us that the best way to endure the insecurity of life, as it affects all the different members of our family, is to realize to the limit our individual loneliness and think of ourselves as absolutely alone in the midst of infinite time and infinite space, it doesn't mean that this *selfness* makes us more masculine if we are male or more feminine if we are female ; it means that it makes us more of a complete human being, and it means also that, as a complete human being, we are more involved with and concerned in the partner or companion of our long years on earth than we can possibly be with our parents or with our children.

The woman whose overwhelming maternal instinct makes her dote on her children and lose interest in her mate either has an unbalanced soul or has chosen her mate badly. The well-balanced woman leaves her children steadily freer and freer, as they grow up, leaves them to live their own lives, while she herself concentrates upon her mate.

But this doesn't mean that she becomes a submissive slave of her mate or that she becomes his tyrannical boss. It means that they both become independent spirits. And human beings cannot become independent spirits until they constantly harden their hearts against their nearest and dearest and concentrate on their private personal and individual sensations as they confront the ultimate loneliness. By the expression "harden their hearts against", our "Philosophy of In Spite" is not implying any vindictiveness. We can only harden our hearts *against* when our hearts have already grown morbidly and unnaturally soft *towards*. You cannot harden your heart against an enemy: and you cannot harden it where you are indifferent or care little. You can only harden it when you care very much.

There is no need to make an exception even in the case of your mate, the sharer of so many things in your life, though this is certainly a special kind of hardening. If you tried to cease thinking of your mate, or wondering about your mate, or evoking the image of your mate in absence, or feeling an intimate telepathic interchange of thought with your mate you would soon find the attempt fantastically and absurdly impossible; but these things do not cover the whole field.

No; the "hardening of the heart" which is so necessary, if we are to face the seismic tremblings of our own and our family's insecurity with real philosophical equanimity, is a very special thing and rather a rare thing.

It is, however, quite possible to cultivate it; and we can do this without making any of those evolutionary experiments our philosophy advocates with regard to the relation between mind and body. But we cannot obtain this necessary, this indispensable hardening of our heart without getting into the habit, hour by hour and day by day, of dominating our feelings, our emotions, our instincts, our intuitions, our intimations, our nervous reactions, *and all the thoughts* that—in the quaint phrase we use—"pass through our mind".

And this domination of our whole being by our will,

however weak our will may be, is well within our power. Persons that some of us would describe as " good " have obtained this mastery for thousands and thousands of years : and persons that some of us would describe as " evil " have obtained this mastery for thousands and thousands of years. Well then, it is now " up to us ", simple and quiet and timid as we are, to obtain this mastery for ourselves. Let us dominate both our feelings and our thoughts by our will, weak as it is, and let the final oracle of whatever will we have be the naked, pure, hard and simple one : " *Force yourself to enjoy* all that surrounds you *while* it surrounds you, and, when it goes, *to enjoy its going* ! "

In Spite of

BELIEF

What our " Philosophy of In Spite ", as it gradually articulates itself, has first to say about what is called belief is that, while belief claims to simplify things and clear up things and straighten out things, what it really does is to cloud, confuse and confound with accumulations of complications one of the simplest of all human feelings, our delight in mystery.

Considering all the ills we suffer under any condition, it really does seem a little too much that we should drag down the high heavens themselves and make them the accomplices of our hurly-burly and the umpires of chaos. Surely it has abundantly been proved by the historians who have followed the sufferings of the human race over any considerable passage of time that what we call belief has increased rather than diminished the blood-stained catalogue of human miseries.

On the other hand, that it has alleviated some of the deepest wounds in individual hearts and redeemed some of the most terrible afflictions in individual minds cannot be denied. Indeed, to be rigorously fair in our attitude to belief, we must accept the fact that even now to-day as we write these profane and critical words, there is a large body of authentic human experience still in our midst passionately indebted to belief and honestly dedicated to an intense day-by-day reliance upon it.

We must also remember that the whole case for and against belief is complicated at the start by the crucial question as to just how much of our life upon earth is covered by this significant word, and exactly what implications of a frightening, ambiguous, and awe-inspiring kind are conveyed by it. All the creeds of all the theologies in the world are primarily concerned, not with what we feel through our senses to have a real existence, but with what we pray and hope and trust and believe have a real existence.

It is indeed completely outside the world of our senses that belief finds its justification and satisfaction, and totally and wholly outside any word we know that it reaches its beatific vision.

Belief in the supernatural is not the only form of belief. There is also belief in progress and belief in evolution and belief in science. There is also belief in communism. And just as we can imagine angels and devils making use for their own ends of our human belief in the supernatural, so we cannot help suspecting that the present rulers of Russia make use of the belief in communism held by so many people to further their own purely nationalistic ends.

The unlucky thing about the world-situation to-day is that while the Sino-Russian side is gathering into its anti-capitalist net all the good arguments against the supernatural, our capitalist side led by America and the Commonwealth is gathering into its anti-communist net all the good arguments in defence of the supernatural. Thus it has come about that what on our side might be called " holy ground " is continually growing holier, and what on their side might be called secular ground is continually growing more profane.

Thus the crucial question for both sides becomes this: from what neutral arsenal of platonic inspiration hidden in what spiritual quarry of " background material " are we Westerners to freshen up our individualism, and these Easterners to humanize their police-state, before *our belief* in the supernatural is dried up, burnt, frozen, scorched,

scoriated, drowned, withered, blasted, blighted, reduced to nothing, and before *their belief* in communism with its destruction of sanctified presences, consecrated influences, crepuscular atmospheres, occult mysteries and pious frauds has been reduced to a stark, scowling, joyless inquisitorial puritanism, combined with such a merciless, pitiless, irresistible scientific slavery, as has never been seen in the world before?

Yes, the question for both sides at this crucial moment—for it is impossible to believe that the masses of the Russian people or even of the Chinese people would want to submit to such an appalling slavery as the present rulers in the Kremlin would inflict upon the world—is from what deep-pulsing upspringing creative force in the background of our lives can we get an inspiration sufficiently stirring and vital to serve as a gathering-cry for men of good-will all over the world?

The question for our side is from what direction can we, whose holy ground has always been blessed by the supernatural, and whose priests of the supernatural have always claimed that this same holy ground of theirs represents all the beauty, all the subtlety, all the mystery in the world, find a new fountain of life?

We have plenty of pigments and feathers and semi-precious stones left still in our possession wherewith to adorn our shrines, but where are the simple living elements wherewith, in accordance with the creative energy of Nature, we can rebuild the world? And when will these Kremlin tyrants, who are liberating *our* victims only to turn them into *their* slaves, creatures to be tortured and bled and sweated and lacerated and worked to death by scientifically armed slave-drivers, when will they feel the day of their doom at hand, and grow aware of the uprising, out of that planetary portion of the human heart that is neither communist nor Christian, neither Eastern nor Western, neither American nor European, but simply human, of a fountain of life that nothing can shut down till it overflows all the bars and barriers on earth?

Here indeed at this present crisis in the history of humanity

we are confronted by two prodigious frauds. *Our* fraud, continually dinned into our simple heads by our scholastic, religious, ethical, and political leaders, declares that it is only by means of our religious belief that the beauty, wonder, poetry, glamour, magic, richness, depth, dignity, nobility, grandeur, subtlety and, above all, *mystery* of life is preserved from destruction.

This is, of course, a monstrous lie. Long before Mahomet left Mecca, long before Lot left Sodom, long before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, long before the wooden horse disgorged its heroic gangsters into the streets of Troy, the noons of the Middle East were radiant with magic and its nights terrible with mystery.

The funeral of Hector, tamer of horses, did not take the heart out of the poetry of the world, nor did the murder of Agamemnon turn all tragedy into a pinch of dust blown across the desert. *Their* fraud, that of the present rulers of Russia and China, with their victimized or hypnotized satellites, is a more obvious one.

With the frenzy of religious conviction, and the dogmatism of logical desperation, they assume that only by shovelling men and women neck and crop into factory barracks and collective farms, and dominating them with labour camps and uranium mines, can the classless Utopia of the future be inaugurated. These two colossal frauds, *ours* and *theirs*, are alike the result of belief. *We* believe that it is entirely due to our religion that human life upon the earth has such possibilities of dignity and beauty.

They believe that the absolute despotism of a handful of privileged rulers, whose conduct of affairs is based on the principle that everything is permitted and nothing forbidden, is a perfectly natural way of reaching their goal. An opportunism in foreign affairs so shameless that it would confuse Machiavel and confound Metternich strikes them as needing no apology. Such are human beings ; and thus and not otherwise they have to be treated. In every struggle throughout

life complete and total must be our unscrupulousness or we might just as well be monks or nuns.

To pursue your end with the cunning of a master-gangster and with the deadly assurance of a sworn assassin seems as natural to them as to eat when you are hungry or to drink when you are thirsty. It is a nice point whether the fraud that deceives others, but does not deceive him who uses it, is more damnable or less damnable than the fraud which deceives the man who uses it as well as his victim.

But in any case it is clear that our communistic enemies belong to the former category and we to the latter. It is, alas, pretty clear, and we cannot think there are many honest men who would deny this, that the leaders of the people on our side of the dividing line go a good deal further in their professional eloquence than their consciences would allow them to go in private life. They deceive themselves—we can watch them doing it!—as cleverly as they deceive us, and nearly as neatly as they endeavour to deceive the world, whereas our enemies' rulers flagrantly deceive their own people, try their utmost to deceive the world, but, like the cynical devils they are, recognize shamelessly among themselves what they are up to!

And what, down at the bottom of it, is the cause of all this deception? Belief—simply and solely belief. *We* believe that since we are well-meaning people in our private life, our cause must be for the good of the world in general; while our enemies believe that for them to be the dominant power in the world is inherent in the destiny of Russia: and indeed in this belief they have the mediumship of the greatest of all novelists to support them, for Dostoievsky himself has uttered many a prophecy to this effect.

But whether the deceptive element in belief is a sanctified deception like ours or an unholy and cynical deception like theirs, it is certainly a deception that on both sides has succeeded not only in justifying itself as "truth" but in justifying its adherents in calling it "the truth", while in their hearts they

either know it for what it is, or feel, at least at certain moments, extremely uncomfortable about it and extremely doubtful about it.

It is curious to think that the subtlest defence of lying ever uttered is that cry in the New Testament which we have been brought up to regard as tragically beautiful: " Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief! " But in this whole matter of truth and lies we are confronted by the inscrutably complicated problem of the trickery of *words*.

There's a whole zodiac of truth and falsehood in every word we utter or write; and the actual living history of certain familiar words, if we only possessed it, would be so full of curious debouchings and fantastic digressions and aberrations that we should be shocked at the revelation.

Very few writers realize the full possibilities of the words they use; and this is true even among the rarer words. Indeed it needs more than just a scholar to catch the mole-runs of underground treachery to the face-value of the word that almost every syllable contains; and the abominable were-wolves and ghostly lemurs that many words hide under their disguises when we examine them with the only eye that can really reveal their dark tricks, and *that* is more than a pyschological eye, and more even than a physiognomic eye, for it is a *mythological eye*, are such as would make Quintilian do more than gasp.

Speaking for our " Philosophy of In Spite ", we can assure you that in the working out of our ideas about life for the benefit of the ordinary man and woman we have found as we travelled among the tribes of words in their dark continents and remote islands, watching their tricks and their incestuous and thaumaturgic habits, and their power of transformation and of metamorphosis, and their hidden ways of giving birth to horrible abortions, and of harbouring in their own persons prodigious parasites, we have found, we can swear to you, that a traveller among words, before he returns to the direct gestures that are honest and natural among men and animals, has to cleanse himself of many contaminations and of many foul smells.

Such a traveller can further assure you that it is from those quarters of the world, where belief quarrels with belief, that the worst and most sulphurous of fumes cling to his skin. But let us, O wavering convertite, imitate the great poets and make use of some really suggestive metaphor. Let us take as a symbol of the subtle shiftings of meaning in words, and especially of the meanings we give to the word "faith", that dark line at the tide's edge that we call the "windrow".

As we walk along the shore and examine this magical windrow at the sea's edge, it seems to become more and more significant as an embodiment of our whole relation to the supernatural. The fragments of pearly shells and rose-tinged seaweeds, the wisps of iridescent foam that are so startlingly lovely in detail, form themselves as we regard them stretched out in a long wavy line before us, into a jet-black trail like a weird stain in the sand left by an interminable sea-serpent.

So rare, so surprising, so startling in what it contains, is this jet-black trail, as we follow its course, that we are inevitably hit by the idea that many of the lovely things twisted into that wavering line are direct benefactions from high heaven and in their strange beauty, including sundry jellyfish and starfish, should compel us to offer vows of regeneration in gratitude to, and in worship of, that same heaven.

And yet, and yet we have to remind ourselves that this magical windrow would still be there at our feet even if no ships had been wrecked in the bay to mingle a few fragments of driftwood with the starfish and the shells; and indeed if there had been no starfish and no shells and nothing at all but the recurrent tides and the sand to receive them, the windrow would still be the windrow.

Yes, the oracle of our "Philosophy of In Spite" for every man that cometh into the world remains the same: "Make the poetical your substitute for the supernatural." Or, if we happen to be the kind of individual—and there's much to be said in favour of such a viewpoint—who, without any wish to have a belief or a creed or a faith, prefers to leave all the

doors and all the windows and all the cracks and crevices in the cosmos open, let our philosophic oracle run thus : " Make the poetical your substitute for the doctrinal."

But allow us to enlarge a little further on what we mean by " the poetical ". And for heaven's sake let us avoid the theoretic, the academic, and the scientific in our investigation. Let us go to work in a more direct manner and turn to poetry itself. Everybody knows, for everybody can *feel*, even if he cannot explain his feeling, what impression we get from reading those old north-country ballads of the romantic battlefields between England and Scotland. There are ballads, of course, handed down from the past in every part of our island ; but those of Northumberland and of the Border seem to carry with them down the centuries in some quite special way the peculiar essence of ballad-poetry. And what is this essence ?

Well, it is a special concentration of the romantic, the descriptive, the amorous, the humorous, and, above all, the tragic. Nothing less than this ballad-spirit, enlarged and extended in a dramatic narrative, makes the innermost secret of the Iliad. And even the *Odyssey*, where, though Odysseus wasn't a pirate, the structure of the plot is more like a picaresque novel than an epic, even the *Odyssey* has plenty of detachable vignettes of which any wandering minstrel, who was an adept at natural rhythm, could make the sort of ballads that contain in a condensed form the whole romantic significance of our life upon earth.

A proper ballad is at once classical and romantic. It contains the wonder of infancy, the wild fancies of our young men, and the far-flung dreams of our maidens, the noonday heroism of the man's and the woman's burden, and all the grotesque humours and pitiful weaknesses of old age.

It would not be from philosophic poems, however metaphysical, or from social comedies, however witty, that a visitor to our planet from another constellation would get an epitome of our whole life upon earth, its rough glory, its

hardly bearable pity, its tenderness, its ghastly humour, its grim horror, and its ultimate mystery.

Some might protest: "But how can poetry be a substitute for belief, when it needs so much imagination, so much sensitivity, so much scholarship, and so much historical reading? Belief is a simple thing and it is adapted to simple people. Anyone can believe who really wants to believe. But what heaps and heaps of people there must be who care no more for poetry than they care for astronomy or geology!"

A good answer from our "Philosophy of In Spite" to this crude argument would be to recommend the believers "to dash their belief against the stones", or, in more chemical and less biblical language, to try the experiment of resolving them into the elements, into water, air, fire, earth.

Make yourself, we would say, by the force of your natural will, feel the same reverence for these mysterious things—for they are mysterious—as you feel for the sublime objects of your belief. If you cannot arrive at such feelings all in a moment, do not give up. Go on practising your will to disbelieve in the supernatural, and to believe in the poetical; and before you realize what has happened, you will find that you have transferred your projection of psychic energy from its former supernatural object to its new poetical object.

And, when once this exchange has been effected, the relief you will experience will be an overflowing reward for the effort you have made. It will be a completely new life for your whole mental and physical being. You will feel like a fish that has been imprisoned all its days in a glass-walled tank or aquarium on the deck of a ship, and that now, suddenly, with one grand fling of its whole strength, has dived into the sea.

Each one of the real, living, palpable elements of your new-old universe will draw you towards itself with a mysterious reciprocity of incredible response. "Never before", you will say to yourself, "have I felt like this about the actual flaming sun as it goes down!" And you will say to yourself: "I've looked at the moon, heaven knows, again and again, but what

is this? What has happened to it, and what has happened to me?"

And when now, on some quite normal visit to the seaside, whither you have gone time and again in your old "believing days" and have enjoyed your gossiping landlady and your intermittent plunge into the waves and your heavenly splashings through the sun-dazzling ripples with sturdy half-dressed little boys and girls, when now, on one of these familiar occasions, you find yourself suddenly confronted by something in the water, by something in the scintillations of the sun upon the water, by something in the swaying of the seaweeds under the water, by something that comes shimmering and shattering and blinding, by something that comes splintering from top to bottom at one flaming stroke the whole mirage of your life, what, O most difficult of convertites, what do you think has happened to you?

Some new revelation from the supernatural is it, eh, that has thus caught you out of yourself and whirled you up into the highest heaven? Not at all! It is simply that, in a way you've never done before, *you*, not "a spiritual being" but simply a human creature who are a pure product of great creative nature, you, who are just one ordinary consciousness among all manner of other consciousnesses, have recognized, and we give you full credit for the recognition, all the mystery there is in the sea, in this "commensurate antagonist of the earth".

