TEXT FLY WITHIN
THE BOOK ONLY

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_154171

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 104 B 470 Accession No. 1144

Author Balfour, A.

Title our present philosophy.

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

OUR PRESENT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

OUR PRESENT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

BY

MONTGOMERY BELGION

LONDON
FABER & FABER LIMITED
24 RUSSELL SQUARE

FIRST PUBLISHED IN MCMXXIX
BY FABER & FABER LIMITED
24 RUSSELL SQUARE LONDON W.C.1
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY BUTLER & TANNER LIMITED
FROME AND LONDON
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE author wishes to express his thanks to Mrs. J. G. C. Le Clercq, and also to Mr. Houston Peterson, of Columbia University, New York, for their respective loans, during the writing of his book, of certain volumes he would otherwise have found it difficult to consult ; and to acknowledge his special obligation to Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, of New College, Oxford, who read, commented upon, and discussed with him, a substantial section of his draft MS.

CONTENTS

PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAP. I. THE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED PAGE 17

§ 1. Social Changes That Are Symptoms of Something Else 17
§ 2. The Change in Imaginative Literature 20
§ 3. The Overthrow of the Christian Philosophy of Life 20
§ 4. The Aim of This Study 22
§ 5. Our Present Philosophy of Life 23
§ 6. Paternity of This Present Philosophy 24
§ 7. No Psychological or Biographical 'Explanation' 28

CHAP. II. THE IRRESPONSIBLE PROPAGANDIST 30

§ 8. An Alien View 30
§ 9. Philosophy in Art 31
§ 10. The Writer's Standpoint 34
§ 11. The Reader's Standpoint 38
§ 12. The Claim to Creation 40
§ 13. A Duty for the Critic 46

PART II

ACCORDING TO MR. BERNARD SHAW

CHAP. I. SOCIALISM AND THE SUPERMAN 51

§ 1. Mr. Shaw's View of His Office 51
§ 2. The Kernel of the Doctrine 51
§ 3. Progress and the Growth of Life 56
§ 4. Doing As You Like 57
§ 5. An Official Second Nature 60
§ 6. What of the Superman? 61

CHAP. II. THE GOSPEL OF GRAB PAGE 63
§ 7. Our Duty Not to Be Poor 63
§ 8. Keep-up-with-the-Joneses 64
§ 9. Grabbers in the Plays 65
§ 10. Noble v. Bourgeois 68
§ 11. Which is the Hypocrite? 69
§ 12. Two Business Abilities 70
§ 13. Putting Oneself Over 71
§ 14. Prostitution as a Duty 73

CHAP. III. CRIME 76
§ 15. The Case of Bill Walker 76
§ 16. Vindictiveness 78
§ 17. Moral Responsibility 81
§ 18. Crime as Pathological 83

CHAP. IV. MARRIAGE 85
§ 19. Cures for Woman's Heartbreak 85
§ 20. Divorce Without Reasons 86
§ 21. Why Happiness? 89
§ 22. The State's Part 90

CHAP. V. THE LIFE FORCE OR CREATIVE EVOLUTION 93
§ 23. Human Will as the Life Force 93
§ 24. A Mind's Eye 95
§ 25. A Political Providence 97
§ 26. The Life Force as God 99
§ 27. Creative Evolution 101
§ 28. Social Well-Being 105

CHAP. VI. CREATIVE EVOLUTION AS RELIGION 106
§ 29. Vital Dogmas 106
§ 30. A Faith Scientific and Mystical 107
§ 31. The Immortal Germ-Plasm 110
§ 32. Creative Evolution as Religion 111
§ 33. Religion and Magic 114

CHAP. VII. THE CLAIM TO INSPIRATION 119
§ 34. Religion and Art 119
§ 35. The Claim to Inspiration 121

CONTENTS

PART III

ACCORDING TO MR. ANDRÉ GIDE

CHAP. I. DISCONCERTING CASES PAGE 125

§ 1. Mr. Gide's Warning 125
§ 2. Some of his Stories 126
§ 3. 'Les Faux-Monnayeurs' 130
§ 4. Personal Reminiscences 131
§ 5. The Faits-Divers 135

CHAP. II. MAN'S UNCLEARED JUNGLE 136

§ 6. The Imaginative Writer's Subject-Matter 136
§ 7. Ricardo v. Carey 137
§ 8. The Two Curiosities 139
§ 9. Wickedness Not Always Wrong? 139

CHAP. III. THE CALL TO HAPPINESS 142

§ 10. The Finality of All Action 142
§ 11. The Call to Happiness 143
§ 12. Sin and Suffering 145
§ 13. The Way to Fulfilment 147

CHAP. IV. NOT CHRISTIANITY, BUT CHRIST 150

§ 14. The Artist 150
§ 15. The Criminal 154
§ 16. Sex 159
§ 17. Not Sinners, But the Righteous 159

CHAP. V. GOOD AND EVIL 162

§ 18. The Natural 162
§ 19. An End to Evil? 165
§ 20. A Self-Regarding Theory 169
§ 21. A Gospel for the Strong 171
§ 22. But What of the Weak? 173
§ 23. A Damaging Defence 174
§ 24. A Light Shining Before Men 175

CHAP. VI. FATE 177

§ 25. Art and Satan 177
§ 26. What is Sublimation? 180
§ 27. The Isolated Crime 183

CHAP. VI. FATE (*continued*)—

§ 28. Man's Internal Fate PAGE 186
§ 29. Must One Throw up the Sponge? 188
§ 30. The Pathetic Fallacy 189
§ 31. Is Man Naturally Good? 191

CHAP. VII. *CORYDON* 193

§ 32. The Source of Reforms 193
§ 33. A New Theory of Love 194
§ 34. The Analogy with Animals 195
§ 35. Who is the Pursuer? 198
§ 36. The Greeks 199
§ 37. What of Women? 202
§ 38. A Word on Theory 203

CHAP. VIII. THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING 207

§ 39. A Moral Being 207
§ 40. The Virtue of Hypocrisy 209
§ 41. The Call of the Heart 211
§ 42. Beyond Impulse and Desire 213

PART IV

ACCORDING TO DR. SIGMUND FREUD

§ 1. The Birth of the Gods 217
§ 2. Morality and Wishes 219
§ 3. Happiness and Intelligence 221
§ 4. Facing Reality 224
§ 5. Why Have Fewer Rules? 225

PART V

ACCORDING TO THE HONOURABLE BERTRAND RUSSELL

CHAP. I. THE MESSAGE 229

§ 1. The Millennium Within Reach 229
§ 2. The Possibilities of Education 230
§ 3. Other Requisites 234
§ 4. Philosophy 236
§ 5. Ethics 240

CONTENTS

CHAP. II. CHANGING HUMAN NATURE PAGE 246

§ 6. The Questions at Issue 246
§ 7. Fear 246
§ 8. Justice 249
§ 9. Truthfulness 251
§ 10. The Will to Power 252
§ 11. The Scientific Spirit 256
§ 12. Parents and Teachers 258
§ 13. Instinct v. Nature 259

CHAP. III. MR. RUSSELL'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE 262

§ 14. Perception 262
§ 15. Consciousness 273
§ 16. Mr. Russell's Theory of Knowledge 276

CHAP. IV. HARMONIOUS DESIRES 280

§ 17. The Ideal Character 280
§ 18. Knowledge and Desire 282
§ 19. Sin 284
§ 20. Harmonious Desires 288
§ 21. Love 290

PART VI

CONCLUSION

§ 1. The Beliefs We Act Upon 299
§ 2. Personality 300
§ 3. The Eternal Made Temporal 301

INDEX 303

PART I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED

§ 1. SOCIAL CHANGES THAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF SOMETHING ELSE

It is well known that, within the last thirty years, the chief social relations—the relations of adults to the young, the relations of the sexes, the relations of classes, and the relations between foreigners—have very much altered in their external character.

The change in the relations of adults to the young is largely visible in education. The method of education has, within the period specified, been radically transformed: sternness has given place to pampering; and this change of method is, in turn, the result of a change of aim: three decades ago the aim of education still was to build character; today it appears to be to respect and develop personality.

As to the relations of the sexes, signs of what has happened are that it is no longer as usual as it was for adventures outside marriage to be clandestine, and women now engage in such adventures as *openly* as men. Moreover, not only has divorce become more common; it has, to a great extent, ceased to be regarded as either scandalous or regrettable.

Concerning the relations of the classes, class barriers have, it is true, dwindled in some regions, but class consciousness is, on the whole, far more intense than it was, and the intensifying of class consciousness has been accompanied by a corresponding growth, open or veiled, of class hostility.

Finally, as to the relations between foreigners—between peoples who are foreigners to each other—it is obvious that, in spite of pacts of peace and leagues of nations, and in spite of the opportunities for international acquaintance

produced by the increased travel which has followed the War, national hatreds are today deeper and fiercer than ever.

So familiar is all this that details are superfluous, and no more is necessary than to state it, as I do, in very general terms. Familiar likewise is another social change of recent years, the change in the state's relation to the individual. No one can have failed to notice how, for a good many years past, and especially since 1914, the liberty of the subject has been steadily encroached upon in all civilized countries. As to that, a writer recently enumerated the measures whereby the action of the individual has, in England, been more and more subjected to state interference. Upon the list of these measures he commented as follows :

> The individualistic doctrine of the nineteenth century has everywhere given way to the dogma of State interference. Nothing is more noteworthy in the legislative activity of the last twenty years than the ever-increasing number of statutes which seek to regulate or control the action of the individual in favour of the 'general good'. . . .
>
> The truth is that modern Government Departments are attempting to recover, through the subservience of the Legislature, all the extraordinary powers and privileges of which the Crown was only deprived after the constitutional struggles of the seventeenth century. In the many bureaucratic tribunals which are being set up by statute after statute are to be found the modern Courts of Star Chamber and of High Commission, with all the instruments of inquisitorial procedure, save, indeed, that of physical torture, for which the older courts were justly attacked. In one respect, indeed, the position of the modern citizen is worse than that of his ancestor of the Stuart period. The Parliament, which then fought his battles and defeated the common enemy, has now gone over to the other side, and only the common lawyers are left to raise the standard of liberty. It will, moreover, be observed that the great majority of Socialistic statutes have been passed under the aegis of a Conservative Government. 'If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' [1]

These are words which cannot, I imagine, be disputed. And as with England, so with other countries. Everywhere, for the citizen's independence of action, there has been substituted an ever wider and wider supervision by the would-be paternal state.

Obviously the effect of this substitution is to diminish the sense of individual responsibility. And it may well be

[1] The State and the Subject, *Saturday Review*, 14 July, 1928, pp. 39–40. Cf. also a book I see announced—Lord Hewart: *The New Despotism.*

asked, I think, whether our welcome of another social novelty of late years, *viz* the ever more lavish supply by the popular press, daily and periodical, the cinema, and broadcasting, of a multiplicity of fleeting and trivial objects of interest, is not also diminishing that sense of individual responsibility.

Be that as it may, there is a further change I would mention as also being beyond dispute, it seems to me, a development of within about the last thirty years. I mean, the change in the conception of what should be the goal of talent and ambition, of what is most worth obtaining, of what is truly great. Today it is generally and *openly* considered, and certainly it was not so considered thirty years ago, that what talent and ambition should aim at, what is most worth obtaining, and what is truly great, is the possession of money.

This is so curious that examples are required. I shall give only two, but they are, I think, striking ones. In 1928 a Minister of the Crown resigned office, not because he found himself in disagreement with his colleagues, but because he wished ' to go into the City '. And his reason for gratifying his wish was, he said, that politics no longer offers rewards adequate for the best brains. That the rewards of statesmanship must be financial—there, certainly, is a new thing. Again, early in 1929, an American institution, Columbia University, sold some land in New York to Mr. Rockefeller, Junior. Of course, the land fetched a high price. And the size of the price led the president of the university to inform the press that the sale was the *greatest* event in the university's history.

About these two examples not the least striking point is that neither the retiring minister's statement, nor the statement by the university president, excited the slightest surprise. That should indicate clearly enough that the conception of the possession of money, as what is most worth obtaining, as what is really most valuable, is a conception which has taken full possession of the world.

Now these changes in the external character of the various social relations, and this open conception of the possession of money as the supreme value, are symptoms of something else.

§ 2. THE CHANGE IN IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE

To discover what that something else is, one may consider another change of the last thirty years or so: the change in the material which is selected by writers of imaginative literature, the change in what novelists and playwrights write about. A critic pointed out some time ago that the contemporary English novel is not dramatic.[1] The novels of the most fashionable writers of the day—D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, David Garnett, and Mrs. Virginia Woolf—are, he said, not dramatic; and even in those of Conrad the dramatic element is, he insisted, only vestigial. A similar change in the subject of the novel has been noticed in France, and an eminent French novelist has inquired for its cause. He has inquired, that is, why the conflicts formerly portrayed in fiction, the conflicts between God and man in religion, between man and woman in love, and between impulse and duty in man himself, should have ceased to be material for the novel. The reason is, he concludes, that conflicts of this kind have become unintelligible to the novel-reading public. And furthermore:

> Même des drames plus frappants ne sont plus compris. Une jeune femme, un jour, m'avouait ne rien entendre à la *Phèdre* de Racine, à ses remords, à ses imprécations. 'Que de bruit pour rien!' me disait-elle. 'Comme si ce n'était pas la chose la plus ordinaire du monde que d'être amoureuse de son beau-fils! Voici beau temps que Phèdre séduit Hippolyte en toute sécurité de conscience et Thésée lui-même ferme les yeux.' L'aventure de Phèdre ne fournirait plus aujourd'hui la matière d'une tragédie.[2]

Undoubtedly the anecdote, even if it has been imagined, correctly illustrates the contemporary attitude.

§ 3. THE OVERTHROW OF THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Imaginative writers today, then, no longer deal in the moral conflicts in which they dealt until recently because their public has ceased to understand such conflicts. But if formerly these conflicts could be appreciated, that was

[1] T. S. Eliot: Le Roman anglais contemporain, *Nouvelle Revue Française* (Paris: May, 1927), pp. 669–675.

[2] François Mauriac: *Le Roman* (Paris, 1928), p. 14.

because the moral conflicts of fiction were akin to those arising in real life, and the moral conflicts of real life arose as the result of the philosophy of life then generally accepted. What, accordingly, must have happened for the conflicts in question to be now unintelligible, is a change in the public's philosophy of life. And it is, of course, of that change that the changes in the character of the social relations, and that the *open* regard for the possession of money as what is supremely valuable, are the symptoms.

Indeed, it may be said, in the light of those symptoms, that there has been more than a change in the popular philosophy of life; it may be said that there has been a reversal. Much that was generally regarded as recently as thirty years ago as immoral and shameful, is now deemed moral and laudable. One philosophy of life has, in the popular mind, given way to another which, in appearance, is its very opposite. And the one which has gone, which has been overthrown, is, of course, the Christian philosophy of life.

That it has gone, that it has been overthrown, will not, I suppose, be questioned. What may seem mistaken on my part is the dating of the overthrow so late. It may be imagined that the Christian philosophy was upset and thoroughly discredited in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But to imagine that is to misunderstand what occurred then. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century the man in the street made the, for him, astounding discovery, already made by his brother, the man of learning, in the eighteenth century, that the Christian faith was hollow. But, in spite of this discovery, the general run of people—and sometimes they were the very people who proclaimed the discovery—retained unaltered the philosophy, the moral code, which is based upon that faith. There can be little doubt that Huxley, for example, never relinquished the Christian *Weltanschauung*. It is only subsequently—within, as I say, the last thirty years—that the upsetting of the Christian philosophy has followed the riddling of the Christian faith; and it is really only since the War that the effects of the overthrow have become widely evident. Only since the War may the other philosophy of life, that which, in appearance, is the antithesis of the philosophy it has displaced, be said to have become firmly established in the

popular mind, and to be reigning over Christendom as something of a usurper.

As something of a usurper, I say ; and I say it not only because Christendom is the realm of that philosophy, but also because the philosophy reigns *de facto*, not *de jure*. It has not yet succeeded in completely banishing its rival from public life. In England, for example, not only is Christianity still the official religion, the state religion, but the whole of the criminal law, and a great part of the civil law too, remain based upon the Christian philosophy of life. If in the minds of most individuals who have, or believe they have, opinions, the other philosophy is now the rule of life, in the greater number of public concerns the Christian philosophy is still there, supreme.

But it will, perhaps, be only a matter of time before the Christian philosophy no more regulates our public lives than at present already it regulates most of our private ones. Such, at least, is the aim and hope of the usurping philosophy's champions. They want European civilization completely to discard that through which it has been developed in the two hemispheres ; and of this happening some see portents in certain recent legal reforms, and in the fact, which, however, need not be as significant as might be supposed, that the Christian religion has itself become, for numbers professing it, a kind of Pragmatism.

§ 4. THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

But why has the change of philosophies taken place ? For a variety of reasons, but I wish to insist upon one only. The change of philosophies has taken place, for one reason, because it was found that the Christian philosophy either was no longer valid or never had been valid. This is a reason which immediately raises a question. What of the validity of the other philosophy, the philosophy which, popularly, has replaced the Christian—has that validity been demonstrated beyond all dispute ? I think not. On the contrary, Christendom, finding itself deprived of the only philosophy of life it had popularly known, of the philosophy upon which it had been founded and developed, has been so eager to fill the void, that the philosophy currently held has been accepted altogether uncritically. That philosophy

may *seem* all right, but the question whether it *is* all right, or all wrong, has not yet been faced.

Yet, surely, whether it is right or wrong, is an extremely important question. I need not insist that a philosophy is something fundamental in our lives, that it governs the great majority of our judgments and sets the course for all our deliberate actions. I will confine myself to the directly pertinent point: if the Christian philosophy had to be discarded when it was found to be not valid, or to be no longer valid, can this other philosophy be retained (it is too late to say: can it be accepted?) unless its validity is in turn unimpeachable?

Accordingly, the investigation of its validity must be an urgent matter, and since this investigation has not yet been undertaken, I am myself attempting it in the present study. I seek to answer the question:

> Is the philosophy of life which so many of us apparently now believe really believable?

§ 5. OUR PRESENT PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The philosophy of life which has already displaced in the popular mind, and may displace everywhere, the Christian philosophy, is not essentially original, an outlook newly minted by the twentieth century, of course. That is where the majority of its American advocates are mistaken. It would be difficult to say when it has not existed in some form or other, or when its adherents have been negligible. But just as evidently, I think, never before has it been really popular, never before has it dominated the minds of the majority. For this to have happened, it must have undergone a recent transformation.

Doctrines originate in scholars' minds, of course, but it is not as they emerge from those minds that any one of them ever wins popular acceptance. Before a doctrine can be popular, it must be popularized, *i.e.* deformed. The philosophy of life which most of us have adopted must, then, be a deformation of what scholars once evolved. It is only as deformed that it is novel. But since it is as deformed that it has become popular, it is also as deformed that it is important. Hitherto the doctrine's activity has, so to speak, been that of struggling to establish itself popu-

larly. But now that it is popular it may alter the face of the world, *i.e.* assume an activity of far greater immediate import. It is, then, as deformed, as popular, that the doctrine has now to be considered.

And there is another reason why, in its popular shape, it should have attention. As deformed, as coarsened in order to provide a popular philosophy of life, may not a doctrine come to show its fundamental soundness or absurdity most strikingly? I do not propose at this stage to answer the question; only to raise it.

But, taking it into account, I shall not, in the following pages, delve into our present philosophy's history, nor study what forms it has assumed in the past, and how those forms differ from its form today. I take it as it is today. It has its contemporary champions, and for the sake of definiteness and clearness, and also because it is idle to say that people believe so-and-so, unless it is shown that so-and-so is believed by at least some people, I deal with our current philosophy as expounded by those champions.

Aided no doubt by adventitious circumstances, the writers I select have, I consider, been among its real propagandists in the community. For the community at large they are, I hold, among the true fathers of these present theories about life. What I mean by: true fathers, may be indicated by a quotation from a French observer of contemporary popular movements, who says:

> Le père d'une idée, en tant que cette idée a été adoptée par des collections d'hommes, ce n'est pas celui qui s'est borné à le penser, moins encore celui qui l'a pensée le premier (à supposer qu'on le trouve), c'est celui qui l'a pensée *dans la manière qui l'a rendue notoire*, c'est celui auprès de qui ces collections d'hommes sont venus l'adopter.[1]

§ 6. PATERNITY OF THIS PRESENT PHILOSOPHY

The representative fathers of this philosophy upon whom, without much hesitation, my choice falls, are four. They are:

MR. BERNARD SHAW;
MR. ANDRÉ GIDE;
DR. SIGMUND FREUD; and
THE HONOURABLE BERTRAND RUSSELL.

[1] Julien Benda: *Les Sentiments de Critias* (Paris, 1917), p. 129, my italics.

I first take Mr. Shaw, not only because he has, as he says, written with the deliberate object of converting the nation to his opinions, but also because he has actually converted the nation to all of his opinions of consequence, to all of his opinions to which, that is, it could be converted. Mr. Shaw has become one of England's glories. For the daily press, on the one hand, he is regarded as Hardy's natural successor in the mantle of G.O.M. of English Letters, and as 'one of the most brilliant thinkers of our generation'. For less effusive quarterlies, on the other hand, he is the subject of leading articles, which comment with mixed awe and admiration upon *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, one such article declaring that the book is 'a summary of a lifetime's thought'. Such unanimous esteem is not the result of Mr. Shaw's universally acknowledged literary talent nor of his strong personal charm: he possessed both in an equal degree forty years ago when daily and quarterly alike ignored him. It is not the result, either, of his growing old: other writers reach old age without gaining a halo. No, there can be only one explanation if Mr. Shaw is heard with enthusiasm and respect when he says today what nobody would listen to when he was saying it in 1891: we yield such attention to, and bestow such flattery upon, only those who express for us our own minds. In 1891 Mr. Shaw was saying what was going to be believed on the morrow, but nobody, except perhaps himself, suspected that; now, today, he is saying what is actually believed today.

Nor is it alone in England and America, where his natural audience lies, that this is so; in Germany, too, for instance, he can be said to have prophesied unto the wind; a French critic, Mr. Marcel Brion, has declared him to be 'a great thinker'; and even in such a distant country as China he is, so a prominent Chinese reports, one of the three most admired European writers.

Thus it may be said that Mr. Shaw speaks for the world. A further reason for choosing him here is that, in addition, he is representative of other writers, is the most able and the most attended to of a dozen or so men who, in various countries, are all saying more or less the same thing. To

give names would be invidious. The point is that on this account, to examine Mr. Shaw's opinions and beliefs, is not only to examine to some extent what the world now thinks and believes; it is also to examine at the same time what those other writers have contributed to thought.

Nevertheless, for my purpose Mr. Shaw is not enough. He remains, after all, on the surface. So I examine, after Mr. Shaw's, the views of Mr. André Gide, an imaginative writer like himself, but one, because more profound and more general, even more representative, and, further, one who does not hesitate to deal with subjects—fundamental subjects—which Mr. Shaw either only grazes or passes by altogether.

English readers have been attracted to Mr. Gide for many years, ever since Sir Edmund Gosse, in the *Contemporary Review*, favourably noticed his *Porte Étroite*, and with Americans he is now growing increasingly popular as a novelist. But it is doubtful if either the English or the Americans fully grasp the importance he possesses—chiefly on the Continent—as an author's author, and as a stimulator of the young. It is said in France that since Mr. Gide became generally known—about 1916—no intelligent *lycéen* has failed to get stamped by his *Nourritures Terrestres*, and as to his effect on other authors, here is the testimony of a particularly distinguished young writer, Mr. André Malraux:

> Par ses conseils, il [Mr. Gide] n'est peut-être qu'un grand homme de 'ce matin',—une date. Mais par cela, autant que par son talent d'écrivain qui le fait par bonheur le plus grand écrivain français vivant, il est un des hommes les plus importants d'aujourd'hui. À la moitié de ceux que l'on appelle 'les jeunes', il a révélé la conscience intellectuelle.[1]

In Germany Mr. Gide's books were translated and prized long before they had become prized in France, and it has been left to a German critic of international reputation, Dr. E. R. Curtius, to describe his position in a phrase. Mr. Gide, according to Dr. Curtius, 'is the voice of the European mind'. Even in England there are, I venture to say, few writers today who have drawn on France at all and who do not, though usually unawares, share some of his views.

[1] Quoted in Henri Massis: *Jugements II.* (Paris, 1924), pp. 6–7n.

So much, then, for the choice of Mr. Gide. Next, inasmuch as psychology occupies such a dominant position in our thought today, corresponding to that occupied by biology in the last century, it seems requisite to consider how our present philosophy of life finds expression by a psychologist. I select Dr. Freud as my representative psychologist because of his rank in the popular esteem. In that respect he is, I fancy, very much the Huxley of our day.

Finally, my selection should include a professional philosopher, and as philosopher I select the Honourable Bertrand Russell because he is practically the only English philosopher living who deliberately writes for a large public. Moreover, with that public he enjoys a tremendous credit, and is regarded 'as one of the keenest intellects of the age'.[1] A quarterly stated not so long ago that his position in contemporary thought is not dissimilar from that of Hume in the middle of the eighteenth century. And his public credit does not lack the support of testimony from colleagues, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller declaring recently that Mr. Russell's mind is 'assuredly the most brilliant and active mind in the philosophic world'.[2]

Such are my reasons for deciding that these four writers are the most representative fathers of our present philosophy of life. I must add that while, for Mr. Shaw's and Mr. Gide's views, I have drawn on nearly all of their respective books, for Dr. Freud I have confined myself to one work, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*[3], and for Mr. Russell to his four most recent popular books: *What I Believe* (1925), *On Education* (1926), *An Outline of Philosophy* (1927), and *Sceptical Essays* (1928). In Dr. Freud's case the one book appears to contain the gist of his views on the subject in hand, and in the case of Mr. Russell the restriction to his popular books is dictated by the consideration that I am dealing, as I have already insisted, with a popular doctrine; and of those popular books I confine myself to

[1] Cf. Alan G. Widgery: *Contemporary Thought in Great Britain* (London, 1927).

[2] *Mind*, No. 150, p. 245.

[3] Vienna, 1927. English translation by W. D. Robson-Scott under the title of: *The Future of an Illusion* (London, 1928).

the four most recent because they may be considered to give his views in their latest and probably definitive form.

§ 7. NO PSYCHOLOGICAL OR BIOGRAPHICAL 'EXPLANATION'

I should add that, since my object, in this essay, is the examination of a philosophy of life, I confine myself to the opinions and beliefs of the four writers in question, and do not attempt, as might, perhaps, be expected, to 'explain' the theories of, for instance, Mr. Shaw by means of some theory of my own of his psychology or biography, or to detect the 'real' Mr. Gide contained in his writings. Attempts of that sort seem to me vain; and when, for example, one of Mr. Gide's recent critics, Father Poucel, declares that Mr. Gide is '*un sensitif intelligent*'[1], he says, in my opinion, precisely nothing.

Likewise, I do not deem it to be my business on this occasion to inquire what the writers whose views I consider owe to other writers. How Mr. Shaw, say, has been influenced by Ibsen, Henry George, Wagner, and Schopenhauer, or what he has borrowed from Samuel Butler and Charles Lever, or how his views may resemble those of Gladstone, Huxley, Tyndall, and George Eliot, are matters entirely foreign to my object. Whether Mr. Gide owes more to Dostoievsky than to Blake, to Oscar Wilde than to Whitman, or whether, without Nietzsche and Goethe, he could himself ever have existed—that too is immaterial here. It has been said that Mr. Shaw's views are 'second-hand ideas'; but the validity or non-validity of those views cannot depend on their having been held before him, or on his having originated them himself, and it is with their validity or non-validity alone that I am concerned. Moreover, second-hand or not, his views, and those of the other writers with whom I am dealing, are held by them in a particular way, '*dans la manière qui les a rendues notoires*', in such a manner that, thanks to these writers, '*des collections d'hommes sont venus les adopter*'.

Lastly, there is the question raised by the medium through which Mr. Shaw's and Mr. Gide's views are, for a great part, expressed; they are expressed, not only

[1] Cf. the review *Études* (Paris) for October 5, 1927.

in prefaces and criticisms, *i.e.* directly, as Dr. Freud's and Mr. Russell's views are expressed directly, but also in plays and stories. The question is : Can one go to plays and novels for the expression of a philosophy of life ? To that question those sections of this essay which are devoted to Mr. Shaw's and Mr. Gide's views are, in a way, answer enough for the unbiased ; but since, for the biased, those sections must beg the question—and it is, of course, an important question—I shall first seek to justify myself in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE IRRESPONSIBLE PROPAGANDIST

§ 8. AN ALIEN VIEW

We have been led to believe wonderful things of the part played among us by the imaginative writer in poetry or prose. He is said to practise his art for art's sake, and we are bidden to enjoy it in the same fashion. Or else we are told that his work possesses a peculiar magic whereby it enlarges our experience of life. Such are among the more modest claims made on his behalf. Others, equally successful, tend, however, to extravagance. The artist is held to be a prophet. Or we are assured that beauty is truth. Again, art is held to be revelation. In particular, the poet's words have, as he employs them, a special meaning ; it is, we may learn, a meaning with an infinite suggestion : the poet speaks of one thing, ' but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all '. This belief is related to another, that the imaginative writer is a creator. He can, it appears, be a creator in either of two ways ; it is by being a creator in the second of these two ways that he becomes simultaneously a revealer. Either the imaginative writer is credited with creating a world different from that which we already know and in which we live, yet perhaps, so it is said, more real—a universe of the mind ; and this world he is said to people with beings, living beings, whom he is alleged to have created also. Or else, as asserted by one of the most learned of the craft, his *modus operandi* is to project his inmost being into the forms and appearances of nature, and owing to the alleged existence of a mysterious analogy of matter and spirit in the forms of the sensible world, he thereby obtains an insight into truth, thus repeating finitely and with his imagination, the eternal act of creation ' in the infinite I Am '.

The view which enables me to go, for the statement of a philosophy of life, not only to the prefaces and critical essays respectively, but also to the imaginative works of Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. André Gide, is a view alien to all these. It is the view that the imaginative writer invariably has two functions, and two functions only: (a) he is a purveyor of pleasure, and (b), he is, under cover of providing pleasure, an irresponsible propagandist. I would further declare that when a critic examines a work of imaginative literature, it is his duty—a duty he at present neglects—to expose and appraise the propaganda it contains.

§ 9. PHILOSOPHY IN ART

Perhaps the best way to attack the subject is by considering a statement contained in the theory of art most favoured in England today, the statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, and is no longer *qua* philosophy either true or false, but is only true or false aesthetically. Let me begin by inquiring whether this statement is itself true.

It is part of the view upon which I am acting in this essay that the statement, as it stands, is (unlike what it states a philosophy in certain conditions to be) both true *and* false. The theory of art to which it belongs assumes that no distinction is to be drawn between art as it concerns the artist and art as it concerns the spectator. Possibly that assumption is not unconnected with the practice in Latin countries (and the theory in question hails from a Latin country) of using the one word: aesthetics, there where in Germany—the fatherland of that word—two words have been found necessary, *viz* aesthetics and *Kunstwissenschaft*. At any rate the assumption is, I suggest, mistaken. That art is not the same thing for artist and spectator is indeed evidenced, I believe, in respect of this very matter of the role of a philosophy in the work of art. The statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, and is no longer *qua* philosophy either true or false, but is only true or false aesthetically, is, I submit, a true statement only as applied to the artist, and, even then, true only with a

qualification ; as applied to the auditor or reader, it is entirely false.

Before I attempt to justify my view, I should indicate why I have just said, not : spectator, but : auditor or reader. That involves my still further calling in question the popular theory of art referred to. It is of the essence of this theory that art has no real divisions or classifications. There is, according to the theory, only one aesthetic experience : the artist has it, not in the making of his work of art, but before he has begun that work. It is because he has had this experience that he undertakes the work, and he undertakes it solely in order to enable the spectator to have in turn the identical experience ; the work of art is no more than a means whereby the experience can be released afresh and in the spectator. Thus what matters, on the theory, is (a), that the artist's experience, before he undertakes the work of art, should have been the genuinely aesthetic one, and (b), that the work should actually enable the spectator to repeat that experience of the artist's. Hence whether the work is properly pictorial, poetic, musical, or what not, as the case may be, is of no consequence ; that is to say, to insist upon a strict distinction of *genres*, as Lessing did, is vain.

But, setting aside such questions as whether there is, in truth, only one aesthetic experience, however diverse are works of art, and as whether that experience is identical for artist and spectator, it is, I feel, a mistake, when dealing with art, thus completely to disregard divisions or classifications. For in so disregarding them one is led to overlook the existence of something which separates all the other arts from the art of imaginative writing.

When it is said that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, what is it that is meant by the term : philosophy ? Not, I take it, a metaphysic, but a philosophy of life or *Weltanschauung*. Now, can a philosophy of life be incorporated in any fine-art or in music ? Can it be incorporated in anything but imaginative literature ? Aristotle says [1] : ' Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of thing a man chooses or avoids.' Is it not equally true

[1] *Poetics*, VI., 17 (trans. Butcher).

that moral purpose can be revealed by character alone? And if so, then, since what dictates moral purpose is a philosophy of life, the depiction of character must be the illustration of a philosophy of life, and only by the depiction of character can such a philosophy be incorporated in a work of art. Now, the only way to depict character is with words: accordingly, a philosophy of life can, I say, be incorporated only in the work of art which employs words.

True, a painting may show persons in the midst of action, but such a painting is no more than the partial illustration of words, and, lacking those words to complete it, must remain, so far as incorporating a philosophy of life is concerned, entirely unintelligible. Again, we have been told—and the assertion may be taken as typical of a certain conception of art—that an urn expresses 'a flowery tale more subtly than our rhyme'. But what guarantee is there that the urn expresses the same tale for any two spectators, unless those two spectators mutually translate the tale, as it appears to them, into words? That is to say, must not the identity of the tale for two or more spectators be nothing else but a coincidence? If yes, then the tale said to be expressed by the urn is not expressed by the urn at all: it is imagined by the spectator in the presence of the urn, and can only be expressed by him and in words. Or take music. There have been people to declare that a Beethoven sonata, for instance, conveys to its auditors Beethoven's philosophy of life. But how can that this is so be established? Only by someone's stating in words what is believed to be Beethoven's philosophy of life and that someone's asserting that what his words thus convey is precisely what the music conveys. But if the music did convey the same thing as these words, the words of the exegetist would be superfluous. He would, in order to enlighten us as to Beethoven's philosophy of life, not discourse to us in words, but play the music to us, without comment, and that would be sufficient to enable us to apprehend the philosophy. If such is not his procedure, is it not because he could, by playing the music without also having recourse to explanatory words, never succeed in conveying to us what he declares Beethoven's philosophy of life to be?

In short, I can see no reason why it should not be laid down that no painting, no sonata, no building or sculpture, ever conveys to the spectator (or auditor) a philosophy of life. Such a philosophy can be conveyed only by that art 'which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse'; it can never be conveyed to a spectator, but solely to an auditor or reader.

Thus any discussion of the role which a philosophy plays in the work of art has not to deal with art as a whole: it has only to deal with imaginative literature.

§ 10. THE WRITER'S STANDPOINT

How, then, is the statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, and is no longer *qua* philosophy either true or false, but is only true or false aesthetically, a true statement as applied to the only artist to whom it can apply—the imaginative writer? It is, I say, a true statement when applied to him because, in the choice of *dramatis personae* and incidents to narrate in his work, in the ordering of the plot of that work, and in the shaping of the plot's outcome, he is governed by a desire, not to illustrate a philosophy of life, but to achieve what will be most effective, by a desire for that wherewith he can produce in his reader (or, if the work is performed or read aloud, his auditor) the greatest possible emotional effect.

But there is, as I have said, a qualification. What I mean is this, that the imaginative writer's conception of what is going to be most effective in his work will vary according to the philosophy of life he happens to hold. In other words, when the imaginative writer appears to be aiming, and may suppose he is aiming, at no more than the production of an effect in his reader, he is actually seeking to philosophize or moralize.

It will be declared, in protest, that this cannot be, since, as is well known, all successful works of imaginative writing owe their success to their authors' abstention from deliberately philosophizing or moralizing. The imaginative writer must never intervene to deflect the destiny of one of his characters in order to prove or demonstrate something: he must take life as it is. This may be well known, but I

am aware of no ground for believing it true. Indeed, when a writer attempts to express such a view, he is liable to succeed only in showing it to be false. One of those most strongly upholding the belief that the artist must not deliberately moralize quotes Shelley in support of it, as follows :

> The great instrument of moral good is the imagination ; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. . . . Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same way as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither.[1]

Now, in this very passage Shelley, it can be seen, reveals himself as the possessor of a philosophy of life. On what grounds does he declare that the imagination is ' the great instrument of moral good ' ? On the grounds, we know, that man is perfectible, and that he can be led to advance towards perfection by the stirring of his imagination, so that it will dwell on the steps of the advance and he will come to desire to take those steps. Such theories are part of a philosophy of life. And this philosophy of Shelley's included views of what is right and wrong, though one need not inquire whether or not they were those of his place and time.

Moreover, he illustrated this philosophy of his in his poetry, as another passage will, I think, show beyond dispute. In the following passage Shelley is contrasting his poem, *Prometheus Unbound*, with Aeschylus's tragedy of the same name, of which only small fragments have been preserved, but of which we nevertheless know the plot, and he says:

> In truth I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of Mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary.[2]

Here Shelley declares that he avoids, in his poem, a

[1] Shelley : *The Defence of Poetry* ; a passage quoted approvingly by E. F. Carritt in *The Theory of Beauty*, 3rd ed. (London, 1928), p. 57.
[2] Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.

reconciliation between Prometheus and Jupiter, because such a reconciliation would be 'feeble'. That is to say, he may be considered to be admitting, in spite of his reference to 'the moral interest of the fable', that, in shaping the plot of his poem, he was actuated by a desire to make the poem as strong as possible, to make it a poem which should have the strongest possible effect upon its reader. To that extent he justifies, as applied to the writer, the statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy. He is not bothering about philosophy; he is concerned to reject what is 'feeble' and to accept what is strong.

However, and that is what I mean by saying that the statement, as applied to the imaginative writer, is true only with a qualification, the poet's conception of what is weakly, or strongly, effective in his poem, is indeed determined by artistic necessity, but the artistic necessity itself varies according to the philosophy of life the poem is illustrating. The evidence of this—and I think it is unimpeachable evidence—is that what is 'feeble' for Shelley is strong for Aeschylus, and vice versa. For Prometheus to have been reconciled with Jupiter in Shelley's poem was made impossible by the laws of dramatic composition; likewise, for Prometheus not to have unsaid 'his high language' and submitted to Zeus in Aeschylus's tragedy was made just as impossible by the same laws of dramatic composition. But the reason why artistic necessity exacted in one case a catastrophe the opposite of that it exacted in the other, is simply that Aeschylus was illustrating one *Weltanschauung*; Shelley another.

Furthermore, to declare that the imaginative writer must take life as it is, and must never intervene to deflect the destiny of one of his characters in order to prove or demonstrate something, is to ask for the impossible. Quite probably it may be a mistake for a writer to intervene deliberately in the fate of his characters. That does not concern me. For, even if it is a mistake, its being so does not establish that the characters of a fiction have a being and a fate actually independent of their inventor. Deliberately or sub-consciously, or in any other way you like, it is the author who devises them and contrives all their actions.

And what I am saying is, that the author does this invariably with a purpose, conscious or not, *viz* the purpose of illustrating a philosophy of life.