And this is no divine revelation. This is simply one specially lucky moment in your ordinary life, when, in some inexplicable way, all the waters of the great deep isolate themselves in their majesty and enormity from the rest of the cosmos, and establish, just for that one particular moment, a peculiar and quite special relation with you, that is to say with an accidentally selected conscious identity, who is lucky enough to be selected by chance in this particular case and who happens to be none other than yourself.

And as with water and fire, so, in our wonderful liberation from the desperate service of some dogmatic belief, there can

be established between your consciousness and the vast spaces of the boundless ether a new and quite special relation. But after all, and most of all, it is in connection with the earth itself, with the planet that has brought us into being and given us our conscious identity as individual lives, that the unutterable satisfaction of the release of the self with all its bodily senses from its slavery to some supernatural belief becomes most apparent.

Nothing takes longer for a human being to learn, but nothing rewards the learner so much when he has learnt it, than the incredible intimacy that can be attained between any human consciousness and the great planetary mother of all our earthly lives.

It is extraordinary how the knowledge grows clearer and clearer upon us that we are in touch with a life-essence here that is distinct from any luxuriant growth of moss or ferns, or any monumental ridge of adamantine rock, or any deep-rooted forest of sepulchral pines, or any yawning chasm among scoriac craters, or any frozen peninsula of polar ice, or any burning camel-traversed desert of centuries-old sand, a life-essence to which we owe all that we are, all that we have been, and all that we may be.

Nor is this the end of what we gain by relaxing our hold upon every dogmatic belief we have ever had. There is no need for us to go out into the wilderness or among the mountains or to wander through lonely woods or by the banks of deep rivers or rushing streams in order to mingle our human life—oh much more than our mere consciousness!—with the life of Nature.

There is no need for us to find specially secluded paths across peaceful elm-bordered meadows or over chalky uplands with glimpses of the distant sea. There is no need for us to leave the pavement or the roadway or the neighbourhood of masonry and the rows of houses and the traffic of streets.

All we've got to do is just to cross our threshold and use our feet—plod, plod, plod!—in any mortal direction that

takes our fancy at the moment. Nothing can hinder us, when we really think of it, from recognizing the fact that we, an upright biped with legs and arms, whether we are male or female, as we put one foot in front of the other on the surface of this planet so that we may walk from one spot to another spot, are able to see above our heads, and even above the chimneys and walls in front of us, and even above the wooded hills and rocky ridges, a spectacle, an object, a sight, a view, a vision, that is beyond the power of our brain, however clever we are, however learned we are, however mathematical or metaphysical we are, to understand or comprehend or even realize. And yet *there it is !*

There it is, above the chimneys in front of us, above the hills and the trees in front of us, and straight up there above our absurdly wooden skulls with their pathetic straw hats, straight up there in what we call the zenith. Well ? Do you follow us, grave reader ? What we are talking about is simply infinity. Nobody on earth really knows, in spite of the way we so glibly use this startling word, nobody has the faintest shadow of an idea, what infinity actually means.

It isn't a miracle ; for it does nothing and changes nothing. All it does is to remain itself, to remain what we can see of it, a spectacle, a vision. And what *do* we see ? Well, we see what we call the sky, the blue sky, the grey sky, the cloudy sky, the red-streaked or yellow-streaked sky, the sky of that " peculiar tint of yellow-green " which they tell us Coleridge greatly admired, and which they say that that childish bully-boy, my Lord Byron, swore couldn't exist, or was an artistic affectation, or something of that kind.

" Well then," you say, " what of it ? What's all this fuss, all this pother, about ? " The fuss is simply about the fact that in looking at the sky above your head, as you casually lift your skirt or swing your stick or kick a stone, you are looking at the last of what, in old-fashioned terms, we call the four elements—fire, water, earth, air—but, unlike the other three, this element of air, thinned out and purged till it can

be called ether, *has no end.* It is boundless. And of this boundlessness our human brain can make nothing. It stops, baffled. Or, to be more correct, it simply stops.

Thus as we slip out of our back door and plunge, or rush, or stroll, or drift into the street, and then proceed to stride, or trip, or totter, or hop and skip along the path or the pavement, or wave our stick, or swing our hips, or light our cigarette on our way to the pub or the cinema, we have only to throw back our head to gaze at an object which is absolutely incredible and unthinkable, a thing that is at one and the same time a black, or a grey, or a green, or a rose-tinged ceiling of thin air within the limits of our ordinary world, and also an unrealizable enigma that thrusts itself out of our universe altogether and into a region of mystery where our human brain no longer works.

When we are confronted by this *eternity of space* above our heads, it is as unsatisfactory to the common sense upon which is founded our " Philosophy of In Spite " to have the subtle speculations of Einstein and others about the mathematical theory of relativity doled out to us as a tentative explanation of this *mysterium tremendum* which is the everlasting background of the chances and changes of our whole life, as it is to have the " belief " called Moslem, or the " belief " called Buddhist, or the " belief " called Confucian, or the " belief " called Roman Catholic Christianity, or the belief called Anglicanism, doled out to us as a dogmatic explanation of this undying wonder.

Our philosophy refuses to accept any explanation because it knows, by a mingling of instinct, intuition, reason, and feeling, along with that curious sixth sense which is *the poetic sense*, that the mere fact that the infinite sky surrounds the smallest detail of our life makes the mystery of that life, *even if we are annihilated at the end of it*, as satisfying as it is insoluble.

But it is not only with the power of its mystery that our poetic sense can serve us as our best substitute for this fatal and dangerous "belief", which is the cause of war and madness and torture and horror and of all those treacherous ideals

which cramp and confine and corrupt us with the false morbidities of family-worship, love-worship, sacrifice-worship, chastity-worship, sanctity-worship, tradition-worship, together with that crazy Manichean shudder at what is contemptuously called " matter ".

It can also serve by its human realism and by its rugged earthiness, and by its power of getting rid of the whole tricky cult of the unhealthy, the sanctimonious, and all that is vulgarly referred to as " spiritual ", but which at its best only represents that dubious tendency towards the *occult* which has come to be called " psychic " and which at its worst can only be described as a particular kind of erotic hysteria. The poetic sense can also serve us by strengthening and steadying our imaginative power.

Now the creative power of human imagination is one of the noblest forces in the world, and it a psychological treachery to our race to deny that ordinary human souls are lacking in it and that to find examples of it we must go to the great artists and poets and inspired prophets. This is totally untrue. All of us possess creative imagination and many of us possess it to a dangerous degree ; and we must be prepared to find that our substitute for this perilous world-old phenomenon of " belief " is not wholly—or it might lack the power of its predecessor—free from some of that predecessor's explosive vibrations.

But we must use what we've got : and if the truth were revealed it would be found astonishing how much creative imagination the simplest person possesses.

The unlucky thing is that most of us allow it to possess us instead of possessing it. But it can be made our shield and spear in the struggle with life. In fact the very first thing our imagination does for us is to visualise the whole of our life upon earth as a battle. No need for us to be a French wit or a Greek sage to imagine *that* !

Well, let us go a step or two further and imagine ourselves—in whatever kind of house you like—confronted by the familiar

walls with their shelves and ornaments and pictures, or with nothing but a dirty wallpaper, which itself, by reason of age and damp, is peeling off in melancholy-looking strips.

Following our imagination, however, in its selecting, disengaging, encroaching, blending, transforming, let us look at this room to which fate, or chance, or necessity, or some god —if we cannot imagine day following day, or night night, without *their* activity—has led us, and let us force ourselves, by using our will, to concentrate our attention steadily and undeviatingly upon these pretentious, or appealing, or dilapidated walls, as the case may be, and to take possession of them with every sense we have. Let us possess them wholly and entirely.

Let us possess everything they can offer in the way of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Let us, in fact, embrace them or be embraced by them as if the whole place were an entrancing bride or a formidable bridegroom.

" But," you may protest, " these walls are damp and filthy and horrible! How can I possibly enjoy anything about them? " You can enjoy everything there is to enjoy about them: and since you possess an ordinary person's creative imagination, *that* means a great deal. " But," you may protest, " these pictures are too obscure in their horrid modernity! They are positively indecent! They are divorced from nature! "

To this our " Philosophy of In Spite " retorts: " Never mind what they are! This is part of your life. This is, therefore, an act of war. When we make war it is in order to take possession. The sexes make war on each other, and when they possess each other it is the culmination of their war. Each one of us struggles to possess the universe, and this means that each one of us has to fight with the universe in order to possess it."

Our philosophy speaks to you from the horse's mouth of the deepest reality we know, and what it says to you is: " *There is only you and the universe. There is only you against the universe. Therefore fight!* "

Well, let us leave the room now, my friend, whoever you are, and step into the road. Well, and what have we got here? There they are—the usual houses, chimneys, trees, pavements; and the usual people passing and the usual children playing and the usual birds flitting about and the usual clouds sailing overhead!

But these are not the only things here. You are here too. And your being here makes the whole difference. For you, being a man, or a woman, or a boy, or a girl, have a creative imagination. *Yes, you have!* It's no good telling me you are an ordinary person. "You are a person. God is no more. Your own humanity learn to adore." Yonder, therefore, are not only bricks and mortar; not only drifting clouds, rising smoke, trees losing their leaves, sparrows twittering, rooks in some distant park cawing, and a far-off railway train whistling.

Don't they include that tiny patch of clear sky over there, between that tree-top and that chimney, which, small as it is, goes on and on and on and on, without end, for ever and ever? And hasn't that small, angular, jaggedly outlined fragment of infinity between an uneven tree-branch that from here has an almost metallic look and the pottery-curve of the chimney-top enough of a Grimm's fairy-tale look about it to make you revert, as we all have to revert if we want to belong to the infinite renaissance of infinity, to the primal question of our youth: "Why is anything anything?"

And again: "Why is everything everything?" And, for the third time: "Why are you *you*, and why am I *I*?" And can our scientists or can any of our religious people offer us any creation of the human imagination that is more homely and poetical than one of Grimm's fairy-tales?

All the supporters and expounders of our traditional "beliefs" talk of the "act of faith" we have to make, and of the "will to believe" we have to exercise in order not to slip back into the "materialism", as they love to call it, of the natural and primeval poetry of human life on earth. Why should "acts of faith" be confined to those who believe in

Mahomet, or in Buddha, or in Confucius, or in Jesus? Why should not ordinary well-meaning, blundering, simple-minded unbelievers have an " act of faith " also?

No, no! Our crafty and cautious " Philosophy of In Spite " is not making any overtures to you, O most critical, and most assiduous, and most concentrated of convertites! We fully admit it almost requires as much obstinacy to refuse to perform the initial " act of faith " in favour of our carefully measured promulgations, as it does to remain obdurate and stubborn when the Vatican refers to the Assumption or the mathematicians to relativity.

No, our philosophy's " act of faith " is much more " basic ", as they say nowadays, than the most literal acceptance of the Queen of Heaven taking her place without death or the most mathematical revocation of an edict of Einstein.

Our " act of faith " is twofold. It is faith in the essential goodness of human nature, and it is faith in the will-power of any individual person. That this twofold " act of faith " requires some daring is proved abundantly. " Placed," as the poet says, " on this isthmus of a middle state " we are doubly balanced between opposites.

Not only are we on one tight-rope between religion and science, but we are on another tight-rope between the unscrupulousness of big-business and the unscrupulousness of the police-state. Thus it can be clearly seen why our desperate " act of faith " in man's natural goodness must be supported by an equally desperate " act of faith " in the will-power of the individual.

There is indeed a power in this second " act of faith " that transcends the first, in the sense in which a faith concerning the condition of " becoming " surpasses a faith concerning the condition of " being ". When, therefore, our friend-enemies, the advocates of belief, implore us to have faith in a person, or image, or emanation, or figure, or symbol, or revelation, our wisest course is not to waste our energy in denial or negation.

Our wisest course is simply to double our faith in our own will-power. And oh, how we need, we ordinary people who are now gropingly and fumblingly, but with clear outrushings of inspiration from the heart of life, formulating our " Philosophy of In Spite ", oh, how we need the cunning of an animal —not necessarily of a serpent, not necessarily even of a fox. Shall we say of an ox or of an ass ?

Yes, by the sun and moon ! What we need is the slow-witted, heavily moving cunning of the beasts of burden in this matter ! For our adversaries the believers have terribly cruel support. For instance, what grist to their mill the Germans brought with their concentration camps and Gestapo! And what grist to their mill the Russians are now bringing with their uranium mines, their mass liquidation of political enemies, and their reckless opportunism and cynical readiness to break their word !

It might well seem true, when we think of these crimes and all this black treachery and cruelty that is going on now in this world, that the Christian oracle is not far from the truth when it declares that the " heart of man is desperately wicked ".

And yet, " all the same for that ", as Homer would say, it is *not* true. In fact it is a lie. The heart of man is *not* " desperately wicked ". No, in spite of all the cruelties of the Gestapo and all the treacheries of the Ogpu or of the " M.K.V.D.", or whatever those damned letters are, the heart of man is well-meaning and good-natured and only desires to work, to play, to make love, to eat, to drink, to enjoy life, and to be let alone by its presposterous rulers.

Our " Philosophy of In Spite ", as we ordinary human beings who are neither metaphysicians nor scientists are slowly struggling to work it out, has indeed arrived at what might be called an historic conclusion. In fact it has decided that, although humanity has undoubtedly gained in various forms of spiritual perception by its two thousand years of the worship of suffering, the time has come for these two thousand years of subtle and tortuous and tragic manias to be brought to an

end. Bringing it to an end does *not* mean a universal orgy of sadism and masochism, of homo-sexuality and lesbianism.

Quite the contrary. These extravagant aberrations grow up as naturally as white-spotted scarlet toadstools out of soils that are soaked with the blood of matryrs, and out of moss-grown recesses and dark-green hollows where the sacrificial victims of murderous sorceries have been anointed with the sacred sweat of spiritual fanatics and drugged with the black rain of their wounds and their weeping.

Bringing two thousand years of sacrificial penance to an end, the life-spirit of our time has before it a very crucial struggle. How far this struggle can be called a redemptive or even a rejuvenative one for humanity is a doubtful question. There are some who feel that our whole white race is already engaged in a desperate life-and-death struggle for survival; and that no man can yet be sure that it *will* survive.

The white race represents what, after all, is only a minority among mortal men. The black-skins and the yellow-skins overwhelmingly outnumber them. And good reason enough they have for wanting to destroy us; for we have certainly, as that expressive and most sinister word has it, " exploited " them.

But although that particular word is an effective weapon for anyone who wants to expose the racial iniquities that have gone on between blacks and whites, it does not cover the whole field or explain everything. Certainly at the beginning of the industrial revolution in this country the exploitation of our own women and children by their employers cried to the clouded north-country sky for vengeance.

This whole affair of the " industrializing " of the nations of the earth, is, in the uneasy fullness of that significant proverbial expression, " a funny business ".

But it does seem as if, between our race and the races whose skins are of other colours than ours, there has continued something—not quite the same, but something with the same moral complexion—of the relation that existed when the industrial revolution began in England, between employers and employed.

In Spite of Belief

We all know the forcible arguments for the industrialization of all the countries of the world, and many have been the descriptions, some horrible, some alluring, of what will come of it all; but just at present the particular portion of our consciousness that really does exist, though it is hard sometimes to believe it, beneath the skins of human beings that are white and black and yellow and red, does really seem to be gathering itself together to face this more than racial crisis, this more than employer-and-employed crisis, this super-moral, super-metaphysical crisis, the end of our two-thousand-years worship of an instrument of torture.

Some among us here, as we try together, men and women, old and young, to formulate our " Philiosophy of In Spite ", hold the opinion that the greatest picture in the world is Rubens' " Christ on the Cross " of the Wallace collection, where a Herculean figure resembling the " Prometheus Bound " of Aeschylus lifts his head in an unconquerable defiance of pain and torture and sorrow and pity and death, lifts it high above the spires and turrets and domes and minarets of the capital city of the entire world, filling any stupefied onlooker, for the head of this crucified Hercules remains alone with the midnight constellations, with an awe-struck sense that he beholds an opponent of the unjust Thunderer who is strong enough to establish a human protest against the heavens that will last as long as the heavens themselves can last.

And if our stupefied wanderer suddenly realized the real nature of the tragedy upon which he has stumbled, isn't it possible he might cry out in the language of the far-off Ultima Thule that was his island home: *Cynnorthwyr'r gwan, O aros gyda mi!* "—" Help of the helpless, O abide with me! " ?

And it is just this mood in the traveller from Ultima Thule that our crafty spiritual guides have a positive genius for exploiting; and they do so by the use of that fatal syllable " love ". Oh, it is necessary for us—and that unconquerable challenger of the unjust heavens is on our side—to make a final desperate rush at those battlements of two thousand

years, above which waves the banner of this false and fatal "love"!

We must storm this bastion. We must surmount these battlements. We must substitute natural, ordinary, human kindness, natural, ordinary, human goodness, for this mystic "love" —yes, and unconquerable human defiance for this ecstasy of divine submission! There is indeed something darkly sinister, something appallingly near to a treacherous and fraudulent attack made by these spiritual leaders of ours against the simple goodness, kindness, and natural uprightness of ordinary human nature, about this whole business of what we must believe, if our belief is still to be founded on "love" and is still to be the belief that has the tradition of two thousand years behind it; and if they attack our best, they must beware of our worst.

Here indeed is the rampart on which we must plant a standard to which the honest and the kindly can repair. Here indeed is the place where we must cry our new cry and challenge this fatal, evil, corrupt and poisonous "love" by which the ghosts and the maggots and the rats and the worms have persuaded us to worship instruments of torture, to kiss the rod, to lick the sores of lepers, and, in a mania of masochism mixed with sadism, to loathe the healthy, despise the natural, spurn the sane, and seek to enter the kingdom of heaven by the Gate of Wailing and to rise to immortality by the Tower of Pain.