As to the imaginative writer's taking life as it is, that is simply impossible. It is impossible, on the one hand, because a series of incidents in real life cannot be transferred to fiction exactly as they occurred, since (a) the imaginative writer cannot ever know how a series of incidents in real life has actually occurred, and (b), no series of incidents in real life ever complies, in the raw, with artistic necessity. And it is impossible, on the other hand, because, as I have tried to show in the case of Shelley v. Aeschylus, artistic necessity operates, so far as imaginative literature is concerned, only at the dictates of a philosophy of life.

Accordingly, whatever the author may imagine or the critic declare, every work of imaginative literature on any scale must be, even if only fragmentarily, the direct or implied illustration of its author's philosophy of life. The author has to depict character in action, though it may be only to the extent that, for instance, Milton does so in *Il Penseroso* or *L'Allegro*, and in order for him to do this, he needs more than observation of life and a sense of artistic necessity. He must have, and, indeed, he always has, a preconception, conscious or unconscious, of how actions occur, whether, for example, as the result of external circumstances or of the actors' internal nature. The actions he narrates, that is, will always occur in such a way as to be illustrative of a belief about life—sometimes, no doubt, only about a fragment of life, yet often enough about life as a whole. And the more ambitious the author's theme, the more will he tend to teleology, and the more definite and fundamental will be the philosophy illustrated.

What Aristotle meant, in fact, by his famous opposition of the particularity of history and the universality of poetry, *i.e.* imaginative literature,[1] is, I take it, that the artist, the literary artist, always has an axe to grind ; he invariably illustrates, in his work, a philosophy of life. That the particular events he narrates are the illustration of a view about life as a whole is what confers upon his narration its univer-

[1] op cit., IX., 4.

sality. Certainly, it is not that the events are true, for truth is what is possessed by the particular events of history.

§ II. THE READER'S STANDPOINT

I now come to the reader. As applied to the reader, or auditor, the statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, and is no longer *qua* philosophy either true or false, but is only true or false aesthetically, is, I say, entirely false. I proceed to show why.

But it must first be accepted that if an imaginative writer's tacit object is, as I have contended, the illustration of his philosophy, his deliberate and avowed object is the production of a certain total effect in his reader. There are critics who do not admit this. They hold that the artist should seek only to please himself, and they allege that it is when he has had no ulterior motive, such as the production of an effect in a reader, but has wrought entirely for his own pleasure in working, that his work of art is most successful. Surely, however, the question is not exclusively one of what is called aesthetics ; it is very largely a question of psychological process : that is to say, it can be settled by appeal to the practice of actual writers. Very likely every imaginative writer begins with no more than a desire to amuse himself. But certainly he does not stop at that. And when it is said, as, for instance, Mr. André Gide has said, that the attraction of Stendhal's and Proust's work results from *sa gratuité* ; that Stendhal *écrivait pour son plaisir* ; then what is said is misleading. No doubt Stendhal—his case will suffice—did write for his own pleasure, but his pleasure was not complete when he had written ; he also wanted to be appreciated : indeed, finding that appreciation was not forthcoming from his contemporaries, he professed to be writing for ' The Happy Few ' who, towards 1880, would be capable of appreciating him. That is to say, to produce an effect on someone or other was, in writing, his distinct aim.

The example could be multiplied indefinitely. On the other hand, can a single example of the opposite be advanced —a single example of a writer who was entirely oblivious to having readers ? Even the diarist who ostensibly writes

for his own eye alone seems usually to expect to be read sooner or later. That may be said to have been the case with Amiel. No doubt it was not the case with Pepys, but Pepys did not, strictly speaking, write : he only noted. So the exception provided by Pepys cannot be held to invalidate the law that a writer who really writes, *i.e.* who writes with that increase of care which differentiates the composition of the most informal essay from the inditing of a letter, always writes for publication and readers.

That granted, there comes the question : What is the imaginative writer's business with his readers ? Evidently it is not to reason with them ; it is not to supply them with information. No, what he seeks to do with the readers he has in view is to produce in them an effect, an emotional effect. In short, his business with them is to move them. Since nobody is likely to dispute this, there is no need to insist upon it. When we read a piece of imaginative writing, we are moved, and it is because our being thus moved is pleasant that I said, at the outset, that one of the two invariable functions of the imaginative writer is to be a purveyor of pleasure. In saying that I had no intention of disparaging the quality of the emotion we derive from imaginative literature [1] : all I wish to insist upon is that what we do derive is emotion.

And what I contend is, that for the imaginative writer to succeed in moving us, for him to succeed in producing in his reader the effect he aims at producing, the reader must accept the philosophy of life which the imaginative work illustrates, he must accept it as a true philosophy. I suspect that it is for no other reason at bottom, than that the reader must accept the philosophy as true, that imaginative writer and critic alike insist so strongly upon the necessity for the writer to refrain from intervening in the fate of his characters in order to prove or demonstrate something ; for the writer to avoid deliberately philosophizing or moralizing ; for him to portray life as it is.

[1] Though, at the same time, I naturally do not think one should disdain the opinion which Plato, in the *Gorgias*, puts into the mouth of Socrates : 'An object which simply gives pleasure is on the lowest plane of material objects of contemplation, something which is neither useful nor harmful.'

In this respect writer and critic alike delude themselves to ensure the reader's being deluded also, that his pleasure may be complete.

It is because of this that, as applied to the reader or auditor, I find the statement that a philosophy, once it is incorporated in a work of art, ceases to be philosophy, and is no longer *qua* philosophy either true or false, but is only true or false aesthetically, to be entirely false. If the reader is to undergo the full effect the work is intended to produce in him, then he cannot regard the philosophy which the work illustrates as merely true or false aesthetically; he must regard it as true philosophically, *i.e.* simply as true.

Moreover, the reader usually does so regard it. The author of a treatise or essay may supply his reader with solid arguments for accepting what he wishes that reader to accept. But the imaginative writer supplies no arguments at all: he merely displays some imaginary characters and sets them acting in certain ways in certain situations. Yet, provided the imaginative writer's dramatic and narrative skill be sufficient, he will convince his reader of the truth of his belief far more thoroughly than will the most sound treatise-writer or essayist. Such is the advantage of stirring the reader's emotions rather than appealing to his reason.

The reader of the imaginative work will be convinced to such purpose that he will come to say, when the immediate emotion he had in apprehending the work has subsided, that the philosophy illustrated is his own. He will say that what he has come to believe through reading a poem or hearing a play is a belief of which he has convinced himself or is everybody's belief. Indeed, he will cease to regard it as a belief at all; it will become for him the truth.

§ 12. THE CLAIM TO CREATION

Thus the actual, as distinguished from any theoretical, function of the imaginative writer is (a), to produce an emotional effect in readers or auditors, and (b), to illustrate a philosophy of life. Does he do anything else? I do not believe so. Let us now see if there exist any grounds for entertaining the claims which, at the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned as being made on his behalf.

He is said to practise his art for art's sake, and we are bidden to enjoy it in the same fashion. I think I have shown that he does not practise it entirely for art's sake, since he invariably desires to be read. Nor, if a work of imaginative literature on any scale is always the illustration of a philosophy of life, and if we, in order to undergo the total effect the writer intends to produce in us, must accept the philosophy as true, can it be possible for us to enjoy his art only for art's sake either.

What, then, of the claim that his work possesses a peculiar magic whereby it is able to enlarge our experience of life? Can anyone point to a single work of imaginative literature in which this magic is present and which, consequently, has enlarged its readers' experience of life? On the other hand, listen to the following trustworthy testimony:

> Let us consider, too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages, which to a boy are but rhetorical common-places, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm, which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival.[1]

If such is the difference between how young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, if indeed the reader must first have 'experience of life' before the 'sad earnestness and vivid exactness' of a poem can come home to him, does it not follow that he cannot gain the experience by reading the poem?

Again, there was in *The Times Literary Supplement* about three years ago a leading article devoted to Stendhal, and in this article it was doubted if Stendhal's novels were ever the delight of young men and women in general. The greatness of *La Chartreuse de Parme* can never, the writer said, reveal itself to 'the newly fledged, the ignorant, the

[1] J. H. Newman: *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 78.

innocent' ; Stendhal, when he wrote it, 'appealed to the experienced', and its proper reader 'need be neither one of the happy nor one of the few, but certainly one of the middle-aged'. From Stendhal, then, no more than from Homer or Horace, from the novelist no more than from the poet, would it seem that the reader can obtain that enlargement of experience which, it is fancied, the imaginative writer may provide.

Passing to those other claims which I have referred to as tending to extravagance, I think that two of them can be dismissed offhand. The artist, we are told, is a prophet. When Mr. H. G. Wells gave this as his reason for not writing an advertisement for Harrods', he was expressing a widespread belief. But of all the imaginative writers there have ever been, including, of course, Mr. Wells, which can be called prophets? As for the statement that beauty is truth, if I am correct in my contention that artistic necessity operates in imaginative literature only at the dictates of a philosophy of life, then I have already disposed of it.

There remain the claim that the imaginative writer is a creator and the claim that art is revelation. No doubt it is a bold man who, at this date, would attempt to dispute that the imaginative writer is a creator. Yet I think there is still this to be said. We are told that the imaginative writer creates a world different from that which we know and in which we live, yet perhaps, so it is said, more real—a universe of the mind ; and that he peoples this world with living beings, who, presumably, are his creations also. What I find objectionable in such a claim is (a), its peculiar employment of certain words, and (b), its disguising of the fact that a work of imaginative literature is the illustration of a philosophy of life. When it is admitted that the world which the writer is said to create is a universe of the mind, is it not also being admitted, if necessary distinctions are to be preserved, that what the writer is said to create is no more than a phantom world, a world of dreams? And while, of course, it is possible to regard a phantom world, a world of dreams, as 'perhaps more real' than what we usually mean when we say : the world, is it quite sane to do so? We do not speak of creating our dreams, though no doubt we have as much to do with

creating our dreams, as the writer has with creating the universe of his fables. Furthermore, there can be no doubt that the living beings who are said to people this phantom, or dream, world, are not living beings in the sense that you and I are living (*pace* the late Bernard Bosanquet, for whom Hamlet's existence was of the same order as Napoleon's). To call them beings, and to say that they are living, is thus surely to blur the meaning of the words : being, and : living. But it is precisely the illusion that the characters of a fiction are in some way living beings which prompts the calling of the imaginative writer creative. Strictly speaking, however, to create is to bring into existence 'out of nothing'. And the characters of a fiction never come into existence, never get so far ; that is to say, they never get so far as to give you the *possibility* of shaking them by the hand or of asking for their opinion ; and certainly they are never produced 'out of nothing'. Once realize this, then, and you can no longer, with a clear conscience, look upon their author as their creator. He must cease to be creative for you as certainly as undertakers, milliners, actors, publishers, and salesmen, never begin to be.

Admittedly, the expressions : create, and : creative, to describe the artist's activity, are now, alas ! part and parcel of the language, but it should be remembered that their use for this purpose is quite recent. Shakespeare, it is true, speaks of creating and creation, but it is to say, for instance, that dreams and hallucinations give rise to '*false* creations'. Such a use of the words has no implication for literary art. About the first critic to resort deliberately to the word : create, in connection with imaginative writing, is Dryden, but, again, the word, as used by him and by those who adopted his usage, was reserved for the introduction into fictions of supernatural characters. Not until the spread in England of the doctrines devised by the German Romantics, did the imaginative writer's work generally come to be regarded as creation, and that is scarcely more than a century ago. The critical term which creation superseded : invention, although it has now acquired a distinct sense, is still, I think, more suitable, for its use leaves the imaginative writer's fictions in relation to actual life, does not cut them off from that world in which we live. That is to say, it

does not conceal in any way that the fictions are illustrations of a philosophy of life.

Then there is Coleridge's designation of the poet as a creator, in that he is held to bring his reader or auditor into contact with a supersensible reality. In the poet, according to Coleridge, the emotions mould the will and are themselves moulded by it, and under the stress of emotion the poet's imagination exercises its interpretative power. Under this stress of emotion, this deepest stirring, the poet projects his inmost being into the forms and appearances of nature, and since there is, so Coleridge alleges, a mysterious analogy of matter and spirit in the forms of the sensible world, he thereby reads the symbols of his inner life, obtains an insight into truth. Thus imagination at its highest, the primary Imagination, is, for Coleridge, 'the living Power and Prime Agent of all human Perception' and 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am'.

As to this, there can, naturally, be no question that the emotions, the will, and the reason, do interact, in everybody, and not only in the poet; but how does that imply that, for instance, the poet projects 'his inmost being into the forms and appearances of nature'? What does the word: project, mean here? Presumably, that the poet *imagines* his inmost being and the forms and appearances of nature to be somehow in communion. But he only *imagines* this, and there lies the weakness of any such theory as Coleridge's. The imagination, like men, was ever a deceiver. Nor does Coleridge's distinction between the fancy and the imagination make it any easier to believe in the trustworthiness of the latter. That the imagination is to be trusted we could only believe if poets in general, and the elect among their readers, were agreed that it was. But they are not so agreed. On the contrary, it is well known that the imagination is deceptive, and we succeed in living only by treating it as such. And that being said as to the projection of the poet's inmost being into the forms and appearances of nature, there is no need to take, point by point, the rest of Coleridge's claim, for the same objection applies to the whole of it. There is no more evidence that, for instance, the poet obtains an insight into truth than that he is a prophet.

Thus we are brought to the last of the claims I began by mentioning as being made on behalf of the imaginative writer, the claim that there is a meaning, a meaning distinct apparently from the 'logical meaning', in the particular words which the poet employs, so that it is impossible, for example, that a poem should be translated. This is the view advanced by Dr. A. C. Bradley in his famous Oxford lecture, *Poetry for Poetry's Sake*. He there tells us that the meaning and the words (or the meaning and the paint, or the meaning and the notes) are one. There is, according to him, meaning in a picture by Turner, in a sonata by Beethoven, and in a poem by Tennyson, but what that meaning is 'can be said in no language but their own'. It is a meaning with an infinite suggestion, for the poet speaks of one thing, 'but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all'.

It seems to me that there is something incontrovertible in this view, and that what is incontrovertible is in no way incompatible with the view that a work of imaginative literature on any scale is always the illustration of a philosophy of life. The question is: What does Dr. Bradley mean by: meaning? Since one can say: to mean, instead of saying: to purpose, as when one says: He means mischief; does he mean, by meaning, that the particular words a poet employs, and the sequence in which he places them, have a purpose? Does he mean this and nothing more?

It is well known that certain poets have sharply distinguished between what they said and their saying it. Sophocles, we are told, called a tragedy of his completed when he had only thought it out wordlessly. There is, among Racine's papers, an act or so of an *Iphigenia in Tauris* outlined in prose; it is believed that he wrote all his tragedies a first time in prose, and, at any rate, he is credited with saying of another of them: '*La tragédie est finie; il n'y a plus que les vers à faire.*' Goethe wrote the whole of his *Iphigenie* a first time in prose and only later turned the prose into verse.[1] Again, the published, 'symbolical' version

[1] Cf. Albert Bielschowsky: *Goethe: sein Leben und seine Werke* (Munich, 1896), Erster Band, pp. 443–445. I am indebted, for the reference, to Professor P. H. Frye, of the University of Nebraska.

of Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, was preceded by another version of which the MS. is, I am assured, still in existence, another version in straightforward language.

In those earlier versions, Racine, Goethe, and Mallarmé, had said all they had to say, as Sophocles, when he had thought out a tragedy wordlessly, had said—to himself—all he had to say ; they had, by then, clearly before them all the meaning, in the sense of import or significance, they wished to express or could express. And their intention, in recasting the works into verse (in one case, into 'symbolical' verse), was, unmistakably, the intention of producing the greatest possible emotional effect in their readers or auditors.

Is this what Dr. Bradley means when he declares that, in a poem, the meaning and the words are one? Does he mean that the words and the poet's purpose of producing the greatest possible emotional effect are one? I suggest that that is all he can mean ; I suggest that there is no meaning, in the sense of import or significance, in a poem, apart from its 'logical meaning', and that Dr. Bradley, when he says : meaning, and distinguishes it from 'logical meaning', can only mean the poet's purpose.

Why, then, does he not say : purpose? In order, I more than suspect, that he may also say that the poet's meaning is a meaning with an infinite suggestion ; in order that he may also say that the poet speaks of one thing, 'but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all'. What, however, is the infinite suggestion in the poet's words and their sequence which leads us, when he speaks of one thing, to fancy, if indeed we so fancy, that there lurks in this one thing the secret of all? Since the poet's purpose with his words is to produce in us an emotion, that infinite suggestion can, I submit, only be an emotion. And this agrees precisely with what I am contending, *viz* that the imaginative writer *moves* his readers or auditors into believing that the particular events he narrates have a universal application, into believing that the philosophy of life he illustrates is true.

§ 13. A DUTY FOR THE CRITIC

But that the philosophy is true there is never the least guarantee, for the imaginative writer is never a thinker.

He chooses his philosophy in the same way that he seeks to make his reader or auditor accept it: he chooses it because it appeals to his emotions. Often enough it is not only his conceptions of right and wrong that are, as I earlier quoted Shelley as saying, those of his place and time, but his whole philosophy which is that of his place and time. It is, however, just as likely to be some heresy of his place and time. The philosophies illustrated by Sophocles and Dante, for instance, are those which were generally accepted in their place and time. The philosophies illustrated by Shakespeare and Shelley respectively were popular, though not generally accepted, in their place and time. Shakespeare, as can be seen from his tragedies, accepted a philosophy which is a medley of the views of Seneca, Montaigne, and Machiavelli [1]. But Milton, on the other hand, was captivated by a heresy popular at, and after, the Renaissance. He was a Kabbalist, a brand of Arian [2]. In any case, the philosophy is never accepted by the imaginative writer because he finds it to be sound, or because it is the support of the civilization in which he lives; he accepts it because, as I say, it captivates him emotionally. Thus, it may be that, as Wordsworth said, 'poetry is the breath and finer spirit of knowledge', but the knowledge is very questionable knowledge. That is why I say that the imaginative writer, in addition to being a purveyor of pleasure, is an irresponsible propagandist. He wields a very powerful influence for converting people to his views, but gives no heed to the validity of those views.

Accordingly, if the propaganda is always present in the work of imaginative literature on any scale, and is always irresponsible, how dangerous, so far as imaginative literature is concerned, must be Matthew Arnold's dictum that what is valuable in religion, as in science, is art. Instead of vainly trying to accept such a dictum, let us, especially in a day which abounds with dubious philosophies, have a set of critics who will make it their duty, when dealing with a production of literary art, to enlighten us as to what we absorb at the same time as we obtain our pleasure,

[1] Cf. T. S. Eliot: *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca* (Oxford, 1927).
[2] Cf. Denis Saurat: *Milton, Man and Thinker* (London, 1925), and *Milton et le Matérialisme chrétien en Angleterre* (Paris, 1928).

Arnold's valuable emotion. Let us have a set of critics who will go behind the effect which the imaginative writer produces in his readers, who will overcome this effect and see through it to the philosophy the work is illustrating, and will then expose and appraise that philosophy.

PART II

ACCORDING TO MR. BERNARD SHAW

CHAPTER I

SOCIALISM AND THE SUPERMAN

§ 1. MR. SHAW'S VIEW OF HIS OFFICE

MR. BERNARD SHAW certainly has no doubts as to what offices the imaginative writer is called upon to fill in the community. He has said: 'I am myself by profession what is called an original thinker'; and: 'I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinion'. He regards the playwright as being 'a moralist as well as a dramatist', as being an 'artist-philosopher', as having a 'poet's vision of the world'; he has reminded his readers that 'the Church once taught the people by means of plays'; and assured them that his own plays are 'didactic' plays. If he did once assert that 'the main thing in determining the artistic quality of a book is not the opinions it propagates, but the fact that the writer has opinions [1]', he seems on the whole to be convinced, not only that it is the opinions which matter, but that his own opinions are right.

This conviction surely constitutes a challenge. It challenges us to treat him as more than a mere entertainer, and to examine seriously what he would call his teaching. And now that he is addressing the converted, now that so many of his opinions are shared by his audiences, surely the examination has become imperative.

§ 2. THE KERNEL OF THE DOCTRINE

When I say, however, that his public shares his opinions, it may be objected that, as a teacher, he is chiefly the apostle of the Superman and the advocate of Equality of Income, and that no large section of the public believes in the advent of the Superman or in the establishment of Equality of

[1] *Man and Superman*, p. xxxiv.

Income. It is true that the public does not believe in either, any more than it is anti-vaccinationist or vegetarian, two other things that Mr. Shaw has strongly urged. But, in order to call for the Superman, and to demand Equality of Income, Mr. Shaw must first have certain beliefs about life, and it is these beliefs, though not necessarily in quite the form he holds them, that the public now shares with him. They are beliefs fundamental to all he has to say, and they are what I wish chiefly to consider.

In order to find out what they are, and what is their relation to the notions of the Superman and Equality of Income, I turn to *The Perfect Wagnerite*. There is in that little book a passage which, in my opinion, provides the best starting-point for a discussion of Mr. Shaw's views. According to the passage, the cleverest men, at some unspecified date in the past, discovered that mankind is not led by God, and that there are no moral laws: what directs mankind is human will. I will quote:

> The man who is delivered from conscience . . . has always drawn large audiences; but hitherto he has been decorously given to the devil at the end. . . . In short, though men felt all the charm of abounding life and abandonment to its impulses, they dared not, in their deep self-mistrust, conceive it otherwise than as a force making for evil—one which must lead to universal ruin unless checked and literally mortified by self-renunciation in obedience to superhuman guidance, or at least to some reasoned system of morals. When it became apparent to the cleverest of them that no such superhuman guidance existed, and that their secularist systems had all the fictitiousness of 'revelation' without its poetry, there was no escaping the conclusion that all the good that man had done must be put down to his arbitrary will as well as all the evil he had done; and it was also obvious that if progress were a reality, his beneficent impulses must be gaining on his destructive ones.

The conclusion, involving that 'every man's private judgment' is 'the interpreter of the will of humanity', leads to anarchism, but Mr. Shaw points out that anarchism cannot be established, because the majority of men are not fit for it. He says:

> The weak place which experience finds out in the Anarchist theory is its reliance on the progress already achieved by 'Man'. There is no such thing as Man in the world: what we have to deal with is . . . a vast majority capable of managing their personal affairs, but not of comprehending social organization, or grappling with the problems created by their association in enormous numbers. If 'Man' means

this majority, then 'Man' has made no progress: he has, on the contrary, resisted it. . . . Such people . . . must be governed by laws; and their assent to such government must be secured by deliberately filling them with prejudices and practising on their imaginations by pageantry and artificial eminences and dignities. The government is of course established by the few who are capable of government, though, its mechanism once complete, it may be, and generally is, carried on unintelligently by people who are incapable of it, the capable people repairing it from time to time when it gets too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization.

Thus, according to Mr. Shaw, governors are compelled to profess publicly beliefs which they privately ridicule. To save them from this, mankind must give place to the Superman. He proceeds:

All these capable people are thus in the position of Wotan, forced to maintain as sacred, and themselves to submit to, laws which they privately know to be obsolescent makeshifts, and to affect the deepest veneration for creeds and ideals which they ridicule among themselves with cynical scepticism. No individual Siegfried can rescue them from this bondage and hypocrisy; in fact, the individual Siegfried has come often enough, only to find himself confronted with the alternative of governing those who are not Siegfrieds or risking destruction at their hands. And this dilemma will persist until Wotan's inspiration comes to our governors, and they see that their business is not the devising of institutions to prop up the weaknesses of mobs and secure the survival of the unfittest, but the breeding of men whose wills and intelligences may be depended on to produce spontaneously the social wellbeing our clumsy laws now aim at and miss. The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive; and no serious progress will be made until we address ourselves earnestly and scientifically to the task of producing trustworthy material for society. In short, it is necessary to breed a race of men in whom the life-giving impulses predominate, before the New Protestantism becomes politically practicable.

We snatch, Mr. Shaw says, at what we think are panaceas, but they are really what we have already tried. Enlightenment proceeds by violent reactions, for balance is incompatible with human passion. He goes on:

Human enlightenment does not proceed by nicer and nicer adjustments, but by violent corrective reactions which invariably send us clean over our saddle and would bring us to the ground on the other side if the next reaction did not send us back again with equally excessive zeal. Ecclesiasticism and Constitutionalism send us one way, Protestantism and Anarchism the other; Order rescues us from confusion and lands us in Tyranny; Liberty then saves the situation and is presently found to be as great a nuisance as Despotism. A scientifically balanced application of these forces, theoretically possible, is

practically incompatible with human passion. Besides, we have the same weakness in morals as in medicine : we cannot be cured of running after panaceas, or, as they are called in the sphere of morals, ideals. One generation sets up duty, renunciation, self-sacrifice as a panacea. The next generation . . . wake up . . . to the fact that their lives have been wasted in the worship of this ideal. . . . Then that defrauded generation foams at the mouth at the very mention of duty, and sets up the alternative panacea of love. . . . You cannot persuade any moral enthusiast to accept this as a pure oscillation from action to reaction. . . . And so for the present we must be content to proceed by reactions, hoping that each will establish some permanent practical and beneficent reform or moral habit that will survive the correction of its excesses by the next reaction.

Wagner had, says Mr. Shaw, a panacea : love ; but he reduced his panacea, as, if it could be tried, it would reduce itself, to absurdity. What we must believe in is, not love, but life. Mr. Shaw resumes :

The only faith which any reasonable disciple can gain from The Ring is not in love, but in life itself as a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward—not, please observe, being beckoned or drawn by *Das Ewige Weibliche* or any other external sentimentality, but growing from within, by its own inexplicable energy, into ever higher and higher forms of organization, the strengths and needs of which are continually superseding the institutions which were made to fit our former requirements.

Mr. Shaw's argument, then, is that either human nature is degenerating, and in that case we must produce the Superman ; or human nature is rising higher and higher, and the more we oscillate from action to reaction the better. He continues :

If human nature, which is the highest organization of life reached on this planet, is really degenerating, then human society will decay ; and no panic-begotten penal measures can possibly save it : we must, like Prometheus, set to work to make new men instead of vainly torturing old ones. On the other hand, if the energy of life is still carrying human nature to higher and higher levels, then the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better for the hopes of the world, since the apparent growth of anarchy is only the measure of the rate of improvement. History, as far as we are capable of history (which is not saying much as yet), shows that all changes from crudity of social organization to complexity, and from mechanical agencies in government to living ones, seem anarchic at first sight.

Yet anarchism is, Mr. Shaw assures us, no better than love as a panacea. Thinkers must be anarchic, *i.e.* free to

think what they like, but economically we must have Socialism, *alias* Equality of Income. In his own words, and they conclude the passage I am quoting :

> Anarchism, as a panacea, is just as hopeless as any other panacea, and will still be so even if we breed a race of perfectly benevolent men. It is true that in the sphere of thought, Anarchism is an inevitable condition of progressive evolution. A nation without Freethinkers—that is, without intellectual Anarchists—will share the fate of China. . . . But . . . applied to the industrial or political machinery of modern society, anarchy must always reduce itself speedily to absurdity. Even the modified form of anarchy on which modern civilization is based : that is, the abandonment of industry, in the name of individual liberty, to the upshot of competition for personal gain between private capitalists, is a disastrous failure, and is, by the mere necessities of the case, giving way to ordered Socialism. . . . Liberty is an excellent thing ; but it cannot begin until society has paid its daily debt to Nature by first earning its living.[1]

Here, then, are all the essentials of Mr. Shaw's doctrine. First, the supremacy of the will. Mankind's guide is human will. This will is not a collective will, but the several wills of individuals. Second, private judgment : there is a will of humanity, but it has to be interpreted, and its most trustworthy interpreter is the individual's private judgment. Third, condemnation of the ' vast majority ' : the exercise of everybody's private judgment means anarchism, and anarchism would be absurd because ' the majority of men ' have no business to be alive. The majority has not progressed ; it resists progress. Hence the majority cannot be left to anarchism ; it must be governed. Fourth, the existence of an *élite* : the original governors are superior persons, though the carrying on of government falls usually to incapables. Fifth, governing means deceiving : capable or not, the governors must deceive the people, or government is impossible. Sixth, need of the Superman : the governors should not deceive the people, but set about breeding a race which would not need to be deceived. Seventh, the Life Force : what is mistaken for progress is the swing of the pendulum. We must hope for the best, but progress cannot be ensured by any panacea ; the only thing to believe in is life, ' as a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward '. Eighth, either the Super-

[1] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, pp. 64–70 and pp. 76–9.

man or human improvement by the assertion of the will : human nature is the highest organization of the tireless power, life. If human nature is degenerating, we 'must set to work to make new men', *i.e.* Supermen. If, on the contrary, human nature is rising higher and higher, the more the young shock the old and discard the old's institutions, the better, since what appears to be a growth of anarchy is 'only the measure of the rate of improvement'. Ninth, Equality of Income : there must be anarchism in thought, *i.e.* thinkers must be 'Freethinkers', but the organization of society must be Socialism, *alias* Equality of Income.

It is now easy to distinguish among these nine articles of doctrine those which, judging by the symptoms I mentioned in my introduction (Part I., § 1), and by other signs, the public may be said to share with Mr. Shaw. They are : (1) The supremacy of the will ; (2) Private judgment ; (4) The existence of an *élite*, provided the individual reader or auditor may reckon himself in that *élite* ; (7) The Life Force ; and, lastly, that part of (8) which lays down that the more the young shock the old and discard the old's institutions, the better.

What, then, is Mr. Shaw's case for these five ? The Life Force, (7), deserves separate consideration. That leaves four. Does Mr. Shaw succeed in warranting our belief in those four ?

§ 3. PROGRESS AND THE GROWTH OF LIFE

In the lengthy passage I have quoted Mr. Shaw says, on the one hand :

> If 'Man' means this majority, then 'Man' has made no progress. . . . The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive. . . . Human enlightenment does not proceed by nicer and nicer adjustments, but by violent corrective reactions.[1]

On the other hand, he also says :

> Life itself . . . a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward . . . growing from within, by its own inexplicable energy, into ever higher and higher forms of organization, the strengths and needs of which are continually superseding the institutions which were made to fit our former requirements.[2]

[1] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, pp. 66–8. [2] Ibid., p. 76.

These two passages raise a question. Mr. Shaw speaks of the institutions which are being continually superseded by the strengths and needs of the ever higher and higher forms of organization into which life grows : for whom have those institutions been instituted ? He distinguishes between the 'few who are capable of government', and the majority which has made no progress. Are the institutions for the few, or for the majority ? If for the few, since the few who establish any government are capable, presumably they are at least as capable as those who intervene when government 'gets too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization'. In what respect, then, since government is very ancient, has life assumed in the few, higher and higher forms of organization, 'the strengths and needs of which are continually superseding the institutions which were made to fit' the former requirements of those few ? But the institutions cannot be for the few, since it is, according to Mr. Shaw, the few who instituted them in order to govern the majority. If they are for the majority, however, since that majority 'has made no progress' and at present has 'no business to be alive', again, how in that majority, has life been assuming higher and higher forms of organization, so that the present requirements of the majority differ from their former ones ?

As to government, Mr. Shaw further says :

> The government is of course established by the few who are capable of government, though, its mechanism once complete, it may be, and generally is, carried on unintelligently by people who are incapable of it, the capable people repairing it from time to time when it gets too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization.[1]

But, if the capable establish government, and always come forward from time to time to repair it, how is it that the capable let government fall into the need of repair ? While government is being carried on 'unintelligently by people who are incapable of it', what are the capable people doing ?

§ 4. DOING AS YOU LIKE

But such questions are subsidiary. The main problem created by the passage cited from *The Perfect Wagnerite* con-

[1] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 67.

cerns Mr. Shaw's view of human will as humanity's guide and of private judgment as the most trustworthy interpreter of the will of humanity, on the one hand, and his view of government on the other. One gathers that, while the 'vast majority' cannot be allowed to obey their individual wills, or to trust in their private judgments, the capable not only should do so, but must do so. Hence, no doubt, Mr. Shaw's admiration of Mussolini. For Mr. Shaw, a great man is a capable governor. Also, a great man is one who does what he likes. Mr. Shaw says, regarding his portrait of Julius Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra* :

> The really interesting question is whether I am right in assuming that the way to produce an impression of greatness is by exhibiting a man, not as mortifying his nature by doing his duty . . . but as simply doing what he naturally wants to do. For this raises the question whether our world has not been wrong in its moral theory for the last 2,500 years or so.[1]

But Mr. Shaw shows others than acknowledged great men worthily doing what they like. The hero of *The Devil's Disciple*, Richard Dudgeon, behaves in a certain manner, and then offers this explanation, which explanation may be assumed to have his author's approval :

> Richard. . . . All I can tell you is that when it came to the point whether I would take my neck out of the noose and put another man's into it, I could not do it. . . . I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature ; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows.[2]

Again, Mr. Shaw in 1891—he would perhaps deem it unnecessary to do so to-day—bade Woman repudiate duty and fulfil her individual will. He said :

> Unless Woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to society, to the law, and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself. But her duty to herself is no duty at all, since a debt is cancelled when the debtor and creditor are the same person. Its payment is simply a fulfilment of the individual will, upon which all duty is a restriction, founded on the conception of the will as naturally malign and devilish. Therefore Woman has to repudiate duty altogether.[3]

---

[1] *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 211. [2] Ibid., p. 56.
[3] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 41.

Children, too, know their own business as instruments of the Life Force. Mr. Shaw says :

> If you once allow yourself to regard a child as so much material for you to manufacture into any shape that happens to suit your fancy you are defeating the experiment of the Life Force. You are assuming that the child does not know its own business, and that you do. In this you are sure to be wrong : the child feels the drive of the Life Force (often called the Will of God) ; and you cannot feel it for him. . . . Every child has a right to its own bent.[1]

But, a few pages further on in the same preface, he also says :

> The risks of liberty we must let everyone take ; but the risks of ignorance and self-helplessness are another matter. Not only children but adults need protection from them. At present adults are often exposed to risks outside their knowledge or beyond their comprehension or powers of resistance or foresight.[2]

This is, no doubt, admirable sense. How, though, is one to distinguish between ' the risks of liberty ' and ' the risks of ignorance and self-helplessness ' ? It may seem easy. But remember that, according to Mr. Shaw, the vast majority of adults ' have no business to be alive ' ; that they ' must be governed by laws '. If you were a governor, one of ' the few capable of government ', a Julius Caesar or a Mussolini, compelled, on Mr. Shaw's theory, to do what you like, where, between ' the risks of liberty ' and ' the risks of ignorance and self-helplessness ' run by those adults who ' have no business to be alive ' and whom you were governing, would you draw the line ? Would it not be natural to draw it wherever those adults interfered with the fulfilment of your individual will ? If you were a parent or teacher, would it not be equally natural to consider you were protecting children from ' the risks of ignorance and self-helplessness ' whenever you prevented them from interfering with your standing by the law of your own nature ? We have Mr. Shaw's word for it that a great man (he is referring to Julius Caesar) acts ' with entire selfishness ' and is generous to people of whom he intends ' to make use ' [3]. And, also according to him, a tyrant is ' a person

[1] *Misalliance*, pp. xiv–v (references are to bound volumes of plays in series).

[2] Ibid., p. xlvii.

[3] *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 210.

who says to another person, young or old, "You shall do as I tell you; you shall make what I want; you shall profess my creed; you shall have no will of your own. . . ." '[1] What is there, then, to prevent a capable governor, having to deal with a vast majority without any business to be alive, or a capable teacher with children to protect from 'the risks of ignorance', from being a tyrant, as thus defined?

§ 5. AN OFFICIAL SECOND NATURE

At any rate, once Socialism, *alias* Equality of Income, shall have been established, adults and children alike will, according to Mr. Shaw, be told: 'You shall profess my creed; you shall have no will of your own.' On the one hand, Richard Dudgeons bent on standing by the law of their own nature, and women who repudiate duty altogether, will be made good by Act of Parliament. Mr. Shaw says:

> Whereas . . . it was believed that you could not make men good by Act of Parliament, we now know that you cannot make them good in any other way. . . . Christianity, good or bad, right or wrong, must perforce be left out of the question in human affairs until it is made practically applicable to them by complicated political devices.[2]

On the other hand, although Mr. Shaw has said: 'A nation without Freethinkers—that is, without intellectual Anarchists—will share the fate of China'[3], children, and adults too, will be taught what to think. He says:

> [Under Equality of Income] the child's up-to-date second nature will be an official second nature.[4]

Again:

> A Socialist Government must equally inculcate whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists.[5]

Thus, what awaits us if ever Mr. Shaw's proposal to equalize incomes is adopted, cannot be in any doubt. I have already mentioned (Part I., § 1) how, in all civilized countries, the liberty of the subject is being encroached

[1] *Misalliance*, p. lxx.
[2] *Androcles and the Lion*, pp. lx–i.
[3] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 78.
[4] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 428. Phrases in square brackets inserted in quotations are intended, throughout this essay, as elucidations of the meaning of the writer quoted based on the context.
[5] Ibid., p. 426.

upon by state interference. But it is more than that that Mr. Shaw has in store for us if ever Equality of Income is established : he would have the state then control thought. 'Liberty,' he says in *The Perfect Wagnerite* [1], 'is an excellent thing ; but it cannot begin until society has paid its daily debt to Nature by first earning its living'. As it turns out, however, it is just when every member of society will have paid his 'daily debt to nature' that liberty, including liberty of thought, will end.

Further, since Mr. Shaw so strongly advocates Equality of Income, he must consider it an advance on the present economic régime. Thus he cannot believe that, if Equality of Income were established, its establishment would be a sign that human nature was, as he has said it may be, degenerating. But if it were not degenerating, it would, according to the passage I have quoted from *The Perfect Wagnerite*, be on the way, in the hands of the force, life, to 'higher and higher levels'. And he explicitly declares that, if that is happening, then 'the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better'. But if children will then be given official second natures, and the Socialist Government will be inculcating 'whatever doctrine will make the people good Socialists', what opportunity will there be for young people to 'shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions' ?

§ 6. WHAT OF THE SUPERMAN?

Of course Mr. Shaw may imagine that, once Equality of Income is established, life will have reached in man the highest level attainable, and that no further progress will be possible. But, then, what of the Superman? Mr. Shaw often presents the Superman as an alternative : he says, for instance, that, if man cannot improve himself to the point of having Equality of Income, then we must have the Superman [2]. But if the Superman is worth having at all, will he not be just as worth having when there is Equality of Income as now? Will he not be then just as much an advance as he would be now? And if life is really rising to ever higher and higher levels, why should life suddenly

[1] P. 79. [2] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 459.

come to a standstill once man has got Equality of Income? But if, under Equality of Income, children are given official second natures, and the Socialist Government inculcates whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists, what chance will there be of the Superman? According to Mr. Shaw, the only way the Superman can come into existence is by being willed. That is why the recognition of the power of human will is so important. The first step must be to prolong the duration of the individual human life, and this will first take place, according to the Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas, in *Back to Methuselah*, by an act of will. Certain people will will to live longer, and they will live longer. These people will not, at that time, be capable governors; they will be part of the sovereign people upon whom the Socialist Government will, when and if there is Equality of Income, inculcate an official doctrine. But no person upon whom an official doctrine has been inculcated, no person who has grown up with an official second nature, is likely to be able to will anything. Must we, then, if we have Equality of Income, forego all prospect of the Superman?

What I am maintaining is that Mr. Shaw bases his doctrine on two mutually exclusive assumptions. It may be that the vast majority 'have no business to be alive'; and that they 'must be governed by laws; and their assent to such government must be secured by deliberately filling them with prejudices and practising on their imaginations by pageantry and artificial eminences and dignities'. In that case, no doubt it will be best, once Equality of Income is established, if it ever is, for children to be given an official second nature and for 'the Socialist Government' to 'inculcate whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists'. But if that is what the vast majority are, and that is what government must be, then it cannot also be that 'the energy of life is still carrying human nature to higher and higher levels', and that 'the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better for the hopes of the world'.

CHAPTER II

THE GOSPEL OF GRAB

§ 7. OUR DUTY NOT TO BE POOR

HAVING, in the last chapter, called attention to the presence, at the basis of Mr. Shaw's doctrine, of two mutually exclusive assumptions, I shall for the moment leave at that the consideration of this doctrine in its general aspect, and examine, in this and the two chapters following, its application to three problems of existence: poverty, crime, and the relations of the sexes. First: poverty.

Mr. Shaw voices an honest indignation at poverty. When he is arguing in favour of Equality of Income, an economic régime under which poverty would, by definition, be unknown, he says: 'It [poverty] is a public nuisance as well as a private misfortune. Its toleration is a national crime.' [1] Also, he declares that 'Socialism abhors poverty, and would abolish the poor'. [2] But Equality of Income is, if ever, for the future. What, meanwhile, is to be done about poverty today? His advice is simple and direct. As it has been seen, for him the valuable person, the great man, is Julius Caesar or Mussolini, the 'capable' person who sets up government or repairs it 'when it gets too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization'. But for him also, the valuable person, the great man, is the capable person who avoids poverty and waxes rich. His advice concerning poverty to-day is: Avoid it. He says:

> Our first duty—a duty to which every other consideration should be sacrificed—is not to be poor.[3]

The meaning of this behest becomes unmistakable in the light of the further passage:

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 44. [2] Ibid., p. 95.
[3] *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 154.

Peter Shirley is what we call the honest poor man. Undershaft is what we call the wicked rich one: Shirley is Lazarus, Undershaft Dives. Well, the misery of the world is due to the fact that the great mass of men act and believe as Peter Shirley acts and believes. If they acted and believed as Undershaft acts and believes, the immediate result would be a revolution of incalculable beneficence.[1]

Is this, I ask, for us who are alive today and attending to Mr. Shaw, as distinct from our posterity which may, or may not, have Equality of Income, anything but preaching the gospel of grab?

§ 8. KEEP-UP-WITH-THE-JONESES

The curious thing is that, concerning the avoidance of poverty, *i.e.* the making of money, Mr. Shaw contrives to make completely contradictory statements, or so they seem to me. On the one hand, in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism,* for instance, he declares that 'poverty is mainly the result of organized robbery and oppression (politely called Capitalism)'[2], and condemns 'the current travesties of Christianity', as being 'really only reductions of the relations between man and God to the basis of the prevalent commercialism'[3], thereby obliquely censuring commercialism, and, again, denounces, in *The Intelligent Woman,* the bad morals of capitalism[4], and, in fact, devotes a whole chapter to the economic régime which he describes as 'To each what she can grab'[5]. Best of all, perhaps, he says elsewhere:

We who have never cared for money enough to do more than keep our heads above water; . . . unless its absence is only a symptom of a general want of power to care for anything at all, it usually means that the soul has risen above it to higher concerns.[6]

And on the other hand, he asserts that we must sacrifice every other consideration to the duty of not being poor, and delivers himself of such dictums as: 'It is no use pretending to be better than other people when you are poorer'[7], which I cannot see to mean anything but that one must entertain on the same scale as one's neighbours, and possess a car of equal horsepower, and dress one's wife

[1] *John Bull's Other Island,* p. 157. [2] p. 141. [3] p. 59.
[4] e.g. pp. 127 and 208. [5] chapter 10.
[6] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism,* pp. 141–2.
[7] *The Intelligent Woman,* p. 184.

as well as, or better than, one's neighbour's wife is dressed. Americans call this the doctrine of Keep-up-with-the-Joneses. At the same time, it must, of necessity, be the gospel of grab.

It is true that in saying, 'It is no use pretending to be better than other people when you are poorer', Mr. Shaw is advancing a plea on behalf of Equality of Income. But Equality of Income is problematical and, in any case, concerns the future, whereas the question whether one is better than, or as good as, other people, is a question which many of Mr. Shaw's contemporaries want answered at once. And when he answers that it is no use pretending to be better when you are poorer, how can they help concluding, especially the Intelligent Women, since it means more clothes and a better car, &c., that the only way to be better than, or as good as, your neighbour, is to make more money than, or as much money as, your neighbour? In short, that one must Keep-up-with-the-Joneses.

Obviously 'the great mass of men' cannot act and believe 'as Undershaft acts and believes'. I need not point out why. Thus it is possible that a reader will reconcile in his mind the two contradictory views, the view that capitalism is 'organized robbery', and the view that we should all act and believe as Undershaft, the great armourer in *Major Barbara*, acts and believes; but he can do so, I suggest, in only one way. Such a reader can conclude that grab is reprehensible in others, but justifiable in himself. He can persuade himself that what Mr. Shaw is telling him, is that all the commercialism he has to contend with when he wants to buy something, or wants to sell something, is nothing but 'organized robbery'; but that his own behaviour when someone else wants to sell him something, or buy something from him, is only the fulfilment of his 'first duty—a duty to which every other consideration should be sacrificed', the duty not to be poor.

§ 9. GRABBERS IN THE PLAYS

In support of this interpretation of Mr. Shaw's doctrine as it concerns poverty, I point to a number of heroes and heroines of his plays who are grabbers. Vivie Warren, for example, declares in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*:

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they cant find them, make them.[1]

She says this, it is true, before she has learned of her mother's occupation. But after the revelation of that, which, curiously enough, has no more effect upon her than if it were a revelation about a stranger, she is found saying also :

I rather admire him [Crofts, the principal owner of Mrs. Warren's establishments] for being strong-minded enough to enjoy himself in his own way and make plenty of money.[2]

Again, she says :

If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did ; but I should not have lived one life and believed in another.[3]

Then Bluntschli, in *Arms and the Man*, is depicted as being a far more efficient soldier than the professionals, Sergius and Petkoff, and his efficiency extends beyond matters appertaining to the Army Service Corps (to which he belongs) and the cognate department of Ordnance. Of course, he has had years of soldiering, so why shouldn't he be more efficient, if he is more intelligent ? That's just it : how does he come to be more intelligent ? Because, in addition to being a soldier, he is a successful business man, *i.e.* a grabber, and a hereditary one, his father being a hotel proprietor.[4]

[1] *Plays Unpleasant*, p. 193. [2] Ibid., p. 231. [3] Ibid., p. 234.

[4] The notion which Mr. Shaw propagates, on the occasion of this play and at other times, that a business man can pick up all the tricks of soldiering in a few weeks, was not borne out by the experience of the last war. If the official historian is to be trusted, it was shown that the art of command can be acquired, and staff work in the field properly discharged, only as the result of years of study and practice. Cf. Brigadier-General Sir James E. Edmonds : *Official History of the Great War*, vol. IV. : Military Operations in France and Belgium, 1915 (London, 1928). Commenting on the failure of the 21st and 24th divisions at Loos, he says (pp 344–5) : ' Strength must be husbanded and bravery must be directed, and to do so effectively requires of the staff and senior regimental officers years of patient training in peace and much experience of war. The 21st and 24th Divisions failed because the direction of large bodies of troops is an art which cannot be acquired in a year of hard training. Rank and file, if of good will, can be taught the elements of their duties—to march, shoot, and obey—in a few

Likewise, Burgess, the commercial success in *Candida*, is held up to only relative condemnation. For Morell, the clergyman in the play, says to him :

> God made you what I call a scoundrel as He made me what you call a fool. . . . So long as you come here honestly as a self-respecting, thorough, convinced scoundrel, justifying your scoundrelism, and proud of it, you are welcome.[1]

That is to say, it is not Burgess's scoundrelism that Morell objects to—and there is reason to believe Morell speaks for Mr. Shaw—but his being ashamed of it. Morell's attitude there is Vivie Warren's attitude to Crofts and her mother : it is not money-making, or even certain ways of making money, that is wrong in their eyes, *i.e.* in Mr. Shaw's eyes ; on the contrary, one is given to understand that, with the present economic organization of society, such ways are entirely satisfactory. What is wrong with Burgess and Crofts and Mrs. Warren, from the point of view of Morell or Vivie, is that they are ashamed of making money as they do.

Then there are Tarleton of Tarleton's Underwear in *Misalliance*, and Undershaft of Undershaft and Lazarus in *Major Barbara*. Both are successful business men, and both are held up to admiration as such, the greater part of the preface to the play in which the latter appears being devoted to showing how good his morals are.

Thus, is it not evident that, while, on the one hand, Mr. Shaw denounces capitalism as 'organized robbery', he extols, on the other, the organizers and robbers ?

True, in *Heartbreak House* Mr. Shaw seems to be going back on his former favourite, the business man. The preface to that play contains a paragraph of crushing contempt for 'practical business men'[2] ; but the sort of practical business man referred to, as the character in the play itself, Mangan, surely indicates, is not the sort that runs bawdy houses or hotels, Croftses and Bluntschlis, or the sort who

months. Soldiers may thus be created in a short time, but not officers ; still less divisions, which, composed of all arms, require not only that individuals and units should be fully trained, but also a knowledge of staff work and team work which takes much experience and long practice to acquire.'

[1] *Plays Pleasant*, p. 93. [2] p. xxx.

sell things, Burgesses, Tarletons, and Undershafts, but the financier and company promoter sort, of whom Mangan is an awful example.

§ 10. NOBLE V. BOURGEOIS

At all events, reparation for the treatment of Mangan is made in Mr. Shaw's most recent work. For there he says :

> The country gentleman despised the employers as vulgar tradesmen, and made them feel it. The employers, knowing that any fool might be a peer or a country gentleman if he had the luck to be born in a country house, whilst success in business needed business ability, &c.[1]

But what is Mr. Shaw saying here? What, to begin with, is the business ability necessary for success in business? It must be the ability of Crofts, Burgess, and Mangan—the ability to make money. When we say that a man has been successful in business, we mean that he has made money in business. But how do business men—the manufacturer just as much as the retailer and the middleman ; Undershaft just as much as Tarleton—make money? In only one way : by buying cheap and selling dear. You may have thought that the manufacturer is more concerned with making than selling, and is thereby superior to the retailer and wholesaler. But it is no good manufacturing something unless it can be disposed of, and disposed of profitably. Hence, the manufacturer is compelled to make his main concern, not manufacturing, but buying and selling—buying his raw material and selling his finished product—and, of course, buying cheap and selling dear. Thus, all business amounts to the same thing.

Why, then, should employers feel—supposing, which is doubtful, that they do—superior to peers and country gentlemen? For one cannot be successful at buying cheap and selling dear unless one has cunning. One must, in business, take advantage, *i.e.* one must not only grab, but grab by cunning. But the peer or country gentleman to whom Mr. Shaw refers holds his property in virtue—at least in theory—of an ancestor's having seized it openly by conquest, or having had it presented to him by his king or feudal lord. That is to say, the peer or country gentleman has obtained

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 214.

his property—at least, as I say, in theory—either by force or by gift. If, then, employers are, on account of the business ability needed to succeed in business, superior to peers or country gentlemen, it can only be because grabbing by cunning is superior to grabbing by force or to receiving in gift. But does anyone believe that cunning is superior to force, or that getting by cunning is superior to receiving in gift?

§ II. WHICH IS THE HYPOCRITE?

However, as I say, the grabbing by force or receiving in gift is, for the peer or country gentleman of to-day, only theoretical. In all likelihood, the ancestor of the peer or country gentleman, even the peer or country gentleman himself, may have obtained his land by purchase with money made in business. He may be either the descendant of an ex-business man or even an actual ex-business man. But then, has not the buying of the land been done in the belief that it was more respectable, and indeed actually better, to become a peer or country gentleman than to remain a business man? And does anyone consider the belief mistaken?

If this were propounded to Mr. Shaw, he might reply that the peer or country gentleman was merely pretending to be better than he actually was; he was pretending to be a peer or a country gentleman, when actually he was an ex-business man. And it is not to being good or bad that Mr. Shaw objects, but to the pretence. That is, as I have mentioned, what Morell reproaches Burgess with; and it is on account of that that Mr. Shaw portrays Bluntschli as superior to Sergius and Petkoff. But should pretence be condemned, as Mr. Shaw condemns it?

Does not the business man, when he pretends to be something else, or converts himself into something else, admit that the condition to which he pretends is superior to his own? And since this condition is indeed superior to his own, unless, on the contrary, it be that the condition of the man of cunning is not inferior to that of the man of force, or to that of receiving a gift, is he not thereby admitting a truth? Whereas, would not the business man who was proud of his business ability, who took Morell's advice and gloried in his

scoundrelism, be denying that the condition of peer or country gentleman was superior to his, or that there was anything unsatisfactory about his own condition at all? And thus, since the condition of peer or country gentleman is, if only theoretically, superior to his, and since his is not entirely satisfactory, would he not thereby be denying a truth? Accordingly, are not Undershaft and Tarleton, when they vaunt their business ability to succeed in business, denying a truth; and is not what Vivie Warren would have her mother do, and Morell have Burgess do, also to deny a truth?

Mr. Shaw obviously deems Mrs. Warren and Burgess to be hypocrites. But what is a hypocrite? One who acts a part; one who pretends that when he is doing wrong he is really doing right. Do Mrs. Warren and Burgess satisfy this definition? How do they act? They profess to be ashamed of their occupations, excusing these on the plea of circumstances. But their occupations are in fact inferior occupations. So where is the pretence? In that they are not really ashamed, but only act as ashamed? But Mr. Shaw never makes that his complaint.

On the other hand, Undershaft and Tarleton have his approval. But how do they act? They are not ashamed of their occupations. Far from it, they proclaim that those occupations are noble. But is buying cheap and selling dear noble? Does anybody really believe it can be? Thus Undershaft and Tarleton are proclaiming that something is noble which, in fact, is not noble. They are pretending that they are doing something worthy, when actually what they are doing is not worthy.

Thus, *pace* their author, of Mrs. Warren, Burgess, Undershaft and Tarleton, which, in Mr. Shaw's gallery of characters, are the hypocrites?

§ 12. TWO BUSINESS ABILITIES

Mr. Shaw appears to be unaware that when the expression: business ability, is used, it may refer to either of two distinct abilities. There is the ability I have been discussing, the ability needed, as Mr. Shaw says, for success in business. And there is another. It is this other he evidently has in mind when he says:

> The dominant sort of modern employer is not to be displaced and dismissed so lightly as Alberic is dismissed in The Ring. . . . Alberic's work, like Wotan's work and Loki's work, is necessary work. . . . Therefore Alberic can . . . be superseded . . . only by a capable man of business.[1]

Here: 'a capable man of business', cannot mean a business man, a buyer and seller, at all; it can only mean a capable organizer, an efficient administrator, or something of that sort—a man with both a passion and a talent for making machines, or an office, or a factory, or a department, or a government, work well, run smoothly. That this is Mr. Shaw's meaning here is indicated by his use of the word: capable. For capable is what he calls the people who set up governments and repair them when they get 'too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization'. And what the successful governor has in common with the successful organizer or manager, that in which their being capable consists, is the possession of the passion and talent in question. Obviously Mr. Shaw imagines this capacity to be identical with the capacity of Burgess, Undershaft, and Tarleton. But it is *toto coelo* different, though very likely it is as the result of confusing them that Mr. Shaw is able to decry commercialism on the one hand, and to encourage and laud commercialism on the other. The capacity of Burgess, Undershaft, and Tarleton, is the capacity for acquiring money somehow, by hook or by crook, so long as it is within the law. Their goal is: profits. But the capacity of the capable organizer or administrator has a different goal. That goal is: organization, or: administration. Thus, the capacity cannot be the same in both cases. And it is not 'only by a capable man of business' that Alberic can be superseded; it is only by a capable organizer or administrator.

§ 13. PUTTING ONESELF OVER

Moreover, it is not only with the business ability needed for success in business that Mr. Shaw wishes to identify the talent for organization or administration, the talent for leadership; he also seeks to identify this talent with the desire for notoriety and public adulation. This he does

[1] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 104.

when he holds up for admiration the following passage from Marie Bashkirtseff's diary :

> I swear solemnly—by the Gospels, by the passion of Christ, by MYSELF—that in four years I will be famous.[1]

Further, since he prefaces this quotation with the statement that Marie Bashkirtseff, 'without any compulsion from circumstances, made herself a highly skilled artist by working ten hours a day for six years'[2], he evidently also confuses the desire to develop one's artistic ability with the desire for notoriety and public adulation. But, here again, the two desires are not identical, and, judging by the entry in the diary, it was the desire for notoriety that led Marie Bashkirtseff to work so hard. That desire has shown itself recently to be more common than it was thought in her day to be, and at the same time it has shown itself to have no connection with artistic talent. For the Marie Bashkirtseffs of today not only flock to Hollywood or assault the concert platform ; they also attempt, and sometimes achieve, new athletic feats or flying records. And some—notably Miss Earhart, who crossed the Atlantic by air—confess after the success, as Marie Bashkirtseff confessed in advance to her diary, that they were prompted by the desire of 'fame'. They wanted, in the American phrase, to put themselves over. That—and nothing else.

It is to be noted, however, that if, instead of the desire of putting oneself over, Marie Bashkirtseff had had only the desire to say something, had striven to say it, and had said it quietly—thus justifying, more or less, the appellation of 'highly skilled artist'—she would have won no admiration from Mr. Shaw. For the Marie Bashkirtseffs, or seekers after notoriety, do have this in common with the Undershafts and Tarletons, or successful business men, and with the Julius Caesars and Mussolinis, or capable governors, that they assert what our contemporary Marie Bashkirtseffs call their personality, or, as Mr. Shaw would say, their wilfulness. And it is that in them which Mr. Shaw admires.

In short, Mr. Shaw's views on poverty and 'fame' are closely related to his belief that :

[1] Quoted in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 31.
[2] Ibid., p. 30.

The strongest, fiercest force in nature is human will. It is the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe.[1]

Of that belief I reserve the discussion. For the moment I will confine myself to asking if it is not significant that, in holding up to emulation the wilfulness which leads to money-making and the wilfulness which leads to notoriety, Mr. Shaw is found to be confusing the first with the display of organizing or administrative ability, and the second with the display of artistic talent?

§ 14. PROSTITUTION AS A DUTY

So much for Mr. Shaw's gospel of grab as it relates to the grabbing of business success and the grabbing of notoriety, *alias* 'fame'. But if, according to this gospel, it is a woman's duty to herself, in certain circumstances, to grab fame, it is likewise her duty, still according to this gospel, not to be poor. This leads us to the subject of prostitution. As I think it will be seen, what Mr. Shaw has to say concerning prostitution is properly to be considered as part of his gospel of grab.

For instance, hear Mrs. Warren. She is contrasting her two half-sisters with herself and her sister. She and her sister became prostitutes; the half-sisters 'were the respectable ones'. She says:

MRS. WARREN. . . . Well, what did they get for their respectability? I'll tell you. One of them worked in a whitelead factory twelve hours a day for nine shillings a week until she died of lead poisoning. . . . The other was always held up to us as a model because she married a Government labourer in the Deptford victualling yard, and kept his room and the three children neat and tidy on eighteen shillings a week—until he took to drink. That was worth being respectable for, wasn't it?[2]

But Liz—what happened to Liz, who 'went out one night and never came back'?

MRS. WARREN. . . . She's living down at Winchester now, close to the cathedral, one of the most respectable ladies there—chaperones girls at the county ball, if you please.[3]

Here, surely, Mrs. Warren is saying that to turn prostitute is preferable to remaining respectable—in fact, one becomes

[1] *Misalliance*, p. lxx.
[2] *Plays Unpleasant*, pp. 193–4.
[3] Ibid., p. 194.

even more respectable in the end. It is true that her argument is entirely fallacious. All girls who remain respectable do not go into lead factories, and it is far from certain that all the girls in lead factories are respectable. The lead factory has nothing to do with respectability or its opposite. Neither do all the girls who remain respectable, yet do not go into lead factories, marry labourers who take to drink. Nevertheless, Mrs. Warren is inciting to prostitution. And the incitement is the stronger that her profession is 'not held in the play to be in itself objectionable. I have already quoted Vivie's reproach to her mother. I will do so again :

VIVIE. . . . If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did ; but I should not have lived one life and believed in another.[1]

Clearly, it is not her mother's profession that Vivie is made to condemn ; it is her mother's failure to regard that profession as honourable.

But it may be objected that Mrs. Warren is a character in a play and, consequently, that she has to speak 'in character'. Yet that Mrs. Warren is there speaking for Mr. Shaw one may, I suggest, well suspect, in view of this passage in the latter's latest work, where he is unmistakably appearing *in propria persona* :

If you offer a pretty girl twopence halfpenny an hour in a match factory, with a chance of contracting necrosis on the jawbone from phosphorus poisoning on the one hand, and on the other a jolly and pampered time under the protection of a wealthy bachelor, which was what the Victorian employers did and what employers still do all over the world when they are not stopped by resolutely socialistic laws, you are loading the dice in favour of the devil so monstrously as not only to make it certain that he will win, but raising the question whether the girl does not owe it to her own self-respect and desire for wider knowledge and experience, more cultivated society, and greater grace and elegance of life, to sell herself to a gentleman for pleasure than to an employer for profit.[2]

It is a curious passage. Does Mr. Shaw seriously expect us to believe that 'resolutely socialistic laws' now, or ever will, prevent a man and a maid from 'having their pleasure'? And whether resolutely socialistic laws can do that or not, it is certain that no socialistic laws, however resolute, can make working in a match factory, or any other

[1] *Plays Unpleasant*, p. 234. [2] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 199.

factory, confer on a girl the ' wider knowledge and experience, more cultivated society, and greater grace and elegance of life ' which she can obtain from ' a jolly and pampered time under the protection of a wealthy bachelor '—but why bachelor ?—if those things are due to ' her own self-respect and desire for wider knowledge and experience '. Further, what evidence is there that a girl does, as a rule, obtain the ' wider knowledge and experience ', &c., when she sells herself ' to a gentleman for pleasure ' ?

However, the question is not whether prostitution benefits girls or not, but why, if, as Mr. Shaw contends, prostitution can benefit them, he should insist that the establishment of Equality of Income will ensure the suppression of prostitution, and that this suppression will itself be a benefit ? And this question brings us again to the mutually exclusive assumptions which, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, underlie Mr. Shaw's doctrine. Either we may assume that the vast majority ' have no business to be alive ' and must be capably governed, even to the extent, under Equality of Income, of ' resolutely socialistic laws ' which will repress such manifestations of wilfulness as the seduction of factory girls (for, surely, seduction is a form of wilfulness), and as the quest by factory girls for ' wider knowledge and experience ' through yielding to seducers. Or else we may assume that wilfulness is the manifestation of the force, life, and hence is the fulfilment of a superior purpose, in which case a woman's, or a man's, wilfulness is to be encouraged, even if it is exhibited, in the woman's case, by her grabbing wider knowledge and experience, &c., in the form of the sweets of prostitution. But we cannot assume both.

CHAPTER III

CRIME

§ 15. THE CASE OF BILL WALKER

I PASS to Mr. Shaw on the criminal and crime. His views as to crime appear to be on the way to gaining the popularity at present owned by his views on poverty and 'fame'; yet, as I hope to show, inherent in some of those views is the very contradiction of which I have just pointed out the presence in his attitude to prostitution. These views of his on the criminal and crime can, for me, be brought under three heads. He condemns forgiveness. He declares that the current conception of crime and punishment 'is nothing but our vindictiveness and cruelty in a virtuous disguise'. He holds crime to be pathological.

As to forgiveness, he says:

> I am more merciless than the criminal law, because I would destroy the evildoer's delusion that there can be any forgiveness of sin. What is done cannot be undone; and the man who steals must remain a thief until he becomes another man, no matter what reparation or expiation he may suffer.[1]

Again:

> Though I am not, I hope, an unmerciful person, I do not think that the inexorability of the deed once done should be disguised by any ritual, whether in the confessional or on the scaffold.[2]

The meaning of such statements he claims to illustrate with the case of Bill Walker. Bill is a character in *Major Barbara*, and in the preface to that play Mr. Shaw says concerning him:

[1] Preface to Sidney and Beatrice Webb: *English Prisons under Local Government* (London, 1922), p. liii.

[2] *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 171.

Having assaulted the Salvation Army lass, [he] presently finds himself overwhelmed with an intolerable conviction of sin under the skilled treatment of Barbara. Straightway he begins to try to unassault the lass and deruffianize his deed, first by getting punished for it in kind, and, when that relief is denied him, by fining himself a pound to compensate the girl. He is foiled both ways. He finds the Salvation Army as inexorable as fact itself. It will not punish him : it will not take his money. It will not tolerate a redeemed ruffian : it leaves him no means of salvation except ceasing to be a ruffian. . . .

Bill has assaulted an old and starving woman also ; and for this worse offence he feels no remorse whatever, because she makes it clear that her malice is as great as his own. . . .

The point which I, as a professor of natural psychology, desire to demonstrate, is that Bill, without any change in his character whatsoever, will react one way to one sort of treatment and another way to another.[1]

Concerning this passage, it is first to be remarked that, whether as a professor of natural psychology or as a moralist, Mr. Shaw here demonstrates nothing : to imagine a character and then make that character behave in a certain way is only a demonstration of one's fertility of invention ; it affords nothing apodictic concerning the behaviour of actual human beings. Certainly the passage does not enable one to understand Mr. Shaw's point that there can be no forgiveness of sin, and that ' the man who steals must remain a thief until he becomes another man '. For if Bill is still liable to behave in a ruffianly manner to the old woman, how can he be held to have ceased being a ruffian?

Let me apply Mr. Shaw's argument to the case of a burglar described by another of his characters in the following passage :

Lady Cicely. We caught a burglar one night at Waynflete . . . and I insisted on his locking the poor man up, until the police came, in a room with a window opening on the lawn. The man came back next day and said he must return to a life of crime unless I gave him a job in the garden ; and I did. It was much more sensible than giving him ten years' penal servitude.[2]

Supposing that this burglar, some years earlier, had broken into a house near Lady Cicely's—the parallel of Bill Walker's assault on the old and starving woman—and that he had, on that occasion, been caught, handed over to the police,

[1] *John Bull's Other Island*, pp. 171–3.
[2] *Three Plays for Puritans*, pp. 259–60.

and sentenced to penal servitude; and that it was after being released from gaol that he had descended upon Waynflete. Now, supposing further—to complete the parallel—that, when he had been a gardener at Waynflete for some little time, he again broke into the neighbouring house, because for having broken in there before he felt 'no remorse whatever', since the tenants of that house had made it clear that their 'malice' was 'as great as his own'. Could this burglar then be regarded as having ceased to be a burglar, merely because he was no longer attempting to rob Lady Cicely? And, if he could not, how can Bill Walker be regarded as having ceased to be a ruffian, when he 'feels no remorse whatever' for having 'assaulted an old and starving woman', but only for having cut the lass's lip?

§ 16. VINDICTIVENESS

Then what does Mr. Shaw mean by saying that there must be no forgiveness? If the Salvation Army is ready to treat Bill as if he had never been a ruffian, provided he ceases to be one, is that not forgiveness of his ruffianism? Mr. Shaw says:

> Forgiveness, absolution, atonement, are figments; punishment is only a pretence of cancelling one crime by another; and you can no more have forgiveness without vindictiveness than you can have a cure without a disease. You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable and pardonable, or in a society where absolution and expiation are provided for us all. The demand may be very real; but the supply is spurious.[1]

What does he mean by saying that you cannot have forgiveness without vindictiveness? Elsewhere he says:

> Our criminal law, based on a conception of crime and punishment which is nothing but our vindictiveness and cruelty in a virtuous disguise, is an unmitigated and abominable nuisance, bound to be beaten out of us finally by the mere weight of our experience of its evil and uselessness.[2]

Presumably, then, he means that unless it is held that crimes must be punished, *i.e.* dealt with vindictively, it cannot be held that crimes may be forgiven. Pardon,

[1] *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 171.
[2] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 78.

legally, means the remission of the legal consequences of crime. Unless there are such consequences, there can, according to Mr. Shaw, be no pardon. Thus, if it is held that Bill Walker deserves no punishment, he is not, when he is treated as having ceased to be a ruffian, being forgiven. This raises the question : Why is it legally considered that crimes should be punished ? With that question I deal in a moment. First I want to ask something else : Is the conception that crime should be punished nothing but social vindictiveness ? Is the punishment of a burglar nothing but a vicarious satisfaction for the householder he has robbed, and for the householders he might have robbed ? I think the answer to that is contained in what Mr. Shaw has to say about Bill Walker. Mr. Shaw says that Bill 'straightway . . . begins to try to unassault the lass and deruffianize his deed, first by getting punished for it in kind, and, when that relief is denied him', &c. If to have been punished in kind would have been a relief for Bill Walker, how can the conception of punishment for crime be nothing but our vindictiveness ?

Of course I am not suggesting that human beings are not vindictive, nor that they will fail to vent their vindictiveness if they are given the opportunity. But, curiously enough, it is just that opportunity which, so it appears, Mr. Shaw would provide for them. It is because human beings are known to be vindictive that the law insists, and the administrators of the law insist, upon a householder who catches a burglar, not dealing with him himself, but handing him over to the police. That this is wisdom Mr. Shaw realizes clearly at times, as when he says :

> An adult is not supposed to be punished except by process of law ; nor, when he is so punished, is the person whom he has injured allowed to act as judge, jury, and executioner.[1]

And again :

> Now most laws are, and all laws ought to be, stronger than the strongest individual.[2]

But in the last act of *Caesar and Cleopatra* Caesar asks why Cleopatra is in mourning. It is for Ftatateeta, whom

[1] *Misalliance*, p. xvi.

[2] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 110.

Rufio has killed in Act IV. There ensues the following dialogue :

RUFIO. . . . Now tell me : if you meet a hungry lion there [in Numidia], you will not punish it for wanting to eat you ?

CAESAR. No.

RUFIO. What, then, will you do to save your life from it ?

CAESAR. Kill it, man, without malice, just as it would kill me.

[Rufio then tells Caesar that he has, ' without malice, only cut ' the ' throat ' of Cleopatra's ' tigress '.]

CAESAR (*energetically*). . . . It was well done. Rufio : had you set yourself in the seat of the judge, and with hateful ceremonies and appeals to the gods handed that woman over to some hired executioner to be slain before the people in the name of justice, never again would I have touched your hand without a shudder. But this was natural slaying : I have no horror at it.[1]

But if such actions as Rufio's are just and are to be tolerated, where shall one draw the line ? Must one not tolerate also such actions as Brutus's in slaying Caesar himself ? For, if a man is to be empowered to slay others whom he believes to be tigers or lions in human form, what is there to prevent any man who feels vindictive towards another, or is jealous of another, from disposing of that other, and deceiving himself that he is merely acting as if he were threatened by a hungry lion ? And, for that matter, even if he is not vindictive, or jealous, he cannot be allowed to take the law into his own hands. For whenever he does so, there must be the danger that, while he imagines he is gathering up a tare, he is actually rooting up wheat. Mr. Shaw may be referred to the parable, since he declares that its moral ' is the only possible rule for a statesman governing a modern empire '.[2] How much more, then, should it be taken to heart by the private individual ! In deciding who are hungry lions and who not, ' every man's private judgment ' cannot, to use Mr. Shaw's words, be ' justified as the most trustworthy interpreter of the will of Humanity ', and if laws ' ought to be stronger than the strongest individual ', they ought to be stronger than Rufios.

Here, as I announced, we are once more confronted by the contradictoriness of Mr. Shaw's two assumptions, (1) that the vast majority ' have no business to be alive ' and

[1] *Three Plays for Puritans*, pp. 198–9.
[2] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. cxiii.

must be governed by laws, even to the extent of being made good by Act of Parliament; and (2), that the capable people are to regard their own wills as 'the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe'. Before we have finished with his views on crime, we shall find that contradictoriness cropping up yet again.

§ 17. MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

I have yet to deal with the question Mr. Shaw's objection to forgiveness was found to raise, the question: Why is it legally considered that crimes should be punished? I want to lead up to the answer to this by first returning to Bill Walker. Mr. Shaw says that Bill 'finds the Salvation Army as inexorable as fact itself'; and I have also quoted him as saying that 'what is done cannot be undone', and as referring to 'the inexorability of the deed once done'. He says further:

> We shall never have real moral responsibility until everyone knows that his deeds are irrevocable, and that his life depends on his usefulness.[1]

But, at the same time, he says:

> The law every day seizes on unsuccessful scoundrels . . . and punishes them with a cruelty worse than their own, with the result that they come out of the torture house more dangerous than they went in, and renew their evil doing.[2]

If that is so, the law's procedure must, one would imagine, be one which makes the deeds as irrevocable as they well could be. Why then change? However, let it be assumed, as we have seen there is reason to assume, that Mr. Shaw means by: an irrevocable deed, a deed which cannot be forgiven, since it deserves no punishment. The only way to wipe out evil deeds would be never to commit them again. If that is Mr. Shaw's meaning, then certainly he must regard the individual as responsible. For unless the individual is answerable, how can we expect him to avoid committing a certain deed again? Moreover, does not Mr. Shaw say: 'We shall never have real moral responsibility', &c.? And again, here is this passage:

[1] *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 187.
[2] Ibid., pp. 171–2.

There can be no question as to the effect likely to be produced on an individual by his conversion . . . to the vigilant open-mindedness of Ibsen. . . . Before conversion the individual anticipates nothing worse in the way of examination at the judgment bar of his conscience than such questions as, Have you kept the commandments? Have you obeyed the law? . . . Substitute for such a technical examination one in which the whole point to be settled is, Guilty or Not Guilty? [1]

If a man can appear at 'the judgment bar of his conscience', he must be responsible.

Yet here is Mr. Shaw saying also:

It may have been the failure of Christianity to emancipate itself from expiatory theories of moral responsibility, guilt, innocence, reward, punishment, and the rest of it, that baffled its intention of changing the world.[2]

One might ask, on what ground Mr. Shaw believes Christianity to have had the intention of changing the world, but that would be by the way. The point is that, in the above passage, he is reproaching Christianity with having failed to emancipate itself from 'expiatory theories of moral responsibility' and 'guilt', yet it is essential to his theory of the proper dealing with crime that human beings should be responsible, should be able to answer, Guilty or Not Guilty.

Moreover, whatever he thinks, the fact is that there is every reason to believe that human beings are responsible. All human beings have an awareness of right and wrong. 'It has,' says Professor W. R. Sorley,[3] 'been established, with a fair degree of probability, as a universal characteristic of human society, that groups of men everywhere are in the way of distinguishing between right and wrong.' Furthermore, this capacity for distinguishing between right and wrong is possessed by human beings alone. That is the source of the view that animals have no souls, a view which Mr. Shaw qualifies with being 'stupid obstinacy'[4]. The point has been made by Renouvier, in a passage which seems worth quoting:

L'innocence diffère profondément chez l'homme et chez la bête en ceci que la bête l'a gardée et que l'homme l'a perdue; phénomène

[1] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 169.
[2] *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 211.
[3] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 66.
[4] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. lviii.

dont il n'y a pas d'histoire naturelle au monde qui puisse rendre compte. . . . D'où que l'homme soit sorti, quel qu'il ait été d'abord, un jour est venu, si ce n'est le premier de sa vie consciente et de sa vie réflechie, un jour est venu pour lui où, faisant quelque chose, il s'est dit que cela n'était pas bien. À dater de ce jour, nous avons réellement l'homme, et c'est le seul homme que nous connaissions, mais dont l'origine *quatenus homo* nous est absolument inconnue. Il n'y a pas, il n'y a jamais eu d'autre homme que celui-là. Lisez les rapports les plus malveillants par système, ou par défaut de pénétration, que les voyageurs nous font de l'état mental des sauvages : on a bien osé nous parler de tribus dont le langage ' est à peine un langage '—ce qui n'a pas de sens ; ou qui parlent, à la vérité, mais qui manquent d'idées générales—ce qui est absurde ; mais nul n'a dit avoir rencontré des hommes qui n'eussent point la notion d'un *devoir faire* ou d'un *devoir d'abstenir*, en des choses qu'ils regardent comme également possibles, celles-ci désirables pour eux-mêmes, et celles-là dangereuses ; des hommes qui ne se créassent point *d'obligations* les uns vis-à-vis des autres au sein d'une même tribu, ou chacun envers soi, selon l'idée qu'il se fait de ce qu'un homme tel que lui *doit être*. Or, c'est bien là l'essence de ce que nous appelons le devoir tout court, idée que jamais autre animal que nous ne songea à opposer à son appétit, à sa passion immédiate.[1]

If, then, all human beings have an awareness of right and wrong, it is only reasonable to assume that they are also responsible. That being so, I want to ask : How, if human beings are responsible, can crime be pathological ?

§ 18. CRIME AS PATHOLOGICAL

For that is what Mr. Shaw declares it is. He says :

We should . . . accustom ourselves to regard crime as pathological and the criminal as an invalid, curable or incurable. There is, in fact, hardly an argument that can be advanced for the stern suppression of crime by penal methods that does not apply equally to the suppression of disease.[2]

In this Mr. Shaw may have a section of the public with him, but not the writers on what has been called the pseudo-science of criminal psychology. There is no evidence, these writers find, of the existence of any particular physical or mental defect in detected criminals such as would justify our considering the criminal as an invalid.[3] As to the

[1] *Critique philosophique*, supplément trimestriel, 1880, p. 21.

[2] Preface to S. and B. Webb : op. cit., p. xlix.

[3] Cf. e.g. M. Hamblin Smith : *The Psychology of the Criminal*, and also in A. Fenner Brockway : *A New Way with Crime* (London, 1928), p. 160 : ' Lombroso's " criminal type " is a myth. Physically and

assertion that there is 'hardly an argument that can be advanced for the stern suppression of crime by penal methods that does not apply equally to the suppression of disease', this brings me back to my question: Why is it legally considered that crimes should be punished? For this is the place for the answer. Crimes are committed for a motive: either for profit or for the satisfaction—as in crimes of revenge—of the criminal. And that is why the arguments for the punishment of crime are not arguments for the punishment of disease. Disease brings to its victim no profit and no satisfaction.

To finish with Bill Walker, Mr. Shaw's contention that ruffians would cease being ruffians if they were treated differently, does not seem worth taking seriously. A man saying to society that he will reform his behaviour towards it if it will first reform its behaviour towards him, would indeed be a pathological case. But to Mr. Shaw—and it is here that, yet again, we meet the contradictoriness of his doctrine—one may propound the following conundrum: If all the good that man has done must be put down to his arbitrary will *as well as all the evil he has done* [1], how can crime be pathological?

mentally, lawbreakers are of a lower standard than the average citizen, but thousands of the law-abiding are of similar physique and intelligence.' Mr. Brockway obviously refers to detected lawbreakers. Another (anonymous) writer has said that 'for every crime or delinquency that is detected, at least two others remain undetected'. Whether the proportion is correct or not, no doubt there are undetected lawbreakers, and one may safely believe that the physical and intellectual standard of undetected, *i.e.* successful, criminals, is higher than that of the detected.

[1] Cf. *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 65.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE

§ 19. CURES FOR WOMAN'S HEARTBREAK

WHAT Mr. Shaw has to say concerning the relations of the sexes is largely confined to the subject of marriage. He believes that woman's lot should be improved, and that it would be improved if all incomes were equal and marriages could be dissolved upon the mere petition, without reasons, of one of the parties.