Yes, it is no blindman's-buff, no playtime charade, no Feast of Fools, to throw off the yoke of a cult as old as the year one, a cult branded into us, burnt into us, bitten into us, as is this belief we have idealized and defended and justified by all the twistings and turnings of all the pietistic chicanery, theological equivocation, and mystical balderdash we could summon up for two thousand years!

Yet this is what we have to do if we are resolved, as far as our normal strength goes, to substitute poetry for superstition, normal and natural goodness for morbidly corrupt

desperation, and finally every level of honest common sense for all those Maenadlike ecstasies of convoluted self-sacrifice.

Well then, the question for us now is this: can we get a firm hold upon this mental act of faith that has been practised by our ancestors for so long and use it for our own ends? Can we turn it into a weapon that can be aimed by ourselves; but at a totally different target and to an absolutely different effect from that at which our ancestors for the last two thousand years have been taught to aim it?

Could it not become something extremely like a deliberately evolved psychological power, a power resembling that other power which we sometimes feel we are on the verge of creating, the one by which our consciousness can project itself beyond the physical body upon which it depends and whose senses it is still bound to use?

Well, our "Philosophy of In Spite" does actually at this point seem to be feeling its way towards a startlingly evolutionary development. And why not? When our ancestral sea-dweller first came up from the waves, and when our ancestral tree-dweller first came down from the branches, there were doubtless many mutterings and murmurings precisely resembling those which we hear to-day, one set of protests warning us that if we give up belief in its oldest, purest, simplest form, belief as it has been held from the year one of our era, we shall lose everything that is precious in our life and probably end by murdering one another in a frenzy of maniacal homicide, and another set of protests of an opposite nature, proceeding from very different but equally agitated creatures in forest and ocean, weird, horny, scaly sounds, corresponding to the indignantly progressive voices we hear to-day protesting against the cautious slowness and nervous timidity of our evolutionary gestures.

Our Philosophy is obviously seeking, as the old Greek oracles told their philosophers to seek, a way that steers a middle track between these two extremes. We must, in fact,

steadily, consciously and very deliberately, practise the art of increasing our power of belief in ourselves.

When you ask: "Belief in ourselves *as what*?" the reply of our philosophy is simple: "As creatures able to create their own private, independent, and personal way of life in defiance of every obstacle."

A curious metaphysical *residuum*, or necessitated "left-over", still palely lingering in a ghostly survival, after the disappearance of the rest of our cosmogonic belief, is faith in what is usually spoken of and written of, with a sort of spiritual hush of awe-struck respect, as "the One". This particular tone, used by oriental occultists and by those who aim at reconciling Eastern and Western belief, is itself a perfect illustration of the element of pontifical priestcraft and thaumaturgic play-acting which is naturally dear to certain types of platform orators, since by means of it they not only derive a delicious feeling of occult power in themselves but a still more exciting sense of exercising power over their hearers.

But the "Philosophy of In Spite" wholly rejects this portentous "One", this prodigious "absolute", this preposterous and phantasmagoric world-ghost. Because science is compelled to assume a certain mathematical unity, and because our human terror of the unpredictable and chaotic tends to make us scamper like children to our nurse's skirt and scramble like chickens under the maternal wing, are we to yield to an Orphic frenzy for the melting of all individuals into one mass and of all differences into the same, till out of our multiverse of a thousand dimensions there resounds the terrified cry—"The One, the One, the One, the One! The Safe! The Secure! The Familiar! The Paternal-Maternal One!"?

The truth is we are being bullied and brow-beaten and persecuted by the totalitarian state-police of mathematics. There is a certain corner in our human brain that craves mathematical logic at any cost to poetical satisfaction and instinctive sensation.

But there is no reason why we should commit suicide

because from a corner of our beings there arises a craving for death. Our " Philosophy of In Spite " sees no sense in giving up the complete agnosticism it has always followed. Besides, to speak plainly, the " Philosophy of In Spite ", from its own shrewd and homely instinct—an instinct in which it follows " the old wives' wisdom " of the human race from the days of the cave-men and is unashamedly more feminine than masculine—feels that there is as much evidence, in what it sees around it every day, for reality being a multiverse as there is evidence for its being a universe.

It is not, however, upon the question whether things make up a " one " or a " many " that our philosophy recommends us to concentrate, but on *belief in ourselves as against belief in the supernatural.* What our philosophy advises us to concentrate upon is a fixed determination that, before we die and are no more seen, we shall enjoy the particular life that fate has given us ; enjoy it with our senses, with our intelligence, and with all the imagination we possess, and, while we are enjoying it, exercise what is sometimes called " an iron control ", though we would ourselves prefer to call it " a playful control ", over our angers and irritations, remembering that he who loseth his temper has been tripped up in his wrestling with life, not by the chess-pawn or even by the chess-knight who has annoyed him, but by the whole chess-board and all its chess-men along with his opponent who is directing the battle against him.

It is queer how every man, every woman, every boy, every girl, at some casual moment in every one of their days, suddenly grows conscious of their " I—I—I—I—I ", their incorrigible and uncontrollable self, and wonders, vaguely and obscurely enough, but with an odd trance-like fixity of consciousness, what the devil it's all about ; and it is at moments like this that they tend to wonder what they would make of themselves if the world were malleable and they could, so to say, invent their career out of nothing.

These moments may come when we are indoors or out-of-doors, or working or playing, or loafing or idling, or hurrying

or resting. But at such moments each and every one of us remains for a second, for several seconds perhaps, though it may be with scarcely a physical pause in what we are doing, lost in a mood of mental reverie approaching what used to be called " a brown study ".

These moments of day-dreaming have not been sufficiently considered by philosophic writers—Heaven forbid they should become the subject of some new missionary from Zurich, digging another mud-pool in the tadpole-pond of " the unconscious " !—but our commonsensical " Philosophy of In Spite " regards them as living substitutes for churches and chapels and shrines and oratories.

It is indeed at such moments, when we are mentally resting at the wayside shrine of ourselves, in this trance-like state, and when upon our faces is that appealing look of profound quiescent receptivity such as appears on the faces of those who sleep or of those who will never wake again, that the " Philosophy of In Spite ", flitting through the air, whether it be the air of daylight, or the air of twilight, or the air of midnight, is inevitably and inexorably attracted, like an airy-feathery humming-bird moth, just as if that particular look of reverie threw on the air an ineffably sweet fragrance, and, being thus attracted, it is, we swear to you, O startled convertite, at such moments that our " philosophy " conveys to the man, or woman, or boy, or girl, the wafture of the particular inspiration which suggests, now that this person has renounced all traditional belief, the sort of belief *in himself*, or *in herself*, which must henceforth take the place of what has been given up for ever.

And what exactly, at such a dedicated moment, will the " Philosophy of In Spite " suggest to this flower-like receptivity ? Well, it will suggest, wherever we are, and whether we are men or women, or boys or girls, that at that particular moment, whether indoors or out-of-doors, we should give ourselves up entirely to this mood of isolation, cease worrying about any other person or any other creature in the world,

and lying back upon the mystery of being, and letting the ocean of life hold us up in perfect passivity, calmly contemplate all the shapes and colours, all the spray and foam, all the seagull feathers, all the flying-fish fins, all the bulwarks of all the ships, all the shadows of all their opacities, all the transparencies of all their imprints, as they pass in the water; and while we betray no heaving breast, no beating pulse, no gasping breath, no clutching arms, allow our consciousness, purged of pride and conceit, and freed from the cumbrous rigmarole of personality, which is such a drag upon natural enjoyment, *to drink in*—for that is an image which can apply to the receptivity of both sexes—as much of our present dimension or multiverse as lends itself to such psychic absorption.

As our company of "good companions" works at our simple chart for life's chaotic ocean, we are confronted now and again by a weird feeling that there is "something in the way", at whose throat, be it sea-beast or demon, be it mortal or immortal, we ought to fling ourselves! It is very likely that it has been from the pressure of this vague and obscure feeling of "something in the way" that for the last two thousand years our Western nations have believed in the Devil.

But we of the "Philosophy of In Spite" have come to the conclusion that "the thing in the way" is simply that particular element in the cosmos itself, or in the dimension of the multiverse itself, with which we as individuals are struggling at the moment. We hold that quite naturally the widely diffused and thinly suffused sub-human consciousness existing in those substances that are generally called "inanimate" but which really are portions, as we have seen, of the body of our mother the Earth, tend to resist many of our human activities. If it is inevitable that we, in our individual reaction to this, should denounce it as malicious devilry, it is also inevitable that the portion of the body of our mother the Earth against which, with the deliberate intention of some radical change or transformation in its essential being, we are directing our energy, for we are inclined to doubt if there is such a thing as an

inanimate substance without some diffused element sub-human sensitivity should likewise feel, and considering what, as masons and carpenters and roadmakers and foresters, we have to do all the time we can fancy it might feel quite strongly that there is no " inert malice " in wood or stone to compare with the " active malice " in us !

In plain words, although our philosophy compels us to accept " the realistic facts " that animals are not " made " to be eaten by man and trees are not " made " to be mutilated by man, it does not require us to live like hermits. Indeed we have come to the conclusion that, to attain the true marriage between heaven and hell and the true balance between good and evil, we should encourage ourselves to learn what is perhaps the sanest rhythm in the world to the strain of which to work ; namely the rhythm of defying without hating, of fighting without malice, being kind without the mysticism of " love ".

But you might say to us : " You are always talking, my good friends, about your ' will to this ' and your ' will to that ' ; and then you talk about refusing every form of belief except belief in ourselves and in our own creative power. Will you, if you please, explain to me just what you mean by this ' will ' of yours, which apparently you regard as the most god-like thing in the universe ? "

Well, cautious convertite, we will certainly do our best ; but the matter is complicated by the horrible trick all human words have, especially philosophical words, not only of copulating with monsters and of giving birth to monstrosities, but of having such appalling abortions that it is only in moods of a savage defiance of all decency that we can use them to our purpose.

But you must, if you please, get into your head that we human beings, both male and female, with our two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and two lips, and our mouth which " goes down " or " goes up " at the corners, and our fingers that sometimes suggest paws and sometimes

claws and sometimes the feet of lizards and sometimes the hands of monkeys, have the power of using all these modes of aggression and reception, of inclusion and expulsion, of hearing, seeing, snatching and spitting out, in a common unity of action to gain some immediate advantage.

And by this word " advantage " just here we mean a momentary victory in our battle with life, and, if you insist that we carry our Hegelian " dialectic " further still, by the expression " victory " we simply mean being successful in getting more enjoyment out of life than we've ever got before.

But you will be waiting, O critical one, for a few more definitions from us. Well, we must hasten to assure you that, when we talk of ourselves as an " ego " or an " I am I ", we are putting into the old traditional language, for there is no other vocabulary available, *the feeling of selfness* or the sense of being ourselves which we call " self-consciousness ". And our point here is that when we feel this self-feeling of being ourselves we are speaking for the unity of the whole of our body, that is to say for the unity of our skull, our neck, our chest, our navel, our belly, our private parts, our thighs, our knees, our shins, our ankles and our feet along with our seeing eyes, hearing ears, tasting tongue, smelling nostrils, and feeling skin, not to speak of whatever nerves in us are at the moment on the jump, or whatever lobes or cells in our brain are going through the process we call " thinking ".

And it is a universal feeling of all human beings, male or female, old or young, that when this conscious " I am I " feels its strength and power as a self, it feels the strength and power *to make an effort* in some special direction ; and it is this power of a conscious effort that we call our will.

Our will is something, therefore, that exists before we grow conscious of its existence. It is, in fact, the concentration of all our powers in that particular unity of our senses and our mind which makes us ourself. The manner in which our various Churches have kept up our belief in the supernatural by perpetually telling us that we are " spiritual beings " reveals

the cunning depth of their wicked cleverness; for they are really simply appealing to our most normal sense of being ourselves, and to our most natural sense of having this will-power to assert ourselves.

When we thus grow self-conscious a curious thing happens; for we instinctively separate ourselves from our body, and, although still completely dependent upon our bodily senses for everything of which we are aware—dependent upon them, in fact, for this very *awareness of self* which, now that they have helped us to reach it, gives us the chance of despising them as earthly, animal, natural, and material, and wholly unworthy of such "spiritual beings" as we now are—we actually begin to experience the fantastic illusion that our "body" is one thing and our "soul" another, whereas in reality we are only using the word "soul" in place of the unifying will-power that gives our consciousness of self the power of asserting itself.

And thus these crafty false prophets have the advantage over us of being able to appeal to what we do now actually feel. For we do feel, when by the use of our senses we have won the sense being independent of our senses, yes, we do feel with the self-consciousness that is now our "I am I", that we are independent of our body, detached from our body, able to despise our body, able, in fact, to treat our body as some proud aristocratic visitor might treat some wayside inn where he or she has been a privileged guest.

It is indeed upon this interior feeling of being separate from our body, a feeling which we owe to the perfect manner in which Nature has created a unity out of the senses of the body, that we arrogantly depend, when, under the crafty guidance of our believing teachers, we think of ourselves as "spiritual beings" rather than as mortal men and women.

Oh, but it is this whole business of the interpretation of words and the meaning of words that makes our struggle to philosophize so difficult! We come to feel as if we had only to approach certain words for them to creep off like sharded

beetles and hide under stones, or to turn into flying dragons and disappear in the clouds, or again to vanish altogether like smoke, leaving nothing behind but a revolting stench. Our grand clue-word, the one word upon which you might say that our whole " Philosophy of In Spite " depends is, of course, the word " enjoy ".

There's a word that sounds simple enough. Simple nothing ! It is the very devil of a word when you get your hands on it, or cling to its knees, as if it were a god to implore it to reveal its meaning ! The completest meaning it contains, and you can see that our philosophy is on the right track here, for everything human begins and ends with sex, is the sexual meaning, where we use the word for the process of ravishing or of being ravished.

And indeed when our philosophy enjoins us to " enjoy the earth beneath our feet " it is, as a matter of fact, touching upon a very interesting and subtle and complicated vista of investigation. Why, for example, have certain poetical writers, why have certain poets, like Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, *such a mania for walking* ?

Our philosophy can give you the answer to this. And you can, incidentally, enlarge further, from the hint implicit in this answer, upon what we have already tentatively advanced as the true poetic and imaginative substitute for belief in the supernatural.

" Believe in nothing but yourself," our oracle says ; but some of the younger members of our philosophy factory have always been pressing us to add to this " nothing but yourself " the words " except the earth ".

And there is indeed a lot to be said for the inclusion of these words ; and even for their further enlargement by the added words " under your feet ". Nor would these final words carry with them any idea that you were superior to the earth, or that you had conquered the earth in the old biblical sense of having " your enemies under your feet ". They would indeed be literal words and peculiarly applicable in particular human

instances. What we mean is that there is a very special and quite peculiar sensual pleasure, not wholly apart from visual enjoyment, but only partially connected with it, in actually treading upon the earth.

And this is proved by the fact that, the thinner your shoes are, the intenser is the sensation of intimate satisfaction. How far the particular mortals whose destiny it still is to go barefoot enjoy proportionally more of the sensation to which we are referring, we could only be sure if we had one of them among us now; but there seems to be a general agreement, apart from your feet being bare, that contact with the earth—even through a quarter of an inch of leather, as long as you are not absolutely exhausted, though to be physically tired rather increases than diminishes the desirable sensation—is in a true sense a peculiarly voluptuous form of earth-worship and one that grows upon the practiser of it until it becomes that delicious kind of a mania when a person seems to get all the advantages of being sane and yet can indulge himself in feelings which, if they were revealed to others, would be regarded as crazy.

Did Aristotle, as he peripateticized up and down the Lyceum, wear sandals? And when at last all his pupils had gone off to their supper-parties and there were no more "spiritual beings" left to bother him with questions about Socrates and Plato, did he decide once for all that, whatever kind of activity the ultimate reality represented, it must be an "energeia a-kinesis", or an activity as intrinsic, spontaneous, and natural as breathing?

Did he, as the city-lights came on and he wondered if he would or would not feel homesick in Macedonia, ask himself whether the tranquil in-breathing and out-breathing of universal nature wasn't something that, if you could only work out a natural philosophy for yourself independently of Olympus, you would be able to share before you died?

When you ask us, O crafty convertite, what substitute our philosophy offers you for the particular comfort you were

accustomed to find in your belief, we can only answer, for at the cost of losing you we have to be honest with you, that *comfort* is not a strong point with us. Our philosophy can offer you distraction. It can offer you analysis. It can offer you satisfaction. It can, up to a point, offer you an explanation in the sense of an interpretation ;, but the word " comfort " suggests an emotional relief and our philosophy is not very competent where it comes to emotional healing ; though it doesn't go so far in the facetiousness of platitudinous dullness as to answer with the tiresome proverb : " Prevention is better than cure."

But our real substitute for belief, especially the sort of belief that relies on the supernatural, is this mysterious thing that we call " poetry ". Since the object and purpose of our philosophy is to create an attitude of feeling and thinking that enables us to dispense altogether with the supernatural, it is natural enough that we should turn to poetry. For all the way down the ages from the earliest records of human history until this hour it is poetry, and poetry alone, that has sufficed us, really and truly has sufficed us, by satisfying the craving of the human mind to react, as Spinoza would say, " adequately " to the experience of life.

And just as, in the sphere of belief, theology includes metaphysic by rendering it unnecessary, so poetry includes theology and renders *it* unnecessary. Behind every clue-word like the word belief there is an underlying feeling ; and the feeling behind our mania for belief is an odd sense of limitation and imprisonment. We feel as if without belief our whole cosmos would be reduced in *size*.

It is this sense of our reduction in size, and of ourselves being imprisoned within hard unscalable walls, hopelessly shut up where we are destined to be the victims of an inescapable doom, that makes belief in the supernatural such a consoling, comforting, relieving, releasing, redeeming background to life.

But our teachers and preachers, and the whole tradition of the last two thousand years in which they desire to keep us,

are all the while occupied in the really wicked task of *de-poetizing* life, yes, of taking the poetry out of life, not only out of the life of the world around us but out of the life of our very bodies themselves, which anyone would certainly think they would be compelled to honour in reverence for what you might call the " poetic nakedness " of Adam and Eve.

But these supernaturalists are prepared—and this has always been a characteristic of worshippers of the supernatural—to divest us human beings of all the poetic qualities we possess, in order that they may offer these qualities, in the pontifical performance of obsequious propitiation, to the object of their worship.

And it is in this spirit that they desecrate the poetry of every single one of our human senses, beginning with our *eyesight.* A tragic example of this particular desecration, as it appears to our little group of cautious thinkers for a desperate time, is to be found in Milton's famous sonnet beginning, " When I consider how my light is spent ", and ending with the oft-quoted line : " They also serve who only stand and wait."

For when *we* " consider " all that Milton made of his power of vision and how his poetic imagination transmuted, transfigured, and monumentalized for the centuries to come what his mortal eyesight gathered hour by hour and day by day from the landscape around him, and when we further " consider " how the eyesight he used for this poetic purpose had been slowly developed for thousands of centuries before " Adam delved or Eve span ", there is here a ghastly lack of reverence for Nature and life, and a sycophantic cringing before the supernatural, that reduces the wonder of the universe in a really weird way.

There was something, yes, just a touch of the same sort of disparagement, of the same sort of bringing down the magical element in things, about the old nineteenth-century cult of what was called " evolution ". In fact this highly extolled " stream of tendency ", like its supernatural predecessors, became in an odd sort of way separated from the real leaps and

jumps and the real debouchings and digressions of Nature, and was elevated into a sacred aqueduct of the neo-moral fountains of scientific authority.

What our philosophy is out for is not a factual account of how life began. Far less is it concerned with just how the supernatural became the ruling superstition, or whether we can best serve it by doing a lot or by doing nothing. What our philosophy is concerned with has no more to do with the discoveries of science than it has with the revelations of belief. Its affair is with ourselves alone and with our feelings alone. It holds that there is only one important question for us, and that is whether we are or are not enjoying this life of ours, into which, willy-nilly, and without giving us any choice, we have been incontinently and arbitrarily flung.

How to enjoy being alive is the sole concern of the " Philosophy of In Spite ". And it is because, in our determination not to be fooled by words and their cunning tricks, we have taken the word " happiness " by surprise and exposed its little games and know now that it comes and goes at its own airy, unpredictable will, and has nothing in it or about it, or over it, or under it, on which you can depend, that we have engraved on our philosophic headstone not happiness but enjoyment.

Happiness just comes and goes at its own volition ; and it is imperative that our feeling about life should be in our own hands. We must, in fact, work out some system of life that shall make us glad and not sorry that we were born. Such a system will clearly be closely connected with our will and with the manipulation *by our will* of our feelings and our sensations.

The very first of our arguments is that, even if it were proved conclusively by science that every single event that happened to us and every single situation we got into was occasioned by fate and thus was totally outside our control, there would still remain our attitude to these happenings and to these situations, an attitude made up entirely of feelings and sensations that we know beyond all argument—for this at any rate is not a

matter of objective observation but is one of those inner certainties that are beyond dispute—are under the control of our will: and please remember that there is not the slightest need for us to have a strong will.

Consider, for example, how profoundly our enjoyment or our misery depends upon the particular one of our five senses upon which our will, whether strong or weak, decides to concentrate. Suppose you are hungry and are pleasantly engaged in munching a loaf of bread while at the same time you are contemplating, from the foot of the tree, or wall, or shed, or stone against which you have propt your back, or from the window of the room where you are seated, some familiar view in which you can deliciously lose yourself.

And then suppose some seductive sound approaches you, a sound to which it is possible either to yield or to refuse to yield. Is it not extremely likely that intense enjoyment or extreme discomfort will depend upon your deliberate choice at that moment? Accept that siren-song and your loaf may grow tasteless and your landscape grow tedious.

Reject it, and there may be added to the taste of the loaf and the look of the landscape an exquisite intensity that may make you feel as if some overbrimming effluence from the sense of hearing had broken loose from its special crack of mystery and had started to flow into your taste and your sight.

We simple philosophers of the New Lyceum of "In Spite of Belief", who are led in our philosophical clearing-house by women as well as men and by the young as well as the old, feel that, when some great critic—was it Spengler perhaps?—praised Goethe for having "a physiognomic eye" for life and nature, he hit the nail on the head. *A physiognomic eye!* Here is the true realism, which, contrary to the opinion of those with geological eyes or of those with entomological eyes, or of those with theological eyes, is both human and poetic.

What our "Philosophy of In Spite" aims at in all its researches is not knowledge à la science; nor is it obedience to the supernatural à la Dante and Milton. Neither of these

attitudes suit it at all, nor do they satisfy it in the least, though any of us can follow scientific enquiries " on the side ", as we say, and listen to the lectures of a favourite professor.

But when the " Philosophy of In Spite " refers to poetry as a substitute for the emotional supernaturalism that has been moulding the thoughts and feelings of our Western nations for so long, let such poetry, for the sake of all we have learnt —little as it may be—of Greek and Latin, and for the sake of all we have felt when we have approached a scene to which the word " classical " could be applied, be the poetry of Homer if it isn't the poetry of Shakespeare.

What we need now—and when you, O most subtle convertite, are really converted, do please, we implore you, invent a word to help us !—is a *name* for our philosophical attitude ; for useful as it is as a challenge and a defiance, we readily admit that the expression " in spite of " lacks the inspiration of a metaphysical trumpet-call. No, but seriously, friend convertite, it is really important at this present world-crisis to have at least *a name*, if nothing else, for what our small melting-pot of age and youth represents to-day among mortal men.

As we have already hinted, the curious physiological necessity that some of us labour under for being provided with a method of thinking and feeling that bears some resemblance to what historically we have come to call a " philosophy " is not by any manner of means a universal necessity. Many of our neighbours would no more think of working out such a system than of using their kitchen-garden for horticultural experiments.

But whoever you are, friend convertite, and whether your cry is : " I claim to be, *euchomai einai*, a barbarian, a philistine, or a proletarian ", it is certain that, either from the general " mores " or from some special traditional " themis ", you have learnt in the dormitory of your public school, or in the Sunday-school of your church or chapel, the power of concentrating your will-power on some sort of code of self-control in regard to being kind and civil and decent and

scrupulous and honest; and, as you know, and as we know still better, in obeying this code of self-control you have been influenced through the medium of the particular belief of your church or of your school by these same two thousand years, or a little under, about which you must be already sick to death of hearing us talk.

Yes, these long, long centuries must have dropped into this self-controlling code of yours, just like a blood-red dye into clear water, the deadly poignance and fearful desperation of this dangerous, this exciting, this fatal ingredient, which we have been taught to call " love ", but which, as we all know, contains in it, not only the explosiveness of the agitating element it is in itself, but also—always and without exception—a touch, a grain, a speck, a jot, a tittle, of that *far more explosive element* which, in spite of a " staled and rung upon " epoch of a little under two thousand years, our small company of honest and obstinate, if not crafty or subtle, thinkers is constrained to call by the opposing monosyllable, " hate ".

What about the word " natural " as the best possible word for our humble and straightforward system? *The Natural Philosophy of In Spite*—how does that sound to you? The chief thing against it is that it has been so often used before, used vaguely and in a loose, unphilosophical, casual kind of way all through the century before last. No, it isn't distinctive enough, nor, to confess the truth, though such a frivolous aspect of a system of philosophy as its name ought, we fear, not to be allowed to present itself in the midst of a serious discussion of its tenets, does it sufficiently express the more startling of our philosophy's conclusions.

Our system, if so simple and spontaneous and honest an exposition of human common sense merits the name of " system ", does *not* try to reconcile science and belief. What it aims at is the providing us with a practical chart for steering our boat through the shallows and between the rocks and reefs of this present life, with the intention and purpose not of reaching " the Happy Isles " but of doing something that

requires no less effort, namely of being happy, or, as we prefer to put it, of *enjoying ourselves* under present conditions, contrary though these conditions certainly are to all our preconceptions of what makes for the happiness of highly-strung neurotic people like ourselves.

One of the best ways, declares our philosophy, of substituting belief in ourselves for belief in the supernatural is to walk as rapidly as we can, whether our legs are shapely or grotesque, or whether they are covered by skirts or by trousers, or even by what the ladies nowadays call " slacks ", through the quietest and most unfrequented landscape we can reach in our immediate vicinity. If you haven't yet learnt the secret of this proceeding or found out how full of perfectly indescribable feelings it is, and what profound sensual and sensuous pleasure it offers, I beg you to try it at once.

I have used the words sensual and sensuous with deliberate intention, for, whether they are the lighter, shorter steps of a woman or the heavier, longer ones of a man, the sensation we speak of, though in one case it is a male-child treading on its mother and in the other a female-child treading on its mother, is the same. It is indeed the supreme sensation of pure primeval *play*, when we, living creatures of the earth, swing ourselves along through infinite space and the divine ether as if we were signs of the zodiac. In fact here is the sensation that brings all of us creatures to the same level, brings us all up to the same level: and by " all " I include men and monkeys and dogs and cats and seals and walruses and polarbears and wolves and lions and tigers.

For all of us mammals who, whether it be under the North Star or the Southern Cross, suck the dugs of our mother, the grandest game in the world is to pound with our infant paws upon the body that bore us and to beat with our baby fists upon the breasts that feed us.

Play is the first salvation under the sun. Play is the last redemption under the moon. Play, not prayer, is what the mother of all things asks of her progeny. Play, not piety nor

purity, is the path to the paradise prepared for all to whom she has given birth by the mother of us all. With the pressure of our feet we worship her. With the beat of our feet we call to her.

The motion of our muscles is the music of our mother's magnetic response; and between our bones as they feel her flesh and the pulse of her blood as she feels the swing of our steps, there is played for the millionth time the birth-game of the stars in their courses. Why in Homer and why in Shakespeare is so much made of the warriors' contact with the soil they are treading and the women's confluence in the dance they are weaving ?

Because in those great poets, who have neither been mediævalized nor puritanized, there is always an undying recognition of the fact that, in any contact between human feet and the body of the planet from which we all draw our life, there is a magnetic reciprocity of a most intense kind.

Our little group of humble " physiognomic " philosophers have actually gone so far, if I may, O still wavering but somewhat more attracted convertite, be indiscreet enough to reveal to you such a secret of our discussion, as to debate the exciting sexual question, whether the fact that in all our poetry—even in Dante and in Milton—the planet upon whose surface we live and from whose oceans we originally came is treated as feminine, can be regarded as having any relation to the fact that as a general rule in all the classes of our class-ridden British Isle our men and boys are more addicted to walking than our women and girls.

We decided that there were as a matter of fact, considering all the calls upon a woman's time made by her home, so many *other* reasons that might be adduced as accounting for this interesting difference between the sexes that it would be dragging into our philosophic defence of walking too much mythology, if we were to suggest that the noticeable magnetic currents between human feet and the body of our common mother that make walking such a peculiar and quite special pleasure are due to the sex of the walker, and that the deliciously

incestuous pleasure certain great poets have received from walking could never be enjoyed by any woman.

Our discussion ended, therefore, with the uncontradictable statement that, whether she was trodden upon by a son or by a daughter, and whether such a movement was a choreographic one or a peripatetic one, the living contact between moving feet and the mother of us all, whether bipeds, or quadrupeds, or polypods, has a magnetic quickening in it for heart and nerves and pulse and blood and for all that we draw from our senses to which nothing else in our entire experience of life can offer a parallel.

But we must, male and female alike, have belief in ourselves ; and this belief must have as its object one thing only, namely our individual power to enjoy ourselves under whatever circumstances and in whatever conditions we happen to be at the moment. We don't have to force ourselves to be clever ; we don't have to force ourselves to be brave ; we don't have to force ourselves to be " loving ", whatever that means ; we don't have to force ourselves to be honest, though it *is* generally wiser to be so ; we don't have to force ourselves to be chaste, though it's generally best to keep a weather-eye open for the perils of incontinence in those dangerous waters ; we certainly don't have to force ourselves to " get on in the world ", or to be a successful careerist, or least of all the self-conscious posturer that publicity calls a " great man ".

But if we refuse to have belief in ourselves, weak, neurotic, timid, excitable, perverted, degenerate, half-crazy as we are, what is the use of our pious, virtuous, reverential, traditional, superstitious belief in the supernatural ?

What we have to recognize is this : that life itself will in any case force us to obey the goddess of custom and habit, otherwise Themis, who rules our corner of the earth. The same goddess will soon see to it that we more or less obey our parents, more or less learn our school-lessons, more or less pick up some kind of a trade if we don't go to high-school and college ; and finally this same all-provident Themis will

see to it that we catch the eye of a suitable maiden, and, let us hope, marry young, and get a house to ourselves.

There is only one other goddess whose decisions we must learn to accept with shrewd submission; and that is the *goddess of chance*. Yes, life can be safely trusted, if only custom has a little aid from the above-mentioned goddess of chance, to deal us out a few good cards. But where life can be a veritable hydra of wicked serpentheads, each head with its own separate poison-fangs, where indeed life can be a demon and a dragon combined, is when we approach the question—a question completely different from any of these outward events of parents, lessons, school, college, job, and the matter of our career—the question, to put it bluntly, whether we are happy or miserable. That clamorously rugged atheist Carlyle, who got credit for talking about the " eternities and veracities " instead of honestly confessing what he felt and what he knew of the empty void, jeers at some Byronic piece of furniture for repeating over and over again : " I *can't* be happy—I'm meeser-able ! "

" Well then, miserable one," retorts Carlyle, " go ahead with the job ! Get your work done ! Your work is the important thing ; not whether you are cheerful or utterly miserable." *There*, O attentive convertite, is the whole of our argument *au rebours*, or the wrong way up ! *We* hold, in direct opposition to Carlyle, to whose puritanical, though atheistical, " veracities and eternities " Charles and Mary Lamb seemed a " pair of sorry phenomena ", we hold that this whole damned business of " our work " is of no importance at all compared with our feelings of happiness or misery.

Don't these accurst moralists realize that the whole atmosphere of this difficult dimension of the multiverse that we call life is riddled with telepathic currents ; and that, just as when some cautious but inventive sadist conjures up the special kind of cruelty upon which his soul feeds, there is an alarming possibility that a less cautious gentleman of the same ilk may start practising what the other is inventing, so every time

people give way to misery in their souls, every time they cry aloud to their souls that they would sooner die than live, some other unhappy one, receiving this current of despair as it goes blindly forth upon its way, may very well find the load of misery, that hitherto has been just endurable, impossible to be borne one moment longer.

Whereas when a relaxed and wavering spirit who longs to enjoy himself, but who lacks the heart in the midst of all he has been beholding, suddenly catches the atmospheric message of resolute and obstinate determination evoked by your forcing yourself to enjoy yourself and by your belief in yourself and your belief in the fact that you have the power to gather all your forces together in that invincible Homeric " crouching to resist ", and when he catches this *alla kai empes* message of " in spite of everything I *will* use my will to enjoy ", he may resolve that what one living self can do and feel, another living self shall do and feel also !

Yes, by the mother of us all, if our Western nations are to resist the despotism of Russia and China with conquering success, our cause must be our belief, and our belief not in any supernatural outside ourselves nor in any capitalist system outside ourselves, *but in ourselves alone*, that is to say in the unconquerable power of the individual human self, whether of an old man or an old woman, whether of a young man or a young woman, whether of a boy or a girl, belief in the power of the human " I am I ", absolutely alone, *as each one of us really is*, in a boundless void of time and a boundless void of space, but able to force ourselves by our own will into a defiance of the whole business, and, more than that, into an enjoyment of our defiance.

In Spite of

OTHER PEOPLE

Consider, O still hesitating convertite, what most of all interferes with your enjoyment of life? You want to ask each one of *us* that question? Well, here are Daddy, Mummy, Grandad, Dick and me. Granny's gone to bed; but, anyway, I doubt if you'd get much out of Granny. She don't like being questioned. Here's Daddy: begin with him. My illness, do you say, master? Well, it's saved me, anyway, from having to go out and fight in Korea! Mummy, *you* talk to him.

That old mental trouble, do you say, master? Oh no! Since the end of the occupation, and my husband's return here, I've been hardly bothered at all by those hysterical fits. But here's my father. Financial worry do you say, master? No, since my wife's sister died and left us this house, I've been pretty well on easy street.

There are, of course—but I won't go into *that*. Easy street is the word, master. But come here, Dick, my boy, and talk to the gentleman. Difficulty with Greek grammar, did you say, sir? No, sir. Since I've taken chemistry instead of Greek I've never been below fourth in my class. But you're looking at my sister now, sir, and she's just dying to answer questions.

Oh no! Never like that, mister! The thing is, Granny doesn't believe in girls like me having home-lessons at all Granny says when she was at school home-lessons hadn't been

invented, and that girls like us ought to be doing housework, not studying French.

Oh no, mister! However long it is before Mummy comes back, Granny leaves me alone now. She's left me alone ever since that day when I asked her how to pronounce *croc-en-jambe*, which is French, as of course you know, mister, for a dirty trick.