According to him, at present a wife often remains tied to her husband for purely economic reasons. Prostitution itself is an economic phenomenon. He says :

> In my play, Mrs. Warren's Profession, I have shewn that the institution in question [prostitution] is an economic phenomenon.[1]

Parenthetically, he showed nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that you cannot show what prostitution is by means of a play. However, not only is prostitution, according to him, an economic phenomenon, but the economic dependence of wives on husbands renders marriage a form of prostitution. He says :

> At present it [the dependence of women on men] reduces the difference between marriage and prostitution to the difference between Trade Unionism and unorganized casual labor.[2]

The statement need not detain us, for its absurdity is patent. It assumes that a wife's relations with her husband are solely those of the bedroom.

Again, if all incomes were equal, and, especially, inalienable, homes would frequently, he tells us, be broken up. He says :

> There must be an immense number of cases in which wives and husbands, girls and boys, would walk out of the house, like Nora Helmer

[1] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 173. [2] Ibid., p. 151.

in Ibsen's famous play, if they could do so without losing a single meal, a single night's protection and shelter, or the least loss of social standing in consequence. As Socialism would place them in this position, it would infallibly break up unhappy marriages and families.[1]

He goes on to declare that, in practice, the homes would not, as a rule, be broken up. The mere knowledge that a home could be broken up would compel those inmates of it who now make it unhappy to behave themselves. Here he assumes that those who make a home unhappy, as the phrase goes, are never those who want to leave it. Also, how does he know that persons who are eager 'to walk out of the house' would be happy anywhere?

Further, he alleges that Equality of Income would cure woman's heartbreak. He says that, today, a woman often fails to meet the man of her heart's desire, or, if she does meet him, is unable to marry him, simply because incomes are unequal. This breaks her heart. Hence Equality of Income would cure, Mr. Shaw declares, but surely it would be better to say, prevent, woman's heartbreak. The nullification of this argument he effects himself, but before I show him doing so, let me consider his case for another cure for woman's heartbreak, *viz* divorce in the conditions he advocates.

§ 20. DIVORCE WITHOUT REASONS

According to Mr. Shaw, 'marriage is for the State simply a licence to two citizens to beget children.'[2] And the licence is to be revoked at the request, without reasons, of only one of the parties, even if the other wishes it to remain in force. He says:

To impose marriage on two unmarried people who do not desire to marry one another would be admittedly an act of enslavement. But it is no worse than to impose a continuation of marriage on people who have ceased to desire to be married. It will be said that the parties may not agree on that; that one may desire to maintain the marriage the other wishes to dissolve. But the same hardship arises whenever a man in love proposes marriage to a woman and is refused. . . . We expect him to face his ill luck, and never dream of forcing the woman to accept him. His case is the same as that of the husband whose wife tells him she no longer cares for him, and desires the marriage to be

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 408.

[2] Ibid., p. 409.

dissolved. You will say, perhaps, if you are superstitious, that it is not the same—that marriage makes a difference. You are wrong : there is no magic in marriage.[1]

But his parallel is misleading. There may be no magic in marriage, yet marriage does make a difference. Between a woman's refusal of a proposal of marriage by a man in love with her, and a wife's notice to her husband who still cares for her that she wants to end their marriage, there is, for one thing, all the difference between refusing to enter into a contract—a refusal which, admittedly, is, in ordinary circumstances, legitimate—and seeking to break a contract already entered into. Furthermore, the ordinary contract is limited to business or finance, it concerns matters quite distinct from the persons concluding it, but the contract of marriage involves the parties themselves. Business and finance are not negligible, of course ; they may certainly influence a human existence considerably ; hence why, no doubt, they should be conducted as honourably as possible. But they remain extraneous to those contracting about them. Marriage does not. Hence, if an ordinary contract is not to be broken if it can possibly be fulfilled, there is that stronger reason for not readily breaking a contract of marriage.

The real difference between a proposal of marriage, and an actual marriage that has already been in existence for some time, may be put in this way. However intense a man's passion for a woman he seeks in marriage, the two parties are at that stage still strangers to each other, and so, deeply as the man may suffer by a rebuff, the woman who is disinclined to accept him has, ordinarily, only herself to consider. But not only does actual marriage gradually obliterate the strangeness of the parties to one another ; it also creates a unique relation : the man and the woman become one flesh ; there arise dependence and expectation ; and hence the one can no longer act without affecting the other. Thereupon neither party may feel free to consider himself or herself only. That is why marriage can never be for the state ' simply a licence to two citizens to beget children ', and why neither a woman nor a man can be authorized to end a marriage simply because she or he has

[1] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 167.

ceased, or fancies she or he has ceased, to care for the other.

Moreover, this is, I believe, Mr. Shaw's own view at bottom. It cannot be without significance as to his real view that, in his three plays dealing with marriage and love-making, the exceptional position of wife or husband should be insisted upon. The susceptible Mrs. George of *Getting Married* says to her admirer : ' If I got anxious about George's [her husband's] health, and I thought it would nourish him, I would fry you with onions for his breakfast and think nothing of it.' [1] Tarleton of *Misalliance* warns the captivating Lina : ' My wife comes first always.' [2] And Mrs. Lunn of *Overruled* declares : ' Our house is always full of women who are in love with my husband and men who are in love with me ; we encourage it because we like company.' [3]

These passages suggest that Mr. Shaw is well aware of the distinction that exists, entirely apart from the question of children, or that of the stability of the family, between the desire of one party to a marriage not to *continue* that marriage, when the other party does desire to maintain it, and the desire of one party not to *enter* into a marriage at the request of a second party. To some extent the difference exists as soon as marriage has been agreed to. And of that too Mr. Shaw is aware. Although he conceals, or forgets, his awareness when he is discussing divorce, he reveals it in *Fanny's First Play*, when Juggins is advising Bobby : ' I assure you, sir, theres no correct way of jilting. It's not correct in itself.' [4]

Mr. Shaw would have us also believe that a reason for treating marriage as provisional lies in the transient nature of the passion which is thought to lead to marriage. He says :

> When two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will remain in the excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously until death do them part.[5]

[1] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 264.
[2] *Misalliance*, p. 54.
[3] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. 82.
[4] *Misalliance*, p. 197.
[5] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 128.

But, of course, the two people are not 'required to swear' anything of the kind. It can only be alleged that they are by treating the word: love, as having but one meaning. What the two participants in the marriage ceremony are required to swear to is, not that 'they will remain in the excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously', but, on the contrary, that when they are no longer under the sway of transient passion, they will not shirk the responsibilities to each other—material and moral—which they may have incurred while in that condition.

§ 21. WHY HAPPINESS?

Not only, however, are Mr. Shaw's arguments in favour of divorce at the request of one party without reasons, fallacious, but his whole plea that marriage should be adapted to ensuring woman's, or both man's and woman's, happiness, is condemned out of his own mouth. For instance, to be happily married is, he says, to stamp oneself a Philistine. Here are his words:

> The ordinary Philistine . . . marries the woman he likes and lives with her more or less happily ever after; but that is not because he is greater than Brand or Rosmer: he is less.[1]

Furthermore, happiness, according to him, never matters to nature [2], and the right sort of people do not bother about it. 'People of the right sort,' he says [3], are 'too much taken up with their occupations to bother about happiness.'

Why, then, should steps be taken to prevent woman's heartbreak? In women of the right sort there can be no heartbreak. The woman who nowadays misses happiness, as she may think, through her failure to meet, or the impossibility of her marrying, the man of her heart's desire, will, if she is of the right sort, be 'too much taken up with' her occupations to suffer heartbreak. Thus, in one way, does Mr. Shaw himself nullify his argument in favour of our having, for women's sake, Equality of Income and divorce at the will, without reasons, of one of the parties. He does so also in another way. In declaring that, if women could exercise a wider choice in the selection of husbands, women

[1] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 161. [2] *Man and Superman*, p. 184.
[3] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 42.

would be happier, would be cured of their heartbreak, he assumes that what matters in marriage is that one should be united to one's affinity. But in one of his plays he makes a character point out that this has no bearing on the success or failure of a marriage. The character says :

> PERCIVAL. Patsy fascinates me, no doubt. I apparently fascinate Patsy. But, believe me, all that is not worth considering. One of my three fathers (the priest) . . . assures me that if marriages were made by putting all the men's names into one sack and the women's names into another, and having them taken out by a blindfolded child like lottery numbers, there would be just as high a percentage of happy marriages as we have here in England. He said Cupid was nothing but the blindfolded child : pretty idea that, I think.[1]

And if it should be thought that the opinion voiced there is the priest's in question, and not Mr. Shaw's, I should add that when, immediately after the above words, Percival says : ' If you can tell me of any trustworthy method of selecting a wife, I shall be happy to make use of it ', he receives no answer. If there is no trustworthy method of selecting a wife, then, why imagine, as Mr. Shaw would have us imagine, that Equality of Income would provide a trustworthy method of selecting a husband ? Why imagine that marriages will be happier if women are afforded a wider field in which to search for their affinities, and are allowed, when they have first married the wrong man and then discover, as they think, the right one, to change partners without giving reasons ?

§ 22. THE STATE'S PART

It has also to be noted that, regarding the relations of the sexes, as regarding thought, Mr. Shaw would have the state interfere more than it does at present. He says :

> When once it becomes feasible for a wife to leave her husband, not for a few days or weeks after a tiff because they are for the moment tired of one another, but without any intention of returning, there must be prompt and almost automatic divorce, whether they like it or not. . . . Both parties must be either married or unmarried.[2]

But this would be an attempt to force people to be respectable which would defeat itself. There can be only one

[1] *Misalliance*, pp. 89–90.

[2] *The Intelligent Woman*, pp. 408–9. Cf. Judge Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans : *The Companionate Marriage* (New York, 1927).

reason for insisting that all couples who cohabit, for however brief a period, should be married, and that all couples who part, without being able to fix a date for resuming cohabitation, should be divorced—and that reason is that to be married is respectable. But to be married can only be respectable so long as marriage itself is respectable. Once, however, all couples cohabiting had to be married, and all couples separating divorced, the respectability of marriage would disappear. Marriage would no longer be a solemn bond and one to be assumed voluntarily. It would be something for which the parties were irresponsible and something automatic ; if two persons of opposite sex lived together, they would be married, just as now, if a man has a motor-car, he also has a licence plate. The factor of personal responsibility in marriage would be gone. Thereupon, the only thing which makes it desirable to be married, rather than unmarried, would be gone too. Here, as in other parts of his doctrine, Mr. Shaw seems to want mankind to have its cake and eat it too. But I do not see how he can escape from this dilemma : Either marriage is going to matter, in which case what must be considered is not those contracting marriage, but the institution, and marriage will not be a convenience ; or else marriage is going to be a convenience, in which case what must be considered is those contracting marriage and not the institution, and marriage will not matter.

But it is not personal convenience so much as state regulation that Mr. Shaw would foster, for he also says :

> The number of wives permitted to a single husband or of husbands to a single wife under a marriage system, is not an ethical problem : it depends solely on the proportion of the sexes in the population.[1]

As to that, he has failed, no doubt, to carry many readers with him. And probably he is not surprised, for did he not once hear ' a lady . . . say with cold disgust that she would as soon think of lending her toothbrush to another woman as her husband ' [2] ? Yet surely his position, as indicated by the above passage, is perfectly logical. Once the individual has surrendered to the state the settlement of the question whether he should be married or unmarried, once

[1] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 137. [2] Ibid., p. 181.

he has abdicated all personal responsibility in marriage in favour of the state's responsibility, then the state is certainly free to make of marriage what it likes. It is free to utilize marriage for its own ends, and not for the sake of those contracting marriage. Thus, if we sacrifice the respectability of marriage in order that every couple cohabiting, more or less indefinitely, shall be respectable, we shall be led to give up, not only the respectability and the solemnity of marriage itself, but also our own freedom in the relations of the sexes. We shall not have our cake and we shall not have eaten it either.

CHAPTER V

THE LIFE FORCE OR CREATIVE EVOLUTION

§ 23. HUMAN WILL AS THE LIFE FORCE

I HAVE now dealt with Mr. Shaw's doctrine as he applies it to three problems of existence: poverty, crime, and the relations of the sexes. It is time to return to the examination of the doctrine itself as such. I said in my first chapter (§ 2) that there were five articles of Mr. Shaw's doctrine which the public might be considered to share with him. I discussed four of those articles there and then, maintaining that the fifth, the article concerning the Life Force, deserved separate treatment. The present chapter, then, will be devoted to the Life Force.

Let me recall the pertinent passage from *The Perfect Wagnerite* I have already quoted. It is as follows:

> The only faith which any reasonable disciple can gain from The Ring is not in love, but in life itself as a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward . . . growing from within, by its own inexplicable energy, into ever higher and higher forms of organization, the strengths and needs of which are continually superseding the institutions which were made to fit our former requirements. . . . If human nature, which is the highest organization of life reached on this planet, is really degenerating, then human society will decay; and no panic-begotten penal measures can possibly save it: we must, like Prometheus, set to work to make new men instead of vainly torturing old ones. On the other hand, if the energy of life is still carrying human nature to higher and higher levels, then the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better for the hopes of the world, since the apparent growth of anarchy is only the measure of the rate of improvement.[1]

As to this passage, it may be asked why, if the first of Mr. Shaw's alternative suppositions is correct, and human nature is degenerating, it should be our business 'to set

[1] pp. 76–7.

to work to make new men'. Surely, if human nature is degenerating, it must degenerate, and we can do nothing about it; and if there is a tireless power, life, which is growing from within into ever higher and higher forms of organization, the making of a higher form of organization than we are, *i.e.* the making of new men or Supermen, may be left to that power. The fact is, however, that Mr. Shaw cannot so much as conceive the degeneration of human nature; in the very act of trying to suppose it, he assumes its opposite, *viz* that human will can effect the purpose of the power, life, even to the extent, if paradoxically human nature is degenerating, of producing Supermen. It may seem strange that human beings should be credited with any ability whatever 'to set to work to make new men', but it must be remembered that, for Mr. Shaw, as, indeed, he indicates plainly in *Man and Superman* and The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas of *Back to Methuselah*, setting to work to make new men means only the willing of new men. Not only is there a Life Force, but its purpose is manifested in human will. As he says:

> The strongest, fiercest force in nature is human will. It is the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe.[1]

But what grounds does he produce for our believing this statement, and for our believing also that what human beings spontaneously want is identical with what is wanted by the tireless power he postulates, life? He does not produce any. On the contrary, not only does he assure us that 'the majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive'[2], and that the doing of this majority's several wills, *i.e.* anarchism, would mean the obstruction of progress[3]; he also declares that the purpose of the race (which, presumably, is also the purpose of the power, life) may be in opposition to individual instincts. He says:

> The modern devices for combining pleasure with sterility . . . enable . . . persons to weed themselves out of the race. . . . Even if this selective agency had not been invented, the purpose of the race would still shatter *the opposition* of individual instincts. . . . In short, the individual instinct in this matter . . . is really a finally negligible one.[4]

[1] *Misalliance*, p. lxx. [2] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 67. [3] Ibid., p. 66.
[4] *Man and Superman*, p. 195, my italics.

§ 24. A MIND'S EYE

Thus, when he declares that human will 'is the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe', it may be concluded that he is not putting his meaning very clearly. What, according to his references to 'Man', 'the vast majority' which has made no progress, and to the capable persons who set up governments and repair them when they get 'too far behind the continuous advance or decay of civilization', he must mean, is, that what the tireless power, life, wants to do, is what the wills of the capable persons want to do. But this appears irreconcilable with the words he puts into the mouth of one of his characters concerning the evolution of a mind's eye. This character says:

> DON JUAN. Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ, the eye, . . . so it is evolving to-day a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present.[1]

Incidentally, this theory of a mind's eye raises difficulties of its own. For instance, what is Mr. Shaw's warrant for asserting that 'that wonderful bodily organ, the eye', was evolved by the tireless power, life, or that it was only after ages of struggle—struggle against what?—that it did so? Again, where is the analogy between a bodily eye and this mind's eye of which he speaks, this mind's eye 'that shall see' 'the purpose of Life', with a capital L? It is true that persons claiming to foretell the future are called seers. This is because it is imagined that such persons actually visualize, *i.e.* see, as in a dream, the future events they predict. We do have the experience of seeing in dreams. But that does not mean that either seers or dreamers see with 'a mind's eye', and if they did, then the Life Force could scarcely be evolving a mind's eye only now. Moreover, if we do see in dreams, what we see is never a purpose. How can a purpose be seen or even visualized?

But, apart from that objection, there is this other. Why should it happen that persons are becoming aware of Life's purpose only now? Likewise, if it is only today that Life

[1] *Man and Superman*, p. 115.

is evolving a mind's eye, how can what the capable persons of the past, *e.g.* Julius Caesar, have willed to do be what the tireless power, life, wanted?

The question leads to still another difficulty inherent in the theory that human will is the Life Force. Is it the wills of capable governors such as Julius Caesar, and of capable men of business such as Undershaft, that are the will of the Life Force, or is it the counsels of prophets and philosophers that are this will? Mr. Shaw says, as to Julius Caesar:

> The really interesting question is whether I am right in assuming that the way to produce an impression of greatness is by exhibiting a man . . . as simply doing what he naturally wants to do.[1]

Thus, according to him, the great governor must be a man who simply does 'what he naturally wants to do', and it must also be in this way that the great governor is the servant of the Life Force. But Mr. Shaw also says:

> It [morality] imposes conventional conduct on the great mass of persons who are incapable of ethical judgment, and would be quite lost if they were not in leading strings devised by lawgivers, philosophers, prophets and poets for their guidance.[2]

Again he makes a character say:

> DON JUAN. No: I sing, not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means.[3]

If, then, it is 'lawgivers, philosophers, prophets and poets' who devise leading strings for the guidance of the great mass of persons incapable of ethical judgment, and these lawgivers, &c., *i.e.* 'the philosophic man', are not 'the hero', *i.e.* the capable governor, how can the hero's will be the will of the Life Force? Further, if the philosophic man has to seek 'in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world', how can the individual wills of capable governors, or of other exceptional active persons, already be that will?

[1] *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 211.
[2] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 320.
[3] *Man and Superman*, p. 115.

§ 25. A POLITICAL PROVIDENCE

To these questions I take Mr. Shaw's answer to be this. Although progress, *i.e.* the adaptation of mankind to greater social well-being and that social well-being itself, can only be accomplished by being willed by the capable, it is just because the capable governors of the past had not discovered 'the inner will of the world' that so little progress has so far occurred, and that, in Mr. Shaw's words, 'all the savagery, barbarism, dark ages and the rest of it of which we have any record as existing in the past, exists at the present moment' [1]. If progress there really is to be, two essentials are, in Mr. Shaw's view, requisite. The Alberics must be superseded by capable men of business [2], men like Undershaft in *Major Barbara*, who says :

> UNDERSHAFT. That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos ; but it wont scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions. Whats the result ? In machinery it does very well ; but in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year.[3]

And these capable men of business must be 'the philosophic man' and capable governors rolled into one. Then, indeed, will their wills be the will of the Life Force. For, according to Mr. Shaw, remember, it is by Act of Parliament that men can be made good [4], *i.e.* it is through government that man can be improved, be made to progress. It is said in *Man and Superman* :

> Now Man must take in hand all the work he used to shirk with an idle prayer. He must, in effect, change himself into the political Providence which he formerly conceived as god ; and such change is not only possible, but the only sort of change that is real. The mere transfigurations of institutions . . . are all but changes from Tweedledum to Tweedledee. . . . But the changes from the wolf and fox to the house dog . . . are real ; for here Man has played the god. . . . And what can be done with a wolf can be done with a man.[5]

The passage calls for a digression. Should not Mr. Shaw supply an authenticated instance of a man's transforming a wolf or fox into a house dog ? However, even if he were

[1] *Three Plays for Puritans*, pp. 202–3. [2] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 104.
[3] *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 280. [4] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. lx.
[5] pp. 181–2.

to do so, he could, presumably, only show a man's effecting such a transformation by an operation similar to that performed by the lion tamer on a lion : he could only show the wolf or the fox as being tamed. If, then, it were true—and there is, of course, no reason for believing that it is—that 'what can be done with a wolf can be done with a man', it would only mean that Man can, if he wishes, tame a man. But taming a wolf or a fox so that it becomes a house dog—assuming such taming to be possible—can result only in making the wolf or fox obedient to its tamer, whereas what has to be done for man, according to Mr. Shaw, is not to make him obedient, but to make him good. Where, then, is the analogy between turning a wolf or fox into a house dog and turning a man into a good man?

So much for the digression. To return to the notion that man can be improved, made to progress, by being given the proper form of government : the above passage does not assist one to believe that government could ever achieve anything of the kind, that government could ever make men good by Act of Parliament. Does, then, Mr. Shaw produce any other grounds for his notion? No, none. Thus, life may be a tireless power, and it may have a purpose, but that part of this purpose is man's improvement, and that his improvement is a matter for Acts of Parliament, or any other political devices, there is not, on Mr. Shaw's showing, the slightest reason to suspect. And when he says also :

> I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman [1] ;

one must ask : How can Jesus Christ be conceived as undertaking the work of a modern practical statesman? If Jesus Christ is regarded, as evidently Mr. Shaw wishes to regard him, as purely a moral teacher, how can moral teaching ever merge into statesmanship, or the moral teacher ever turn statesman? Apparently Mr. Shaw does not see that the statesman has to be practical, but that the moral teacher is only a theorist. And there is between them a greater difference than that. The statesman can, at most, deal with the public relations of the persons he governs ;

[1] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. viii.

he cannot, however despotic and Draconian, control their private relations; still less, their thoughts and intentions. But people's private relations, and their thoughts and intentions, are precisely the business of the moral teacher.

There is even a divorce between theoretical and practical politics. That is why, *pace* Plato, 'the philosophic man', of whom the Don Juan of *Man and Superman* sings, cannot ever be also the capable governor. Machiavellis can never be princes. But the divorce between practical politics and theoretical morals is greater still. That is why it is absurd of Mr. Shaw to talk of making men good—whatever by good he may mean—by Act of Parliament. Acts of Parliament can cope, to some extent, with public conduct, but morality governs both public and private conduct, and while private conduct may influence public conduct, it must remain, in many respects, beyond reach of the law. Also in the domain of public conduct alone, enforcement of the law, *i.e.* of the provisions of Acts of Parliament, depends upon the detection of infringements, and all infringements cannot be detected.

As to Undershaft's complaint that the world 'scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it wont scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions', there is a very good reason for the world's not treating its moralities and its religions and its political constitutions, as it treats its obsolete steam engines and dynamos. To devise a new political institution is a good deal more difficult than to invent a new steam engine or dynamo; and as for a morality or a religion, was ever one *invented*?

§ 26. THE LIFE FORCE AS GOD

But, further, why should Mr. Shaw believe that life is a tireless power and has a purpose? He says that life is a force. As one of his characters puts it:

> DON JUAN. Life: the force that ever strives to attain greater power of contemplating itself. . . . There is the work of helping life in its struggle upward.[1]

It certainly is a pretty image, this of 'Life' as a Narcissistic 'force' struggling upward—why upward?—and so getting

[1] *Man and Superman*, p. 105.

a better view of itself! But if we are to believe that life is the Life Force and has a purpose, Mr. Shaw should not content himself with assertion: he should produce some reason for the belief. It is not enough to say, as he says, that:

> The strongest, fiercest force in nature is human will. It is the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe.[1]

Or to ask:

> Whether I am right in assuming that the way to produce an impression of greatness is by exhibiting a man . . . as simply doing what he naturally wants to do.[2]

Nor is it enough to assert that the Life Force is what the Churches mean by God, as Mr. Shaw asserts when he says:

> In 1562 the Church, in convocation . . ., proclaimed . . ., as an Article of Religion, that God is 'without body, parts, or passions', or as we say, an *Élan Vital* or Life Force.[3]

For the assertion is merely ridiculous. *Élan*, the *Petit Larousse* says, means: '*Action de s'élancer; mouvement subit avec effort.*' Force, according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, is: 'Strength, power, impetus, violence, intense effort.' No reference in either definition to *élan* or force, as being 'without body, parts, or passions'.

It will not do either to allege that 'he [Jesus] declared that the reality behind the popular belief in God was a creative spirit in ourselves, called by him the Heavenly Father and by us Evolution, Élan Vital, Life Force and other names'[4]. For the words of Jesus have no reference to 'a creative spirit', nor could he have meant by 'the Heavenly Father' the Life Force.

Finally, it is not enough either to identify this creative spirit or Life Force, under the name of God, with our imagination, as Mr. Shaw does in this scrap of dialogue:

> JOAN. I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God.
> ROBERT. They come from your imagination.
> JOAN. Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us.[5]

For that is only begging yet a further question.

[1] *Misalliance*, p. lxx. [2] *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 211.
[3] *Back to Methuselah*, p. xxxvii. [4] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. c.
[5] *St. Joan*, p. 11. Cf. J. M. Robertson: *Mr. Shaw and 'The Maid'* (London, 1925), p. 19: 'Making Joan justify her "voices" in terms

§ 27. CREATIVE EVOLUTION

Thus, Mr. Shaw contends that a capable person is justified in doing what he naturally wants to do. And today the public agrees with him, with, however, this difference, that, for the public, in order that a person should be justified, it is enough that he *feel* capable. And the justification resides, according to Mr. Shaw, in the existence of a Life Force, and in what the capable person wants to do being the purpose of that Force. But when Mr. Shaw's writings are searched for some reason for his belief in a Life Force, and his further belief that human will is, in certain cases, the will of the Life Force, there is none to be found. Or, rather, it is found that Mr. Shaw claims to know how the Life Force effects its purpose, and thereupon one is driven to conclude that he infers the existence of the Life Force from its method, of which he claims to be aware. What, then, is its method? According to him, it is evolution. Not, however, a steadily progressive evolution; rather a trial and error evolution. 'Life,' declares Don Juan in *Man and Superman* [1], 'is a force which has made innumerable experiments in organizing itself.' Further, it is because evolution is experimental that, according to Mr. Shaw, we must be tolerant. He says:

> The deeper ground for Toleration is the nature of creation, which, as we now know, proceeds by evolution. Evolution finds its way by experiment.[2]

Also, it is evolution's experimental character that, according to him, explains the existence of disease and why we have to fight disease. As Blanco Posnet puts it:

> It was early days when He made the croup, I guess. It was the best He could think of then; but when it turned out wrong on His hands He made you and me to fight the croup for Him.[3]

And, obviously, it must be because, for him, experimental evolution explains such matters that he decides upon the existence of experimental evolution. Experimental evolu-

of modernist views of divine immanence, of which Joan certainly had no idea, Mr. Shaw expressly tells us again and again that her visions and voices were hallucinations; which is precisely what Catholics call Materialism. Of course he adds other views, the preface being apparently a work of three (it may be thirty) lines of theory, more or less irreconcilable.'

[1] p. 113.

[2] *Misalliance*, p. xlix.

[3] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. 406.

tion is, for him, a theory fitting the facts ; therefore, so he must say, it is a true theory. But does it fit the facts? Is it, for instance, a fact that croup existed before there were people who, by stealing horses, as Blanco Posnet steals a horse, or by other means, could fight croup?

However, what is central in Mr. Shaw's doctrine, and what, in that doctrine, has proved so popular, is the belief that evolution is, not only experimental, but also creative, and that it creates through the instrumentality of human will. That is, among Mr. Shaw's beliefs, the one about which it is most important we should know if he justifies it, for it is a belief, more or less as he believes it, that we unmistakably share with him. Certainly its justification he does attempt. He says :

> The impulse that produces evolution is creative. . . . The will to do anything can and does, at a certain pitch of intensity set up by conviction of its necessity, create and organize new tissue to do it with. . . . If the weight lifter, under the trivial stimulus of an athletic competition, can 'put up a muscle', it seems reasonable to believe that an equally earnest and convinced philosopher could 'put up a brain'. . . . Among other matters apparently changeable at will is the duration of individual life. . . . This is not fantastic speculation : it is deductive biology.[1]

And, according to him, this is how the impulse that produces evolution will produce the Superman :

> If you can turn a pedestrian into a cyclist, and a cyclist into a pianist or violinist, without the intervention of Circumstantial Selection, you can turn an amoeba into a man, or a man into a superman, without it.[2]

But, concerning these two passages, it is to be remarked, first, that the very question at issue, *viz* the question : How can human will come to be the instrument of the Life Force? Mr. Shaw glides over. He says : 'The impulse that produces evolution is creative.' And, thereupon, he immediately proceeds to speak of : 'The will to do anything.' What has 'the will to do anything' to do with 'the impulse that produces evolution'? As to that, he maintains silence. Not without reason has he been called a master of the *non sequitur* !

If, however, one accepts his tacit assumption that it is 'the will to do anything' which is creative, the justification

[1] *Back to Methuselah*, pp. xvi–xviii. [2] Ibid., p. xxiii.

of his belief that human will is creative remains as elusive as ever. For the two passages above are riddled with paralogisms. I will confine myself to mentioning six.

1. The weight-lifter who can put on muscle must, in order to do so, already be of a certain physical type. Men of many physical types could not put on enough muscle to enable them to lift weights however much they willed. Again, exercise will, for other types of men, result in an increase of muscle whether there is any willing or not, as thousands of normally sedentary men discovered while in the Army during the War. Further, the weight-lifter who does put on muscle does not do so by willing : he does it by training the muscle. In short, the relation alleged by Mr. Shaw to exist between ' putting up a muscle ' and willing does not exist.

2. Brain power is not a matter of quantity of brain tissue. Some remarkable thinkers have had brains smaller than the average. Thus, there is no relation either between ' putting up a muscle ' and ' putting up a brain '. Hence, it is not, though Mr. Shaw says it seems, reasonable to believe that if, which is false, a man could ' put up a muscle ' by willing, another man could ' put up a brain ' by willing also ; the two are entirely dissimilar.

3. Mr. Shaw declares that he reaches his view that the duration of human life is ' apparently changeable at will ' by a process which he calls ' deductive biology '. And this is his argument :

> Weismann . . . pointed out that death is not an eternal condition of life, but an expedient introduced to provide for continual renewal without overcrowding. Now Circumstantial Selection does not account for natural death : it accounts only for the survival of species in which the individuals have sense enough to decay and die on purpose. But the individuals do not seem to have calculated very reasonably. . . . In the case of men, the operation has overshot its mark. . . . Presumably, however, the same power that made this mistake can remedy it. If on opportunist grounds Man now fixes the term of his life at three score and ten years, he can equally fix it at three hundred, or three thousand.[1]

This third paralogism resolves itself into a double one. First, it is not the ' individuals ' who have ' sense enough to decay and die on purpose '. The purpose is not that of

[1] *Back to Methuselah*, p. xvii.

the individuals at all, but a purpose attributed by Weismann to nature, which operates independently of the individuals' wills. Secondly, there is the sentence: 'Presumably, however, the same power that made this mistake can remedy it', just after which Mr. Shaw says: 'This is not fantastic speculation: it is deductive biology.' To deduce is one mental operation, to presume another. In the above statements, which Mr. Shaw calls 'deductive biology', no deduction is to be found.

4. Quite obviously there is no analogy between a pedestrian who is turned into a cyclist and an amoeba which is turned into a man. For one thing, what are turned into cyclists are not pedestrians, but men who happen occasionally to be pedestrians. For another, while men are turned into cyclists every day, usually, however, through their own efforts, and not those of a third party, whose role is limited to holding up the bicycle in the early stages of the conversion, no amoeba has ever been turned into a man, either by the efforts of some man or in any other way.

5. Creative Evolution, in the sense given to the term by the man who coined it, and he was not Mr. Shaw, has nothing to do with pedestrians, cyclists, pianists, or amoebae. Mr. Bergson's *élan vital* is not physical, but psychical: it is that which, according to him, drives life to penetrate matter.

6. Although Mr. Bergson has said: 'We shall suppose that it is by an effort more or less conscious that the living being develops a higher instinct', that does not give one any reason for supposing also that biological evolution, *i.e.* the appearance of new species, ever occurs as the result of a conscious effort on the part of members of an already existing species. Geneticists, who alone are competent to pronounce upon the question, hold that evolution has proceeded by a selection of favourable *chance* variations; that is to say, variations certainly unconscious on the part of the individuals varying or their sires. Furthermore, not even any geneticist has the slightest *knowledge*, as distinct from conjecture, of how evolution has taken, or does take, place.[1] Still less, then, has Mr. Shaw.

[1] Vide e.g. Professor D. M. S. Watson's presidential address in the Section of Zoology at the meeting of the British Association (*The Times*, August 3, 1929). Cf. also the writings of the late William Bateson.

§ 28. SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Thus, it does not seem that Mr. Shaw produces satisfactory reasons for his believing in the existence of the Life Force, and in Creative Evolution as its method. It remains to refer to that 'social wellbeing' which, he says, is, so far as mankind is concerned, the Life Force's goal. Our governors must, he has told us,

> see that their business is not the devising of laws and institutions to prop up the weaknesses of mobs and secure the survival of the unfittest, but the breeding of men whose wills and intelligences may be depended on to produce spontaneously the social wellbeing our clumsy laws now aim at and miss.[1]

And if, as he says, 'the energy of life is still carrying human nature to higher and higher levels', it must also be towards his social well-being that we are being already carried when 'young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions'[2]. But what is that social well-being? Except to tell us that, under Equality of Income, we shall lead pleasanter lives than we do at present, and that then all human beings will cease having 'no business to be alive', he certainly does not vouchsafe much information on the subject. He completely fails to indicate *why* he is convinced that such social well-being is the goal of the Life Force, and that it is being brought nearer whenever a capable governor, or any other capable person, does what he naturally wants to do. Likewise, he completely neglects to discuss the desirability of such social well-being. That, at any rate, it is not desired by the vast majority of mankind at present he certainly makes clear. On what grounds, then, is mankind to have it? He says:

> The ultimate sanctions of conduct are metaphysical, by which . . . I mean that from the purely matter-of-fact point of view there is no difference between a day's thieving and a day's honest work, between placid ignorance and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, between habitual lying and truth-telling: they are all human activities or inactivities, to be chosen according to their respective pleasantness or material advantages, and not to be preferred on any other grounds.[3]

But is there an ultimate sanction, metaphysical or otherwise, for Mr. Shaw's brand of social well-being?

[1] *The Perfect Wagnerite*, p. 67. [2] Ibid., p. 77.
[3] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 362.

CHAPTER VI

CREATIVE EVOLUTION AS RELIGION

§ 29. VITAL DOGMAS

MR. SHAW not only declares Creative Evolution to be the method of his Life Force; he also asserts that his view of evolution 'is emerging, under the title of Creative Evolution, as the genuinely scientific religion for which all wise men are now anxiously looking'[1]. The assertion raises the query: What does he mean by the word: religion? I take his answer to be contained in the following statement: 'Government is impossible without a religion: that is, without a body of common assumptions.'[2] But which are the common assumptions? Presumably, they are:

> The great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life, faith that the unknown is greater than the known and is only the As Yet Unknown, and resolution to find a manly highway to it.[3]

Very well. Must we, then, in order to believe in honour, liberty, courage, and the other 'great vital dogmas', also believe in the Life Force, in Creative Evolution as its method, and in human will as its instrument? Has there never been an honourable man, a defender of liberty, a man of courage, who did not believe in the Life Force and in Creative Evolution, as Creative Evolution is defined by Mr. Shaw?

Moreover, what is going to happen to the 'great vital dogma' of liberty, when the Life Force has been creatively evolving for a little longer, and we have Equality of Income? Mr. Shaw's answer is:

> A Socialist Government must equally inculcate whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists.[4]

---

[1] *Back to Methuselah*, p. xviii.
[2] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. cxii.
[3] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. xcii.
[4] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 426.

Also, how is it that, as he says, all wise men are now anxiously looking for 'the genuinely scientific religion', and that he has always known, as he further says, 'that civilization needs a religion as a matter of life or death'[1]? For he also declares that there is only one religion. The passage in which he does this is as follows:

> The time was ripe for a modern pre-Raphaelite play. Religion was alive again, coming back upon men—even clergymen. . . . Here my activity as a Socialist had placed me on sure and familiar ground. To me the members of the Guild of St. Matthew were no more 'High Church clergymen,' Dr. Clifford no more 'an eminent Nonconformist divine,' than I was to them 'an infidel.' *There is only one religion*, though there are a hundred versions of it. We all had the same thing to say.[2]

§ 30. A FAITH SCIENTIFIC AND MYSTICAL

Perhaps, however, he does not mean literally that all wise men are now anxiously looking for 'the genuinely scientific religion', but only that they are looking for the hundred and first version of the one religion; that, owing, no doubt, to the present predominance of the sciences, they are looking for a new version of the one religion which shall be 'genuinely scientific'. Even so, why should the wise men accept Creative Evolution? As it will have been seen in the preceding chapter, Mr. Shaw's view of evolution can scarcely be described as scientific, *i.e.* as having much in common with the scientists' view. Indeed, concerning scientific matters Mr. Shaw is not, one fears, always to be relied upon. For instance, he says that 'Joan was what Francis Galton and other modern investigators of human faculty call a visualizer'[3]. But what did Joan of Arc do? According to Mr. Shaw, she imagined that the promptings of her imagination were the voices of saints. And what did Galton mean by: a visualizer? He meant a person who sees images in his mind's eye. He says:

> People who are imaginative almost invariably think of *numerals* in some form of visual imagery. If the idea of *six* occurs to them, the word 'six' does not sound in their mental ear, but the figure 6 in a written or printed form rises before their mental eye.[4]

---

[1] *Back to Methuselah*, p. lxxxv.
[2] *Plays Pleasant*, p. vii, my italics.
[3] *St. Joan*, p. xxi.
[4] Francis Galton: *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (Everyman edition), p. 79.

For Galton Joan of Arc would have been, not a visualizer, but a visionary.[1]

But Mr. Shaw's description of Creative Evolution as a 'genuinely scientific religion' involves a graver confusion than that. For he also says that 'evolution as a philosophy and physiology of the will is a mystical process, which can be apprehended only by a trained, apt, and comprehensive thinker'[2]. Thus, one must assume that, for him, Creative Evolution is 'genuinely scientific' and 'mystical' both. But how can this be?

If a religion could possibly be called scientific, it could be only in virtue of some such fact as that the knowledge upon which it was based was scientific knowledge, *i.e.* knowledge potentially obtainable by anyone. But to say that a process is mystical can only mean that it is apprehensible, not, as Mr. Shaw says, 'by a trained, apt, and comprehensive thinker'—whatever that may be— but by a mystic or by mystics. And mystics are, by definition, not as other men. What they know, if they do know it, is not knowledge directly accessible to the rest of us. We can obtain of it no more than glimpses, at second-hand. We can never verify it for ourselves, as we can, at least potentially, verify scientific knowledge. In short, what is mystical cannot be also scientific. Mr. Shaw's statements, in this respect, are so silly that they would not be worth discussing, were it not that, although potentially we can all become scientists, actually we have neither the training nor the leisure to verify what scientists tell us, and so are exactly in the same position with regard to scientific knowledge, as we are to mystical knowledge. We must accept both knowledges, if we are to accept them, on hearsay. But if we cannot verify either sort of knowledge for ourselves, we can at least see for ourselves that they are distinct.

Then, another point. Mr. Shaw further says:

> The Goddess of Reason . . . was no use at all, not because she was a goddess . . ., but because good conduct is not dictated by reason but by a divine instinct that is beyond reason. . . . Honor is a part of divinity: it is metaphysics: it is religion. Some day it may become

[1] op. cit., the section: Visionaries.
[2] *Back to Methuselah*, p. xliii.

scientific psychology. . . . Meanwhile we must bear in mind that our beliefs are continually passing from the metaphysical and legendary into the scientific stage.[1]

And also :

Their [the scientific bigots'] pretended advances from the metaphysical to the scientific are often disguised relapses into the pre-metaphysical stage of crude witchcraft, ancient augury, and African 'medicine'.[2]

That is to say, he declares that 'our beliefs are continually passing from the metaphysical and legendary into the scientific stage', and that there are 'pretended advances from the metaphysical to the scientific', and he refers to a 'pre-metaphysical stage'. He may imagine he is saying that, whereas hitherto we have based a belief in God on metaphysical grounds, we can now believe in God in virtue of theories, which he miscalls scientific, of evolution. But science tells us nothing about evolution in respect to its being the method of the Life Force, nor about the Life Force's being what is meant by God. Supposing we want to believe in God, we must, if hitherto we have had to base our belief on metaphysical grounds, still go on basing it on those grounds.