Well, well, most sophisticated of fascinated convertites, you can see from all this how steadily, obstinately, and determinedly we go on over and over the same ground, making it as certain as it is possible for us to be in any ordinary natural sense that the obstacles to our enjoying ourselves in this staggering mirage we call Nature, as we fight with this demon-monster we call Life, are *not* such obstacles as cannot be overcome. On the contrary they are such obstacles as *can* be overcome.

But how curiously interesting it is to note that it has been left to a Frenchman to utter the universally human cry that " other people are the real hell " in the case of each and every one of us!

It took a citizen of the cleverest and most civilized nation in the world to discover this appalling fact. And as with other facts of a similar kind, this desperate recognition of the inherent horror of an experience that in its human universality has been so softened and veiled and censored and " screened ", as the phrase is to-day, with an implication—eh?—of using a *sieve* to separate bits of unburnt coal from cinders, and above all so consecrated and so steeped in pious incense as to make it a sacrilege, almost an indecency, to blurt out the naked truth about it must now be shown to be man's justified retort to life. Yes, as with other desperate recognitions of the grim horrors hidden away under the ghastly conventionalities wherewith pious hearts have been taught to conceal the reality of their own shocked and outraged feelings, we of the Nordic races are far less honest, we will avoid the word hypocritical, and far less outspoken than our southern European neighbours.

No, that Frenchman is perfectly right; and this is just the kind of thing that our "Philosophy of In Spite" is absolutely resolved upon facing. Yes, we've come to it at last, the crux of cruxes, the cross of crosses, the terrible monkey-wrench thrown by Nature herself into her own supreme relation, the relation between one human being and another human being.

We will hasten, all the same, to restrain ourselves from beginning our next sentence with that arrogant and impertinent expression "of course"; but whoever our excellent convertite may be, he will probably concede that, though in our human quarrels phallus may confront phallus, and bosom rage eloquently against bosom, the most rewarding of our battles, from the philosophic view point, are those most "thick and slab" with the bubbling gruel of the old everlasting sex duel.

And it is, really and truly, O cautious convertite, absolutely fascinating for simple ponderers—we won't say panderers—like ourselves to note how much less disturbing to the flow of the river of life, for all this sex-foam and for all the danger of complete shipwreck, are the clashes between husband and wife, and the quarrels between mistress and protector, or between any pair of lovers, when compared with the vindictive and malicious feuds between man and man, woman and woman, boy and boy, girl and girl.

The explanation our philosophy gives of this is obvious enough, namely that in all sex-quarrels, whether the couple is old or young, there is always behind it the life-deep difference between male and female, which works as powerfully for the avoiding and the settling of such clashes as for their continuance to the bitter end.

The great advantage in favour of quarrels between male and female over those between persons of the same sex lies in the fact that the difference of sex, though it becomes the cause of other annoyances, gets rid of much of the explosive business that we luckless bachelors and old maids suffer from in all our clashes with each other, namely the blind irrational

fury of getting on each other's nerves. Men-friends seem to suffer from these nervous fits more exquisitely than women-friends, and it has not escaped us that there are many more couples of ageing Lesbians living happily and faithfully together, than there are of male homosexualists who have thus, as we chastely express it, joined forces.

We explain this by the fact that sex as sex plays a far larger and more important part in any feminine life than in any male life, and that in its pervasive saturation of the whole of a woman's being it absorbs those touchy, ticklish, teasing, tantalizing, tortuous twists and turns of our personal pride, vanity and conceit, which are so maddening in their exacting claims where male friendships are concerned: for with men these claims are outside the sex question altogether, as can be beautifully seen in the amusing fact of the extreme rarity of a close friendship lasting on into old age between two men, whereas, as we have already noted, such friendships between old women are comparatively frequent. Old men grow prouder, vainer, more conceited every year of their old age, and this intensification of their personal importance in their own estimation is accompanied in precisely equal stages by the progressive perishing of their erotic potency.

Thus it may be said that, from the point of view of the " Philosophy of In Spite ", the supreme moral achievement of the human animal *as a male creature* is when two old men go down to the grave together in mutual admiration, consideration, and affection.

But you are anxiously waiting, dear convertite of the gate, our sagacious conclusions as to the wisest manner of avoiding these furious clashes that make the enjoyment of life so difficult. Well, let us tell you in the first place that between male and female the whole success of their relation depends on the absolute independence of the life of the one from the life of the other. They must be free. *Freedom* is far more important for any healthy and natural enjoyment of life than *love*; and this is true whether the " love " in question belongs to the

mysterious Christian kind or to the more simple and natural heathen kind.

A couple can enjoy its life together best when they are leaving each other free; free to go and to come each its own separate way. Nor need this be taken crudely, physically, socially, actually. *It is a matter of the mind.*

In the second place we would say that each one in any pair of successful life-companions must acquire somehow the trick of humorous kindness, with as much affection as you like, but *no love in it at all*, towards the other: deep, intense, eternal affection, but *not love*. For when love enters, hate enters. Those are the words that should be engraved over the threshold of every human dwelling—or, since we are to assume that the *lares* and *penates*, the protective family-fairies, are already well housed, it were better perhaps to engrave the words on our hearts rather than on our roof-tree, and there let it be written: "Here rules not 'love' but kindness and consideration."

In the third place what the "Philosophy of In Spite" says to man it also says to the woman: exaggerate to the extreme limit of your imagination the sexual difference between you; and concentrate *in your mind* more and more upon the humorous pathos of the ways of a man as a man and of the ways of a woman as a woman.

But remember, O scrupulous convertite, that when the moments arrive—and the more successful your mating is, the more often they will arrive—when you and your husband, *you* and your wife, are discussing things in general and things in particular together on equal terms, as if you were friends and not a married couple, friends and not lovers, when, we repeat, you are discussing life as simply as if there were no sex-link or sex-division between you at all, prolong such moments to the limit; and retain, like the light of Aladdin's lamp, every flicker of concerted and united insight which those precious moments have given; for it is then that in your *united wisdom* you represent the verdict on life of *homo sapiens*.

No ; even married lovers can sometimes enter a much more heavenly state than love can provide and can become simply affectionate friends. And it is then that real humour—a totally different thing from wit—is able to have its full fling. We who cannot escape being mummies and daddies and lovers need not *always* be these responsible beings. Indeed what we tend to forget in our moods of agreeing with that Frenchman that it is " other people who are hell " is what all passionately analytical, intensely amorous, and desperately artistic people—we avoid using the word " aesthetic " because *that* word carries with it a suggestion of the humorous indulgence of the real virtuoso, who wants much more to enjoy himself in solitude than to feel critically superior in company—tend to forget, namely the enjoyment of that sort of harmonious friendship, that might be called " amicitia ", in whose decent kindness, honest indulgence, and humorous understanding there isn't a grain of that possessive and mystical love in which, according to its advocates, the supernatural so subtly revels and which contains in its radio-activity all hate and all hell.

Where the " Philosophy of In Spite " is at its wisest, and we can assure you, honest convertite, that not without long and difficult mental work together we have come to the conclusion that the wisest thing in the world is *not* the "wisdom" of the supernatural, nor the " reason " of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, nor the mingling of " reason " with " revelation ", as we get it in the great schoolmen of the Middle Ages, nor the discoveries of modern science, least of all in psychoanalytical psychology is where it makes use of the instinctive wisdom of women. We are fully prepared to confess and admit our terrific debt to those two metaphysical thinkers Spinoza and Kant, and in our own time to William James, the great pluralist and pragmatist. But we have come to the conclusion that the wisest thing in the world is *a power possessed by women* for which there is no name ; and there is no name for it for the simple reason that men from the beginning of recorded time have been the namers and the baptizers. You'll have observed

yourself, honest convertite, how instinctively we use the expression " recorded time ". *Time unrecorded* is still the chief concern of women, who, while such grand novelists and prophetesses and poets and painters, are, at least from the masculine viewpoint, such deplorable historians and biographers.

And why is there at least " something ", as we say in Chicago, " to " this masculine criticism of women historians and women biographers and even of women essayists ? We will tell you, O chivalrous convertite, we will tell you. The " something " in the male criticism of women as historians and biographers and essayists is in reality entirely in women's favour. What women suffer from in these dimensions is the domination of men ; and the domination of men is always the damnation of women.

What our " Philosophy of In Spite " ought really to name some best and final chapter would be " In Spite of Men ". For the truth is that from the earliest days women have been the prophetesses and the inspired sibyls of human society that have done the most to propel its movements in those directions from which the human race have gained the most.

In the time of the later Caesars a person could travel under the protection of Roman law from one end of the civilized world to the other, a journey which, while the present rulers are ruling in Moscow and Pekin, would be very quickly brought to end, whether undertaken by tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man, apothecary or thief. But upon what *words* in the early recorded or unrecorded times of Roman history did Rome direct, we will not say her " policy ", but her evolution into a world-state ? By the words of the *sibylline books.*

Now an intelligent person has only to read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to divine and judge into what wise directions the human race might have moved, if the essentially masculine supernaturalism that has dominated the world since " the year one " had not intervened and taken the mystery of life out of

those feminine hands and feminine inspirations, that were behind the beginning of the Roman world-state, and put them into the hands of men, thinking and reasoning as men always tend to do.

And to what does the imaginative evolution of humanity owe most in later times? *To the Renaissance!* And to what Western men, inspired by the Renaissance, do the best spirits of to-day owe the most? To Erasmus, to Rabelais, to Cervantes, to Shakespeare. These were the men who detected the fact that what the unimaginative witch-hunting puritans—for the moralist and the puritan has always deep down in his heart feared the wisdom of women—hated most in the world was the inspiration of the prophetess and the voice of the sibyl.

There is no such thing as a puritan woman. Puritanism is simply masculinity punishing women for being women and punishing themselves for turning to women.

Just as Catholic men with the natural feelings of male tyrants inaugurated the Inquisition, so Protestant men with the natural feelings of male tyrants inaugurated all the abominations of what might be called " the Unholy Family ".

Our " Philosophy of In Spite " feels that what your typical academic thinker is most of all hostile to, and most of all facetious about, is the universal wisdom of the old wives' tales. It is thither that we of the " In Spite " philosophy would coax you to go to learn the secrets of real wisdom; and that is where eventually you will have to go.

Well, our question now is, O subtle and anxious convertite, how to escape, avoid, flee, dodge, get rid of, this particularly devilish hell, the hell of the existence—yes, just the mere existence—of " other people ". For if once " other people " exist in any form, you know what it means—we all know what it means—they come bustling in, shuffling in, rushing in, groping in, fumbling in, striding in, leaping, horning, dancing, rampaging, gliding, sliding, skipping and slipping in!

" *Into* what? " Is that what you are trying to say, anxious convertite? Well, *into our affairs* . . . into the way we're

behaving and conducting our life, into our successes, our failures, our anguished worries, our most complicated secrets! Like flies to rabbit dung they come in swarms—buzz! buzz! buzz! Now, startled convertite, there is no need for you to assume that grieved and disgusted expression. You know perfectly well that what I'm saying is the truth; though it may not be the whole truth. Hear, therefore, what we recommend you to do. But first of all allow us to explain what precisely it is about, the existence of "other people" that is so peculiarly trying. We are not hermits. We are not so many Atlases holding up the world and liable to let it fall if anybody nudges our elbow. No, no: the whole point lies in the attitude of other people towards us.

This attitude, allow us to inform you, and it is one of our profoundest discoveries, depends entirely upon people's belief that they are "spiritual beings" and possess, inside their bodies, things that they call their "souls", things that are themselves, as the saying is, "sub specie aeternitatis", that is to say that are their own dear, precious, warm, homely, touchy, live selves, considered as they indestructibly exist, *outside*, as well as inside, space and time.

Our grand discovery is that when a cat jumps up on our lap, a dog rubs against our knee, or a bird feeds from our hand, it does not worry us at all. We just cry, "Down, Spotty!" or, "Don't bother me now, Tootsie-Wootsie!"—words that, without exception—even if "Spotty" were our Great-uncle John and "Tootsie" our kind Aunt Mary—would express our precise feelings with our human fusty-budge Johns and our human meddlesome Matties. But it is because of the illusion that there exist, *inside* our loving friends and relations, and *inside* our inquisitive and intensely interested neighbours, immortal angels and devils who are not only *here below* but are also, and just as lively in that condition, *there above* as well, that these "other people", and this applies, we particularly insist, as much to those who have angelic "souls" in them, indeed it sometimes applies more, as to those who have

diabolic " souls " in them. It is, in fact, the " souls " that are the trouble, apart from whether they are white or black.

And now we come to the point ! What we have discovered is that it needn't bother us in the slightest what *they* believe exists inside them as long as *we* don't believe it. The thing for us to do, therefore, is to regard Baby So-and-so and Granny So-and-so and our own Daddy and Brother Tom and Sister Louisa and all our interested and inquisitive friends and neighbours just exactly as if they were *no more than they appear to be*, that is to say as if their bodies and their faces and their voices and their bodily movements and their whole appearance were all there was of them, except that they have conscious minds and can exert imaginative belief in themselves and in us and have a mysterious power of concentrating all their bodily senses and energies upon their actions and upon whatever it may be they are concerned with at the moment, a power which we have agreed to call, as it can be increased or diminished *at will*, by the name of " will power ".

What we of the " Philosophy of In Spite " have discovered is that it is our human consciousness which is the important thing in this whole question as to whether we are going to enjoy life, or life is going to enjoy *us* : and that this human consciousness is the thing that possesses will, and that if we are to enjoy life we must use this will to strip ourselves, and this means strip our consciousness of all the weight we can possibly get rid of. By "weight", when we speak of our consciousness, what we are thinking of is what is usually called " personality ".

What we have got to do is to *travel light* ; that is to say to use our will in a daily, monthly, yearly, struggle to force ourselves to enjoy life on the simplest terms, which, as far as we are ourselves concerned, means to cut down on our damned *personality* and not to be secretly puffed up with pride and vanity and conceit that we are so remarkable, so unique, so original, *so integrated*—all these soul-doctors adore the word " integrated "—a human personality !

What we ought to aim at is the extreme opposite of all this. We ought to aim at having a *disintegrated personality*, a personality, that is to say, like a flock of birds, so that if *some of them* are killed the rest have a good chance of survival. In fact the supreme discovery our philosophy has made is that real and true *humility* is the secret of enjoying life, and that humility can easily, like enjoyment itself, *be willed.*

No need to worry yourself in the least if you are born extremely proud or extremely vain. *Conceit* we regard as a much more dangerous thing than the other two, and a completely different thing. The meaning we give to "conceit" implies, as we have tried to explain in an earlier chapter, a complete overrating of our own abilities, of our own powers, of our own personality; so that conceit must clearly be far more difficult than pride or vanity to reduce to the required minimum. In fact it might be beyond the power of our will to bring down the contemptible thing.

But even in that case some external shock totally beyond our expectations might do the trick. In fact such a shock has been administered by pure chance to one of our number, and it is from his experience that we utter our "In Spite" oracle upon this problem; for he who *was* a conceited man is *now* a humble man, though he has enough of the right sort of pride to keep him going, and the rest of us are always imploring him to cultivate the kind of vanity which never hurts anybody and could be used by him—so the rest of us think—as ointment for the wounds which the unexpected loss of so much deep-rooted conceit has entailed.

But in this whole question of escaping from the hell inflicted upon us by other people, we must always remember that what we have to escape, avoid, dodge, and jump over is the hell they throw us into and create within us, not the people themselves. We've got to cultivate the magic power, and I swear to you, noble convertite, it *can* be cultivated, of winning the battle completely against this damned plague, and its succubus-incubus gullet for warm blood.

The first thing to do is recognize as a two-thousand-years-old traditional falsehood the idea that inside all human beings dwells this restless creature, always ready to be lost or saved, that we call " the soul ". What persecutes us and hunts and hounds us in other people is *not* their poor, dear, piteous, tragical, grotesque body, their body which is on a par with our own and as pathetic and comic a spectacle for all eyes to see as our own ! That is what our " Philosophy of In Spite " insists on : that although the world is full of beautiful females and handsome males, this beauty and handsomeness in both sexes is as relative as Professor Einstein's space.

It is not a constant. It is a variant. Aye, but the mother of us all knows how it varies ! Even Helen must sometimes have looked like the bitch she so often accuses herself of being ; and Ganymede must pretty often have had the vicious scowl and the ugly pout of an overpetted urchin. And the only way to enjoy life is to have enough common sense to stick to the earth and to believe in the wisdom of the earth and in the wisdom of the particular body which the earth has given to each one of us.

Nothing proves better how crafty and how treacherous is the propaganda of the believers in the supernatural than their habit of using the word " materialism " and " materialist " as terms of abuse. What in the name of our mother the Earth could be more sacred to all her offspring than the four " elements ", as we ordinary people still call them, of earth, air, water, and fire ? And yet what is our poetic devotion to these but the purest materialism ?

It is ever the same. The " other people " who make life hell for their fellow-mortals are always believers in something untrue, unreal, and above all *invisible*. Whom, we ask you, was the Holy Inquisition designed to torture to death ? Those who refused to believe in the supernatural and the invisible.

These secret officials of the police-state were by no means all of them insane sadists. They were conscientious servants of the eternal and the invisible. And it was in the interests of

the eternal and the invisible that at all costs they had to suppress materialism. In other words they had to *vivisect.*

And this they did under the same excuse as our modern vivisectors use *their* instruments of torture on helpless and twitching living bodies, that is to say for the sake of problematical advantages to the human race. In all things our " Philosophy of In Spite " insists on going to the " root " of the matter, where there is much more reality to be found than in the " heart " of the matter; for our poor human hearts are too weak and fickle for reality to bide there long.