But his echo of Comte here has a more serious import than that. I mean, it can be taken to express crudely the view that the subject-matter of what is known as metaphysics, is properly the subject-matter of science, *i.e.* of, for instance, psychology and orthology jointly. That metastasis has been, and is still being, attempted by distinguished philosophers. But there appears to be no more reason for believing that it has been achieved, than for believing that Mr. Shaw's view of evolution is either scientific or mystical. For the view that what metaphysics is said to deal with, can only be dealt with by psychology, amounts to the view that there is no such subject as metaphysics. And that, as Bradley points out in the first pages of *Appearance and Reality*, is itself a metaphysical view. It cannot be supported by evidence obtained in psychology, but only by arguments which are metaphysical arguments.

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 365.
[2] Ibid., p. 362.

§ 31. THE IMMORTAL GERM-PLASM

To return to Mr. Shaw: in saying that we may now believe in God (so long as we believe in Him as the Life Force) on a scientific basis, he is giving only one example of his more general view that religious beliefs now turn out to have scientific authority, and that science requires us, not to abandon them, but to hold them in a different form. He supplies another example in what he says about immortality. Take the following passage:

> The modern devices for combining pleasure with sterility . . . enable . . . persons to weed themselves out of the race. . . . Even if this selective agency had not been invented, the purpose of the race would still shatter the opposition of individual instincts. . . . In short, the individual instinct in this matter . . . is really a finally negligible one.[1]

The words I wish to discuss are: 'enable . . . persons to weed themselves out of the race'. What do they mean? All persons die, and, in dying, cease, one would think, to be in the race. Thus, should Mr. Shaw not have said: 'enable . . . persons to avoid encumbering the race with their posterity'? No. He has chosen his words. And what, I take it, he is suggesting by them is that we can now believe in immortality, so long as we believe in it on a scientific basis, and that that scientific basis is supplied by Weismann's theory of the continuity of the germ-plasm. What, then, is that theory? It is a theory which supposes that germ-plasm grows in bulk, by 'doubling' or homogeneous division of the germ-cell, without altering in character, and that this unaltered germ-plasm is marshalled in the generative organs of the new individual to be ready to form the germ-cells of the third generation. Germ-plasm remains, according to the theory, distinct from soma-plasm (the material of the general body-cells) from the outset of the individual's growth, and in this mode the continuity of the germ-plasm from individual to individual is maintained. On the theory, a daughter is, in a sense, her mother's sister. Consequently, when Mr. Shaw says that persons are enabled, by certain devices, to weed themselves out of the race, he may be taken to mean that, so long as

[1] *Man and Superman*, p. 195.

persons have children, such persons continue to be in the race : they are immortal.

It is first to be remarked, as to this, that Mr. Shaw, in the preface to *Back to Methuselah,* declares himself to be a Neo-Lamarckian, and to be convinced of the inheritance of acquired characters. But the theory of the continuity of the germ-plasm requires the denial of the inheritance of acquired characters. For, obviously, if the germ-plasm is distinct in the individual from his soma-plasm *ab initio,* structural modifications occurring in that individual during his life, *i.e.* acquired characters, cannot be passed on to the next generation through his germ-plasm. Hence it is difficult to see how Mr. Shaw can at once be a Neo-Lamarckian and accept the theory of the continuity of the germ-plasm.

But that is by the way. What has mainly to be noticed is that the immortality with which the theory of the continuity of the germ-plasm is concerned, is the immortality of the germ-plasm, and of nothing else. It is, in no sense, the immortality of persons. Thus there can be no justification, in an acceptance of Weismann's theory, for speaking of persons' being enabled ' to weed themselves out of the race ' : it is not the persons who remain in the race, it is the germ-plasm. Moreover, the germ-plasm is physical or material. But the religious belief in immortality is a belief, not only in the immortality of persons, and not of their germ-plasms ; it is also a belief in a non-physical, a non-material immortality. The physical, material body is mortal : it perishes. That is never forgotten. After the skin worms will destroy the body. But something else survives. There lies the religious belief. Thus, to believe in the immortality of the germ-plasm is not a different way of believing what religious believers in immortality believe : it is a belief *toto coelo* different.

§ 32 CREATIVE EVOLUTION AS RELIGION

Such are some of the remarks which, in Mr. Shaw's description of his view of evolution, as ' the genuinely scientific religion ', the presence of the word : scientific, evokes. There has also to be considered whether belief in his view of evolution, or, rather, whether belief in his view of

evolution, coupled with belief in his vital dogmas of 'honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life', &c., constitutes a religion at all.

But before considering that, I would mention the point raised by such passages in his writings as this :

> Nine out of ten clergymen have no religious convictions ; they are ordinary officials carrying on a routine.[1]

And again :

> THE CAPTAIN. . . . Are your Christian fairy stories any truer than our stories about Jupiter and Diana, in which, I may tell you, I believe *no more than the Emperor does*, or any educated man in Rome.[2]

Both these passages reflect a view stated explicitly in that extract from *The Perfect Wagnerite* which I took (§ 2) as my starting-point for the discussion of Mr. Shaw's beliefs and opinions. His words there are :

> All these capable people [the few who are capable of government] are . . . forced . . . to affect the deepest veneration for creeds and ideals which they ridicule among themselves with cynical scepticism.[3]

And the view is the view that religion is devised and maintained by rulers and priests in order to carry on government. Here again Mr. Shaw is not voicing an idiosyncrasy, but a view shared with a number of other distinguished writers. It has now, however, been generally abandoned, for it has been seen to depend on the delusion that religion is something instituted *after* the establishment of the government it is supposed to assist. This is a delusion because a government which upholds a religion has not, as a rule, preceded the coming into existence of that religion.

Now, as to whether Mr. Shaw's view of evolution, coupled with belief in his 'great vital dogmas', constitutes a religion, how does the dictionary define the word : religion ? The *Concise Oxford* says :

> RELIGION : Human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience, effect of such recognition on conduct and mental attitude.

Perhaps Mr. Shaw would say that Creative Evolution and his vital dogmas are a religion according to this definition.

[1] *The Doctor's Dilemma*, p. liv.
[2] *Androcles and the Lion*, pp. 36–7, my italics. [3] p. 67.

The 'superhuman controlling power' is, for him, the Life Force. But if he were to say so, he would be forgetting that, according to him, human will is the highest organization of the will that created the whole universe, *i.e.* of the Life Force. Human will is the Life Force. Or, as he himself puts it time and again :

> Not one of Ibsen's characters who is not . . . the Temple of the Holy Ghost.[1]
>
> He [Man] will presently see that his discarded formula that Man is the Temple of the Holy Ghost happens to be precisely true.[2]

But what he means can only be understood in the light of this further statement : 'Now the man's God is his own humanity ; and he, self-satisfied at last, ceases to be selfish.'[3] And, of course, if the man's God 'is his own humanity', the man's God cannot also be 'superhuman', and Creative Evolution is not a religion according to the meaning of the word : religion, given by the *Concise Oxford.*

Let us open an even more authoritative dictionary, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and we shall find :

> RELIGION : Action or conduct indicating a belief in, reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power ; the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying this. A particular system of faith or worship.

It will be noticed that Mr. Shaw, when speaking of religion, entirely ignores the question of 'the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying' 'belief in, reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power'. Such an exercise or practice is, however, part of religion. At the same time, it is not possible to conceive of rites or observances which implied a belief in, reverence for, and desire to please human will, which, according to Mr. Shaw, is 'the highest organization we know of' the will that has created the whole universe, *i.e.* of the Life Force.

So, altogether, it does not appear that Mr. Shaw's 'genuinely scientific religion' is any more a religion than it is scientific.

[1] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 181.
[2] *Man and Superman*, p. 185.
[3] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 17.

§ 33. RELIGION AND MAGIC

There is yet more to be noticed in Mr. Shaw's conception of religion. For instance, as he imagines that belief in human immortality can turn into belief in the immortality of the germ-plasm, so he suggests that the celebrity accorded to, and the trust placed in, those he terms 'successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks', and such scientists as Lister and Pasteur, is a form of religious observance. He says:

> It is no longer our Academy pictures that are intolerable, but . . . our shameless substitution of successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks for saints as objects of worship, and our deafness and blindness to the calls and visions of the inexorable power that made us, and will destroy us if we disregard it.[1]

Again:

> When the centenary of his [Lister's] birth was celebrated in 1927, the stories of his miracles, told with boundless credulity and technical ignorance in all the newspapers, shewed that he was really being worshipped as a saint.[2]

Saints, however, are not worshipped; they are venerated. Further, veneration may be either one of two kinds. Mr. Shaw also says:

> The conflict between Mrs. Eddy and the secular governments was really a conflict between the Church of Christ Scientist and the new Church of Jenner and Pasteur Scientists.[3]

If the expression here, 'the new Church of Jenner and Pasteur Scientists', means that Jenner and Pasteur are now objects of veneration, then the veneration, in spite of the presence of the word: church, cannot obviously be religious veneration, since neither Pasteur nor Jenner is a saint. There must be some other kind of veneration, and the veneration of Jenner and Pasteur, if it exists, must be of this other kind. Likewise, if indeed 'successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks', and Lister, are—not, of course, as Mr. Shaw says they are, worshipped, since the saints, with whom they are compared, are not worshipped—but venerated, they too cannot be venerated as saints, for saints they are not. And what the other kind of veneration must be is superstitious veneration.

[1] *St. Joan*, p. xx. [2] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 434. [3] Ibid., p. 433.

What this implies is that Mr. Shaw confuses religion and magic. If 'successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks' are worshipped, as Mr. Shaw asserts, meaning that they are venerated, and Lister is worshipped, *i.e.* venerated, neither the swindlers, &c., nor Lister, can be venerated as saints are venerated, simply because they are not venerated for the same reason. The saints are venerated for their holiness; the swindlers, &c., and Lister are venerated for what they are reputed to perform. The saints are venerated as saints; the others are venerated as magicians.

That Mr. Shaw makes this confusion, not merely in such passages as the above, but in his mind, is borne out by this further passage, in which he says:

> At present, if a woman opens a consulting room in Bond Street, and sits there in strange robes professing to foretell the future by cards or crystals or revelations made to her by spirits, she is prosecuted as a criminal for imposture. But if a man puts on strange robes and opens a church in which he professes to absolve us from the guilt of our misdeeds, to hold the keys to heaven and hell, to guarantee that what he looses or binds on earth shall be loosed or bound in heaven, to alleviate the lots of souls in purgatory, to speak with the voice of God, and to dictate what is sin and what is not to all the world (pretensions which, if you look at them objectively, are far more extravagant and dangerous than those of the poor sorceress with her cards and tea leaves and crystals), the police treat him with great respect; and nobody dreams of prosecuting him as an outrageous impostor.[1]

Apart from whether there is given here an accurate description of a priest's or a clergyman's 'professions' or not, and neglecting the reason why those who deem the priest or clergyman an imposter cannot prosecute him, and of this reason Mr. Shaw must be perfectly well aware; one may point out that the comparison the passage attempts, between the Bond-street fortune-teller, on the one hand and the priest or clergyman, on the other, is no comparison at all, because the Bond-street fortune-teller is a magician, and the priest or clergyman is not.

Likewise, Mr. Shaw is again confusing religion and magic in this further passage. He says:

> For all you know Mrs. Eddy a thousand years hence may be worshipped as the Divine Woman by millions of civilized people, and

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 429.

Joseph Smith may be to millions more what Mahomet now is to Islam. You never can tell. People begin by saying 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' and end by saying 'Behold the Lamb of God!' [1]

Incidentally, do people begin by saying: 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' and end by saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God!'? There appears to be only one case in which people said: 'Is not this the carpenter's son?', and those people did not end by saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The words: 'Behold the Lamb of God!' are John the Baptist's, and he uttered them, not after, but *before* the countrymen of Jesus Christ inquired: 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' That aside, Jesus is not worshipped as the Divine Man by those who believe he was divine; he is not worshipped for his curative powers; or for his theories of healing (he didn't have any); and he was not first worshipped one thousand years after his death. Accordingly, to suggest, as the passage suggests, an analogy between the Christian religion's history, and an imaginary future for Mrs. Eddy's memory, is absurd. Especially as Mrs. Eddy, and all Christian Science healers, are what the Bond-street fortune-teller is, and what the 'successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks', and Lister must be, if they are the objects of such veneration as Mr. Shaw indicates; that is to say, they are all magicians.

I have already given the dictionary definition of religion. But what is magic? As to that, I will quote a recent French writer. He says:

La représentation qu'il [the African savage] se fait des choses est essentiellement magique, disons-nous. En d'autres termes, pour lui, dans tout phénomène, il y a ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas. Par ce qu'on voit nous ne désignons pas seulement ce que les yeux distinguent; c'est ce qui frappe les sens en général, ce que les sens constatent. Mais ce qu'ils saisissent n'est pas l'essentiel pour les individus que nous étudions. Ce qui intéresse surtout ceux-ci, c'est ce qu'on ne voit pas, c'est un ensemble de liaisons invisibles, intangibles, que rien ne décèle, mais que l'on soupçonne partout; c'est une participation à un pouvoir surnaturel. . . .

. . . le pouvoir magique, c'est-à-dire *une efficacité pure*, qui est cependant une substance matérielle et localisable en même temps que spirituelle, qui agit à distance et pourtant sans connexion directe, sinon

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 432.

par contact, mobile et mouvante sans se mouvoir, impersonnelle et revêtant des formes personnelles, divisible et continue.[1]

To believe in magic, then, is to believe that what we call natural is never natural alone, but simultaneously supernatural, and that the natural can be affected by our acting upon the supernatural. The magician has mysterious capacities which enable him to act on the supernatural accompanying the natural. And it is for these capacities that he is venerated. If, then, Mrs. Eddy, and 'successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks', and Lister, and Jenner and Pasteur, are venerated at all, it must be for mysterious capacities with which they are credited. They must be venerated as magicians.

Now, magic has no relation to religion. Though one may both believe in magic and accept a religion, it remains that magic is condemned by the Churches. Magic has distinct principles from religion, and an entirely different aim. So much is now commonly admitted. In confusing religion and magic, Mr. Shaw is once again echoing a widespread view, *viz* the view that religion is a kind of magic, or is akin to magic, or has grown out of magic. But that view has been found mistaken. I will quote a psychologist. He says :

> In considering how far psychology can throw light upon religion, it is desirable to set out from some general conception of what Religion is. . . . I am taking this particular line of approach to the problem, because it seems to me that in this way one can avoid so much of the arguing in a circle that is to be found in the historical approach, which is the usual so-called scientific approach to the question of religious sentiment. Usually, we find introductory chapters on lower forms of religious observance, and we have explained to us how, in the course of evolution, there must have been a pre-religious state in which magic figured largely. In magic the individual attempted to get his own way with the powers around him by spells and incantations, and then later, as a result of the failure, relative or absolute, of these spells, the individual turned from the attitude of magic to the attitude of prayer or supplication, and at the same time passed from polytheism to a form of monotheism. Along this line of thought, according to this natural history of religion, one is given the impression that the higher forms of religious feeling and religious insight are simply products of lower

[1] Raoul Allier : *Le Non-Civilisé et Nous* (Paris, 1927), pp. 38–40, his italics. English translation under the title of : *The Mind of the Savage* (London, 1929).

forms of mental activity : religion has grown out of forms of consciousness that could not themselves be called religious. . . . Such an approach to the problem of religion is inadequate, if not positively misleading. . . .[1]

The fact is that we do not know how religion arose, and we have no means of knowing. Certainly we are not justified in assuming that it developed out of magic and witchcraft, for religion, and magic and witchcraft, are found to exist concurrently, and for widely separate purposes. Still less, then, are we justified in assuming, as Mr. Shaw, faithfully reflecting current popular views, it is true, assumes, that religion and magic are two species of one genus.

[1] William Brown : Religion and Psychology, in *Science, Religion and Reality* (London : S.P.C.K., 1925), pp. 303–4.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLAIM TO INSPIRATION

§ 34. RELIGION AND ART

MR. SHAW contends that religion is dependent on art. From Mr. Shaw on religion, then, I pass—and this will conclude my examination of his views—to Mr. Shaw on art. The way in which he deems religion to be dependent on art is made clear by the following passage :

> Creative Evolution is already a religion, and is indeed unmistakably the religion of the twentieth century. . . . But it cannot become a popular religion until it has its legends, its parables, its miracles. . . . The revival of religion on a scientific basis does not mean the death of art, but a glorious rebirth of it.[1]

It is true that, just before this, he also says :

> There is no question of a new religion, but rather of redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible. . . . It is the adulteration of religion by the romance of miracles and paradises and torture chambers that makes it reel at the impact of every advance in science, instead of being clarified by it.[2]

Thus we are assured with equal emphasis, (a) that to give religion miracles and a ' sludgy residue ' of legends is to adulterate it, and (b), that the ' religion ' of Creative Evolution must have, *inter alia*, its legends and miracles ! Legends make ' belief impossible ', and at the same time without legends Creative Evolution ' cannot become a popular religion '. The paradox is no doubt only apparent. It is the old legends which, according to Mr. Shaw, are incredible. The task for art is to supply new legends and new parables for religion ' on a scientific basis '. The question whether Creative Evolution has ' a scientific basis '

[1] *Back to Methuselah*, pp. lxxviii–lxxix. [2] Ibid., p. lxii.

I have already dealt with. The question whether Creative Evolution can have credible new legends I need not go into. There remains the question why art should have the task with which Mr. Shaw entrusts it. One may first note that, for him, such a task has always been the task of art. Jesus was really an artist. Mr. Shaw says :

> When reproached, as Bunyan was, for resorting to the art of fiction when teaching in parables, he [Jesus] justifies himself on the ground that art is the only way in which the people can be taught. He is, in short, what we should call an artist and a Bohemian in his manner of life.[1]

And if St. Paul has a reputation, this is why :

> Paul . . . did not get his great reputation by mere imposition and reaction. . . . He comes out in his epistles as a genuine poet, though by flashes only.[2]

The suggestion seems to be that, if Jesus Christ and St. Paul taught anything that matters, it is because they were artists. The artist is the great teacher. Not the great teacher is an artist. The confusion Mr. Shaw is falling into here is the confusion evident in his assertion : 'Artist-philosophers are the only sort of artists I take quite seriously.'[3] He evidently imagines that the term : artist-philosopher, means an artist who is a philosopher. The term, however, was coined by Nietzsche, and what Nietzsche meant by it was : a philosopher who is an artist, *i.e.* who makes of his philosophy a work of art. In the same way, there might be an artist-ruler, *i.e.* a ruler who made of ruling an art. But for Mr. Shaw it is never the philosopher who may be an artist, but the artist who is a philosopher. Moreover, it is art which acts as the vehicle of revelation. He says :

> Let no one think that a child or anyone else can learn religion from a teacher or a book or by any academic process whatever. It is only by an unfettered access to the whole body of Fine Art : that is, to the whole body of inspired revelation, that we can build up that conception of divinity to which all virtue is an aspiration.[4]

What from 'the whole body of Fine Art' 'a child or anyone else' will learn about Creative Evolution one need

[1] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. xxix.
[2] Ibid., p. xcii.
[3] *Man and Superman*, p. xxviii.
[4] *Misalliance*, p. civ.

not ask. The point is: How does Mr. Shaw come to hold that the whole body of Fine Art is 'inspired revelation'?

But there is not only Fine Art; there is also imaginative literature. Especially, there is the theatre. And the theatre also, Mr. Shaw claims, can teach religion. He says: 'Modern European literature and music now form a Bible far surpassing in importance to us the ancient Hebrew Bible that has served us so long.'[1] How is this? Again, he says:

> The theatre is growing in importance as a social organ. . . . Modern civilization is rapidly multiplying the numbers to whom the theatre is both school and church.[2]

It may be remarked that, since a church's primary purpose is to serve as a place for the worship of God, it is difficult to see how the theatre can be, for anyone, a church. But why does Mr. Shaw imagine that it can be a school? Assuming he uses the word: church, to mean a place where one learns of religion, why does he imagine that a theatre can be a place where one learns of religion?

§ 35. THE CLAIM TO INSPIRATION

The answer is that, for him, the dramatist has an instinct for truth. He says, in fact:

> The best dramatic art is the operation of a divinatory instinct for truth.[3]

And all artists are really the instruments of the Life Force. He says, further:

> Ordinary men cannot produce really impressive art works. Those who can are men of genius: that is, men selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose.[4]

Again:

> What produces all these treatises and poems and scriptures of one sort and another is the struggle of Life to become divinely conscious of itself instead of blindly stumbling hither and thither in the line of least resistance.[5]

---

[1] *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, p. 207. [2] *Plays Pleasant*, p. xi.
[3] *Androcles and the Lion*, p. xlviii. [4] *Man and Superman*, p. xix.
[5] Ibid., p. xxi.

That is to say, he declares that 'the whole body of Fine Art' is 'inspired revelation', that 'modern literature and music now form a Bible far surpassing in importance to us the ancient Hebrew Bible that has served us so long', and that the theatre can be both school and church—all in virtue of his claim that great artists and writers, including, presumably, himself, are inspired. I shall not discuss why we should believe this of great artists and writers in general. But how does the claim affect Mr. Shaw's theory of the Life Force in particular?

It must mean that, although what he says about the Life Force, about Creative Evolution as its method, and about human will as its instrument, may be difficult to believe, it is nevertheless true because *he* has been 'selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose', and because *his* plays have been produced by 'the struggle of Life to become divinely conscious of itself'. But that does not take us, any more than the notion of the Life Force takes us, a single step outside the realm of pure theory.

Thus, when Mr. Shaw's ultimate justification for his beliefs is sought, it is found to amount to this. He says: (1) Believe my theory of a Life Force because I am inspired; (2) I am inspired because my theory of a Life Force requires that I should be.

And with that we may take leave of Mr. Shaw.

PART III

ACCORDING TO MR. ANDRÉ GIDE

CHAPTER I

DISCONCERTING CASES

§ 1. MR. GIDE'S WARNING

MR. ANDRÉ GIDE is a writer doubly strange and perplexing. On the one hand, most of the characters of his stories, and the individuals of flesh and blood in whom he takes an interest, are queer. '*L'étrange me sollicite*,' he says, and his remark about Dostoievsky : '*Il s'attache aux cas déconcertants*', applies to his literary self. On the other hand, as to the meaning of what he is saying the reader is often puzzled. It is not that he fails to express himself clearly. His style is simple and direct enough, and his sentences seem lucidity itself. But that simple and direct style is deceptive ; those lucid sentences do not immediately yield their meaning—at least their full meaning. In reading them one has the feeling that more is implied than is said.

And this is precisely what Mr. Gide, on his own confession, aims at producing in his reader. He aims at a classical style, and of this style he has said : 'Le classicisme—et par là j'entends : le classicisme français, tend tout entier vers la litote. C'est l'art d'exprimer le plus en disant le moins.' That sounds admirable. But the style does not appear to the reader quite as it appears to the author. For Mr. Gide his style may be concise ; for the reader it is suggestive, insinuative, and therefore often baffling. The extremity of the reader's standpoint is stated by one of Mr. Gide's critics, Mr. André Rouveyre, thus : 'Ce culte qu'il a de l'insinuation (d'ailleurs de plus en plus audacieuse) plutôt que de l'affirmation' ; and again : 'L'équivoque est le pivot de la nature de Gide.' For him Mr Gide's role in contemporary French literature is that of '*le Retors*'.[1]

[1] André Rouveyre : *Le Reclus et le Retors* (Paris, 1927). The quotations are from p. 165 and p. 133 respectively.

Be that as it may, in the paradox that his clear language conceals its ultimate meaning in its depths, Mr. Gide himself has found cause for self-satisfaction. He has said : ' La très grande clarté est, pour défendre une œuvre, la plus spécieuse ceinture. . . . Il semble qu'on en touche le fond d'abord. Mais on revient dix ans après et l'on entre plus avant encore.' Indeed, he has even contended that, in order to grasp completely what is the meaning conveyed in his work, one will have to be alive many years hence. Concerning him posterity alone can, he has declared, render a just verdict.

That may be taken as a warning. And in the face of it, to attempt forthwith, as others have done and I am doing, the examination of his views, may seem vain. But to the warning I have an answer. For Mr. Gide to be exercising the influence he does, it must be that some meaning, right or wrong, is being found in his writings already. I claim no more than to examine that contemporary meaning, which is being acted upon even now. Let posterity find another if it likes : the meaning which is at present being read into his work calls, in the meanwhile, for discussion.

Moreover, Mr. Gide has lately admitted [1] that what he intended, when he declared that only by posterity would he be understood, was that only by posterity would he be appreciated, for in France until 1916 he was, he points out, almost entirely neglected.

So I do not think that his reference to the superior wisdom of posterity need deter one. Especially as he has also said : ' En art, où l'expression seule importe, les idées ne paraissent jeunes qu'un jour.' [2] It remains, however, that to ascertain what are his real views will be rather in the nature of detective work.

§ 2. SOME OF HIS STORIES

Let me begin by considering the plots of some of his stories. The little tale entitled *La Tentative Amoureuse* has not, perhaps, been among his most influential writings, but it is evidently a parable, and, as such, significant. Two lovers live by the sea. Far across the bay they can

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, August, 1928, p. 234.
[2] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 140.

see a wall which must, they presume, enclose a magnificent estate. In the wall are gates, and at sundown these gates reflect an almost supernatural light. The lovers feel that the estate must be wonderful, and, although they have no cause for discontent, they set out one day to explore it. To reach the wall they have to walk a long way, all round the bay. At last they arrive beside the wall, but they are separated from it by a ditch which, as they can see, extends to the beach and is filled by the sea. If they are to get beyond the wall, they must seek an entrance inland. So they decide to follow the wall until they shall reach the gates they have so often seen at sundown. They walk for hours, the sun beats down on them, and presently they are by the sea again, on the far side. They have walked all round the land side of the estate without finding an entrance. On this far side the wall runs out into the sea. There is no means of entering at that point. They drag themselves home and reach there dog-tired.

Some days later they try again, and on this occasion they come upon a small door in the wall, which they had failed to notice the first time. They open the door and enter. The estate turns out to be a waste. Its whole expanse is overgrown and untidy.

A few days after having seen the estate, the lovers separate.

If we have not found the key to this tale in its telling, let us not pause to seek it now, but pass on to the earliest of the three important *récits*, *L'Immoraliste*.[1] This story takes its name from the character of the hero, Michel. Thanks to nursing by his bride and the soft Tunisian air, he is recovering at Biskra from consumption. The Arab urchins play about his lodgings, and one or other of them is always at hand to carry his rug. He grows very fond of some of them. One day, unseen himself, as he thinks, he watches his favourite, Moktir, steal a pair of scissors. Instead of interfering, he smiles to himself, and lets the boy make away with his spoil.

Later, Michel and his wife go to Paris, for he is quite well again. And in Paris he renews a friendship with a great traveller and man of the world, Ménalque, a decade

[1] Mercure de France. Mr. Gide's books are published by the Nouvelle Revue Française, except where otherwise indicated.

his senior. Ménalque tells him that the only way to live is to live dangerously and satisfy all one's desires. Michel is fascinated by the man. Everything seems dull in comparison with spending an evening with him, and, to the accompaniment of rare liqueurs and even drugs, listening to his entrancing conversation. Though Michel's wife is now about to have a child, he neglects her for Ménalque. And it is on returning home in the early morning, after a night with Ménalque, that he learns how, in his absence, the baby has been stillborn.

The couple go to an estate of theirs in Normandy. There, with a farm-hand, Michel takes to passing nights poaching in his own woods. He is detected by his game-keeper. He sells the estate. His wife and he return to Paris. Soon she dies.

Thereupon Michel goes back to Biskra. The Arab urchins play about his little house, and of some of them he is very fond. After a time he summons four boyhood friends from France, and, after dinner, tells them his story.

The second *récit* is *La Porte Étroite*.[1] As a boy, Jerôme, who lives at Havre, falls in love with his cousin, Alissa, slightly his senior. When they are grown up, she postpones their betrothal. He may, she says, find that he prefers someone younger. Her secret intention is to resign him to her younger sister, Juliette. The latter has conceived a violent passion for him, but of this he is entirely unaware. She is driven to tell him that Alissa thinks they ought to marry. He declares the suggestion absurd, and Juliette, mortified, promptly accepts an elderly suitor. Then his university studies, and a visit to Italy, separate him from Alissa for quite some time. He just misses seeing her on the eve of his military service, and so altogether it is several years before they meet again.

He now lives in Paris, and it is only a visit. Alissa is no more inclined than before to allow their engagement. She bids him not stay long. In the years that follow, while he remains devoted, he sees her only on three more occasions, and each time she looks paler than before, and insists ever more emphatically that they are not for each other.

[1] Mercure de France. Translated as : *Strait is the Gate.*

Then he hears of her death, and her journal is bequeathed to him. From its pages he learns for the first time how passionately Juliette had cared for him, and he also discovers how Alissa, once she had forced herself to consent to give him up, had been unable to reconcile herself to the vanity of her sacrifice. Yet, so she tells her journal, if Jerôme had only made the right move at the right moment, she would have agreed to marry him. When he is away she weakens time and again in her resolve to renounce him. But her sense of sacrifice always reasserts itself. She feels that, by giving up Jerôme, she is drawing nearer to God. At the last she had taken to dowdy clothes, and this turns out to have been a final effort to drive away the temptation which Jerôme in his devotion remained.

Les Caves du Vatican [1] is, in a way, the most important of the three stories, for, according to Mr. Charles Du Bos [2], from 1917 to 1923 its hero was also the hero of French youth. This was on account of that hero's *acte gratuit*, or crime without a motive.[3] And, while the whole story is undoubtedly very amusing, that is all of its plot I need mention here. Lafcadio, the hero in question, is in the Rome-Naples night express, when he suddenly decides he would like to have, merely for the sake of experience, the experience of committing a crime. There is only one other person in the compartment, an inoffensive-looking man, who, however, is foolish enough to get up and lean against the carriage-door beside which Lafcadio is sitting, in order to get a view of himself in the window glass. While he is thus mirroring himself, Lafcadio silently raises the door handle ; the door swings open ; the stranger lurches forward, makes one wild, vain clutch at Lafcadio to save himself, and falls out, over the parapet of a bridge across which the train is roaring, into the dry bed of a river below.

[1] Translated as : *Lafcadio's Adventures.*

[2] *Le Dialogue avec André Gide* (Paris, 1929), p. 168.

[3] Cf. François Mauriac : *La Vie et la Mort d'un Poète* (Paris, 1924), pp. 163–4 : ' *Les Caves du Vatican* d'André Gide ont inspiré toute une littérature à propos de crimes immotivés, " d'actes gratuits ".' Quoted by Charles Du Bos : loc. cit.

§ 3. 'LES FAUX-MONNAYEURS'

Mr. Gide's most recent fiction [1], *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* [2], is described by him as his first novel. It deals with a large number of characters, but has no strict plot. First, there is an adolescent, Bernard. He has just come across some old love-letters of his mother's. From these he discovers that his mother's husband, whom he had been led to regard as his father, is not his father. The writer of the letters is his father. The discovery prompts him to leave home. He has only fifty centimes in his pocket, but he picks up a dropped cloak-room ticket, and, after withdrawing the suit-case for which the ticket was issued, he becomes, by a stroke of fortune, the secretary of the suit-case's owner.

Then there is Olivier, another adolescent and Bernard's friend. Olivier is in love with the owner of the suit-case, his uncle Édouard. Olivier has an elder brother, Vincent, who abandons his mistress, a married woman, Laura, at the very moment when she is about to have a child by him. He did have sufficient money to enable her to bear the child clandestinely, but he gambles this money away, and when he wins it back, and more, Édouard, whom the woman had wanted to marry originally, has come to her rescue, and it is too late for Vincent to help her.

Vincent introduces Olivier to a wealthy amateur of letters, the Comte de Passavant, and when Édouard engages Bernard, Olivier's friend, as his secretary, and takes him off to Switzerland to act as a kind of chaperon for Laura, Vincent's cast-off mistress, while she recovers her health, Olivier is filled with jealous rage, and accepts an invitation from Passavant to spend the holidays with him in Corsica.

Meanwhile, Passavant has introduced Vincent to a Lady Griffith. She falls in love with him, and carries him off to Africa, where she is drowned.

In Switzerland Bernard falls in love with Laura. It is a case of pure devotion. But Édouard and Bernard do not get on. In the autumn, when they return to Paris, he dismisses him and gets him a job in a *pension* for schoolboys.

[1] Since I wrote the above, another work, *L'École des Femmes*, has appeared.

[2] Translated in U.S.A. as: *The Counterfeiters.*

Most of the characters in the novel meet at a party, and there Olivier is reconciled with Édouard. The latter takes Olivier home with him, and so overwhelmed with happiness is the lad, that next morning he attempts suicide.

Édouard is writing a novel called *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, and there are long extracts from his diary, in which he discusses the novel as a form, and also many of the characters in Mr. Gide's novel.

Yet a third adolescent, Armand, behaves abominably to the younger of his two sisters in the *pension* where Bernard is employed, and one evening drives Bernard to make the girl his mistress. He reforms at the end of the novel. But by then he has syphilis.

Then there is Armand's father, the Protestant clergyman, who runs the *pension*. One of his daughters discovers a notebook of his, in which he has noted his vain efforts to stop smoking. The daughter shows the notebook to Édouard, and suggests that the word : ' smoking ', stands for something else.

There is also the music teacher, old La Pérouse, who has discovered that to resist temptation successfully is to yield to the temptation of vanity, and who implies that therefore it is wise to yield to temptation.

Finally there are some schoolboys who pass counterfeit money. One of them, Boris, the grandson of La Pérouse, has a nervous disease which has followed upon his giving up '*de mauvaises habitudes*'. In the last chapter, after Bernard —who, with Édouard, is the co-hero of the novel—has returned home to his putative father's roof, Boris is persuaded by his school-fellows to shoot himself in the midst of morning school.

§ 4. PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

In addition to fiction, Mr. Gide is the author of a number of volumes of reminiscences. One is entitled *Amyntas*. It is a notebook of sojourns in North Africa. It certainly insinuates more than it affirms ; it is full of hints of a peculiar kind. Sand dunes in it mean more than they appear to. But there is no need to consider these hints now, because, in another book which I shall mention presently, the same ground is covered without any dis-

sembling. I will, however, extract one incident from *Amyntas*.

Mr. Gide visits a soldier in hospital at Blida. The soldier says to him :

—. . . Moi, je ne tiens pas à vivre longtemps, voyez-vous ; je voudrais . . . comment dire ? . . . vivre en très peu de temps le plus possible. Vous ne comprenez pas cela, vous ?
—Oh ! oh ! fis-je.

And, in order no doubt to live as intensely as possible, the soldier asks his visitor to obtain for him some 'kief' to smoke. And, although to possess 'kief' is illegal, Mr. Gide gets some for the soldier, and some for himself too ! [1]

Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises is the notes Mr. Gide made while he was, at his own insistent request—for most landowners in Normandy are spared jury duty—a juryman at Rouen Assizes. During that period there were tried cases of murder, rape, incendiarism, and embezzlement. Of the accused in a case of incendiarism, he says :

J'ai remarqué chez Marceau un singulier malaise lorsqu'il sentait que la *recomposition* de son crime n'était pas parfaitement exacte—mais qu'il ne pouvait ni remettre les choses au point, ni *profiter de l'inexactitude*. C'est ce que cette affaire présenta pour moi de plus curieux.[2]

And of another incendiarist he notes :

Le médecin assermenté nous parle de l'étrange soulagement, de la détente que Bernard lui a dit avoir éprouvés après avoir bouté le feu. Il lui a avoué, du reste, n'avoir plus éprouvé la même détente après les incendies suivants.[3]

A post office sorter is brought to trial, charged with embezzling, and absconding with, a registered letter, containing 13,000 francs. Daily this sorter had, Mr. Gide says, to handle letters containing large sums. On the very morning he ran away there was, beside the letter he took, another letter, also within his reach, a letter he saw, and containing 15,000 francs. This second letter he let alone. Further, after having spent 246 of the 13,000 francs on drinks in a brothel, the sorter had given himself up, returned the balance of the 13,000 francs, and offered to pay back in instalments what he had spent.

Another case is that of Charles, a private coachman,

[1] *Amyntas*, pp. 137–8. [2] p. 35, his italics. [3] p. 38.

charged with the murder of his mistress. He had stabbed her 110 times. Why he does not know, and it seems, according to Mr. Gide, that while he was stabbing her he was unaware of what he was doing, except at the beginning and the end. He thinks it was because she had repulsed him on the previous night and again that morning. It was early, before they were dressed, that he attacked her. Evidently he did not, Mr. Gide says, have any desire to kill her; possibly he was sadistic; certainly his was a '*crime passionnel*' if ever there was one; but he was not, strictly speaking, a murderer.

A third book of reminiscences is *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, Mr. Gide's recollections of his childhood and youth. As a child, as young as he can remember, he was, he says, addicted to '*de mauvaises habitudes*'. He and the concierge's son would play, 'l'un près de l'autre, mais non l'un avec l'autre', under the dining-room table. Did one initiate the other? If so, which was the initiator? He does not know.

While still a small child he was taken to see a beautiful grown-up cousin, whose dress on that occasion left her shoulders bare. He was led up to kiss her, but instead of kissing her on the cheek, he found himself biting her dazzling smooth shoulder.

He remembers, too, discovering that the cook at home, who was leaving to get married, was in love with the parlour-maid. All night he overheard, he says, their farewell sobbing in the next room, although, of course, it was only years after that he understood its significance.

In those childhood days he enjoyed looking at statues of nudes, but they did not produce in him any erotic excitement:

> Les thèmes d'excitation sexuelle étaient tout autres: le plus souvent une profusion de couleurs ou de sons extraordinairement aiguës et suaves; parfois aussi l'idée de l'urgence de quelque acte important, que je devrais faire, sur lequel on compte, qu'on attend de moi, que je ne fais pas, qu'au lieu d'accomplir, j'imagine; et c'était aussi, toute voisine, l'idée de saccage, sous forme d'un jouet aimé que je détériorais: au demeurant nul désir réel, nulle recherche de contact.[1]

[1] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. I., p. 86. The edition invariably referred to is that published by the Nouvelle Revue Française and dated: 1924. There is a more recent edition (1929) in one volume.

As for literary sources of excitement, the metamorphosis of Gribouille in George Sand's story of that name, when he jumps into the water and is changed into an oak twig, delighted him as much, he says, as a page of *Aphrodite* would the ordinary schoolboy. Likewise a passage in *Les Dîners de Mademoiselle Justine* by Madame de Ségur, that in which the servants, in the absence of their masters, have a celebration, and all the crockery is smashed, sent him into ecstasy.

Later, when he was older, the school bully one day rubbed his face with a dead cat, and to avoid remaining at that school, young Gide successfully simulated a nervous disease.

Still later, he was put to board in a master's house in Paris, and was found to be spending too much time over some pet turtle doves he had acquired. The room in which they were kept was padlocked. Thereupon he bought a key and, in full view of the master's sister who, he knew, could see him from her window, he opened the padlock, and went in to see his doves. When she caught him beside their cage, all his efforts could not make her understand that he had not tried to deceive her ; what he had wanted to do was to protest.

He grew up and visited Algeria. He fell ill on the way over and began to spit blood. He stayed on to recover. While still convalescent, he discovered that in making love to women he obtained no pleasure. His adolescence had been entirely chaste, and he had no clue as to why the experience should be so disappointing. Then, at Sousse in Tunisia, he went among the sand dunes one morning with '*fuscus Amyntas*'. It was a revelation. A second and even more wonderful adventure occurred during a subsequent stay in Algeria when, with Oscar Wilde, he was at Blida, near Algiers, Wilde on this occasion acting as Uncle Pandarus. There was a third episode with a young boatman on Lake Como.

Vainly did he struggle, he says, against his leaning. When he failed to satisfy it, he lapsed into what he calls '*le vice*'. He could not write ; even his piano did not attract him. He saw, looming ahead, insanity and death.

The book concludes with his engagement to a cousin, to whom he had previously proposed unsuccessfully.

§ 5. THE FAITS-DIVERS

Then there are the *Faits-Divers* which Mr. Gide has published irregularly in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* from November, 1926, to June, 1928. They are newspaper cuttings which he has collected over a long period. They include the report of a boy's suicide in a *lycée* at Clermont-Ferrand, which happening is incorporated in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* ; other *étranges* suicides ; *étranges* murders ; statistics of suicides in Russia ; a survivor's story of the wreck off the coast of Brittany in the winter of 1905 of the L.S.W.R. ss. Hilda ; a report of the Johnson-Jeffries prize fight at Reno, Nevada, in 1910 ; the account of a blind husband's petition for divorce from his blind wife, on the ground that she had misled him concerning her age and her looks ; the report of a man's having said : No, at his wedding ; the account of how a boy, who was being prepared for missionary work, three times started a fire in a cathedral, and each time sent an anonymous letter to the police accusing himself of the deed.

Still other *Faits-Divers* are about other self-accusers. One is about a chemist who was put in an asylum by his wife, on the ground that he had talked to her of museum attendants (he had already been in an asylum once before). Another deals with a stenographer in Vienna who, on being dismissed, appealed to St. Theresa of Lisieux to save her, and her employer was thereupon visited by a lady who bade him retain the girl ; and on being shown a portrait of the saint, the employer exclaimed : 'Yes, that's the lady ! '

Now, it will not be disputed that all these stories, reminiscences, and *faits-divers*, are indeed *cas déconcertants* and *étranges*. But why does Mr. Gide specialize in such cases ?

CHAPTER II

MAN'S UNCLEARED JUNGLE

§ 6. THE IMAGINATIVE WRITER'S SUBJECT-MATTER

LET me turn to Mr. Gide's critical essays. In some of these he defines his conception of the imaginative writer's job. Among other things he says :

> Il me paraît que l'importance des écrivains de cette époque [the seventeenth century], le caractère classique de leurs œuvres, venaient précisément de ce qu'ils intégraient en eux la totalité des préoccupations morales, intellectuelles et sentimentales de leur temps.[1]

But in the great French writers of before the advent of Romanticism :

> L'étude de l'homme occupe plus que l'étude des hommes. Molière trace des *types* bien plutôt que des caractères, ainsi que La Bruyère, le plus souvent, malgré le titre de son ouvrage. Si Racine a tendance à individualiser ses héros, Corneille, par contre, et Voltaire plus tard, généralisent.[2]

Whereas today it is generally understood that the truth about men must be individual. In fact, psychological truth is not general, but particular. He says :

> Certainement les vérités psychologiques paraissent à Dostoïewsky ce qu'elles sont en réalité : des vérités particulières.[3]

Further, Mr. Gide cannot take any interest in opinions ' avant de m'intéresser à la personne '[4], for, according to him, ' les opinions n'existent pas en dehors des individus '[5].

Hence, if writers today are to follow in the wake of the

[1] *Incidences*, p. 43. [2] Ibid., pp. 184–5n., his italics.
[3] *Dostoïewsky* (Plon), p. 139. The book has been translated as : *Dostoievsky*.
[4] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 191.
[5] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 12.

great French classical writers, and integrate 'la totalité des préoccupations morales, intellectuelles et sentimentales' of our time, it must, he implies, be to the individual that they will go for their material.

The literary artist should not imagine that, because his illustrious predecessors did admirable work, no course confronts him but slavishly to follow them, not only in style, but in the choice of material. The time has arrived, Mr. Gide says, for art to be given a new direction:

> Il ne s'agit plus, pour l'artiste de valeur, de prendre appui sur l'art d'hier pour tâcher d'aller au-delà, et de reculer des limites, mais de changer le sens même de l'art et d'inventer à son effort une nouvelle direction.[1]

§ 7. RICARDO V. CAREY

But a direction leading where? Mr. Gide replies in his book, *Nouveaux Prétextes*[2]. Some young French writers had asserted that, since, on the one hand, it was generally admitted that the great masters of the seventeenth century had reached the summits of French literature, and since, on the other hand, the same *altitude* is never twice reached in the history of a literature, French writers were now condemned to do no more than write a few splendid pages for inclusion in anthologies. In reply Mr. Gide contrasts the respective economic theories of Ricardo and Carey.

Ricardo's theory is, he says, that when a region has been cultivated for some time, the best land in that region is all occupied. The first settlers having appropriated the choicest land, the next arrivals have to be content with the second best, and so on in order of quality. Soon only the poorest soil remains untilled, and although the ambition of the latest comers may spur them to attempt its subjection, such land can, in return for the greatest efforts, yield only successively poorer crops.

Carey's theory, on the contrary, is, Mr. Gide says, that the first settlers do not take up the richest land. The earliest land to be settled is that which is most easily and most conveniently cultivated; that is, not the richest, but the poorest, that which is reached first and which, for a long time, will satisfy the settlers' needs. Such land ('I am

[1] *Prétextes*, p. 39. [2] pp. 85–93.

thinking,' says Mr. Gide to the young writers he is answering, 'of your *altitude* in literature.') is that of the high plateaus, the soil of which has no depth and little natural vegetation. Over such soil the plough (or style) will readily triumph. But the other lands, the rich lands, the lowlands, will be considered only by later settlers. For a long time these lowlands must remain on the margin of cultivation, wild and unexplored. Only gradually will civilized man grow alive to their potentialities.

'What is a fertile soil?' Mr. Gide quotes Carey as asking. It is a soil which in a state of nature is overrun by an exuberant vegetation, and this before the land can be settled, must first be cleared, or else it is an alluvium ever threatened by floods, against which, before it can be settled, it must be protected. And so, concludes Mr. Gide, it is the dark and luxuriant forests, in which the thick undergrowth and the serried tree-trunks hamper and tire the pioneer, lands overrun with wild and crafty beasts, or shifting marshlands from which rise dangerous exhalations—it is these regions which are at once the most fecund and the last to be cultivated.

As regards natural forces, Carey's theory applies, Mr. Gide says, even more completely: 'They are,' he says, 'domesticated in inverse ratio to their potentialities.'

But it is especially to psychology that, according to Mr. Gide, Carey's theory applies with the greatest significance. What is available for the satisfaction of the earliest desire to make poetry? Not the richest regions of the mind, but the most docile. At the outset, and for long afterwards, a literature must be confined to the highlands: its material will be lofty thoughts, lofty sentiments, and noble passions. Meanwhile the plains and the deeper depressions are covered with a rich alluvium: there, in the thick brushwood, Rousseau went botanizing; the Romantics followed in his footsteps as mere marauders.

These regions still await their explorers. Mr. Gide says:

On vient nous répéter souvent qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau dans l'homme. Peut-être, mais tout ce qu'il y a dans l'homme, on ne l'a sans doute pas découvert.[1]

[1] *Morceaux Choisis*, p. 114.

§ 8. THE TWO CURIOSITIES

What, according to Mr. Gide, the literary artist requires, in order to undertake the exploration of these rich regions in man, man's uncleared jungle, is curiosity. But it must be a daring and masculine curiosity. Sinbad the Sailor had that kind of curiosity, so Mr. Gide assures us, and, indeed, he finds that it occupies such a considerable place in all Arabian tales that it seems to him, he says, that, in comparison, it has no place at all in European literature, or in Western myths and popular legends either. In the West there is curiosity certainly, but it is, Mr. Gide says, Eve's curiosity, or Pandora's, or Psyche's : that curiosity is weakness ; it is a feminine curiosity. Sinbad's, the curiosity of the East, is, on the contrary, strong and masculine : it is a kind of avidity of both the mind and the senses.[1]

Mr. Gide evidently considers that he himself has displayed this oriental and masculine form of curiosity. Yet it is, he declares, extremely perilous : there lies its fascination for him. This kind of curiosity ' me paraît ', he says, ' la plus infernale peut-être des *énergies* dont parle Blake ', perhaps it ' mène l'homme à sa perte, mais l'humanité au progrès '[2].

§ 9. WICKEDNESS NOT ALWAYS WRONG?

It is not only for art's sake that the literary artist should, in Mr. Gide's view, display this masculine curiosity, explore man's uncleared jungle and seek to discover the as yet undiscovered in man. He suggests that, by undertaking this task, the writer may contribute to increasing the harmoniousness of social life, and so render individual lives both more pleasant and fuller. For at present man is, he holds, constricted by established morals. He contends that established morals, to which man is compelled to conform, or, rather, to appear to conform, are based upon a purely conventional conception of man's nature ; one might even say that they are contrary to man's nature : they are based on the notion that man's nature can be altered. But, Mr. Gide insists, man's nature cannot be altered.

And, indeed, established morals do not, he says, alter people ; they only compel them to live insincerely. Behind

[1] *Prétextes*, pp. 221–2.

[2] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, November, 1927, pp. 667–8.

their conventional behaviour their real nature is ever striving to assert itself. Here is a character in one of his books who may be considered to be speaking for him :

—Et quand il n'y aurait pas la société pour nous contraindre, ce groupe y suffirait, de parents et d'amis auxquels nous ne savons pas consentir à déplaire. Ils opposent à *notre sincérité incivile* une image de nous, de laquelle nous ne sommes qu'à demi responsables, qui ne nous ressemble que fort peu, mais qu'il est indécent, je vous dis, de déborder. En ce moment, c'est un fait : j'échappe ma figure, je m'évade de moi. . . . O vertigineuse aventure ! ô périlleuse volupté ! . . . Mais je vous romps la tête ? [1]

This theory leads Mr. Gide to recall a suggestive phrase of Balzac's : ' Les mœurs sont l'hypocrisie des nations.' [2] The phrase makes him wonder :

Veut-il dire, peut-être, que ces passions, que représente l'auteur, ne sont pas en nous supprimées par les mœurs, mais cachées ? que nos mouvements mesurés ne sont que pour donner le change ; que c'est nous qui sommes les comédiens (*hypocritès*, en grec, vous le savez, veut dire : *acteur*) ; que notre politesse n'est que feinte ; et qu'enfin la vertu, cette ' politesse de l'âme ', comme l'appelle Balzac encore, que la vertu n'est, la plupart du temps, qu'en décor ? Serait-ce de là que viendrait en partie notre plaisir au théâtre : entendre parler haut des voix qu'en nous la bienséance étouffe ?—Parfois.—Mais plus souvent l'homme regarde les passions sur la scène comme d'affreux monstres domptés.[3]

If on the stage, then, these passions appear to the spectator as ' affreux monstres domptés ', what are they in actual life ? If it were allowed by morals that these monsters should be given rein, what would ensue ? But they sometimes are given rein. In spite of morals and public disapproval, the natural man does out. In spite of people's efforts to deform themselves into the shape of convention, they cannot help behaving naturally on occasion : the monsters may be tamed on the stage, but they are not tamed in actual human breasts. Mr. Gide says :

En ce temps je ne savais pas encore à quel point le natif l'emporte sur l'acquis, et qu'à travers tous les apprêts, les empois, les repassages et les plis, la naturelle étoffe reparaît, qui se tient, d'après le tissu, raide ou floche.[4]

[1] Defouqueblize in *Les Caves du Vatican*, p. 267, my italics.
[2] *Physiologie du Mariage*, current Flammarion edition, p. 49.
[3] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 17.
[4] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. II., p. 115.

'Le natif l'emporte sur l'acquis', and men have, as it were, to fulfil an internal destiny.

This being so, the question arises: We regard our passions as monsters, but are they, in truth, monstrous? Mr. Gide doubts it. It will be admitted, he argues, that there is no such person as an entirely bad man or an entirely good man. He says:

> Je songe qu'en psychologie il n'y a pas de sentiments simples et que bien des découvertes dans le cœur de l'homme restent à faire.[1]

We are all bad and good by turns; indeed, more than that, we are all bad and good simultaneously. To be bad, to be good—both are natural. Can we be sure, then, that to be bad, to be wicked, is always wrong? Wrong in the long run, that is. Can we be sure than when a man throws off the restraint of morals and acts naturally, and happens thereby to do something evil, he is necessarily going to the devil?

We can tell only from the study of cases of apparent wrong-doing, of cases of strange and disconcerting behaviour; only by seeking to learn both the springs and the consequences—the consequences to the individual concerned—of such behaviour. It is, Mr. Gide's critical essays lead one to believe, in that direction that one should seek the key to such stories as *La Tentative Amoureuse*, *L'Immoraliste*, *La Porte Étroite*, *Les Caves du Vatican*, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, and to the books of reminiscences, *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises*, *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, &c. It is more or less on that account then, one realizes, that Mr. Gide has dwelt so much upon the *étrange*, and has devoted so much of his writing to *cas déconcertants*.

[1] *Incidences*, p. 87.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL TO HAPPINESS

§ 10. THE FINALITY OF ALL ACTION

MR. GIDE began with a sense of the limiting effect of all action. His 'philosophy' is, it has been said, that one should remain ever in a state of tension, of unsatisfied desire. What is meant is that he looks upon the satisfaction of any aim as unsatisfying :

> Car, je te dis en vérité, Nathanaël, chaque désir m'a plus enrichi que la possession toujours fausse de l'objet même de mon désir.[1]

At first he carried this, as I say, to the point of rejecting all action. In an early book, *Paludes*, he sought to expose the folly of any realization of life. In being realized, life is, he pointed out, immobilized, enclosed ; in being given form, life expires. So long as no action has been taken, possibility holds open a variety of courses, all promising, all pregnant with surprise. If we must act, it should be contingently, gratuitously, at haphazard ; actions should not be willed, rather they should be allowed. Then, says Jacques Rivière, in the course of his study of Mr. Gide [2], then one might feel distinct from them, as a pianist, choosing the keys he plays, understands that he and they are distinct. But that is impossible. We are buried beneath our actions ; we no longer exist except in them ; they absorb us. Better, then, to avoid action. In that way alone can we know, in all its purity and delight, our own life. For the incomparable advantage of detachment resides in the ability which it confers on a man to grow aware that he is alive. He is free ! 'Ce n'est pas des actes que je veux faire naître,' Mr. Gide says [3], 'c'est de la liberté que je veux dégager.' Again, there is this passage :

[1] *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, p. 15. [2] In *Études*. [3] *Paludes*, p. 207.

La nécessité de l'option me fut toujours intolérable ; choisir m'apparaissait non tant élire, que repousser ce que je n'élisais pas. . . . Et je restais souvent sans plus rien oser faire, éperdument et comme les bras toujours ouverts, de peur, si je les refermais pour la prise, de n'avoir saisi *qu'une* chose.[1]

§ II. THE CALL TO HAPPINESS

Mr. Gide, when he wrote *Paludes*, held living in suspicion, but soon his suspicion of living changed into enthusiasm for leading one's own life, and he wrote *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, in which he says :

Il faut agir sans *juger* si l'action est bonne ou mauvaise. Aimer sans s'inquiéter si c'est le bien ou le mal.
Nathanaël, je t'enseignerai la ferveur.[2]

It is neither a story nor an essay, but rather a series of lyrical notes, with, occasionally, a few verses, and it is addressed to a hypothetical Nathanaël, 'un adolescent, pareil à celui que j'étais à seize ans, mais plus libre, plus hardi, plus accompli'[3], who is bidden to travel, to break all ties and go away, to go away not only in the flesh, not only by removing his body elsewhere, but to go away mentally too, and force his mind to wander far from everything to which he has become attached. Let him follow all his impulses, gratify all his desires, and look upon any goal he may have in view, not as a goal, but merely as something to be reached, passed, and left behind. To be happy—that is one's sole duty, and in order to be happy it is enough to be aware that one is. 'Que l'homme est né pour le bonheur, certes toute la nature l'enseigne.' And life can be so much more splendid than men are ready to allow. Here Mr. Gide says :

Mes sensations se sont ouvertes comme une religion. Peux-tu comprendre cela : toute sensation est d'une *présence* infinie.[4]

Comprendre, c'est se sentir capable de faire. *Assumer le plus possible* d'HUMANITÉ, voilà la bonne formule.[5]

Ne distingue pas Dieu du bonheur et place tout ton bonheur dans l'instant.[6]

---

[1] *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, pp. 77–8, his italics.
[2] *Les Nourritures*, p. 16, his italics.
[3] Les Nouvelles Nourritures, *Morceaux Choisis*, p. 250.
[4] *Les Nourritures*, p. 18, his italics.
[5] Ibid., p. 19, his italics.
[6] Ibid., p. 27.

Volupté ! Ce mot je voudrais le redire sans cesse ; je le voudrais synonyme de *bien-être*, et même qu'il suffit de dire être tout simplement.[1]

If only we will enjoy life when it is at hand :

Nathanaël, ah ! satisfais ta joie quand ton âme en est souriante—et ton désir d'amour quand tes lèvres sont encore belles à baiser, et quand ton étreinte est joyeuse.

Car tu penseras, tu diras : Les fruits étaient là ; leur poids courbait, lassait déjà les branches ;—ma bouche était là et elle était pleine de désirs ;—mais ma bouche est restée fermée, et mes mains n'ont pu se tendre parce qu'elles étaient jointes pour la prière ;—et mon âme et ma chair sont restées désespérément assoiffées.—L'heure est désespérément passée.[2]

These passages illustrate the style of the book. It is, Mr. Gide says, ' un livre d'une folie très méditée '.[3]

Its rule of life is, however, for the strong. Replying to the condemnation of the emigrant which Maurice Barrès pronounced in his novel, *Les Déracinés*, Mr. Gide says :

Aux forts seuls la véritable instruction. Aux faibles l'enracinement, l'encroûtement dans les habitudes héréditaires qui les empêcheront d'avoir froid.—Mais à ceux qui, non plus faibles, ne cherchent pas, avant tout, leur confort, à ceux-ci, le déracinement, proportionné autant qu'il se peut à leur force, à leur vertu—la recherche du dépaysement qui exigera d'eux la plus grande vertu possible. Et peut-être pourrait-on mesurer la valeur d'un homme au degré de dépaysement (physique ou intellectuel) qu'il est capable de maîtriser.—Oui, dépaysement ; ce qui exige de l'homme une gymnastique d'adaptation, un rétablissement sur du neuf : voilà l'éducation que réclame l'homme fort,—dangereuse il est vrai, éprouvante ; c'est une lutte contre l'étranger ; mais il n'y a éducation que dès que l'instruction modifie.[4]

But even the strong should not go too far in their obedience to every passing impulse, and their gratification of every stray desire. After writing *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, Mr. Gide wrote a play, *Saül*, in which the full acceptance of his thesis in *Les Nourritures Terrestres* is held up to parody. King Saul is shown to have entertained every passing desire, to have left his self entirely disengaged, and to have accepted all things. As a result, he has gradually annihilated himself, worn out and destroyed his will. In Mr. Gide's own words, his spirit is broken, and his personality completely disintegrated, through his having yielded to the blandishments of all his desires.

[1] *Les Nourritures*, p. 51. [2] Ibid., p. 173. [3] *Prétextes*, p. 51. [4] loc. cit.

Saül, in short, is a warning not to act too literally upon the call to happiness, the call to live fully and in every instant, which was uttered in *Les Nourritures*. Mr. Gide has, indeed, always insisted upon the saving grace of common sense. He says :

> Ce qui manque à chacun de mes héros, que j'ai taillé dans ma chair même, c'est un peu de bon sens qui me retient de pousser aussi loin qu'eux leurs folies.[1]

And when he asks : 'Au nom de quel Dieu, de quel idéal, me défendez-vous de vivre selon ma nature ?' he does not fail to add : 'Et cette nature, où m'entraînerait-elle, si simplement je la suivais ?'[2] But whereas *Les Nourritures Terrestres* has been read by many thousands, *Saül* has not been performed more than once or twice and has been read only by a few.

§ 12. SIN AND SUFFERING

'Il faut agir sans *juger* si l'action est bonne ou mauvaise,' I have quoted Mr. Gide as saying. Bad actions, that is, must not invariably be avoided. They cannot, of course, always be avoided ; but more than that : a temptation to do an ill action is not of necessity to be resisted. For it is only through sin and suffering that we can acquire a soul, be our self. Mr. Gide expounds this view in a short 'treatise', *Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue*, which somewhat betrays, in its manner, the influence of the Symbolists and of Oscar Wilde.

On the night following the killing of the fatted calf, the Prodigal Son has gone to bed, but, still impressed by the rejoicing which has marked his return, he has not fallen asleep, when he hears his younger brother get up and prepare stealthily to go away in his turn. The Prodigal speaks to him and urges him not to go. He dwells again on the hardships he himself has undergone. The boy thinks, no doubt, that he will be more fortunate. But do not let him believe it. He will meet with similar hardships ; he will suffer and be wretched time and again, and wish he had never gone away. 'I do not doubt it,' the younger

[1] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 94.
[2] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 43.

brother replies ; ' but I must seek my self.' The Returned Prodigal continues to try to dissuade him, but his words lack conviction, and finally he lights the lad's way out of the house, saying : ' Puisses-tu ne pas revenir.'

Another ' treatise ', in dialogue form, *Philoctète ou le Traité des Trois Morales*, has a related theme. Ulysses prepares a sleeping draught for Philoctetes, so as to be able to despoil him without being resisted, and Neoptolemus, overcome by scruples, warns Philoctetes not to drink it. But Philoctetes picks up the cup, and swallows the contents in front of Neoptolemus, saying : ' Vois-tu ce que je fais ? ' Then, alone, he soliloquizes : ' De tous les dévouements, le plus fou, c'est celui pour les autres, car alors on leur devient supérieur. . . . C'est pour moi que j'agis, non pour toi '. Overcome by the draught, Philoctetes falls asleep. Ulysses returns. ' J'aurais voulu te dire . . . que tu m'as vaincu, Philoctète. . . . Mon devoir m'apparaît plus cruel que le tien, parce qu'il m'apparaît moins auguste.'

Of the three moralities, those of Ulysses, Neoptolemus, and Philoctetes respectively, that of Philoctetes is evidently, in the author's estimation, the superior, because Philoctetes, by his sacrifice of self, puts himself in the way of attaining a new self ; in the ill-treatment which he undergoes he is made greater.

Mr. Gide's own view of the effect of sin and suffering is put most clearly perhaps in a statement of Walter Rathenau's which he quotes in his book on Dostoievsky. In 1917 he met Rathenau in a neutral country and asked him what, in his opinion, might be expected from the Russian Revolution. Rathenau said :

' Un peuple n'arrive à prendre conscience de lui-même, et pareillement un individu ne peut prendre conscience de son âme, qu'en plongeant dans la souffrance, et dans *l'abîme du péché*.'

Et il ajouta : ' C'est pour n'avoir consenti ni à la souffrance ni au péché que l'Amérique n'a pas encore d'âme.' [1]

To seek to follow the path of righteousness, and never voluntarily stray into any other, is to miss life. For life is given to us in order that we may make the most of it ; to live is a never-completed becoming. And if sin and suffering are certainly perilous, they are not so perilous as right-

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, pp. 248–9, his italics.

eousness. For sin and suffering may indeed overwhelm and defeat us, but righteousness excludes all becoming. Only in sin and suffering, then, do we have a chance. So long as, for righteousness's sake, we refuse to live, to submerge ourselves in experience, to give ourselves up to the instant, and to pass from instant to instant as heedlessly as the bee passes from flower to flower, we cannot progress towards selfhood, though selfhood, it is true, is never to be attained. It is only through sin and suffering—fortified, if possible, by common sense—that we can grow. Common sense will always save those strong enough. Mr. Gide approvingly quotes Blake: 'If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise'.[1]

§ 13. THE WAY TO FULFILMENT

Happiness is to be sought in suffering—beyond suffering: such is the paradox Mr. Gide discovers in Dostoievsky's novels and accepts. But further: one bad action, committed spontaneously, may be a step in the fulfilment of a person's destiny; a necessary step, in fact, in one's becoming. Because we commit a bad action, it by no means follows that we shall go on repeating that bad action unless we are prevented; it does not mean that we ourselves are bad. We may have wanted to do it only once, and our natural repentance at having committed it may be more salutary than our abstention from the action could have been.

For the individual is ever being drawn *simultaneously* (Mr. Gide particularly stresses the word) towards God and towards Satan. Baudelaire understood this, Mr. Gide says, and quotes his '*journal intime*'.[2] But Dostoievsky understood it even better. There is no doubt much in Dostoievsky's work which is unexplained, Mr. Gide declares; but he does not think that there is much which is inexplicable, once we admit, as Dostoievsky invites us to do, that man is inhabited simultaneously by contradictory sentiments.

This does not result in the struggle between passion and duty depicted by Corneille. Corneille depicted his hero as casting before him an ideal model which was himself, but himself as he wished to be, as he strove to be; not as he

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 246.

[2] *Incidences*, pp. 168–9.

was naturally, as he would have been if he had abandoned himself to his real self. The French hero, as depicted by Corneille, is, in fact, Mr. Gide says, afflicted with what Mr. Jules de Gaultier has termed : *Le Bovarysme, viz* a tendency in many people to imagine themselves as other than they actually are. Every man who strives to make himself conform to an ideal provides, according to Mr. Gide, an example of this *bovarysme*. Dostoievsky's cases of duality are quite different ; and they are quite foreign also to those pathological cases of dual personality, in which one human body is inhabited first by one personality, then by a second, cases of which a striking illustration is given, Mr. Gide says, in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In Dostoievsky's novels the duality is simultaneous. He says :

Mais, dans Dostoïewsky, le déconcertant, c'est la simultanéité de tout cela, et la conscience que garde chaque personnage de ses inconséquences, de sa dualité.[1]

Mr. Gide quotes Versiloff in *The Adolescent* as saying : 'Il me semble que *je me partage en deux*' ; and Stavroguin, the hero of *The Possessed*, as declaring :

Je puis, comme je l'ai toujours pu, éprouver le désir de faire une bonne action, et j'en ressens du plaisir. A côté de cela, je désire aussi faire du mal et j'en ressens également de la satisfaction.[2]

And both attractions must be yielded to : that is Mr. Gide's point, and, he claims, Dostoievsky's too. One must not struggle against one's impulses ; on the contrary, one must obey them. Thus, one may live without stiffness or artificiality ; but naturally, as surely it is meant that we should live. We have been taught to renounce the joys of this world ; on the contrary, it is our self, our artificial self, which must be renounced. It restrains us from action, from enjoyment, which we are meant to experience. And Mr. Gide thereupon quotes the following passage from *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* :

As I got older I became aware of the folly of this perpetual reaching after the future, and of drawing from tomorrow, and from tomorrow only, a reason for the joyfulness of today. I learned, when, alas ! it was almost too late, to live in each moment as it passed over my head,

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 173. [2] Ibid., p. 174 and pp. 175–6, his italics.

believing that the sun as it is now rising, is as good as it will ever be, and blinding myself as much as possible to what may follow. But when I was young I was the victim of that illusion, implanted for some purpose or other in us by Nature, which causes us, on the brightest morning in June, to think immediately of a brighter morning which is to come in July. I say nothing, now, for or against the doctrine of immortality. All I say is, that men have been happy without it, even under the pressure of disaster, and that to make immortality a sole spring of action here is an exaggeration of the folly which deludes us all through life with endless expectation, and leaves us at death without the thorough enjoyment of a single hour.

He also quotes Blake. First, he recalls Stavroguin's words : 'Je puis, comme je l'ai toujours pu, éprouver le désir de faire une bonne action', &c., which I have just cited from him, and this time he also gives Stavroguin's preceding words :

Même *ici, je n'ai rien pu détester.* J'ai mis pourtant ma force à l'épreuve. . . . Dans ces expériences, dans toute ma vie précédente, je me suis relevé immensément fort. Mais à quoi appliquer cette force ? Voici ce que je n'ai jamais su, ce que je ne sais pas encore. Je puis, comme je l'ai toujours pu, éprouver le désir de faire une bonne action, &c.[1]

At bottom what Stavroguin is in love with is, Mr. Gide says, energy. The explanation of his predicament is to be sought in William Blake. Thereupon Mr. Gide quotes some of Blake's *Proverbs of Hell* : 'Energy is the only life. Energy is Eternal Delight.' And further : 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.' 'If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise.'

This energy must be allowed its outlet, in actions reputed bad as well as in those reputed good, if a man is to travel the way to fulfilment, and his energy is to give way to wisdom. Happiness is to be attained by suffering—through suffering. That is the only happiness, a happiness Dostoievsky was well aware of. Mr. Gide says :

C'est ce bonheur, cette joie par delà la douleur, qu'on sent latente dans toute la vie et l'œuvre de Dostoïewsky, joie qu'avait parfaitement bien flairée Nietzsche.[2]

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 175. [2] Ibid., p. 56.

CHAPTER IV

NOT CHRISTIANITY, BUT CHRIST

§ 14. THE ARTIST

MR. GIDE discerns a kinship linking Nietzsche and Dostoievsky. Both understood that the true man is he who leads his own life, who insists on being himself always, who is sincere, and refuses to conform to any arbitrary model of what he ought to be. For men of action, such as Dostoievsky's heroes mostly are, Nietzsche's problem of the Overman arises only to be immediately solved. As Mr. Gide says elsewhere :

> Pourquoi formuler l'individualisme ? Il n'y a pas d'individualisme qui tienne : les grands individus n'ont nul besoin de théories qui les protègent : ils sont vainqueurs.[1]

But not only for men of action does this problem solve itself ; it also solves itself for artists.

The artist, or poet, fashions his art out of his own duality. I say : artist or poet, because, although in the passages where he elaborates this theory, Mr. Gide uses the word : artist, he has recently distinguished between the artist proper, whose subject is, for him, beauty, and the poet, whose subject-matter is, he says, the passions. For a man to be an artist, or, rather, a poet, the duality in him must be emphatic. Dostoievsky was fully aware of this, and, to a lesser extent, Baudelaire, for instance, was aware of it too. Of Baudelaire Mr. Gide says :

> Je ne lis pas sans un frisson de reconnaissance et d'effroi ces quelques phrases de son journal intime : *Le goût de la concentration productive doit remplacer, chez un homme mûr, le goût de la déperdition*,—ou encore : *Il y a dans tout homme, à toute heure, deux postulations* SIMULTANÉES (tout l'intérêt de la phrase est dans ce mot) : *l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan.*—Ne

[1] *Prétextes*, p. 162.

sont-ce pas là des traces de ce radium infiniment précieux, au contact de quoi les anciennes théories, lois, conventions, et prétentions de l'âme, toutes, se volatilisent ? [1]

The problem of being one's self, the problem of which self to be, or rather to become, solves itself for the artist, because the artist must disintegrate, dissipate himself, into his work. That is certainly how Mr. Gide interprets Baudelaire's words about ' le goût de la concentration productive '. Into his own work what Mr. Gide has put is, he says, his superfluous selves, as it were ; the selves which are not himself and yet which are. He says :

Un caractère arrive à se peindre admirablement en peignant autrui, en parlant d'autrui—en raison de ce principe que chaque être ne comprend vraiment en autrui que les sentiments qu'il est capable de fournir.[2]

Then, a few pages further in the same volume, he also says :

Ce faisant, j'oublie qui je suis, si tant est que je l'aie jamais su. Je deviens l'autre. (Ils cherchent à savoir mon opinion. Mon opinion, je n'en ai cure, je ne suis plus quelqu'un, mais plusieurs—d'où ce reproche que l'on me fait d'inquiétude, d'instabilité, de versatilité, d'inconstance.)

. . .

De même dans la vie, c'est la pensée, l'émotion d'autrui qui m'habite ; mon cœur ne bat que par sympathie. C'est ce qui me rend toute discussion si difficile. J'abandonne aussitôt mon point de vue. Je me quitte et ainsi soit-il.

Ceci est la clef de mon caractère et de mon œuvre. Le critique fera de mauvaise besogne qui ne l'aura pas compris—et ceci encore : ce n'est pas ce qui me ressemble, mais ce qui diffère de moi qui m'attire.[3]

And through this disintegration, this dissipation of self, into his work, the artist attains peace and contentment. Mr. Gide's view is given in these two passages :

T. s'explique.

. . .

Je n'ai jamais rien su renoncer ; et protégeant en moi, à la fois le meilleur et le pire, c'est en écartelé que j'ai vécu. Mais comment expliquer que cette co-habitation en moi des extrêmes n'amenât point tant d'inquiétude et de souffrance, qu'une intensification pathétique du sentiment de l'existence, de la vie. Les tendances les plus opposées n'ont jamais réussi à faire de moi un être tourmenté ; mais perplexe—

[1] *Incidences*, pp. 168–9.
[2] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 67. [3] Ibid., pp. 87–8.

car le tourment accompagne un état dont on souhaite de sortir, et je ne souhaitais point d'échapper à ce qui mettait en vigueur toutes les virtualités de mon être ; cet *état de dialogue* qui, pour tant d'autres, est à peu près intolérable, devenait pour moi nécessaire. C'est aussi bien parce que, pour ces autres, il ne peut que nuire à l'action, tandis que, pour moi, loin d'aboutir à la stérilité, il m'invitait au contraire à l'œuvre d'art et précédait immédiatement la création, aboutissait à l'équilibre, à l'harmonie.[1]

Likewise :

J'ai pu être inquiet, dans le temps ; . . . Je le serais sans doute encore, si je n'avais pas su délivrer mes diverses possibilités dans mes livres et projeter hors de moi les personnages contradictoires qui m'habitaient. Le résultat de cette purgation morale, c'est un grand calme ; osons dire : une certaine sérénité.[2]

But the artist has not only to produce his work ; he has also to live. And if he is to be a successful artist, his duality must not overwhelm him in his life. For when it does, he ceases to be an artist at the same time as his life is wrecked. Mr. Gide has studied the careers of two writers in particular : Oscar Wilde and Dostoievsky. Wilde was defeated by life ; Dostoievsky triumphed over it.

Wilde, according to Mr. Gide, lavished himself too much on living, he dissipated himself too much in life and not enough in his work. In his own words : 'The great tragedy of my life is that I have put my genius into living ; only my talent has gone into writing.'[3] Wilde was not Overman enough—that is what Mr. Gide finds was wrong with him. When the supreme test came, it proved too much for him : he gave way. This was not because he was too individual, but because he was not individual enough. Mr. Gide quotes from *De Profundis* :

People used to say that I was too individualistic. I must be far more of an individualist than ever I was. I must get far more out of myself than ever I got, and ask far less of the world than ever I asked. Indeed, my ruin came not from too great individualism of life, but from too little. The one disgraceful, unpardonable, and to all time contemptible action of my life was to allow myself to appeal to society for help and protection.[4]

[1] *Morceaux Choisis*, pp. 434–5, his italics.

[2] Letter from André Gide quoted in André Rouveyre : *Le Reclus et le Retors*, p. 251.

[3] Quoted in *Oscar Wilde*, p. 32n. (Mercure de France).

[4] Ibid., p. 63 ; *De Profundis*, 31st edition (London, 1915), pp. 104–5.

He puts Wilde and Tolstoy side by side in this respect. When the springs of inspiration ran dry, both pretended that what had happened was that they had become possessed of truth. In reality, life had proved too much for them; it had beaten them. Mr. Gide says:

> Lorsque, chez un artiste, pour des raisons extérieures ou intimes, tarit le jaillissement créateur, l'artiste s'assied, renonce, se fait de sa fatigue une sagesse et appelle cela: avoir trouvé la Vérité. Pour Tolstoï, comme pour Wilde, cette 'vérité' est à peu près la même—et comment en serait-il autrement.[1]

But Dostoievsky, on the contrary—and Baudelaire too—although they threw themselves into life as fully as Wilde did, faced disintegration and dissipation as fully as he—Dostoievsky and Baudelaire triumphed, at least as artists: their work testifies to that. Of Baudelaire Mr. Gide says:

> L'admirable, c'est qu'il soit resté, malgré tout cela, cet artiste. Comme dit magnifiquement Barbey d'Aurevilly, dans le bel article qui nous console du silence de Sainte-Beuve: 'L'artiste n'a pas été trop vaincu.'[2]

And to Dostoievsky he applies almost the same words. First he says:

> Dostoïewsky, lui, n'a rien supprimé; il a femme et enfants, il les aime; il ne méprise point la vie; il écrit au sortir du bagne: 'Au moins, *j'ai vécu*, j'ai souffert, mais quand même j'ai vécu.'[3]

And he recalls some of the events in Dostoievsky's life: his perpetration of rape, his condemnation to death, his imprisonment, his poverty, his marital sufferings, &c. And then he says, regarding certain complaints against the curiosity which pries into every secret corner of Dostoievsky's life:

> Des lettrés délicats . . . qui s'insurgent contre la publication des papiers intimes, des correspondances privées; ils ne semblent considérer dans ces écrits que le plaisir flatteur que les médiocres esprits peuvent prendre à voir soumis aux mêmes infirmités qu'eux les héros. Ils parlent alors d'indiscrétion . . .; ils disent: 'Laissons l'homme; l'œuvre seule importe!'—Evidemment! mais l'admirable, ce qui reste pour moi d'un enseignement inépuisable, c'est qu'*il* l'ait écrite *malgré cela*.[4]

---

[1] *Oscar Wilde*, p. 59.
[2] *Morceaux Choisis*, p. 115.
[3] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 24, his italics.
[4] Ibid., pp. 29–30, his italics.

But Wilde's case is likewise not without instruction. On the contrary. Wilde's defeat as an artist makes him more representative as a man. 'All that is won for life is lost for art,' Mr. Gide quotes him as saying ; hence, all that is lost for art is won for life. Mr. Gide admires, behind Wilde's excessive self-indulgence, his secret advance towards a more significant destiny. He fulfilled his fate, did not seek to misinterpret it. Mr. Gide quotes him as saying : 'It would have been wrong to go on leading the same life, for that would have been a limitation. I had to go forward.'

And since it is the common fate to be thus defeated by life, Wilde is representative. Dostoievsky, who did not fail —at least as an artist—would have appreciated Wilde's fate. Mr. Gide says :

> Partant du même problème, Nietzsche et Dostoïewsky proposent à ce problème des solutions différentes, opposées. Nietzsche propose une affirmation de soi ; il y voit le but de la vie. Dostoïewsky propose une résignation. Où Nietzsche pressent une apogée, Dostoïewsky ne prévoit qu'une faillite.[1]

Wilde, however, did not attain resignation ; instead, life for him lost its savour. And to Mr. Gide his fate is accordingly tragic. Wilde may well have been in Mr. Gide's mind when he wrote :

> Une sorte de tragique a jusqu'à présent, me semble-t-il, échappé presque à la littérature. Le roman s'est occupé des traverses du sort, de la fortune bonne ou mauvaise, des rapports sociaux, du conflit des passions, des caractères, mais point de l'essence même des êtres.
>
> Transporter le drame sur le plan moral, c'était pourtant l'effort du christianisme. Mais il n'y a pas, à proprement parler de romans chrétiens. Il y a ceux qui se proposent des fins d'édification ; mais cela n'a rien à voir avec ce que je veux dire. Le tragique moral—qui, par exemple, fait si formidable la parole évangelique : 'Si le sel perd sa saveur, avec quoi la lui rendra-t-on ?' C'est ce tragique-là qui m'importe.[2]

§ 15. THE CRIMINAL

If the artist illustrates in himself and his craft the simultaneous duality of human nature and that duality's expression : its possible '*sublimation*' in his work and the perils to which it exposes one as one lives ; should we not believe

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 260.
[2] Journal Éd'douard, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 160.

that the same duality is present in many criminals, and should not our treatment of criminals take that into account? Such is, I take it, the question Mr. Gide seeks to raise with his *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises* and his *Faits-Divers*.