Yes, the " root " of the matter is in matter, and out of matter do all we mortals *make ourselves.* Yes, out of matter and out of the will to create new patterns of matter which every child of earth possesses. But if on our western side of this new " Great Divide " we have our lies and our treacheries, who know better than our little company of Pantagruelian men and women what lies and treacheries there are on our enemies' side.

And here again it repeats itself, this terrifying mania of believers and worshippers and of the devoted servants of " something invisible " to coax, seduce, persuade, cajole, entice, inveigle and even, if they can get away with *that* also so that public opinion is not aroused too violently against them, bring it about that those who oppose their belief disappear from among men.

What our " Philosophy of In Spite " insists upon is that the communist " belief " is almost as much a belief in " something invisible " as is a Catholic's belief in the supernatural. The idea of our enemies is, since it is so much better for humanity in general that communism should dominate the whole planet than that our resistance to its domination should prevail, that *any methods* for making it prevail, however secret, however treacherous, however cruel, are justified.

These dark and horrible methods are indeed justified, according to their theory of justification, precisely for the same reason that Catholics would justify the Inquisition; that is to

say because, just as in the supernatural there dwells absolute truth, so in communism there dwells absolute justice.

In both cases belief in the invisible is the dominant urge; whereas what the " Philosophy of In Spite " teaches is belief in our own physical body and in its power of will to create its own future. We, in fact, hold that the only way to fight belief in the unseen is by belief in the seen. " We are men and women," says the poet, " God is no more. Your own humanity learn to adore."

Putting it, therefore, as bluntly and plainly as an ordinary person can put anything, the whole gist of the present quarrel between the two halves of the human race is our division over this business of belief. As compilers of the " Philosophy of In Spite " we have for our purpose, as we keep telling you, simply and solely the composition of a compact body of rules, not of obscure metaphysical theories, but of practical rules, in obedience to which we have found by experience that we can increase the enjoyment of life. If we have been tempted now and again in the working out of these rules to debouch into *politics* or into the sphere of *government*, let us hasten here and now in this final chapter to plead guilty for these digressions. In the grain and in the blood and in the marrow and bone and substance, as well as in the atmosphere of our discussion, we have no wish to cross the border-line into the world of government and of politics, whether foreign or domestic.

We hold, as did both Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus, that it's not the business of philosophers to dispute about the image on a coin, or about the blunders and injustices of the powers-that-be.

We hold that the business of philosophers is to create philosophers; or rather to help philosophers to philosophize. And we further hold that the philosophizing of philosophers has as its purpose the enjoyment of life.

Philosophy is a medicine for the sick, a tonic for the weak, a drug for the restless, a calendar for the forgetful, and an almanac for the unimaginative. If philosophers are daily

compelled to see the mistakes of governments, they are hourly compelled to see the blunders of friends and neighbours, and moment by moment they have to force themselves to overcome their own tendency to think like idiots and act like giddy goats.

If " other people " working *en masse* make hell for us as police-states and despotic governments, we must confess that sometimes, even in constitutional monarchies, there are aspects of public life that at least approach the purgatorial.

But the " hell of other people " can invade our life much nearer home. In fact it can take the form of our husband or our wife. It can take the form of a mother or a sister ; and as for aunts and uncles, and as for our neighbours and their families, it burbles up ubiquitously.

But how on earth's name does our philosophy propose to help us here ? It does more than " propose " to help us. It tells us exactly what to do and exactly how to force ourselves to do it. The first thing to do is to be resolved that *nothing* shall make you get angry or begin abusing " other people " or *that particular* " other person ". And for the earth's sake remember, O sensitive convertite, to forget all personal affronts. Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, was the mother of the Muses, but she is also the mother of what is best forgotten ! Pray, O convertite, that you may acquire not only a good memory but a good " forgettory ".

And as you devote yourself to enjoying the present, you must not allow your love for the sweet antiquities of the past to drain away your strength. There is not the faintest need for you to make great moral efforts to remember the past. You *are* the past. All the past is concentrated in you. But in addition to this heavy weight there also exists in your consciousness a faint, weak, small, feeble, frail, fragmentary flame of creative force, quivering to leap forward into the future, or to speak more correctly, for here our consciousness is like the crest of a wave, to carry the foam of its creative life into the hollow void of the future.

But to return, as all we poor creatures of earth struggling

to enjoy our life eventually have to force ourselves to do, to the great problem of home, if we have cultivated our power of will to the essential point, we can deal with this " hell " which our daily companions cause us to feel and which, without question, we, on our side, must all the time be causing them to feel.

For, let us assure you of this, the method we employ to save ourselves from you is the method we would recommend you to employ to save yourselves, or to save yourself, from us. It is, let us hasten to say, a method that includes what many people insist on calling their " sense of humour ". How often we hear that phrase : " If it weren't for my sense of humour I couldn't stand the troubles of life."

In reality what we call *humour*, in the ordinary meaning of the word, enters very little indeed into this " sense of humour " which, they assure us, protects them from misery and despair, but it might be *forced* to enter ; and please permit us to go so far as to maintain that if *humour* in a certain important sense—for though we believe that the popular phrase we have just quoted does contain a certain modicum of truth, the " humour " to which we are now referring is a little different—were applied to the case in point, it would alter the whole situation, alter the annoyance *we* feel from our friends the " other people ", and alter the annoyance *they* feel by reason of ourselves.

It all depends—at least that is the conclusion we have reached about it—upon the difference between the word " like " and the word " love ". We are not such fools as not to know that, when people are " in love ", it is a totally different thing from any conceivable " liking ", however deep and strong and subtle and lasting such " liking " may be.

We may as well confess freely to you, O wary and wavering convertite, that no topic we have ever discussed together has been so tossed about between us before any decision was reached as this one of the difference between " liking " and " being in love ".

We were all quickly agreed upon discarding the mystical "love" so subtly advocated by inspired saints and crafty theologians, for there was not one among us, man or woman, old or young, who didn't scent danger from that direction. "Love" of that kind implies that the luckless neophyte of either sex is being "egged on"—not by any derisive use of ovoid missiles but by the cosmogonic lure of these brittle preciosities as the disciples of Orpheus and other antique mystagogues held them aloft, mystagogues who, in the place of Farmer Hesiod's honest earth-mother, and with a view to increasing their own nest-eggs, tried to foist upon the more pious of the ancients the idea of the origin of the world being a primordial and aboriginal egg—to seek the satisfaction of all his desires in a totalitarian supernatural *oneness*. Yes, we have long ago wholly and entirely agreed together that this almost insane mania in natural-born tyrants for *oneness*, for the lovely, the beautiful, the sacred, the consecrated, the holy, the perfect, the unspeakable, the super-mathematical, the super-scientific, the super-sexual, the inquisitorial, the spiritual, the secret-police-dominated *oneness* of cosmogonic integration, is simply the "hell of other people" "made thick and slab" for the blotting out of all rebellion.

It is all very well to say that the sublime logic of spiritual intercommunication demands that if "the many" are to exist at all they must be made an essential part of "the One". The answer of the "Philosophy of In Spite" to *that* is that a congeries of dimensions, universes, worlds, existences, separate entities, distinct identities, disunited selves, independent beings, is neither impossible nor unimaginable; and even *if it were*, there are plenty of aspects of life we are forced to accept as part of reality, and forced to accept also as the causes why we act as we have to act, that are unimaginable by any process of thought.

We excuse ourselves for this acceptance of things as they are by murmuring something about basic paradoxes and ultimate contradictions. Led by our spiritual medicine-men,

we try to bridge with reason and whitewash with religion the gulfs deep as life that divide one life-shoot from another life-shoot and one consciousness from another consciousness in the unfathomable chaos wherein we utter our comical " hails " and tragical " farewells " before we are annihilated.

But the difference between " being in love " with a person and " liking " a person has absolutely nothing to do with this mystical " love " stirred up in the flighty bosom of us poor feathers and straws on the surface curve of an illusory wheel for the imaginary hub round which it revolves.

Over the difference between " I am in love " with So-and-so and I " like " So-and-so our little Pantagruelian group have argued for weeks ere we hit on a conclusion definite enough to make part of our philosophy. What we finally concluded was that the state of " being in love " is an absolutely unique experience for all us born into life. It is like nothing else and its effects are like nothing else. It creates an atmospheric romance which transfigures in the manner of an ageless and timeless enchantment the whole landscape of life.

On the other hand, to " like " a person is to enjoy that person's bodily appearance, not necessarily for either its handsomeness or its humorous ugliness, not necessarily for its intellectual power or for its delicious and engaging idiocy, but simply for having in itself and as itself a unique something that unaccountably attracts you. This, we decided, is the true bond or real " amicitia " or friendship.

Different as it is from " love ", it is almost a greater mystery. Your friend may suit you—suit something in you deeper than mere taste—because of the gothic nature of his identity or because of the classic nature of his identity.

The great point is that he or she suits you simply and solely *because you are you*—wasn't it Montaigne who hit this golden nail on the head ?—*and he or she is he or she.*

To " like " a person, therefore, is to enjoy their bodily appearance, to enjoy their ways, and above all to enjoy the special and peculiar quality—a quality that to lots of others

might be curiously repulsive and annoying—of their whole identity. After an extremely prolonged discussion—for to our view the composing of a philosophy demands the shaking off of that heavy weight of " integrated personality " so adored by moralists and the assumption in its place of one colourless " mufti " of what might be called a disarming neutrality between male and female and old and young—we decided upon another important point. We decided that, although it may well be that for the begetting and conceiving of children the state of " being in love " has its advantages over " amicitia " or the state of mutual attraction and affection, there are several very quaint differences between these two states in which what might be called " the poetic advantage " lies, to the astonishment of some of us, rather with " amicitia " than with " Eros ".

Allow us, O subtlest of convertites, to put the case in this way. Although for a mood of intoxicated transport there is nothing in friendship to compare with " being in love", we cannot help, however, being struck by the quaint fact that the aspects, or attributes, or belongings, or appurtenances, of the object of our erotic infatuation need not be in the least worthy of the paradise of ecstatic enchantment or the Eldorado of incomprehensible rapture into which this figure of destiny has proved itself able to transport us.

Such reminders, such belongings of this figure, can be almost anything. No, we will go further. They can be *anything*. If the object of our " love " is a man, it can be his tobacco-pouch, his nail-scissors, his toothbrush, his very toothpick. It *could* be a scrap of his toilet-paper.

As for the ferrule of his elegant cane, if it happened to come off, as for that fragment of mud left on the carpet when he came home from duck-shooting, as for that dab of paint, if our unique one is a house-painter, left on his shelves, or that cherry-stone on a carpet that he spat out just now if he's still working at the greengrocer's, each of these things has in it the power of Prospero's wand. " We are such stuff as dreams

are made on " in any case; but when it comes to taking a cutting from Bessie's corn or a snippet from Angela's toe-nail and *turning thereby* the Bog of Dogs into the Garden of the Hesperides, does not the Roman tone of:

For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;
If not, why then, this parting was well made

even though these Caesar-killing friends *have* just been so touchy with each other, bring us back, not only to a world of deeper reality, but to a world of truer poetry? But we must go cautiously here. This a perilous argument. Dante's lost lovers with their *quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante*—" that day we read in it no further "—give us pause. All the same for that, it does remain that a friend is a friend. We are sure of his authentic interest in our attitude of mind, in our ideas, in our work, in our secret ambition. We like the feeling that we can indulge in a towering argument, and yet not get really angry with each other, we like the feeling of being absolutely at ease with each other; we like the relief of being able to talk of anything at any moment and the relief of not having to stop for a second to think *how* to say what we want to say.

One of the things, however, above all else, that we value both in our friends and in those with whom we are in love is the fact that they *don't get on our nerves*; and the fact that they have no teasing and annoying and even maddening physical trick or habit that drives us to distraction as they eat or drink, or move, or sit, or stand.

Oh yes! Oh yes! Whenever, in our serious discussions, we, the philosophers of this new philosophy, approached the problem of " other people " *getting on our nerves*, it was evident that we were coming close to the centre nerve of the whole business. That—the matter of our friends " getting on our nerves "—is just the very kind of thing that our systems of philosophy ought to deal with, but, alas, it is just the kind of thing that they so rarely do deal with!

Permit us, therefore, O wavering convertite, to lay before you in clear detail our feeling on this point. What do we advocate? Well, in plain terms we advocate a real, deep, subtle marriage, as people love nowadays to call it, copy-catting William Blake, between heaven and hell.

When we talk of this "marriage" what *we* mean is quite different from anything in Blake, or Nietzsche, or Schopenhauer. We mean the use both of psychological feelings that are called good and of psychological feelings that are called evil, and their use for our own quite special and narrowed-down philosophical purpose—namely forcing *ourselves*, not other people, mark you, but *ourselves*, to enjoy life.

Well then, let us begin by laying before you, as a subtle judge in these matters, the steps we would suggest that we should all take. To start with, then; cultivate what we call "self-control" to the furthest possible limit: and, mark you, this is possible even though our will is weak and our temper explosive. With this power of self-control as our initial strength, the next thing we should do is to exercise *kindness*, *not* "love", we repeat, but kindness, and everybody knows what kindness means, to the limit.

Having got our complete self-control and having acquired the habit of kindness to everybody, and to every living creature, not even excluding, though in our Chestertonian moods we are tempted to mock at this inclusion with such clever phrases as "shedding the green blood of the silent animals", not, I say, even excluding the vegetable world, the next thing we suggest that we should cultivate is an intensely humorous awareness of the grotesque element in all bodily forms and features, whether human or animal. Thus if our daddy aged eighty-two, or our youngest child aged two, or our devoted though austere Aunt Tab aged sixty-two, or even our faithful and devoted husband, John Joshua James, aged fifty, all of whom possess, no doubt, enough natural vitality to be fully able to carry off whatever neurotic weaknesses, like certain unaccountable spots and blemishes on the bark of trees and

the undersides of leaves, may be afflicting the power of their will, happened suddenly to annoy us, or interrupt us, or interfere with us, or come bolt upon us when we particularly wanted to be alone, were we already adepts in this imaginative humour, we would be able to enjoy ourselves by mentally and emotionally flinging our consciousness so completely into the curves and crannies and crevices and corrugated undulations and grotesque bulges and protuberances and ragged interstices and hairy mystery-holes of these familiar physiognomies as they are thrust thus inopportunely upon us that we would derive a delicious satisfaction, without in the faintest way being unkind to the relative in question, from our grossly humour relish for the absurd ugliness of all human or animal countenances when seen under particular conditions and in what nowadays we call " close-ups " of special sorts.

O convertissime mio ! O my darling little waverer, don't you see that here is " the rub ", in the deep and true Shakespearean sense, of ordinary human life as it affects our happiness or unhappiness?

And this is just the point where the great philosophical systems leave us stranded. Individual Stoic and Epicurean sages can indeed help and inspire us to retain through the chaos of life the artfulness—for it is this we need much more than will-power—which is essential if we're to have any philosophy at all ; but very few of these master-teachers warn us to take " the bull by the horns ", in other words as we wrestle with this mystery-monster, the life of man upon earth, to carry the battle into the enemy's camp, and to carry it there with something of the enemy's shamelessness, humorous grossness, and ferocious irony !

" With *something* ", we warn you, O cautious convertite of the gate ; but we do not say with all the force you doubtless could put into it ; because, after all, the fact that it has become possible for one human being to be obstinately, patiently, persistently nice to other human beings and to be regularly and habitually honest with them, so that these others get the

impression that our word is not only as good as a legal bond but is as good as " a life for a life " or " a skin for a skin", though about the greatest victory over this monstrous mystery-enemy of ours that we call " existence " that can be imagined, is a victory that would soon be defeat if we grew proud and conceited.

" Imagined " ? Well then, for the ancient earth's sake begin practising this trick at once ; and see what comes of it ! When next you see before you, at the moment when you least want to see it, the comically familiar " phyz " of your grand-daddy or Auntie Tab, or of that preposterous and absurd infant brother of yours who is always appearing before you at the most inappropriate occasions, stare frantically at that gargoylish little goblin, at that inexcusable little demon—stare, stare, stare, stare ! Throw your whole consciousness into your stare ! Remember that it is precisely for the benefit of this moment that you have cultivated a gross, shameless, devouring stare, a humorous, maniacal stare, a gliding, gloating, gargantuan stare, a stare during which you lap up and suck down every bulge and blot, every wrinkle and hair, of this grotesque apparition.

Now you may begin to understand why we have implored you to cultivate to the limit your natural cave-man sense of humour, your natural Rabelaisian grotesquerie, and the power by which you can lose yourself in the ecstatic contemplation of a particular human countenance that has this weird power of exciting to the limit your peculiar nervous rage ; and also why we have implored you to thin out your own active consciousness and scrape it clean of pride, vanity, and conceit, so that you shall have no heavy weight of " integrated " personality cloying up your swift, moth-like humorous hoverings over the face and figure of this dear grotesque.

The great thing is to decide within yourself just what, under the ordinary daily routine of your present life, you are going to make of the whole business. As philosophers we have no wish to meddle with any important changes you may

decide upon making in the outward conditions o your life. We can only hope that when you have made these terrific changes, got a job at the Antipodes, for instance, or in the heart of Africa, you will find yourself impelled to take with you, darting about in your brain and heart and will and imagination and nerves, the main psychic intimations of our " In Spite " system.

Come on then, subtlest of all possible convertites, and do just what we now are telling you. Get your will—call it by any other name you like as long as it is *you yourself* taking yourself and your impressions into your own hands—into working action, so that *you*, and no other power in the sky, or the earth, or under the earth, decide what you are going to make of yourself and of your life, taking both these things *as at present constituted.*

Practise this subtlest of all arts, which we refuse to call " strengthening your will " because we can all become adepts at it, however weak our will remains, but which really consists in deciding how we are going to react to life and with a constantly intensified consciousness obeying our own secret decision ; so that it is *we who decide what we feel* and not our jealousy, or annoyance, or frustration, or misery, or extra high spirits—we who decide—or *you*, convertite to " In Spite "—what you think, feel, imagine, do or say, and above all whether you are, or are not, going to enjoy ourselves.

Be forever using your whole nature to force yourself to be *kind* to every living creature you encounter, including animals, birds, reptiles, fish, trees, plants, *and even weeds.* Be forever using your whole nature to enjoy with an intense almost cannibalistic relish, and with all the humour—and never mind how gross and earthy and bawdy and indecent it is—and with all the comic imagination you can muster up, the outward appearance of the companions of your life. Turn yourself as you gaze upon them into a honey-sucking moth, only the honey is their comicality, and hover over all the queer, odd, ugly, grotesque, fantastic, pedantic, neurotic, cat-like, dog-like,

ass-like, ox-like, clown-like, hangman-like, Punch-and-Judy-like characteristics of your friends and relations even though some of them have been called in their time, and retain a touching notion themselves that they are still, sylphs, ariels, undines, angels, heroes, warriors, and reproachless knights; and, as you hover, feed your imagination with them till you are too drunk with the grotesque humour of it all to be cross or unkind, far less to be cruel.

And please note that you are doing this not from any sort of "love"; for you have taken "love", as Paul Verlaine in his inspired art-of-poetry sonnet took "eloquence", and *broken its neck*, but from a pure selfish enjoyment of your own sense of humour and a delicious sensation of gratitude to the queer-looking "inanimates", for *there*, and nowhere else, lies the tragic point of the deep game you are playing; for you are really treating your dear companions as if they were so many dolls and tin soldiers together with a modern Noah's Ark of Falstaffs and Little Nells and Mr. Pickwicks and Don Quixotes—all made of twisted wire and painted wood!

But be not shocked beyond measure, sweet convertite, at what you might call our heartlessness; for we swear to you it is far better to resemble, as the poet says, the elemental inanimates of the outer zodiacal spaces, "unaffrighted by the silence round them", than to be fretted and chafed and blighted and embittered by the jarring diurnal sound, like dirty paper being torn up to be burned, of the mystic "hate-love" of the believers.

But our philosophy teaches that at any moment, when we are resting from our labours and yet not inclined to slide off into a daze, the thing to do is to embrace the forms and colours of every substance, near or far, porous or opaque, beautiful or ugly, that you can see round you, and merge your whole consciousness in these things. And mark you this, convertite, it is in order that you can embrace these colours and forms or be embraced by them, as if you were no more than a wandering air or faint sigh of wind, that we have implored you to

travel light in this crowded chaos, rather than load yourself down with the heavy weight of a conceited personality burdened with all the integrated portentousness of a " spiritual being ".

But if you do as we tell you and abandon yourself to the colours and forms of all the inanimate substances round you, you will soon be rewarded ; for you will soon begin, without of necessity " becoming one " with anything, though you *may* " become one " with any mortal thing, as long as you use it as a temporary vessel to carry you here and there, while you and " it " continue your peculiar fellowship, to enjoy more pleasure from life than you have ever had before.

But at this point we have to ponder a little upon one of the most obstinate characteristics of our " Philosophy of In Spite ", namely its persistent determination to take its place in the drama of what in the nineteenth century we used so proudly to speak of as " evolution ". Modern science has rapidly been growing—how shall we put it ?—so ecstatically and erratically mathematical that we tend to regard the old-fashioned notion that what Matthew Arnold called " the stream of tendency that makes for righteousness " should be running through all the atoms of our present elemental dimension, as they are jostled and jumbled in their liquefactions, their petrifactions, their revolvings and gravitations, their explosions, and annihilations, and finally their reappearances out of nowhere, as the very lunacy of superstition, whereas, after all, such consciousnesses as we have, though they are not yet like those of the gods " knowing good and evil ", are surely conceivably and imaginably inherent in the nature of our planet from her first beginning independent altogether of supernatural interference ?

Our idea, however, in regard to this matter of evolution is, as has been hinted, that we ourselves in the process of our ordinary life should practise " on our own ", as we say, an original and a really daring experiment in the evolutionary direction, namely the experiment of projecting our consciousness, lightened considerably, however, of any " integrated

personality " and of any tail-feathers of a " spiritual being " and following, you may well imagine, O latest of Attic of convertites, a path entirely different from that taken by any sort of " Yogi-practitioner ", the experiment, let us repeat, of projecting our consciousness a certain distance, not very far of course, not more, perhaps, than a few hundred yards, but still far enough to make the whole experience an extremely important and significant one.

You will naturally, O most critical of waverers and hoverers, enquire of us what on earth we are assuming our body will be doing while our consciousness is playing these tricks with itself? This is a very reasonable and very sensible question and we will confess at once that we have not yet practised our evolutionary experiment long enough to be able to answer it.

And not only so ; but in our experiments hitherto we have foolishly assumed that our body *minus the immanence of our consciousness* would just stand still, awaiting the return of its " animula, vagula, blandula, hospes comesque ", as Hadrian calls its wandering companion. On one occasion, however, the luckless " corpus ", instead of behaving like this, began reeling like a drunken robot and finally, as we all remember to our shame, fell flat on its face in a collapse so sudden as to throw both it and its straining consciousness into something alarmingly like an epileptic fit.

The value of this bold evolutionary side, however, of our " Philosophy of In Spite ", must not, naturally, be judged by the failure of a thousand of such experiments, and we hold that it would be better to fail in all our practical experiments of this simple, obvious, honest kind with the urge of earth-life and of what our ancestors called "nature" behind us, rather than to share those doubtful, plausible, specious, spiritualistic, telepathic, Yogi-ish, " successes " which have done more to confuse and bewilder and side-track people with a nervously alert and sensitive intelligence like ourselves than any traditional belief has ever done.

From the harm of traditional belief, whether orthodox or heretical, we are to a considerable degree protected by the conventionality of the plaguy thing; but when it becomes a matter of satisfying our luckless mania to believe at all costs in the supernatural by unorganized spiritual experiments adapted to the sensational conceit and casual curiosity of persons who regard themselves as "spiritual beings", *there at once*, in a nasty explosion of foul gas and a horrid smell of theatrical sulphur, comes the end of all philosophy.

But we are reluctant to allow the patient philosophizing of our little group of Pantagruelian "good companions" to die upon your ears with any final word save one that will help you to deal with the "hell of other people". Let us, therefore, imagine that we are on the step just outside our own abode in a long dull street with small houses on both sides.

To an intellectual novelist it would be a sordid house in a dingy and dreary slum; but to us it is simply "home". Well, O most enduring of convertites, let us hasten to clasp all this dinginess and dreariness in the sensual-spiritual embrace we have just been practising. When embraced in our special manner this dust, this smoke, this grime, these ashes, this dirt, this masonry, this gravel, this mud, this yellow and green mould growing on these piled-up stones, these garbage-tins, and these mysterious little pockets of undisturbed rubbish, have the power of giving us an enchanting ecstasy.

From our present position on the lower one of the two steps that lead up to our door we can see a considerably large assortment of shapes and textures and colours and substances, across which the passing of Time and the crowding after that great artist of such attendants as we indicate in the monosyllables soot, dust, smoke, dirt, mould, damp, stains, blots, cracks, dregs, junk, scum, drift, have left that atmospheric art-for-art's-sake touch without which the whole place might just as well have been virgin forest.

Here if we look down we can see at the bottom of this

second step, where the pavement's edge has been cracked, a tiny tuft of grass. The seed that resulted in this small plant may have fallen from some cart with a load of window-boxes, or it may have been brought here in the beak of some bird, or it may have been carried here on the mighty breath of Zephyrus from the orchard-lawns of Glastonbury. In any case here destiny has allowed it to grow green; and at this actual moment one blade of this tiny plant is faintly stirring in a hardly perceptible breeze from the south.

Where it is growing and where we are standing regarding it there is a wet pavement, which ends on the north in a delapidated square in the entrance to a small railway station. Up and down this pavement move two preoccupied streams of people, one hurrying south and one hurrying north.

And as those two human tides flow past it, the one flowing north and the other south, the single minute grass-blade of that tiny tuft continues its scarcely perceptible swaying from side to side; behaving as if it had some duty to perform in relation to the passing of time, a serious duty, even a tragic duty, like that of a pendulum or a bell or a revolving beam from a lighthouse at sea.

Let us suppose the actual time of the day, according to both the church clock in the dilapidated square to the north and the station clock over the dingy railway entrance to the south, is somewhere between two and half-past two in the afternoon, that lowest ebb of our planet's vitality, when at night people float away in death and when in the day everything seems covered with a grey, dull, monotonous, unalterable weight of dust and ashes, shaken through a sieve so that there should be not only no minutest grain of red coal but no minutest fragment of conceivably inflammatory black coal.

Now just what is our "Philosophy of In Spite" conveying to our ear at this moment in its two o'clock ash-dust revelation, whether our legs, as we pause at the top of that well-known second step of our house-door entrance with our reverie-gaze fixed on that solitary just perceptibly stirring grass-blade

are covered by the skirt of a woman of forty or a girl of fourteen, or by the flannel trousers of a boy or the cloth ones of a man?

Oh, how much more natural it is to hear everything and resolve to act and yet to do nothing at all, than to hear nothing and resolve nothing and yet "press on regardless"! But what our "Philosophy of In Spite" is trying to make us do is to have belief in our own power of overcoming the inert hostility of *that which is in the way*. If we have the power of our own mind to do it, the chances are, though the last thing our philosophy must do is to become morally dogmatic, but the chances really are in favour of our doing it.

Do *what*? Well, "come down", as they say, "to brass tacks". *Here* are you, a conscious self, an only too conscious self, as you may be driven to interject. And *there*, outside of you, is the world into which you have, by no fault or mistake of your own, and for no pleasure or satisfaction of your own, been flung. You may so far have had very little experience as to how to make yourself happy in a world that clearly does not seem to have been exactly designed for that good end. But here is an experience you can have at once. "Gather yourself together", as Homer would say, and "crouch for a spring". As a woman your happiness is brought about by quite different things from those that bring it about as a man; or, again, as a girl, it is brought about differently from the way it happens if you are a boy.

And of course what with our job, with our service, with our games, with our education, with our entire social, public, and private life, and above all with our parents, our brothers, and sisters, our mate, and our children, our situation as one person, old or young, among a lot of others is extremely complicated.

But though so complicated and though so entirely different from every other person's situation, old or young, it can be reduced to a plain, downright, "down-to-brass-tacks" situation. Each of us can "get on", as we say, "somehow or

another " in the position into which we have been led, driven, ordered, dragged, or even, let us confess it, enticed and fooled.

But here we are; and this is our destiny just at present. But what we need, what each of us, male or female, old or young, need, is a living substitute for the belief we have, for good and all renounced.

What we all want is some clear-cut, definite, sensual-spiritual, but absolutely simple and natural gesture of our whole being. We want a gesture that is at once psychic and physical, a gesture that uses both mind and body, and has an actual magnetic and vital effect upon our power to believe in ourselves, and upon our power to shake off the inert hostility of *that which is in the way*, and to create for ourselves a mental attitude that steadily increases our scope of enjoyment.

Is it possible for us to enjoy life more than we've ever done before? The conviction of our " Philosophy of In Spite " is that it is possible, for each and everyone of us, to force ourselves to enjoy life more and more in spite of all that is in the way. Thus, as we stare at this grass-blade, being thereby fitly and properly reminded of that profoundly wise man Walt Whitman, whom our " Philosophy of Spite " considers the wisest human being who has lived since Goethe, just as it regards Goethe as the wisest since Shakespeare, and Shakespeare as the wisest since Homer, we recognize that in poetry, and in poetry alone, every human being can find his proper and most natural gesture of defiance and enjoyment.

But the grand point is that we must come down to some essential attitude of the mind that can become a pause, a stopping place, a standing ground in our life, for the expression of our ultimate defiance and of our power to force ourselves to enjoy life in spite of *that which is in the way*.

In almost every room, in almost every house, in almost every street and on the threshold of almost every house in that street, we, as observant human creatures, can catch sight of some living specimen of the vast kingdom of vegetation to

which we refer when we play the old quiz-game of " animal, vegetable, or mineral ".

Nor is it unusual that when our gaze, in these moments of self-hypnotic reverie and of " long, long, thoughts ", fixes itself upon some growing entity of the vegetable world, it also falls upon some familiar human face which, in the daily round of our life, we have come to take for granted.

Well, the human face that confronts us at this moment is the face of a doll; but this familiar object is balanced on the shoulder of a small personage with whose own face when it now appears we are still more familiar. This little creature, as it comes whimpering, grumbling, muttering, trailing a dirty piece of cloth and protesting against life in general, is our latest infant.

Well, here we have the entire " quiz-cosmos " of all artful questioners—animal, vegetable, mineral! For the doll's owner, like the rest of us human animals, belongs to the genus of mammals and we have all the vegetation in the world in that softly stirring grass-blade, and as for minerals—well, " mineral " is everything else save the air through which we are seeing all that we see—and a solitary flame of gas burning in some gloomy office near the entrance to the station!

And what is it that at this crucial moment within your bent head, with your abstracted gaze fixed on this familiar scene, you are thinking? That you've never seen, nor supposed it was possible for you ever to see, a more troublesome, more obstinate, more difficult child than that little girl with the doll? Not that at all, eh? Simply the very natural protest that our " Philosophy of In Spite " has no right to assume all this amount of *will-power* in its votaries? No, no, no, no! We would indeed be wrong to assume anything of the kind. You have misunderstood us completely. When we speak of *will-power* the last thing we mean is that tight-lipped strongly outlined chin and jaw, or that powerfully concentrated strain of resolute purpose, that is usually associated with the " strong-willed ".

Most of us Pantagruelian " good companions ", who are excogitating this modest and tentative system of a wise life—you have only, convertite dear, to look at our chins !—have exceptionally weak wills. In fact our system might be called " a philosophy for the weak-willed ".

All we meant was that you must *keep your eye*—and remember that even a fly, the weakest of all creatures in Nature, has a very seeing and a very intent eye when such a sense is needed—fixed on the main purpose, and used simultaneously with your ear, your skin, your nose, your tongue. And by " main purpose " I mean the use of them all, and *not necessarily as one*, but rather as loosely and as casually, and in as disintegrated a drifting sequence of apprehensions, as if your senses were an air-borne cloud-wisp of the aboriginal chaos itself !

But perhaps, O almost won-over convertite, as you stared at that infant, *your* infant, *our* infant, *anybody's* infant, you were wondering what, in this attempt of ours to originate an evolutionary " next step " just at the moment when our scientific experts are assuring us that the whole idea of evolution was a nineteenth-century hallucination, you were wondering *what would become of our miraculous body*, which, after all, is a far greater marvel in itself than all the philosophies in the world, while we are projecting our consciousness a few paces from it, that consciousness from which we have purged all its portentous weight of " spiritual-being-integrated-personality ".

Well, it will probably stand erect in a blind, deaf, unfeeling, unsmiling, untasting trance. Haven't some of our air-pilots, when for a dizzy second they *imagined* they'd been shot down, actually *seen* their own lifeless bodies, only to find, a second after, that it was an illusion ?

Please try and realize, convertite, old friend, as standing on this step of our dingy home in its mean street you contemplate our cantankerous infant lamenting that she was ever born into such a world, that it is no supernatural power but simply a group of simple men and women like yourself who are now playing the oracle with you and explaining a few

mental and nervous tricks by which it really is possible to escape the " hell of other people ".

All that you see around you from our dreary doorstep, including that blade of grass in that unseemly crack and this troublesome infant with her preposterous doll, may be calculated to depress you; and yet we swear to you that it is possible to enjoy the whole multiverse of the known and the unknown as a lover takes possession of the loved.

But when these moments come we must snatch at them and force ourselves to embrace with every single one of our senses this mad fantastic dream-world to which we belong; for, dream-world though it may be, we can touch through that single grass-blade all the vegetation of the whole planetary earth and through that wretched cracked stone on that pavement-edge all the zodiacal constellations that this grey daylight is now hiding from us, and through the complaining cries of that little human creature that has just appeared at our feet all the troublesome bother and irritation as well as all the ensorcerizing and enthralling appeal of every human animal born into our homes, whether these homes are anxious to receive them or not.

And as you encounter between the leafy immensities of planetary vegetation and the mineral monstrosities of astronomical infinitude that angry, ugly, blurred, blotted, and puckered infant's visage, the baby image of your own apehood, whether you are its brother, or sister, or father, or mother, you are offered, each of us is offered, yet another lifetime chance of getting hold of this devil of a dream-world by its hairy-ghostly throat.

Get hold of it, whoever you are, get hold of it and squeeze till it confesses you've won! That's the true wisdom of our " Philosophy of In Spite " where this question of belief is concerned. To believe in ourselves; to believe in nothing outside ourselves; to believe that we can wrestle with life to the end of our days without yielding a jot.

Life will go on when we are dead. Others of our race,

other " mortal men ", as Homer always calls us, other leaves from the tree of life will still be here, here to prove that we're more than leaves, here to prove that we have hands and wits, stout hearts and crafty minds and Stoic nerves, here to prove that we are justified in our trust that the heart of man is at bottom good and not evil, kindly and not cruel, loyal and not treacherous, friendly and not ferocious. What our " Philosophy of In Spite " recalls for us is indeed no negligible thing. It reminds us that the mystical, metaphysical and apostolical *love*, in which so many clever and intellectual believers unscrupulously indulge, can be proved, when sifted and strained and analysed to the uttermost, to contain an element for which there is no other word but hate.