Are we justified in being as certain as we are, that a criminal is all of a piece, all bad, and that, once a man has committed a crime, he is predestined to go on committing crimes for the rest of his days, unless he is forcibly prevented? May there not, Mr. Gide asks, be such a thing as a *crime isolé*, a single crime which a man, unable to resolve the duality of his nature by writing, commits in obedience, as it were, to his fate; a single crime from which he will, through the suffering and repentance which, independently of society's punishment of him, it involves, increase in human stature, grow into more of a man, advance in the becoming of self? May not such a single crime purge him of the desire to be criminal which he shares with so many of his fellows, as a writer is purged of his contradictions by writing, and guarantee that, thereafter, he will lead a decent life? Do not, Mr. Gide implies, some of the cases which came up before the Rouen Assizes while he was a juryman suggest this?

Consider again those I have already mentioned in § 4. There is the incendiarist, Bernard, about whom a doctor, in giving evidence, says that he admits having felt a strange relief, a relaxation, the first time he started a fire. There is the post office sorter who ran away with a registered letter containing 13,000 francs. Daily he had handled letters containing large sums. On the very morning of his flight there was, beside the letter he took, another letter, also within his reach, which he saw, which contained 15,000 francs. And that second letter he left behind. Moreover, when he had spent 246 of the 13,000 francs he did make away with, he gave himself up, restored the balance of the 13,000 francs, and offered to pay back in instalments what he had spent. There is the coachman, Charles, who had stabbed his mistress 110 times. Why he stabbed her he did not know, and while he was stabbing her he was unaware, it seems, of what he was doing, except at the beginning and at the end. Evidently he did not, Mr. Gide says, have any intention of killing her; possibly he was

sadistic ; certainly his was a '*crime passionnel*' if ever there was one ; but he was not, strictly speaking, a murderer.

There is also a case of rape which I have not yet mentioned. The prisoner, a frail lad of twenty, is addressed by the presiding judge :

—Eh bien ! mon garçon, c'est pas bien ce que vous avez fait là.
—Je l'vois bien moi-même.[1]

All crimes, of course, are not of this nature. Mr. Gide, indeed, distinguishes two kinds of crime : that in which there is an obvious motive, such as robbery, and that in which there is apparently no motive at all. The latter he calls an *acte gratuit*, and it is into the nature of such *actes gratuits* that he suggests there should be a fresh inquiry.

We all perform inconsequential actions, but they appear to us awkward and ridiculous : we seek to deny any responsibility for them. Mr. Gide says :

Les inconséquences de notre nature, si tant est qu'il y en ait, nous apparaissent gênantes, ridicules. Nous les renions.[2]

But are they not important, and should we not, instead of repudiating, investigate them ? There lies one of Dostoievsky's attractions for Mr. Gide : he understood their importance ; he was interested in them. Mr. Gide says :

Il semble que ce soit là ce qui intéresse le plus Dostoïewsky : l'inconséquence.[3]

Again :

Mais dans Dostoïewsky, le déconcertant, c'est la simultanéité de tout cela, et la conscience que garde chaque personnage de ses inconséquences, de sa dualité.[4]

When Lafcadio, in *Les Caves du Vatican*, pushes his fellow-traveller through the carriage doorway, his is, as I have said, one of these disconcerting *actes gratuits*, or, rather, the parody of one such action. And the *acte gratuit* comes up for discussion in that book. In an earlier chapter, speaking, as it happens, through an irony of Mr. Gide's, to the victim of the future crime, the *acte gratuit*, Julius, Lafcadio's step-brother, says :

[1] *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises*, p. 26.
[2] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 169.
[3] Ibid., p. 170.
[4] Ibid., p. 173.

Le profit n'est pas toujours ce qui mène l'homme ; il y a des actions désintéressées. . . . Par *désintéressé*, j'entends *gratuit*. Et le mal, ce que l'on appelle le mal, peut être aussi gratuit que le bien.[1]

And Julius says further :

. . . Mais, me disais-je, poursuivant ma première idée—mais, à le supposer gratuit, l'acte mauvais, le crime, le voici tout inimputable ; et imprenable celui qui l'a commis. . . . Car le motif, le mobile du crime, c'est l'anse par où saisir le criminel. Et si, comme le juge prétendera : *Is fecit cui prodest*. . . .[2]

That, however, is only speculation. But the term : *acte gratuit*, is self-contradictory and a misnomer. Mr. Gide, seeking to make his meaning clearer, says :

Un acte gratuit. . . . Entendons-nous. Je n'y crois pas du tout moi-même, à l'acte gratuit, c'est-à-dire, à un acte qui ne serait motivé par rien. Les mots ' actes gratuits ' sont une étiquette *provisoire* qui m'a paru commode pour désigner les actes qui échappent aux explications psychologiques ordinaires, les gestes que ne détermine pas le simple intérêt personnel (c'est dans ce sens, en jouant un peu sur les mots, que j'ai pu parler d'actes *désintéressés*). Pourtant, disons encore ceci : l'homme agit soit *en vue* de et pour obtenir . . . quelque chose ; soit simplement par motivation intérieure. . . .[3]

' *Motivation intérieure* : there is his point. When a man has committed a crime, should we not inquire if he has not acted in obedience to an imperious desire, the gratification of which, far from being the sign that he will go on committing crimes unless he is prevented, is a release, a relief, and consequently the guarantee that he will behave himself in future? That man often has an internal fate which he must fulfil, Mr. Gide is convinced, and he believes, furthermore, that the Greeks were aware of it. Of Greek mythology he says :

Sans doute ils [the heroes of legend] connaissaient cet ' amor fati ' qu'admirait Nietzsche, mais la fatalité dont il s'agit ici, c'est une fatalité intérieure. C'est en eux qu'était cette fatalité ; ils la portaient en eux ; c'était une fatalité psychologique. Et l'on n'a rien compris au caractère de Thésée, par exemple, si l'on admet que l'audacieux héros

Qui va du dieu des morts déshonorer la couche,

a laissé par simple inadvertance la voile noire au vaisseau qui le ramène en Grèce, cette ' fatale ' voile noire qui, trompant son père

[1] p. 211, his italics. [2] p. 214.
[3] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, June, 1928, p. 841, his italics.

affligé, l'invite à se précipiter dans la mer, grâce à quoi Thésée entre en possession de son royaume. Un oubli? Allons donc! Il oublie de changer la voile comme il oublie Ariane à Naxos. . . .[1]

Again:

Agamemnon, Ajax, fils d'Oïlée, Idoménée, Diomède, tous, vous dis-je, précipités vers un péril

Qu'il leur fallait chercher,

sont accueillis à leur retour par l'adultère, le meurtre, la trahison, l'exil, et les crimes les plus affreux; et c'est vers cela qu'ils se hâtent. Tandis qu'Ulysse qui, seul d'entre eux tous, doit retrouver à son foyer, fidélité, vertu, patience, en reste dix ans séparé par mainte traverse, et je crois aussi par sa curiosité vagabonde, l'inquiétude de son humeur.[2]

Yes, for Mr. Gide, a man has an internal fate which he must obey. Such was the case of Wilde. Such is, Mr. Gide suspects, the case with many a man who commits a crime. It is his fate which drives him, and this fate is distinct from himself; we are mistaken in believing that as a rule a criminal is bad, is predestined to crime unless forcibly kept out of reach of crime. For man by nature is, Mr. Gide feels, good. Recently he visited French Equatorial Africa, and there he found the Noble Savage. He says:

Le vieux, que nous avons emmené de force comme pilote, ne s'attendait évidemment à rien recevoir, car, lorsque je lui glisse un matabiche [a tip] dans la main, son visage, renfrogné jusqu'alors, se détend. Je le plaisante sur son air maussade: il se met à rire, prend une de mes mains dans les deux siennes et la presse à maintes reprises avec une effusion émouvante. Quels braves gens! Comme on les conquerrait vite! et quel art diabolique, quelle persévérance dans l'incompréhension, quelle politique de haine et de mauvais vouloir il a fallu pour obtenir de quoi justifier les brutalités, les exactions et les sévices.[3]

And he adds in a footnote:

Conrad parle admirablement dans son *Cœur des Ténèbres* de 'l'extraordinaire effort d'imagination qu'il nous a fallu pour voir dans ces gens-là des ennemis.'[4]

And elsewhere he says also:

Combien d'exemples de fidélité chez les nègres m'ont été rapportés, par Marcel de Coppet et d'autres, du boy faisant jusqu'à vingt jours de marche (le sien par exemple) pour retrouver un maître dont il avait gardé bon souvenir.[5]

---

[1] *Morceaux Choisis*, pp. 187–8.
[2] Ibid., pp. 190–1.
[3] *Voyage au Congo*, p. 213.
[4] Ibid., p. 213n.
[5] *Le Retour du Tchad*, p. 109.

This last passage is followed by an account of how Mr. Gide repeatedly tested the honesty of one of his carriers, and never once found the man avail himself of the opportunity to cheat.

Such, in brief, is Mr. Gide's plea for a revision of current methods of dispensing criminal justice, and, indeed, for a revision of our attitude to the detected criminal, both before conviction and after his release from gaol.

§ 16. SEX.

But it is not only our attitude to the criminal which is, in Mr. Gide's view, mistaken and needing revision ; there is also our attitude to the questions called sexual, and, in particular, our attitude to what are regarded as sexual abnormalities. Are we certain that they are abnormalities ? he asks. He is convinced that some are not.

I shall not, at this stage, attempt to give an account of this aspect of his views. It seems better to do so later, in Chapter VII.

§ 17. NOT SINNERS, BUT THE RIGHTEOUS

Meanwhile, it may surely by now be said that what Mr. Gide wants us to do is to put our trust in the ultimate goodness of human nature and its promptings. He fully approves of Dostoievsky's exaltation of sensation and inhibition of thought. Further, he declares that, in this, Dostoievsky is only leading us back to the Gospels. He says :

> Mais, direz-vous, si la sensation triomphe de la pensée, si l'âme ne doit plus connaître d'autre état que cet état vague, disponible, à la merci de toute influence extérieure, que peut-il en résulter, sinon la complète anarchie ? . . . J'entends d'avance les protestations que je pourrais soulever, si je venais vous affirmer : Non, ce n'est pas à l'anarchie que nous mène Dostoïewsky ; mais simplement à l'Évangile.[1]

The only way to be truly oneself, to be truly individual, is not to make any attempt at being particular self, at being a pre-determined person, says Mr. Gide. This applies in writing :

> Le triomphe de l'individualisme et le triomphe du classicisme se confondent. Or le triomphe de l'individualisme est dans le renonce-

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 225.

ment à l'individualité. . . . Le grand artiste classique travaille à n'avoir pas de manière ; il s'efforce vers la banalité. S'il parvient à cette banalité sans effort, c'est qu'il n'est pas un grand artiste, parbleu ! L'œuvre classique ne sera forte et belle qu'en raison de son romantisme dompté. 'Un grand artiste n'a qu'un souci : devenir le plus humain possible,—disons mieux : devenir *banal*,'—écrivais-je il y a vingt ans. 'Et chose admirable c'est ainsi qu'il devient le plus personnel.' [1]

The same applies to living, and likewise to following Christ ; that is, Mr. Gide says, what Jesus meant when he said to Nicodemus : 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' ; that is what Jesus meant when he said : 'Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.'

'C'est en se renonçant qu'on se trouve,' Mr. Gide insists ; and thus also may one attain to eternal life :

C'est à la vie éternelle, c'est à participer aussitôt à l'éternité de la vie, c'est à entrer dans le royaume de Dieu, que le Christ invite Nicodème, lorsqu'il lui dit : *Nul, qui ne naisse de nouveau, ne peut voir le royaume de Dieu*—car *Celui qui cherche à sauver sa vie la perdra*, mais celui qui naît de nouveau, qui fait abandon de sa vie pour renaître, qui renonce à soi pour *Le* suivre, celui-là fait son âme vraiment vivante, il renaît à la Vie éternelle, il entre dans le Royaume de Dieu.[2]

That Jesus should have uttered such words is proof for Mr. Gide of his divinity :

Il ne s'agit pas tant de croire aux paroles du Christ parce que le Christ est Fils de Dieu—que de comprendre qu'il est Fils de Dieu parce que sa parole est divine et infiniment élevée au-dessus de tout ce que nous proposent l'art et la sagesse des hommes.[3]

Furthermore, the eternal life to which the follower of Christ can attain by abandoning all attempt to be any particular self is not, he says, eternal life by and by, after death, but eternal life forthwith. Mr. Gide thinks he discerns an awareness of this in Dostoievsky. He quotes Kiriloff as saying in reply to the question : 'Vous croyez à la vie éternelle dans l'autre monde ?' :

Non ! mais à la vie éternelle dans celui-ci. Il y a des moments, vous arrivez à des moments, où le temps s'arrête tout à coup pour faire place à l'éternité.[4]

[1] *Incidences*, p. 38.
[2] *Numquid et Tu ?* p. 85.
[3] Ibid., p. 14.
[4] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 220.

But it is in the Gospels themselves that he naturally finds this immediate participation in eternal life announced, and thanks to the Gospels that he can so interpret Jesus's words : ' And whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.' He is struck, he says, by the frequency with which in the Gospels there recur the words : ' *Et nunc* '—' Forthwith '. It is, he is convinced, ' *Et nunc* '—' Forthwith ' that he who will renounce self will be born again to life eternal and enter into the kingdom of God.

The Churches, however, have not understood this. They have sought to impose an ideal, arbitrary self upon all human beings ; they have sought to make humanity uniform. They have not succeeded ; they cannot succeed :

L'humanité n'est pas simple ; il faut en prendre son parti ; et toute tentative de simplification, d'unification, de réduction par le dehors sera toujours odieuse, ruineuse et sinistrement bouffonne. Car, l'embêtant pour Athalie, c'est que c'est toujours Eliacin, l'embêtant pour Hérode, c'est que c'est toujours la Sainte Famille, qui échappe.[1]

The Churches have not understood the renunciation which Christ preached, and Mr. Gide has proposed to call attention to this ; to write a book urging the world to follow, not Christianity, but Christ :

Et je me désolai et m'indignai tout à la fois de ce qu'en avaient fait les Églises, de cet enseignement divin, qu'au travers d'elles je ne reconnaissais plus que si peu. C'est pour n'avoir point su l'y voir, que notre monde occidental périt, me redisais-je ; telle devint ma conviction profonde, et que le devoir de dénoncer ce mal m'incombait. Je projetai donc d'écrire un livre que j'intitulais en pensée : *Le Christianisme contre le Christ*—livre dont nombre de pages sont écrites et qui sans doute eût déjà vu le jour en des temps plus prospères, et sans cette crainte que je pus avoir, si je le publiais aussitôt, de contrister quelques amis et de compromettre gravement une liberté de pensée à laquelle j'attache plus de prix que tout le reste.[2]

Mr. Gide has, in short, proposed to call, not sinners, but the righteous to repentance.

[1] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 189.
[2] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 168.

CHAPTER V

GOOD AND EVIL

§ 18. THE NATURAL

So far I have been pursuing Mr. Gide's views. Before examining them, it seemed best, considering the subtlety with which they are expressed, to find out what they are. I here reach a point from which an inquiry into their validity may, I think, properly begin. For we have come so far that it is now possible to state, in his own words, what the centre of his attitude, what his rule of life, is.

In the preceding chapter I indicated how Mr. Gide finds himself, as he thinks, in communion with Dostoievsky. But there is a point at which they part company. That is the point we have reached. Dostoievsky, he maintains, never went very far from the Gospels. 'Dans chacun de ses livres nous ne voyons triompher que les vérités de l'Évangile.' [1] Dostoievsky understood, Mr. Gide says, that a man is brought nearer to God through sin and suffering. He understood that the individual is more precious than humanity collectively. That is, he knew, according to Mr. Gide, why joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Mr. Gide says :

> Il [Dostoievsky] nous donne à entendre que l'homme n'est jamais plus près de Dieu que lorsqu'il atteint l'extrémité de sa détresse. C'est alors seulement que jaillira ce cri : 'Seigneur, à qui irions-nous ! tu as les paroles de la vie éternelle.'
>
> Il sait que, ce cri, ce n'est pas de l'honnête homme qu'on peut l'attendre, de celui qui a toujours su où aller, de celui qui se croit en règle envers soi-même et envers Dieu, mais bien de celui qui *ne sait plus où aller*.[2]

If, accordingly, Dostoievsky was aware of the wisdom of the

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 249. [2] Ibid., pp. 249–50, his italics.

behest to abandon all attempt at being a pre-determined self, he believed that a man should make that renunciation in order that he might, sooner or later, follow Jesus. But, for Mr. Gide, if a man is to renounce his individuality, it is not in order that he may follow Jesus ; it is in order that he shall become more of an individual.

Mr. Gide, in spite of the scheme he mentions of writing a book to be called, *Le Christianisme contre le Christ*, is not himself disposed to follow Christ. He is not a Christian. Although at times he is liable to see Satan at work in his own life, as when he says : ' Dès l'instant que j'admets son ' [the devil's] ' existence,—et cela m'arrive tout de même, ne fut-ce qu'un instant, quelquefois—dès cet instant, il me semble que tout s'éclaire, que je comprends tout ; il me semble que tout à coup de découvrir l'explication de ma vie, de tout l'inexplicable, de tout l'incompréhensible, de toute l'ombre de ma vie ' [1]; and tends to give the devil even more than his due, to exalt the devil's status, he is not a heretic, a Manichaean, as he says Dostoievsky was. He would follow nature. He says :

> Vous ne trouverez, dans la Nature entière, que précisément la recherche du plaisir ; et la grandeur du Christianisme est précisément de s'opposer à la Nature. Pour adorer le Christ il faut résolument tourner le dos à Cérès. . . .
>
> Il importe de reconnaître que tout ce qui appartient au Christ est du domaine *sur-naturel*. La question, pour moi, est précisément de savoir si le *naturel* n'est pas préférable, et s'il exclut toute idée d'abnégation dans l'amour, de sacrifice, de noblesse et de vertu, *dont je ne puis me passer* ; de savoir s'il est nécessaire, pour obtenir de soi la vertu, d'admettre une mythologie dogmatique (qui du reste n'est nullement dans l'enseignement même du Christ, mais a été inventée après coup) que ma raison, donnée par Dieu, ne peut admettre ? [2]

And the way in which, according to him, we should follow nature is by living in the moment. Let us give no more heed to the past than to the future, but live, as Mark Rutherford learned to live, ' in each moment as it passed over my head '. And as soon as the moment is exhausted, before it is quite exhausted, let us pass on to another. It is not only that the past must be blotted out, abjured. ' " Le moi est haïssable," dit Pascal. Le moi d'hier, pas

[1] *Journal des Faux-Monayeurs*, p. 142.
[2] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, January, 1929, pp. 57–8, his italics.

celui d'aujourd'hui.' [1] But wherever we have arrived, however far we have got, we must always push on, always go beyond. '*Ne demeure jamais, Nathanaël.*' This command in *Les Nourritures Terrestres* is as vital to Mr. Gide as his behest to enjoy the moment. The two together form his rule of life.[2] Only by following them together can we be individual. We must renounce all kind of pre-determined self in order to live in the instant. But in order to progress towards our real self, to be our true self, we must never cease to be seeking yet another instant, to be reaching yet further, ever beyond.

Furthermore—and this is as essential as the rest—we must never pause to see if the action involved in the enjoyment, the living, of any particular instant, is good or evil; we must seize the next instant that offers as spontaneously as we abandon the present one. We live to manifest what is in us, both good and evil. Mr. Gide has said that morality is a branch of aesthetics:

—Mais qu'est-ce donc, selon vous, que la morale?
—Une dépendance de l'esthétique.[3]

[1] *Prétextes*, p. 104.

[2] Cf. Charles Du Bos: op. cit., pp. 104–5: 'Qu'au thème de l'instant promu au rang d'un absolu réponde et corresponde le thème de l'évasion nécessaire s'explique par le fait que s'il faut que l'instant soit vécu et pleinement vécu, il ne faut à aucun prix qu'il soit vécu au delà du point où il a donné tout ce qu'il avait à donner: non seulement il ne doit pas survivre dans et par le souvenir; mais encore il ne doit pas se survivre du tout au sens radical du terme parce qu'alors ce n'est plus nous qui vivons de l'instant, c'est l'instant qui vit de nous, sur nous et à nos dépens: les rôles sont renversés, et ce renversement est aux yeux de Gide un des plus graves qui soient: la différence n'est pas moindre qu'entre cueillir la Toison d'Or et être cueilli par elle. Là est, à mon sens, le motif sous-jacent—et le plus souterrain—de l'adjuration: ne *demeure* jamais; là gît le nœud véritable de l'évasion chez Gide. . . . S'il est de ceux qui partent pour partir, au moins autant, et peut-être davantage, toujours Gide est celui qui part pour ne pas demeurer. . . . La nécessité de l'évasion chez Gide est commandée par le besoin de quitter ce qu'il a, plus encore que par celui de rejoindre ce qu'il pressent. Il n'est pas de ceux qui partent pour oublier; il n'est même pas tout à fait de ceux qui partent pour changer: très exactement—et ceci m'apparaît vrai pour tout l'ensemble et de son œuvre et de sa démarche—il part au moment précis où ce qu'il possède commence à le posséder à son tour.'

[3] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 58.

I take the meaning of the epigram to be disclosed by this other passage :

Les règles de la morale et de l'esthétique sont les mêmes : toute œuvre qui ne se manifeste pas est inutile et par cela même, mauvaise. Tout homme qui ne manifeste pas est inutile et mauvais. . . .

Tout représentant de l'Idée tend à se préférer à l'Idée qu'il manifeste. Se préférer—voilà la faute. L'artiste, le savant, ne doit pas se préférer à la Vérité qu'il veut dire : voilà toute sa morale. . . . Et je ne prétends pas que cette théorie soit nouvelle ; les doctrines de renoncement ne prêchent pas autre chose.

La question morale pour l'artiste, n'est pas que l'Idée qu'il manifeste soit plus ou moins morale et utile au grand nombre ; la question est qu'il la manifeste bien.—Car tout doit être manifesté, même les plus funestes choses.[1]

Life is an art. The art consists in living well, thoroughly, what is in us, good and bad, according to the instant.

§ 19. AN END TO EVIL?

In those three pieces of advice is contained, I believe, the essentials of Mr. Gide's attitude to life. Live spontaneously, yield rather than struggle against (' Il est plus long . . . de lutter contre le naturel que d'y céder.' [2]), and trust to future instants for the discovery that you have, through acting spontaneously, through committing both good and evil, acquired wisdom. And always go onward, go ever beyond.

In the insistence on ' Ever beyond ' Mr. Gide is, according to one of his most acute and illuminating critics, Mr. Du Bos, the exponent of a conception which is nothing less than the major temptation of our time. Mr. Du Bos says :

Qu'il faille toujours ' aller plus loin ' ; que de ne pas le faire corresponde *ipso facto* à ' revenir en arrière ' ; que la vertu suprême réside dans une certaine notion de *dépassement*,—le dépassement étant envisagé comme valant en soi, indépendamment de la qualité de ce que l'on quitte ou de ce vers quoi l'on va ; cette conception tout ensemble *spatiale* du *spirituel* et *temporelle* de *l'intemporel*, ah ! voilà bien la tentation majeure dont tels grands esprits modernes et contemporains sont les réceptacles d'élection,—à tel point que pour ma part je suis enclin à y voir la forme particulière qu'avec fruit le démon assume à l'usage de notre temps.

[1] *Le Traité du Narcisse*, p. 21n.
[2] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, January, 1929, p. 59.

He adds in a footnote, as to the conception in question :

> D'où la ' primauté ', non plus ' du spirituel ', mais, dans la sphère même du spirituel (c'est là ce qui donne au phénomène toute sa gravité), de *l'événement*—lequel figure ici la notion corrélative de celle de *dépassement*. Or, dans la sphère spirituelle il n'est pas d'état plus contre-nature (je veux dire plus antispirituel) que celui que traduit le mot de Wilde [cited by Gide in his book, *Oscar Wilde*] : ' Il faut qu'il arrive quelque chose ' ; et c'est pourquoi ' une conception spatiale du spirituel et temporelle de l'intemporel ' aboutit—en opposition avec le désir exprès de ceux-là même qui l'entretiennent—à une véritable déspiritualisation.[1]

Having quoted Mr. Du Bos, I shall not myself say anything at the moment as to this fatalism.

The point I want to examine is rather that involved in Mr. Gide's statement that, to yield rather than to struggle against—there lies the shortest road to wisdom and peace, his statement that ' il est plus long . . . de lutter contre le naturel que d'y céder '.

If this be adopted as a rule of life, what must ensue? If it does often happen that a man's nature proves too strong for him and that he yields to it while disapproving of his weakness, and then, through his weakness and the repentance its triumph engenders, finds temptation less strong thereafter—and the possibility of this need not be disputed—does it follow that, if a man were to yield to his nature in the first place, the result would be the same? If he were to yield to his nature forthwith, would he as inevitably repent of his action, and would his resistance to his nature in future be strengthened, as much as it is strengthened when he yields to his nature only in spite of himself?

Mr. Gide says :

> Ce qui manque à chacun de mes héros, que j'ai taillé dans ma chair même, c'est un peu de bon sens qui me retient de pousser aussi loin qu'eux leurs folies.[2]

But should one assume that this ' bon sens ' is a mere manifestation of his spontaneous nature? Consider his conception of the individuality a man must renounce in order that his individualism may triumph. It is, one gathers, an arbitrary individuality imposed from without. It is either

[1] op. cit., p. 236.

[2] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 94.

the character his friends or relatives expect of him, and in accordance with which he thereupon seeks to act, or else the set of duties laid down by the religion, or the scheme of morality, he accepts. To enable the ordinary person who thus behaves 'in character' so to behave, there are, of course, numerous adventitious aids. When he behaves in accordance with the character which his friends and relatives have fitted him with, there is the assistance he obtains from their expectations of him: when he is tempted to do a certain action, he has in mind their conception of him, and this restrains him if the action is one of which they disapprove. When his guide is religion, there is, of course, prayer, grace, &c. When it is a non-religious scheme of morality, the scheme itself usually provides aids. And, furthermore, in every case he is apt to devise adventitious aids of his own, external aids designed to reinforce the external aids already available. Does not his devising of such private aids prove the need of the others?

The question is: Can a man, if he adopts the rule, said to be also a rule of aesthetics, that his sole duty is to manifest what is in him, and, accordingly, discards all external assistance to virtue, can a man then still be virtuous? What is Mr. Gide's 'bon sens' but largely this external assistance?

Mr. Gide has contended that the adoption of only one duty, and that the duty to manifest what is in one, is Protestantism. He has said:

> J'ai dit que nous attendions Nietzsche bien avant de la connaître: c'est que le Nietzschéisme a commencé bien avant Nietzsche; le Nietzschéisme est à la fois une manifestation de vie surabondante qui s'était exprimée déjà dans l'œuvre des plus grands artistes, et une tendance aussi qui, suivant les époques, s'est baptisée 'jansénisme', ou 'protestantisme', et qu'on nommera maintenant Nietzschéisme, parce que Nietzsche a osé formuler jusqu'au bout tout ce qui murmurait de latent en elle.[1]

But if he means here that the Protestant trusts exclusively to the voice of his conscience, he is mistaken. The fact is that both Catholic and Protestant alike have ultimately to rely on their conscience; for how a man acts only he himself knows, and even he does not know always, however keen his vigilance against self-deception; but Protestant and

[1] *Prétextes*, p. 177.

Catholic consciences are alike fortified by adventitious aids. The aids happen to be different aids; that is all. Conscience alone is not enough. What, then, is Mr. Gide's 'bon sens'? Is it something entirely within himself, or is it not also, in addition to that something inside himself, the collective wisdom of the people among whom he was born and lives? Further, is not this wisdom displayed in the exercise of those very restraints concerning which he echoes Balzac's epigram: 'Les mœurs sont l'hypocrisie des nations'? No doubt times change, and now and again some restraints must give place to others. But can there really be any question of the suppression of all of them?

Mr. Gide apparently considers that man's strength is underrated. But is not what we tend to underrate, not so much man's strength, as his weakness? He is, it may be recalled, no more than a reed, 'le plus faible de la nature'. If he can pilot ships across oceans and aeroplanes over continents, if he can win great battles, if he can carry his country's fortunes through a fateful crisis or accomplish a revolution, does it not always seem a miracle that he should succeed? Must he not always feel, when he does succeed, that he has done so by a hair's breadth? And would he succeed even as he does, if he relied merely on his individual strength and skill? Would he ever succeed were it not for all the adventitious aids conferred upon him by responsibility, discipline, and all that goes into collective effort, and especially by prevision and thought?

And does not what applies to the conduct of public enterprise, apply equally to the conduct of private lives? This being so, is there any sense in exhorting man to act without pausing to consider if his action is good or bad, to say:

> Il faut agir sans *juger* si l'action est bonne ou mauvaise. Aimer sans s'inquiéter si c'est le bien ou le mal.
> Nathanaël, je t'enseignerai la ferveur.[1]

For this is to leave the finding out of which actions should be performed, and which avoided, to experience; and can the individual's experience be his sole guide?

One of the lessons to be drawn, Mr. Gide says, from

[1] *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, p. 15.

Dostoievsky, and from Blake, is that wisdom is acquired through sin and suffering. But to sin and suffering—the suffering of remorse—it is not so much the experience, as the very notions, of good and evil, that are essential. In order that a man may feel remorse and repentance, it is not enough that he should find out by experience that what he has done is wrong ; he must know *beforehand* that what he is doing is wrong. Therefore, when Mr. Gide bids a man act without pausing to consider whether his action is good or bad, is he not bidding him to say farewell to repentance, and to all that accrues to him through repentance ?

But setting aside the matter of repentance, there remains the question of evil. Once a man believes that his actions should be spontaneous, that what he does spontaneously is legitimate, what is going to happen to his notion of evil ? How can a man believe that what he is doing is legitimate and also that it is evil ? Thus, when Mr. Gide bids a man follow his natural inclinations rather than resist them, is he not attempting to dispense with the notion of evil ? In which case, the question is : Are we certain that the notion of evil can be dispensed with ?

§ 20. A SELF-REGARDING THEORY

Also, what of the effect of the man's actions upon others ? When Mr. Gide urges Nathanaël, in *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, to go out, to get away—from his room, from his family, from his town ; to break all bonds—what of the effect of such an action upon others ? When he urges, as he appears to do, the condoning of the single crime, again how would that affect others—the perpetrators and victims of other, future crimes ? Is not Mr. Gide's theory of conduct a self-regarding theory ? And, on the contrary, should not an individual, before acting, consider, not only how his actions will affect himself, but how they will affect others ? For man does not live as Thoreau proposed he should.

It is in being thus self-regarding that Mr. Gide's theory of conduct diverges from that of a school of philosophers who have held, as he does, that conformity to nature—that is, acting independently of, and uncorrupted by, social customs and conventions—is a general positive rule for outward

conduct. The Stoics' 'exposition of the "natural" basis of justice, the evidences in man's mental and physical constitution that he was born not for himself but for mankind, is,' it has been said, 'the most important part of their work in the region of practical morality.' [1] One reason why the Stoics were able to do this work was, of course, that they held reason to be natural, and so held that it should govern living. Must not the Stoics be right as to the role, if not the naturalness, of reason, and Mr. Gide, who appears to hold that reason tends to the artificial and should be subordinated to impulse, be wrong? Does not the sphere of virtue lie in the social relations?

Mr. Gide's theory is, indeed, a form of Egoism, and in Egoism there is a logical contradiction which is exposed by Eduard von Hartmann in the course of his criticism of Nietzsche and Max Stirner [2]; obviously, if Mr. Gide, though, as he tells us, rejecting Sterner, finds Nietzsche acceptable in spite of Von Hartmann's criticism, he should say why, and this he fails, in his little essay on Nietzsche, to do.[3] Egoism has also been trenchantly impugned by Dr. G. E. Moore,[4] and Hastings Rashdall has commented on Dr. Moore's argument, while agreeing fundamentally with him.[5] It is, I think, unnecessary to do more than mention these references: in so far as Mr. Gide's view is Egoism, it has frequently been shown to be unacceptable, and its unacceptability may be regarded as final.

The curious thing is that, in practice, he is far from approving of contempt for others. He himself delays the publication of certain books out of deference for his friends' feelings. But he puts this down to mere sentiment, saying:

> Je tiens excessivement à l'opinion de quelques uns; c'est affaire de sentiment et rien ne peut faire contre cela. Ce que l'on a pris parfois pour une certaine timidité, n'était le plus souvent que la crainte de contrister ces quelques personnes.[6]

[1] Henry Sidgwick: *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, fifth edition (London, 1925), p. 81.

[2] *Ethische Studien*, pp. 33–90.

[3] *Morceaux Choisis*, pp. 171 et seq.

[4] *Principia Ethica*, second edition (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 96–105.

[5] *The Theory of Good and Evil*, second edition (Oxford, 1924), vol. I., p. 78.

[6] *Corydon*, pp. 9–10.

Again :

Le Christianisme contre le Christ—livre . . . qui sans doute eût déjà vu le jour . . . sans cette crainte que je pus avoir, si je le publiais aussitôt, de contrister quelques amis.[1]

Also, in a letter to a stranger seeking his counsel on marrying, he says :

En règle générale, mieux vaut se sacrifier soi-même, que de sacrifier à soi un autre être. Mais tout cela, c'est de la théorie ; en pratique il advient que l'on ne s'aperçoive du sacrifice que longtemps après qu'il est consommé.[2]

But here again, it will be noticed, he insists upon the unconscious, the 'spontaneous'. Can one, however, rely upon self-sacrifice being chosen spontaneously where it may be required? Can one be sure that 'le naturel' does not exclude, not 'toute idée d'abnégation dans l'amour, de sacrifice, de noblesse et de vertu'—for that really cannot be the question—but as much self-abnegation, as much sacrifice, nobility and virtue, as can be obtained from man when he does not distrust reason? Was Kant, in fact, altogether mistaken in making morality essentially rational? Though many have sought to show that he was, none, so far as is known, have succeeded. If Mr. Gide is convinced that Kant is mistaken, should he not expose the fallacies in Kant's arguments?

§ 21. A GOSPEL FOR THE STRONG

In addition to being self-regarding, Mr. Gide's theory of conduct is, unless one completely misunderstands him, a morality for overmen. He approvingly quotes Blake :

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.

You never know what is good unless you know what is more than enough.[3]

It is not my purpose to claim that these maxims contain no truth. I will even grant that they may be all right for

[1] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 168.

[2] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, September, 1928, p. 315.

[3] Proverbs of Hell in William Blake : *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* ; quoted in *Dostoïewsky*, p. 246.

Mr. Gide himself, and for other men exceptional enough to be able to play with fire. For with Mr. Gide himself there is always the saving note of common sense. He says :

> Au nom de quel Dieu, de quel idéal me défendez-vous de vivre selon ma nature ? Et cette nature, où m'entraînerait-elle, si simplement je la suivais ? [1]

Which passage is illuminated by this other one :

> Ce qui manque à chacun de mes héros, que j'ai taillé dans ma chair même, c'est un peu de bon sens qui me retient de pousser aussi loin qu'eux leurs folies.[2]

But it is evident, from the experience of anyone of us, that ordinary men often enough lack the saving grace of common sense, and if once they embark upon the road of excess, they find it leads, not to the palace of wisdom, but to the inebriates' home, the lunatic asylum, or what is still termed moral ruin.

It may be suggested that Mr. Gide is not addressing himself to ordinary people, but only to the exceptional ones. But exceptional persons do not need his stimulus. As he says :

> Pourquoi formuler l'individualisme ? Il n'y a pas d'individualisme qui tienne : les grands individus n'ont nul besoin de théories qui les protègent : ils sont vainqueurs.[3]

It is the ordinary person able to buy his books, since they are on open sale, and read them, who alone is liable to find in them an application to himself.

One may readily concede that Mr. Gide does not fall into the mistake with which Mr. Bertrand Russell (whose views I am to consider also in this study) has been reproached :

> A great man *is* one who thinks his own thoughts and goes his own way, one who cannot easily be thwarted or defeated. . . . But more goes to the making of him than this obvious characteristic. You will not make a great man out of a small one by giving him the liberty to think as he pleases and act as he likes and by abstaining from ever thwarting him. Character is only indicated by this kind of liberty, it is not constituted by it.[4]

---

[1] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 43.
[2] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 94. [3] *Prétextes*, p. 162.
[4] J. W. Scott : *Syndicalism and Philosophical Realism* (London, 1919), pp. 193–4.

Mr. Gide, I say, does not fall into the mistake which is, in this passage, attributed to Mr. Russell. He does not suggest that an ordinary person will be transformed into an exceptional one if only he is given enough rope. Yet he does reprove the ordinary person for obeying convention and not seeking to be 'himself'. He says:

> La convention est la grande pourvoyeuse de mensonges. . . . Il est plus aisé à l'homme d'imiter tout que d'inventer rien. Combien d'êtres acceptent de vivre toute leur vie tout contrefaits par le mensonge, qui trouvent malgré tout, et dans le mensonge même de la convention, plus de confort et moins d'exigence d'effort que dans l'affirmation sincère de leurs sentiments particuliers. Cette affirmation exigerait d'eux une sorte d'invention dont il ne se sentent pas capables.

Again:

> Que de Werthers secrets s'ignoraient, qui n'attendaient que la balle du Werther de Goethe, pour se tuer ! Que de héros cachés qui n'attendent que l'exemple du héros d'un livre, que l'étincelle de vie échappée à sa vie pour vivre, que sa parole pour parler.[1]

Do not these passages both reprove ordinary people for being conventional and approve persons who act with strength and determination, even if it be only upon the inspiration of a book? Again, here is a passage I have already quoted:

> Aux forts seuls la véritable instruction. Aux faibles l'enracinement, l'encroûtement dans les habitudes héréditaires qui les empêcheront d'avoir froid. . . . Et peut-être pourrait-on mesurer la valeur d'un homme au degré de dépaysement (physique ou intellectuel) qu'il est capable de maîtriser.[2]

§ 22. BUT WHAT OF THE WEAK?

Can one doubt that Mr. Gide's message is a message for the strong? Or, rather, since the strong, he says, do not need it, is it not a message for those weak enough to imagine that they are strong when, in fact, they are not? As I say, his books are accessible to the whole public, and nothing is easier than for the weak, the average, to get hold of them and imagine, after reading them, that they are of the strong. Mr. Gide has recently expressed surprise that a Jesuit writer should condemn his novels:

[1] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 24. [2] *Prétextes*, pp. 54–5.