Dante himself announces this in his familiar inscription over the entrance to hell. Listen once more to his wicked and abominable words ; and forget not how long this sickening horror has been accepted as a revelation from the supernatural.

Giustizia mosse li mio alto Fatore ;
fecemi la divina Potestate
la somma Sapienza e il primo Amore.

" Justice moved my high Creator, Wisdom supreme and primal Love." And as we move on through the increasingly cruel and horrible circles of this torture-house of primal love, we are fain to cry aloud, as the poet himself did, when he behold *il primo Amore* getting to work on a certain poor rogue of a thief called Vanni Fucci who had presumed to rob the sacristy of San Jacopo, in the Church of San Zeno, of its golden treasures.

O potenza di Dio, quant' è severa
che cotai colpi per vendetta croscia !

" O power of God, how merciless you are, raining down such writhings of pain in your dreadful revenge ! " There is indeed a curious fascination in thus using our " Philosophy

of In Spite ", now that we have brought it to this crucial stage, as the point of a psychological drill, driven into the substance of that particular sort of terror that is sometimes called " the fear of God " just as its victims are sometimes called " God-fearing ".

Few believers, I think, have dared to analyse in their own hearts the effect of this secret terror upon the mystical virtue of love. Why have we, for instance, this irrepressible tendency to magnify and exalt the power of love wherever we go and in all we utter? Is it not because by so doing we are secretly trying to hide from ourselves the fearful and dreadful knowledge that the *divina Potestate*, or " creative power ", in the cosmos is clearly revealed, when we face the naked reality of things, as moved as much by cruelty as by mercy, and as much by hate as by love?

In plain fact the theological, metaphysical, and mystical emphasis upon love, which is common to all the impassioned rhetoric of modern believers, reveals itself under honest analysis as anything but tender fondness and imaginative sympathy for the oversensitive " funny ones " who get so jostled by the thick-skins barging up against them in life's rough-and-tumble arena, but, on the contrary, as a pumped-up cloud of quivering incense for the propitiation of the *primo Amore* that down there at the heart of things loves to make its unbelieving or disobedient creations writhe and howl with pain.

But our " Philosophy of In Spite " has a much more important task before it than the holy or unholy one of practising a new evolutionary step. What it *must* do if it is to be of real use to us is to offer us some practical assistance in the difficult art of turning simple endurance into subtle enjoyment.

And it is for this and for no other purpose that it drags in all these mountains of chemical matter, and all these animal, vegetable, and mineral aspects of planetary life. The point is that each of us, man or woman, boy or girl, frequently falls into a mood of loathing for the whole situation, which resolves

itself into a ghastly *danse macabre* of ourselves and our relatives and friends, revolving round each other through endless space, in a fatal and nauseating reciprocity of " Well, what are we going to do ? "

We are going to do just this, convertino darling ; and our pliable oracle had better utter a plain, direct, imperative statement and cease beating about the bush. In this tight little island we have lived so long, Iberians, Celts, Romans, Saxons, Normans, Danes, as if we were all crowded together on board a ship, that we have learnt several precious tricks of the " Philosophy of In Spite " without being taught them by anybody.

We have so long completely agreed with our dramatic Frenchman that hell is simply " other people " that we have begun to learn, just because an island is so different from a continent and so like a ship at sea, the wise seafaring art of loneliness. We have begun to learn that, however interesting they may be, our shipmates had better remain no more than temporary distractions if we are to enjoy life in its proper sea-solitude as we help in the navigation of our ship.

We are, in fact, islanders twice over ; we live on an island, and on that island *we ourselves are islands*, barging up against each other, but too absorbed in our private feelings and sensations to notice the jolts. And we can, when we want to, we can assure you of *that*, supply ourselves out of ourselves with enough hell to keep an army of devils fully employed !

But listen, my boy, my girl, my man, my woman ; listen to what one honest group of simple old men and old women and spirited lads and girls have put into their " Philosophy of In Spite " after some really hard work.

But, alas, the necessity for our conclusions in these rough seas and on this crowded ship has by no means passed away. Your small infant with her doll is already behaving in the precise manner that irritates you most of all. Well, just nod and shake your head ; just murmur " yes " and " no " ; just keep enough intelligent interest clamped like a mask on

your face; but in reality you can let your thoughts wander as much as you like.

No, no, my dear boy, my dear girl, my dear man, my dear woman, there's no need for you to talk to your oracle about love. Your oracle—this practical and sensible and simple philosophy we are slowly constructing together—has already substituted kindness and consideration for love and it had also substituted friendly common sense for desperate self-sacrifice.

Thus when at one of these curious pauses in your life when your whole consciousness rests for a moment in passive quiescence, not so much to take stock of things as simply because it is out of breath, the thing to do is to gather together all the belief in yourself that you can possibly muster up and all the humorous concern for those with whom you live that comes natural to a naturally selfish person. Don't bring your conscience into it. We've got to use our conscience *always or not at all*, as that girl in Goethe's story said of love. If your feelings aren't kindly to the companions of your life, they must be *made* so! But keep your conscience, like Natalia her "love", for *never or always*!

Humorous concern is the word for what you've got to feel for your fellow-prisoners in the concentration-camp of your home. It takes a family to concoct a real bubbling cauldron of *vita nuova*. And at levels of the mystery of life as deep as these levels are when you find yourself face to face with the most irritating of your fellow-convicts, as apparently you are at present with this teasing child and its enormous doll, get your belief in yourself grasped firmly like a magic wand in your hand and then utter—without betraying a sign to the person opposite of what you are doing, and drawing the strength for it from a power within yourself that you scarce knew existed—yes, from the ultimate depths of your being, utter a desperately authentic defiance to the whole of life!

And then, immediately afterwards, start projecting, just as if you were a great magician yourself, or even some minor kind of demi-god—*for such* every man and every woman

and every boy and every girl *actually and in truth is*—yes, start projecting vigorous waves of power and support for the pathetic and troublesome creature opposite you whom you resolutely persist in regarding with humorous concern and friendly consideration, however infuriating it is.

What our " Philosophy of In Spite " has indeed come at last to discover is that there is an inexhaustible reservoir of power in every one of us of both sexes, however weak and feeble and lazy and timid and ineffectual we may be, and however young or old we may be, if only we can get the secret of tapping it, and, once having tapped it, of drawing upon it. And it is towards this secret of tapping this power and of drawing on it that we are now occupied in feeling our way. " Feeling our way "—yes, that is the word.

At this particular moment we have to deal with the curious irritation we experience when we confront this infant with the doll. We shall doubtless feel the same when at nightfall we confront the " old man " or the " old lady ", and all strength of all the philosophy we can call up will be required if we are to enjoy, as we *must*, not only every one of the details that annoy us intensely but *our own annoyance* at these details. No, we don't have to suppress our annoyance. We have to enjoy it.

Yes, our " Philosophy of In Spite " recommends us to indulge our annoyance to the limit ! " In the destructive element immerse ! " is once more the magic incantation ! Yes, we've got to *enjoy* every curve and every line and every twist of this annoying visage whose contemplation causes us such quite peculiar nervous irritation.

Yes, every single thing about this face now before you—and the same will be true of the old man's face and the old lady's face when you encounter them to-night. And everything that you feel about this face, and about these three faces, you must not shrink from recognizing as an authentic impression. These are fellow-prisoners in the terrifying concentration-camp of a British family ; and we find these fellow-prisoners annoying, absurd, irritating, grotesque, ugly, ox-like,

sheep-like, dog-like, cat-like, canary-like, sparrow-like, hedge-hog-like, hyaena-like !

There is not the slightest need for you to pretend to feel any mystical "love of the saints", or any metaphysical " love in the abstract ", for these familiar human visages, whose comical curves of self-satisfied stupidity or pathetic creases of crazy silliness you know as well as you know your own facial deformities when you look into a mirror.

Only too often have you caught teasing reminders of every one of these faces in your own reflection ; but that doesn't make you like them any the better.

Yes, our philosophy has reached the point of encouraging us to go to the limit in our private and secret reactions, not only to the faces, but to the ways, looks, tones, habits, gestures, manners, outbursts, silences, and all the most intimate peculiarities of our friends and relations ; and the more annoying to our wretched nerves these peculiarities are the more heartily does our philosophy encourage us to note them.

But it also warns us with the utmost emphasis to keep this " noting " dark ; to keep it, in fact, scrupulously *mental* ; not to allow a stiver, or a grain, or a crumb, or a flake, or a pin's head, or a minnow's eye of it to catch the attention of the infant, or child, or boy, or girl, or grown-up man or woman, or old man or old woman who happens to be just then the object of it.

But the philosophy we are working out does not by any manner of means leave the matter at that point. It has encouraged you to note, with an intense rush of shameless exploration and an almost furious curiosity, every one of the particular things in this other person's countenance, figure, movements, ways, that are specially characteristic.

Many of these things " get ", as we say, " on your nerves ", but not all of them, and yet all them you must now salute, greet, and gloat over, with kindly and humorous enjoyment. And then, all suddenly, lo and behold, as the old stories say, you discover that what annoyed you so exquisitely has been

completely swallowed up in gross and friendly humour. And this miracle has been worked, not by mystic love, but simply and solely by a ribald caricature!

It is, in fact, a perfect case of the divine art of Doctor Rabelais. And by this experience everybody is the better. You can now regard these tiresome aspects and ways of your relative with more than tolerance. And your relative becomes quickly conscious that he or she is being appreciated with an appreciation that rarely comes their way. Had it been love that worked this miracle, either you or your comical relative would now, like poor Dives in that revengeful parable, be howling in his torment for a drop of water. Instead of which both of you are lapping up good comforting draughts from the *dive bouteille* of Pantagruelian good-fellowship.

And moreover after practising this gloating, lubricating, inhaling, this absorbing, swallowing-up-alive method with those of your house-mates who get on your nerves, you will find not only that the "hell" of these awful "others" is "letting up" a great deal and letting in all sorts of fine fresh air, but you will also find that *their* attitude to yourself is a much nicer one.

The truth seems to be that in all these matters of human relationship there are certain changes of attitude towards our "opposite number", which are like the movements of the helm in the hands of the man who is steering the ship. It may make all the difference between sailing east or sailing west! You must remember that our philosophy is being worked out *in practice*. It is not an imposing theory about "the one universe", whose rules are dogmatically indicated by such expressions as "Science teaches" or "The Church teaches" or "The great metaphysicians all agree that——" It must also be noted that we, the ordinary people who are working it out, are both male and female; so that we get the great advantage of having the peculiar wisdom of women brought to bear, where, as Aristophanes shows in the most effective way, it is an absolutely new thing to use it at all!

The wisdom of women is many-sided. It can be used as whores, as mothers, as housekeepers, as wives, as sisters, as companions, and above all as old maids. The man who has not discovered that the wisest women in the world are unravished virgins is simply an inexperienced, conceited, uneducated, illiterate ass. There must be something in the ravishing of a woman by a man that robs her of a certain very deep philosophical power. She can queen it still formidably enough, and from her practical knowledge of the man who is the father of her children she can rule a kingdom in peace and war.

But when it comes to any deep philosophizing, it seems as if there must be something about the act that takes away a woman's virginity that also takes away the power of planetary intuition. The act of love, whether she likes it or not and whether she knows it or not, turns her perforce into an animal, into a wise and crafty animal, but still an animal.

Our " Philosophy of In Spite " derogates in no whit from her dignity when we utter this oracle. We have both mummies and grannies in greater number among us than we have aunties, but we are all absolutely agreed upon this point. But the being that in her unravished state remains all her days a sort of elemental goddess in magical rapport with earth, air, water, fire, when once she is made a mother becomes, as the ancients accused the Earth herself of becoming, a creature liable to be caught in the act of very queer games indeed.

It is for this reason that the books to which we owe our understanding of the most significant aspects of the historic mythologies of our Western world will generally be found to have a Miss Somebody as their author.

And now we arrive at the point when we must reveal an oracle from our Grove of Consultation which we reached long ago, but concerning which we have thought it wise to postpone the declaration until the time was ripe. The time *is* ripe now and the oracle speaks.

From what portions of this planet—and you can cleverly see, O convertite almost won over, that it was neither from

Mummy nor Daddy that *this* inspiration came!—did there travel over land and water and over vast calendars and almanacs of time till they reached our Grove of Consultation the most definite and recognizable influences that have helped us in formulating these oracular announcements, or, to put it more simply, in working out this practical and humble chart for future mariners across the oceans of mortal experience and the mysteries of reality?

Without hesitation we will now confess the truth. We have been influenced by all the early Greek sages, in so far as we could learn anything about them, who lived before Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. We have been influenced by the Chinese Taoist Kwang-Tze. We have been influenced by the Pluralism of William James. We have been influenced by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. And above all we have been influenced by Walt Whitman.

And so, convertite, old friend, we reach this important point: are you prepared to be honest with yourself, even if this means that you must refuse to declare you believe what you don't and can't believe? If you are so prepared, I beg you to stay on this step at our house-door a few seconds longer while together we make a really honest struggle, while that funny little creature with her doll stares up at us in wonder, to embrace everything, really and actually everything, that is now around us, from this child, this doll, this grass-blade, to infinity in space and endlessness in time.

Our own belief in ourselves, convertite my friend, is directing us now to deeper, intenser, subtler feelings of enjoyment than we have ever known before. And these feelings are going, from now on, to increase with us whether we lie down to sleep or get up from sleep, whether we are sitting in the sun, or by the fire, or trudging through snow or are shuffling over ice, or are facing the rain, or climbing a mountain, or crossing the sea, or feeling the strange differences between the winds from the south, the east, the west, and the north.

Yes, a subtler and subtler power of enjoyment is gradually becoming ours. We are acquiring the secret of it as our philosophy deepens under the pressure of our separate consciousness. For it is nothing less than a way in which we all—girl, boy, man, woman, old maid, granny and grandad—can embrace every material thing that surrounds us at every moment wherever we may happen to be. If we are indoors we can " embrace " the walls, the ceiling, the floor, the window, the fireplace, the mantelpiece, the chairs, tables, blinds, curtains, rugs, carpets, bookshelves, ornaments and flowerpots, not to speak of the bare flagstones or savagely scrubbed bricks of the kitchen floor.

It was quite deliberately that our philosophy put " inverted commas " round the word " embrace ". This indeed is the crux of the whole thing. By " embrace " our philosophy is anxious to indicate a certain composite seizure of every form, shape, colour, texture, substance, stuff, fabric, material, luminosity, transparency, opacity, density, clarity, hardness, roughness, softness, smoothness, and of every degree of glitter or of greyness that the motions of light and the alternations of shadow can evoke out of the " too, too solid flesh " of the earth and the overyieldingness of the transparent air.

But the bewildering varieties of phenomena which are well " enveloped ", as Walt Whitman would put it, among the objects and existences that must be "embraced " by our senses, as our senses are used and interpreted by our " consciousness ", do not stop with those which our senses can reach. We feel—and here we have been tremendously influenced by the " Vestal Virgins ", as you might call them, of our Pantagruelian group, doubtless including the priestess Bacbuc—that there are microscopic as well as telescopic recesses in the elements of matter; and we feel that these recesses—yes, every one of these recesses—include the elements of which we ourselves are made.

Let us now, therefore, return to the familiar-featured child whose defects of appearance are enhanced by connecting her

with her monstrous doll; and who by chance happens at his minute to have stopped in front of us at our street-door, so that we have to force ourselves to include in the spectacle we are embracing that quaintly homely visage, which is as preposterously appealing in its comical ugliness as is that of her big doll in its massive dignity.

And now comes the moment for proving that we can enjoy the huge, crazy, grotesque spectacle of life upon earth without having recourse to any of these beliefs that we have decided to renounce. There is, in fact, not the slightest need for us to *love* any aspect of what we are enjoying—no, not even that dear, familiar, absurd, and tragically comic face before us—as we force ourselves to enjoy this well-known scene.

Our philosophy tells us that the *kindlier* we feel to all that we behold, the better it will be for everybody. But it is *not*—no, all that business can be thrown " to the crows ", as Aristophanes loves to say!—it is not incumbent upon us to try to " love " anybody or anything. Kindness and consideration, friendliness and sympathy, are the feelings required for the benefit of all. Let this love-business go and play its games with those damned souls among whom the " divine power ", as Dante calls it, persuaded the poet Cowper that he had to spend eternity!

And still further does the " Philosophy of In Spite " take us. It assures us that we can in complete safety totally renounce our puzzled modern belief, supposed by some to be a holy comfort, and by others to be a beautiful, terrible, ghastly *truth*, in that " dim lake of Auber " and " misty mid-region of Weir " named, only we must not utter its name above a whisper, " the unconscious ".

Shrewdly does our " Philosophy of In Spite " assure us that in a hundred years the whole notion of " the unconscious " will be regarded, as it has taken nearly two thousand years for many of us to regard hell, namely as the crowning phantasmagoria of the perverse fungoid ideas that the coming together of certain psychic poisons of a particular day and age have caused

to spring up among the saner growths of the chance-begotten saturnalia of Nature.

So we've really and truly won you over at last, have we, O subtlest and most wary of convertites? Well, all we can say to you now as we bid you return to the rough waves of the world, with our tentative chart for the reefs and rocks and capes and bays and promontories and headlands and gulfs and canals and floating islands of the unphilosophical deep sea in your patched pocket, is that we are completely satisfied if at least half of our "In Spites" can give your ship's rudder, when you are at the helm, the touch, just the faint touch it needs, as, in your belief in yourself, and in nothing more mysterious than yourself, you steer for that uninhabited shore about which you have so long been telling yourself stories.

Corwen,
15th July, 1952.