Je ne comprends pas trop pourquoi vous considérez l'*Immoraliste*, la *Porte Étroite* et *Isabelle* comme de mauvais livres (je me place à votre point de vue, bien entendu). Ce sont trois livres avertisseurs, qui, avec la *Symphonie Pastorale*, travaillent dans votre sens et versent de l'eau à votre moulin. Ils dénoncent tour à tour les dangers de l'individualisme outrancier, d'une certaine forme de mysticisme très précisément protestant . . ., du romantisme, et, dans la *Symphonie Pastorale*, de la libre interprétation des écritures.[1]

It is all very well for Mr. Gide to declare that the stories can be interpreted in that manner. That that is so is irrelevant. What matters is that they can be interpreted otherwise. And that *L'Immoraliste*, for example, can by some be interpreted otherwise, Mr. Gide himself reveals in his *Conversation avec un Allemand* :

—Elle [prison] a eu ceci de bon, me dit-il, qu'elle a supprimé chez moi, complètement, tout remords, tout scrupule.
—Et maintenant que la société vous a frappé, vous vous sentez des droits contre elle . . . ?
—Oui, tous les droits.
—Lutter contre la société, cela est passionnant ; mais elle vous vaincra.
—Non. Je suis terriblement fort.
Il dit cela sans forfanterie aucune, avec une simple conviction.[2]

And the German who spoke thus was not, to judge by Mr. Gide's account, a really strong man ; he was, however, an admirer of Mr. Gide's. He had translated two of his books, and his desire to meet him came when :

—Brusquement, dit-il, quand, dans votre *Immoraliste*, je suis arrivé au passage où Moktir vole une paire de ciseaux et où Michel, qui l'a vu faire, sourit.[3]

May one, indeed, not ask : But what of the weak ?

§ 23. A DAMAGING DEFENCE

That *Les Nourritures Terrestres* are possibly dangerous, Mr. Gide has recently admitted. In the same letter to the Jesuit writer from which I have just quoted, he also says :

Condamnables . . . mes *Nourritures Terrestres*. . . . Mais ce livre est de 1897 ; et le danger même que présentait sa doctrine (si j'ose

[1] Letter to the Rev. V. Poucel, S.J., *Nouvelle Revue Française*, July, 1928, p. 43.
[2] *Incidences*, p. 143. [3] Ibid., p. 138.

ainsi dire) m'est si nettement apparu, que, sitôt après, en antidote, j'ai écrit *Saül* (dont sans doute on reconnaîtra plus tard l'importance), dont le sujet même est l'exposé de cette ruine de l'âme, de cette déchéance et évanouissement de la personnalité qu'entraîne la non-résistance aux blandices.[1]

Is not this a curious piece of reasoning? In what way, one must ask, did the publication of *Saül* serve as an antidote to *Les Nourritures Terrestres*? Mr. Gide here speaks as might a man accused of murder, who would say: 'Oh, it's all right; yes, I killed him; but the population has not decreased: my wife has just given birth to a child. So don't worry!' The advent of the child into the world does not bring the murdered man back to life. Likewise, the publication of *Saül*, after that of *Les Nourritures Terrestres*, could not undo the harm, if any, which the latter had done. Moreover, *Les Nourritures*, whether or not it is harmful, has never been withdrawn: it is still on sale. Its sales perhaps were never larger than they have been during the last ten years. But what compulsion is there, when one buys a copy of *Les Nourritures*, to buy also a copy of *Saül*? And if one did buy it, what compulsion to read it? Thousands have read *Les Nourritures Terrestres*. But how many have read *Saül*? How many of those who are attracted by a book which tells them that it is legitimate to cast duty to the winds and have one's fling, are likely to get, still less read, a play, of which the purely negative moral is that one must not have one's fling too far?

§ 24. A LIGHT SHINING BEFORE MEN

Even if it were so, that Mr. Gide's theory of conduct, his theory that, since 'il est plus long de lutter contre le naturel que d'y céder', it is better to yield to one's nature, to be *sincere*, and that thereby one advances oneself in wisdom, were a theory addressed to the strong only, and even if it were so that only the strong would be likely to adopt it, there remains an important objection to it. It is that such a theory omits all consideration of the fact that the light of the strong shines before men. Mr. Gide cannot be unaware, since he has been so much consulted and

[1] Letter to the Rev. V. Poucel, S.J., loc. cit., pp. 42–3.

appealed to from every corner of the world [1], of how apt ordinary people are to follow leaders. Also, he is aware that our behaviour may be inflected by another's presence. I have already quoted his statement that he has refrained from publishing a book in deference to his friends. There is also this. He says that, while at Biskra at the same time as a friend of Oscar Wilde's who 'ne me plaisait guère ; ou pour mieux dire : il m'intéressait beaucoup plus qu'il ne me plaisait', 'je m'enfonçai dans le travail'. Then, when the other had gone away :

> C'est alors que je reconnus combien le spectacle de la dissipation, par protestation me donnait du cœur à l'ouvrage. A présent que je n'avais plus à résister aux sollicitations des courses en voiture, je partais chaque jour, souvent dès le matin, ne lançais à travers le désert dans d'exténuantes randonnées.[2]

If 'le spectacle de la dissipation' can have that effect on someone, and make him behave sensibly 'par protestation', so the good example of a person who is respected can have a similar effect on one. Mr. Gide sees such an effect in love :

> —C'est Olivier qui vous fera meilleur. Que n'obtient-on pas de soi, par amour ? [3]

But love makes demands on the loved, and one of those demands is the giving of an example. Thus even the strong man may hesitate to go his own way, if he has in mind the effect his example will have on those less strong than himself. It is perhaps his omission to consider sufficiently the power of example that results in Mr. Gide's plea for a different treatment of the man who commits what he calls a *crime isolé* ; he does not perhaps allow, when he advances that plea, for the extent to which we are affected by example ; he does not allow for the force with which the deterrent acts, not only upon the evildoer, but also upon the just. There remains the question : Is there such a thing as a *crime isolé* ? Into that I inquire in the course of the next chapter.

[1] Cf. Jacques Copeau in *André Gide, Les Contemporains, No. 5* (Paris, 1928), p. 115.
[2] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 154.
[3] *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 404.

CHAPTER VI

FATE

§ 25. ART AND SATAN

I COME now to discuss Mr. Gide's hints and theories concerning the dark subject of man's nature or fate. Mr. Gide being himself an imaginative writer, he reaches this subject from the subject of art. Regarding art and what is still, in his view, uncleared jungle in man, he has said something which has greatly incensed several of his critics in France. It is what he says in the following two passages :

> À ces *Proverbes de l'Enfer* de William Blake, je voudrais en ajouter deux autres de mon cru : ' C'est avec les beaux sentiments que l'on fait la mauvaise littérature ', et : ' Il n'y a pas d'œuvre d'art sans la collaboration du démon '. Oui, vraiment, toute œuvre d'art est un lieu de contact, ou, si vous préférez, est un anneau de mariage du ciel et de l'enfer.[1]

Also :

> Trois chevilles tendent le métier où se tisse toute œuvre d'art, et ce sont les trois concupiscences dont parlait l'apôtre : ' La convoitise des yeux, la convoitise de la chair, et l'orgueil de la vie.' [2]

The second passage surely requires no elucidation. The meaning of the first I take to be this. Good imaginative literature—the opposite, that is, of ' *la mauvaise littérature* '—must be dramatic ; the essence of drama is conflict, and the most dramatic of conflicts is man's internal conflict, the ' contradiction perpétuelle et pathétique à la lâche disponibilité de nos sens ' [3]. Again, the reader is to be stirred, and the activity of the mysterious and sinister in man will stir the reader far more than that of the obvious and noble

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 247. [2] Ibid., p. 254.
[3] Quoted from René Schwob : *Moi Juif*, by André Gide in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, January, 1929, p. 59.

can. Since one can write only of what one is aware, the imaginative writer cannot depict the conflict unless he himself has enacted it violently within his own breast, nor deal with the mysterious and sinister unless he has cultivated that. On this account it is, no doubt, that the writer runs, in Mr. Gide's opinion, such a risk. His own internal conflict, and his intimacy with the mysterious and sinister, may wreck him as a writer, may render him impotent to write. On this account it is, no doubt, that to Mr. Gide the case of Dostoievsky, as he interprets it, appears so remarkable and so 'admirable'.

I do not see that the two statements, in so far as they concern imaginative literature, and art generally, need to be disputed. How can one dispute that art draws part of its inspiration from our lower nature, or that art results from the artist's enjoyment of his five senses and his pride of life? It is, indeed, difficult to see why, on the ground of art, Mr. Gide's critics should have disputed them. But Mr. Gide is not concerned merely with art, and his first statement, at any rate, does not apply only to art. He is also calling for a reformation of morality, for a greater freedom in morals, and this first statement of his has accordingly an application to life.

But how does the case of the artist affect the question of morality and morals? Has excellent art not been produced when morality was stern and morals strict? Mr. Gide says:

> Racine ne mériterait pas tant d'honneurs s'il n'avait pas compris, tout aussi bien que Baudelaire, l'inéffable ressource qu'offrent à l'artiste les régions basses, sauvages, fiévreuses et non nettoyées d'un Oreste ou d'une Hermoine, d'une Phèdre ou d'un Bajazet—et que les hautes régions sont les pauvres.[1]

Let that be granted. But then, since Racine wrote during the classical age of France, at a time when Catholicism was supreme around him, should one not conclude that the predominance of the Catholic morality is excellent for the production of good imaginative literature?

Does not the artist content himself with what he finds ready to his hand and adapt his work to whatever morality and morals may be in vogue? Has the artist, in fact, the

[1] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, pp. 92–3.

scruples and anxieties with which Mr. Gide endows him? In addition to *Saül*, Mr. Gide has written a second play, *Le Roi Candaule*. Candaule is an artist. He feels compelled to make other men aware of the beauty he has himself beheld. He knows that, in revealing his secret exaltation, in admitting Gyges to see his wife, naked, he is guilty of an act of prostitution, and yet he feels that his love for his fellow-man entails his committing it. The problem for King Candaules is, in short, the problem created by the conflict between (a) that sense of delicacy which should forbid a rich man to display his wealth, and (b), desire for the joy there is in sharing one's good things with others.

Now Mr. Gide may himself have had to grapple with this problem. But does it arise for the artist as a rule? Do any such problems arise? Has not the artist a talent which he cannot bury, and is not that the whole of the matter? For the artist, as for the man of action, there are, Mr. Gide tells us, no problems. He says:

> Pour les artistes et pour les hommes d'action, la question du *surhomme* ne se pose pas, ou du moins elle se trouve tout aussitôt résolue.[1]

And if the problem of the Overman is thus settled for the artist, is not the problem of morality and morals settled in like fashion? Mr. Gide also says:

> Je dirais assez volontiers: qu'on nous redonne la liberté des mœurs, et la contrainte de l'art suivra; qu'on supprime l'hypocrisie de la vie et le masque remontera sur la scène.[2]

The inferiority of French classical to Greek tragedy is due, he argues, to the freedom of Greek as compared with French seventeenth century morals. But is the passage not set at naught by this other, and is the latter not the sounder of the two?

> Une singulière méprise aujourd'hui fait prôner par-dessus tout, dans l'œuvre d'art, le mérite de sincérité . . . . Les artistes de la Renaissance s'inquiétaient fort peu de cela. Le manteau d'hypocrisie catholique dont ils furent forcés de recouvrir leur sensualité, si naturellement païenne, servit aux fins de l'art. C'est aux plus hypocrites époques que l'art a le plus resplendi.[3]

---

[1] *Dostoïewsky*, p. 231.
[2] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 23.
[3] Ibid., pp. 38–9.

Thus, should not Mr. Gide, so far as art is concerned, call not for a relaxation of morality and freer morals, but for a tightening up of morality and for stricter morals?

§ 26. WHAT IS SUBLIMATION?

Another question regarding the relation of art to what Mr. Gide calls the lowlands of man's nature, the marshy, miasmal, and still uncleared jungle in man, is raised by his interpretation of these words of Baudelaire's: 'Le goût de la concentration productive doit remplacer, chez un homme mûr, le goût de la déperdition.' He finds in this statement a trace of 'ce radium infiniment précieux, au contact de quoi les anciennes théories, lois, conventions, et prétentions de l'âme, toutes, se volatilisent'.[1] What he hints at is, I fancy, to be understood in the light of the following passages which I have already quoted:

T. s'explique.

. . .

. . . Cet *état de dialogue* qui, pour tant d'autres, est à peu près intolérable, devenait pour moi nécessaire. C'est aussi bien parce que, pour les autres, il ne peut que nuire à l'action, tandis que, pour moi, loin d'aboutir à la stérilité, il m'invitait au contraire à l'œuvre d'art et précédait immédiatement la création, aboutissait à l'équilibre, à l'harmonie.[2]

And:

J'ai pu être inquiet dans le temps: . . . Je le serais sans doute encore, si je n'avais pas su délivrer mes diverses possibilités dans mes livres et projeter hors de moi les personnages contradictoires qui m'habitaient. Le résultat de cette purgation morale, c'est un grand calme; osons dire: une certaine sérénité.[3]

Thus, what Mr. Gide believes Baudelaire meant by: 'Le goût de la concentration productive doit remplacer, chez un homme mûr, le goût de la déperdition', is, I take it, that an artist, as he becomes mature, must learn to rid himself of his internal contradictions, not into life, as he naturally does in youth—sowing his wild oats—, but into his work.

But is that really what Baudelaire meant? The theory of the sublimation of passion has become a commonplace of psychology. But does it cover the facts? The theory

[1] *Morceaux Choisis*, p. 115. [2] Ibid., p. 435; his italics.
[3] Letter quoted in André Rouveyre: op cit., p. 201.

assumes that when, for instance, a poet desires to possess a lady and cannot satisfy his desire, he sits down and writes a sonnet on her eyebrow, and that, when he rises from this occupation, lo! his desire is appeased. From this it is inferred, on the theory, that what has happened is that his desire has gone into the sonnet: it has been sublimated.

But has it? Is it really conceivable that a physical condition, demanding for its relief an outlet of physical matter and energy, can be relieved by the expression, on paper or orally, of certain non-physical and immaterial sentiments? No doubt energy is consumed in the composition of the sonnet, but is it not a relatively infinitesimal amount? And is it not rather the case that what happens, when the poet composes a sonnet, is that his desire is, not deflected into another channel, as the theory of sublimation supposes, but merely distracted? And that if, instead of writing a sonnet, the poet were to go into the garden and do some digging, he would remain as lustful as ever, not because the digging would not consume energy—it would use up far more than would the composition of a sonnet—, but because the digging would not distract his attention?

A man—or a woman—may, it is well known, burn with all the ardours of love, and have the object of his or her desire at hand and, by her or his presence, fanning those ardours; and yet there is required only some slight interruption—it may be a strange small noise, or only a stray recollection—and, suddenly, the ardours are, not only damped, but extinguished. A notorious example is, of course, the one Sterne supplies in the early pages of *Tristram Shandy*.

But when this has happened, surely the physical energy and matter, which were demanding outlet, must still be there. They have in no way been let out. What, then, must one infer?

That it is not the desire which matters, but attention to, awareness of, the desire. Hence may one not further infer that, when a desire cannot be satisfied, it is not the so-called sublimation of the desire which can prove a substitute for its satisfaction, but a sufficiently strong distraction, a new focus of attention? This may be supplied by the writing of a sonnet, or by horse racing, Stock Exchange speculation,

bridge-building, or mathematics. The advantage the writing of a sonnet owns over horse-racing lies, then, not in any sublimation which the writing of the sonnet effects, but in the length of concentration it, as compared with watching, say, the Grand National, requires. But any knotty problem in bridge-building or mathematics *which sufficiently concentrates the attention* of the desirous person, will provide quite as complete a 'sublimation' as the writing of a sonnet. So will the finding of one's way out of a forest, or the quest for water in a desert.

Thus, is it not probable that no peculiar sublimation of passion is obtained exclusively from engaging in a work of art?

And is it not likely that Baudelaire's assertion: 'Le goût de la concentration productive doit remplacer, chez un homme mûr, le goût de la déperdition', has actually no relation whatever to the meaning with which Mr. Gide invests it? For Mr. Gide it means that an artist, as he becomes mature, must learn to rid himself of his internal contradictions, not into life, as he did in youth, but into his work. The artist, in short, must, for Mr. Gide, sublimate those contradictions. But since sublimation was not in fashion during Baudelaire's lifetime, and since one may well doubt, as I say, if there is such an operation as sublimation, should one not rather believe that Baudelaire's meaning is this: that the poet must, as he grows mature, acquire regular habits of work, instead of, as Baudelaire did, frittering away his time and attention in all the sundry calls made upon them? And should one not also believe that what Barbey d'Aurevilly meant when he said, of Baudelaire: 'L'artiste n'a pas été trop vaincu', was merely that Baudelaire had retained, in spite of all the frittering away of his time, enough power of concentration to produce a respectable amount of work?

The point is cardinal as regards Mr. Gide's views. For if I am right, then what Baudelaire, in the statement in question, affirms, is a faith in those very adventitious aids to behaviour and conduct, which Mr. Gide contends we can forgo. He affirms a faith in the assistance to be gained from formed habits, from following a routine—self-provided, if you like, but thereupon self-imposed *from without.*

Again, if I am correct in my surmise that sublimation is a myth, and that Dante, for instance, no more sublimated his desire for Beatrice by describing her in *The Divine Comedy* than, say, Mr. Arnold Bennett could appease his hunger by writing an advertisement for Selfridge's provision department, can Mr. Gide himself, when he speaks of having been able to 'délivrer mes diverses possibilités dans mes livres et projeter hors de moi les personnages contradictories qui m'habitaient', be giving a true account of what occurs when a man writes a story? Here also it is nothing less than the whole of his theories which is brought into question. For if the artist, as he calls him, does, in fact, not rid himself into his stories of any characters, contradictory or other, that dwell in him, and if all this talk of sublimation, of artistic *creation*, of putting one's spare selves into one's work, is nothing more than an invention of the novelist's, designed to magnify the nature of his job, and entirely divorced from the facts, what becomes of Mr. Gide's suggestion that a man must rid himself of his contradictory selves, somehow or other, in art or in life? And what, likewise, becomes of his theory about the criminal and the *motivation intérieure* of the *crime isolé*?

§ 27. THE ISOLATED CRIME

Mr. Gide suggests, as I say, that the artist, or, rather, the poet—the specialist in passion—purifies and evolves his self by committing to paper what he is tempted to commit in life. From that, of course, it is only a step to declaring that certain people who are not poets, and even poets themselves to an extent, have to commit in life what they cannot commit to paper. Do not brand them for acting thus, is how in effect he exhorts us; once they have committed these actions, they too will have undergone a '*purgation morale*'; they too will have reached a state of great calm, one even of serenity.

At least, is not that what one is led to gather from Mr. Gide's *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises*, where he mentions several cases which may well have been, he suggests, *crimes isolés?* Let me run over them again. There is the incendiarist, Bernard, about whom a doctor, in giving evidence, says that he admits having felt a strange relief, a relaxation,

the first time he started a fire. There is the post office sorter who ran away with a registered letter containing 13,000 francs. Daily he had handled letters containing large sums. On the very morning of his flight there was, beside the letter he took, another letter, also within his reach, which he saw, which contained 15,000 francs. And that second letter he left behind. Moreover, when he had spent 246 of the 13,000 francs he did make away with, he gave himself up, restored the balance of the 13,000 francs, and offered to pay back in instalments what he had spent. There is the coachman, Charles, who had stabbed his mistress 110 times. Why he stabbed her he did not know, and while he was stabbing her he was unaware, it seems, of what he was doing, except at the beginning and at the end. Evidently he did not, Mr. Gide says, have any intention of killing her; possibly he was sadistic; certainly his was a '*crime passionnel*' if ever there was one; but he was not, strictly speaking, a murderer.

Then there is also the frail lad of twenty, who is charged with rape, and who, when the presiding judge says to him that he has done something serious, replies: 'Je l'vois bien moi-même.'

That Mr. Gide does believe such cases may be *crimes isolés* is, I think, indicated by his comment elsewhere upon another case of incendiarism. He says:

> . . . Une impulsion naïve et sommaire, une impulsion impérieuse (libre à nous de chercher à l'analyser et décomposer par la suite); certaines réponses de l'accusé m'ont laissé supposer qu'il entrait même de l'érotisme dans le cas de cet incendiaire, une perversion sexuelle.[1]

And he implies that, in the penal treatment of the perpetrator of such a *crime isolé*, it should be recognized that possibly, if let alone, he would never commit another crime. Imprisonment tends to prove fatal—that is what he insists upon. Of another youth, who had been sentenced, he says:

> Mais hélas! après la prison ce sera le bataillon d'Afrique. Et au sortir de ces six ans, qui sera-t-il? . . . *que* sera-t-il? . . .[2]

To which one cannot avoid retorting: Well, supposing the youth had been acquitted, what then would he have

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Française*, June, 1928, p. 842.
[2] *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises*, p. 99.

been at the end of six years? Is there any ground, except pure sentimentality, for believing, without special evidence, that, if he had been acquitted, he would have turned into a decent citizen, that his crime was a *crime isolé* (he had killed all the inhabitants of a farm where he worked), and that, once he had put that crime behind him, and had gone unpunished, he would have followed the path of rectitude?

That reforms in the treatment of detected criminals are both practicable and desirable, I do not, of course, deny for a moment. But are there *crimes isolés*? Here is Mr. Gide's case for their possible existence. The passage is a somewhat lengthy one, but it is, I think, worth quoting:

Trois ans après.

La scène se passe en wagon, entre Narbonne où j'ai laissé Alibert, et Nîmes.

Dans un compartiment de troisième classe . . .

The passengers discuss 'des criminels':

Un autre voyageur, qui semblait dormir dans un coin du wagon:

—D'abord ces gens-là, quand ils reviennent de là-bas, ils ne peuvent plus trouver à se placer.

Le gros Monsieur.—Mais, Monsieur, vous comprenez bien que personne n'en veut. On a raison; ces gens-là, au bout de quelque temps, recommencent.

. . .

'Le gros Monsieur' speaks again:

—Naturellement, ces criminels, ils se plaignent toujours; rien n'est assez bon pour eux. Je connais l'histoire d'un qui avait été condamné par erreur; au bout de vingt-sept ans, on l'a fait revenir, parce que le vrai coupable, au moment de mourir, a fait des aveux complets; alors le fils de celui qu'on avait condamné par erreur a fait le voyage, il a ramené de là-bas son père, et savez-vous ce que celui-ci a dit à son retour?—qu'il n'était pas trop mal là-bas. C'est-à-dire, Monsieur, qu'il y a bien des honnêtes gens en France, qui sont moins heureux qu'eux.

. . .

—Quel crime avait-il donc commis, demande le Monsieur du coin.

—Il avait assassiné une femme.

Moi.—Il me semble, Monsieur, que cet exemple contredit un peu ce que vous avanciez tout à l'heure.

Le gros Monsieur devient tout rouge.

—Alors vous ne croyez pas ce que je vous raconte?

—Mais si! mais si! vous ne me comprenez pas. Je dis simplement que cet exemple prouve que quelquefois un homme peut commettre un crime isolé et ne pas s'enfoncer ensuite dans de nouveaux crimes.

Voyez celui-ci : après ce crime il a mené, dites-vous, vingt-sept ans de vie honnête. Si vous l'aviez condamné, il y a de grandes chances pour que vous l'ayez amené à récidiver.[1]

The obvious weakness of this argument is that the man who had once escaped detection may have abstained from further crimes, not because the crime for which another had been sentenced in his place was a *crime isolé*, but because he feared that if he committed a second crime, he would not escape detection again. It may have been a case, not of a *crime isolé*, but of fear of the deterrent.

§ 28. MAN'S INTERNAL FATE

The question : Are there *crimes isolés* ? is, however, really part of a larger question, *viz* Is a man compelled to obey an internal fate, and are all his efforts to subtract himself from that fate vain ? That is the crucial theory Mr. Gide advances. He says :

. . . En ce temps je ne savais pas encore à quel point le natif l'emporte sur l'acquis, et qu'à travers tous les apprêts, les empois, les repassages et les plis, la naturelle étoffe reparaît, qui se tient, d'après le tissu, raide ou floche.[2]

Hence his insistence that it is necessary to inquire closely whether there are not *actes gratuits*, that is, actions performed par *motivation intérieure*, actions which it is the man's fate to perform.

Paganism, he tells us, accepted man as he is :

Paganisme ou christianisme, c'est d'abord une psychologie, avant d'être une métaphysique. Le paganisme fut tout à la fois le triomphe de l'individualisme et la croyance que l'homme ne peut se faire autre qu'il est.[3]

And the pagan Greeks, he also tells us, understood that man has an internal fate. The heroes of Greek legend had each a fate, ' mais la fatalité dont il s'agit ici, c'est une fatalité intérieure. C'est en eux qu'était cette fatalité ; ils la portaient en eux ; c'était une fatalité psychologique '.[4] He mentions a number of Greek heroes who, he says, not only encountered dangers which they were compelled to

[1] *Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises*, pp. 107–8 and 110–12.
[2] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. II., p. 115.
[3] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 22.
[4] *Morceaux Choisis*, p. 187.

go in quest of, but upon their return home were met with adultery, murder, betrayal, exile, all the most horrible crimes, and yet they invariably hastened home. On the other hand, Ulysses, who alone among them all was destined to find, upon his return home, that his wife has been faithful, virtuous, and patient, remained away for ten years, being delayed by many a mishap.

As to this, no doubt the Greeks did consider that man has an internal fate. No doubt, for them, Agamemnon, for instance, was compelled by his nature to bring back Cassandra with him from Troy. No doubt Prometheus was only obeying his fate when he sought to serve mankind and, in so doing, infringed upon the prerogatives of Zeus. But what the Greeks seem to have inferred from the existence of this internal fate is not what Mr. Gide appears to infer. Mr. Gide, dwelling on that 'manifestation de vie surabondante qui s'était exprimée déjà dans l'œuvre des plus grands artistes'[1], calling for man's conquest of his nature by surrender to that nature ('le triomphe de l'individualisme'), places the emphasis on man's strength. He says that the pagans agreed with him: 'Le paganisme fut . . . le triomphe de l'individualisme', and the Greeks were pagans. But that the Greeks laid the stress on man's strength does not seem to have been the case. Mr. Gide is probably far more familiar with Greek literature than I am, but to me it seems that, on the contrary, the Greeks realized man to be, not strong, but weak.

Human beings, even demi-gods, were fallible—that is what Greek literature dwells on. Even when acting for the best, human beings, and even demi-gods, erred. There is Agamemnon, there is Prometheus. Perhaps an even more striking illustration of fallibility is supplied by Oedipus. In attempting to escape his fate, Oedipus certainly sought to act for the best. But it was precisely by trying to escape his fate that he ran, instead, into it. Had he only stayed where he had grown up, all would have been well. At the same time, how could he, in the circumstances, have stayed? Is not the predicament of Oedipus typical of man's? Faced with a bewildering variety of possible courses, man has to choose one only. And, in choosing, does

[1] *Prétextes*, p. 177.

he not act at his peril? That is the lesson of Oedipus, and that is how Oedipus illustrates, not man's strength, but man's weakness.

Of course, if it turned out that Mr. Gide were in agreement with the Greeks, that would not make him right. It is merely curious that there where he seeks support for his views, it is lacking. The punishment of crime may often be an error, he says. But how did Aeschylus and Sophocles, for instance, regard the punishment of crime? As the fulfilment of justice. Just, for them, was Agamemnon's murder; just the punishment of Prometheus; just the self-inflicted punishment of Oedipus.

So it does not seem, either as regards man's attitude to life, or as regards punishment, that the Greeks and Mr. Gide have much in common. Even less so is it for the view he expresses when he says: 'Certes il m'est impossible de concevoir la morale indépendament de la psychologie'[1]. That is a view the Greeks would certainly not have understood. Indeed, as he says of the artists of the Renaissance regarding the dictum: art for art's sake, the Greeks would have been utterly unable to grasp it.

§ 29. MUST ONE THROW UP THE SPONGE?

Furthermore, to realize that a man often is driven to act by what seems to be an internal fate, and that obscure emotions and impulses play in the performance of actions a greater part than either moralists often allow or the agent is often aware—to realize this is one thing; to contend that we should not struggle against our nature quite another. It is one thing to agree with Mr. Gide when he says:

> Mais était-ce bien la curiosité qui me retenait? Je ne sais plus. Le motif secret de nos actes, et j'entends: des plus décisifs, nous échappe; et non seulement dans le souvenir que nous en gardons, mais bien au moment même[2];

which is a matter of psychology; and another thing to admit that, even if 'il est plus long . . . de lutter contre le naturel que d'y céder', one should not struggle against one's nature; which is a moral question.

[1] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 234.
[2] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 72.

Mr. Gide says, and it is certainly a poignant passage :

C'est là que pour moi commence l'étrange : si soûlé que je fusse et si épuisé, je n'eus de cesse et de répit que lorsque j'eus poussé l'épuisement plus loin encore. J'ai souvent éprouvé par la suite combien il m'était vain de chercher à me modérer, malgré que me le conseillât la raison, la prudence ; car chaque fois que je le tentai, il me fallut, ensuite et solitairement, travailler à cet épuisement total hors lequel je n'éprouvais aucun répit, et que je n'obtenais pas à moins de frais. Au demeurant, je ne me charge point d'expliquer ; je sais qu'il me faudra quitter la vie sans avoir rien compris, ou que bien peu, au fonctionnement de mon corps.[1]

Upon this I offer only one comment : Assuming that here Mr. Gide is not merely telling us what he imagines to be the truth, but is telling us the actual truth, should he not —and not only he, but any slave of the gin bottle, opium pipe, or other ' fatal weakness ', who may draw consolation from his words—should they not, even if it be true that in such cases all struggle must fail in the end—should they not struggle all the same ? Should they forthwith throw up the sponge ? If it is once admitted that virtue exists, and Mr. Gide holds that it does, must it not be our duty to pursue virtue even if it is unattainable ; if we deem a certain end to be right, right independently of its results, should we not strive for that end even if it can never be reached ?

§ 30. THE PATHETIC FALLACY

Mr. Gide has declared not only that life has been given to us to be enjoyed, but also that such is the teaching of nature. Commenting upon the assertion :

> Que l'homme est né pour le bonheur,
> Certes toute la nature l'enseigne ;

he says :

Une éparse joie baigne la terre, et que la terre exude à l'appel du soleil. . . . On voit des complexités ravissantes naître de l'enchevêtrement des lois ; saisons ; agitation des marées ; distraction, puis retour en ruissellement des vapeurs ; tranquille alternance des jours ; retours périodiques des vents ; tout ce qui s'anime déjà, un rythme harmonieux le balance. Tout se prépare à l'organisation de la joie et que voici bientôt qui prend vie, qui palpite inconsidérément dans la feuille, qui prend nom, se divise et devient parfum dans la fleur, saveur dans le fruit, conscience et voix dans l'oiseau. De sorte que le

[1] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., pp. 141–2.

retour, l'information, puis la disparition de la vie imite le détour de l'eau qui s'évapore dans le rayon, puis se rassemble à nouveau dans l'ondée.

Chaque animal n'est qu'un paquet de joie.

Tout aime d'être et tout être se réjouit. C'est de la joie que tu appelles fruit quand elle se fait succulence ; et quand elle se fait chant, oiseau.

Que l'homme est né pour le bonheur, certes toute la nature l'enseigne. C'est l'effort vers la volupté qui fait germer la plante, emplit de miel la ruche et le coeur de l'homme de bonté.[1]

I give the passage at length because thus it can at once be seen to be nonsense. To make his point Mr. Gide has first to identify joy with rhythm : the words, of course, are far from being synonyms. Yet it is only on condition that they are taken as such that natural events—evaporation from the sea and rivers, the formation of clouds, the falling of rain—, events which are rhythmical, can be interpreted as nature's self-enjoyment. Mr. Gide has also to assume that the scent of a flower, the taste of a fruit, and consciousness and song in a bird, are all one thing, *viz* joy. Apart from our being unaware of how far birds are conscious, it is difficult to see how the three things : scent, taste, and song, can be one thing, *viz* joy. Certainly the flower cannot enjoy its scent nor the fruit its taste, whatever the bird may do. As for saying : ' Chaque animal n'est qu'un paquet de joie ', obviously an animal is much else as well. And so on. That man has a capacity for joy, that on a fine morning when he is in good health he is glad to be alive, and, if in the country, finds all nature a joy, so much is a commonplace. There is no need to resort to what Ruskin named the pathetic fallacy, to credit nature with human emotion, in order to get us to believe it. Why then does Mr. Gide call on nature and animals to bear witness for him ? Because he wishes to have it believed that goodness predominates in nature, and, therefore, in man also. For that is his main point : only leave man to his nature, only allow him to be sincere, and tell him that he is good, and he will be good. He quotes these words from a novel of Dostoievsky's with enthusiastic approval :

Ils ne sont pas bons, puisqu'ils ne savent pas qu'ils le sont. Quand ils l'auront appris, ils ne violeront plus de petites filles. Il faut qu'ils

[1] *Morceaux Choisis*, pp. 247–8.

sachent qu'ils sont bons et, instantanément, ils le deviendront tous, jusqu'au dernier.[1]

§ 31. IS MAN NATURALLY GOOD?

Mr. Gide, that is, insists that man is naturally good. As I have already said, he recently visited French Equatorial Africa, and there he rediscovered the Noble Savage. He found that the natives were easily pleased, that they were affectionate, that frequently they were faithful to the point of undergoing much hardship, and that one of his carriers invariably failed to take advantage of the opportunities Mr. Gide gave him to cheat over change. But was Mr. Gide's experience sufficient to produce the conviction that the black is naturally good? How was the theory of the Noble Savage exploded? Through the testimony of an overwhelming number of travellers and ethnologists that the black was not naturally good. Again, if Mr. Gide met with several good blacks, he also met with many bad whites. Moreover, of the whites' treatment of the blacks he says:

> Quel art diabolique, quelle persévérance dans l'incompréhension, quelle politique de haine et de mauvais vouloir il a fallu pour obtenir de quoi justifier les brutalités, les exactions et les sévices.[2]

Can it be that, although the blacks are naturally good, the whites are naturally bad? Yet does not Mr. Gide consider the whites superior to the blacks? Is not the whole tone of his two African travel books that of a superior person dealing with inferiors? And by: superior, I do not mean superior merely in intelligence; I also mean, superior morally.

That the whites, who, in Mr. Gide's books, are so often bad—he complained to the governor about them and, when he got home, raised a considerable stir in the press—are superior to the blacks, who, again in Mr. Gide's books, are so often good—does not admit of doubt. A recent writer, who discusses the discarding of the theory of the Noble Savage, also suggests that the white man's acknowledged supremacy in the world may be partly the result of his sexual behaviour. The white has, this writer points out, always controlled his sexual impulses to some

[1] *Les Possédés*, I., p. 258; quoted in *Dostoïewsky*, p. 259.
[2] *Voyage au Congo*, p. 213.

extent ; at all events he has, on the whole, kept them within bounds. But all primitive races, and especially the blacks, are not only strangers to sexual self-control ; all of them are given to sexual excess. The black, in particular, artificially maintains himself in a perpetual state of sexual hunger.[1] How, if this is true, does Mr. Gide explain that primitive man's, and particularly the black's, natural goodness has not, in the course of the centuries, asserted itself in this respect ; how does Mr. Gide explain that, for the black, the road of excess has not led to the palace of wisdom ?

[1] Raoul Allier : *Le Non-Civilisé et Nous* (Paris, 1928), pp. 262-8. English translation under the title of : *The Mind of the Savage* (London, 1929). Mr. Allier refers his reader also to the appendices in Latin which Mr. Henri A. Junod has supplied to the *Ba-Ronga*.

CHAPTER VII

CORYDON

§ 32. THE SOURCE OF REFORMS

It will long since have become evident that Mr. Gide is a reformer. Naturally, in view of his insistence on the pre-eminence of the psychological, he has, for the reformer's zeal, a psychological explanation. It is this :

> À l'origine d'une réforme il y a toujours un malaise ; le malaise dont souffre le réformateur est celui d'un déséquilibre intérieur. . . . Socrate, Mahomet, Saint-Paul, Rousseau, Dostoïewsky, Luther . . . il n'en est pas un que je ne reconnaîtrai pour anormal.[1]

Does the explanation go very far ? Does it amount to saying more than that a man who wants conditions to be different is a man who does not like conditions as they are ? The reason for mentioning this explanation, however, is that, if Mr. Gide is a reformer, he too has his abnormality. It is that which I still have to discuss. Or, rather, what I have still to discuss are the views concerning this abnormality which he sets forth in the little book, *Corydon*.

These views are so welcome in, at least, certain circles that no discussion of contemporary beliefs such as this can ignore them. Mr. Du Bos, in his recent study of Mr. Gide, says [2] that, as a result of the publication of *Corydon* and *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, ' à son œuvre et à sa *figure* la pédérastie ajoute encore un rehaut : l'une et l'autre sont bien près de devenir l'objet (oh ! horreur) d'un *snobisme*, d'une *mode* '. Mr. Du Bos is considering the man and the author ; I am considering his *effect*. But the observation is equally significant for both standpoints. Mr. Gide's peculiarity could not make him the object of a *snobisme* and a *mode* if it were not already a popular peculiarity. Yet it is not how wide-

[1] *Incidences*, pp. 91–2.
[2] Charles Du Bos : op. cit., p. 248n., his italics.

spread the peculiarity may be today that matters ; what I wish to stress is that an attempt to defend, and even *extol*, this peculiarity should at present be acclaimed.

I wish to stress it the more that Mr. Gide professes to be actuated by worthy reasons. He prefaces the conversations of which *Corydon* consists with the statement that he does not advocate a blind surrender to our instincts, but an honest inquiry into what our instincts really are, an honest attempt thoroughly to understand them. He says :

> Je ne crois nullement que le dernier mot de la sagesse soit de s'abandonner à la nature, et de laisser libre cours aux instincts ; mais je crois qu'avant de chercher à les réduire et domestiquer, il importe de les bien comprendre—car nombre des disharmonies dont nous avons à souffrir ne sont qu'apparentes et dues uniquement à des erreurs d'interprétation.[1]

This is what he says. But what he does, in the book, is not to make any instinct understandable, but to defend and commend a certain manner of gratifying one instinct.

§ 33. A NEW THEORY OF LOVE

Corydon's views, as disclosed in the conversations, are :

1. Uranism is natural. To sustain this he advances what he calls a new theory of love. Love is, he says, a human invention. In nature it does not exist. In nature the perpetuation of species is ensured by a great superabundance of the male element in comparison with the number of females to be fecundated and the frequency with which they can be fecundated. This male element requires outlet at all seasons, whereas the females can be approached only once or twice a year. As a result, the males of many species are heterosexual only at those rare times when the female will suffer their approach ; the rest of the year they are homosexual. Dogs, cattle, sheep, goats, pigeons, ducks, chickens, moths—all have been observed to be homosexual.

2. Woman's beauty is only man's (artificial) desire of her. Youths, after puberty, are inclined towards woman, not by natural desire, but by social pressure and woman's artifice (ornament, veils, &c.).

3. All great periods of art have been periods in which homosexuality was rife. In Periclean Greece, Augustan Rome, Shakespearian England, in Italy during the Renais-

[1] p. 12.

sance, in France at the Renaissance and under Louis XIII, in Persia in the time of Hafiz—in all those great ages homosexuality flourished. Likewise, periods of martial exaltation appear to be essentially uranian. If the Greeks so excelled in the plastic arts, and attained in every manifestation of life such harmonious perfection, it was because they had introduced wisdom and harmony into the regulation of their lives. And they were homosexual, their women being solely wives and mothers.

4. It would be better for contemporary society if we were to revive the Greek custom. Prostitution and adultery could thus be ended, and the greater peace of the hearth, and the better health of both parties in marriage, secured. When the time comes for a young man to marry, let him do so, but before then, during that period when he is *molliter juvenis*, a friend in the fullest Greek sense of the word is better for him than a mistress.

§ 34. THE ANALOGY WITH ANIMALS

Corydon has elicited a whole book in reply [1] and its claims have also been impugned elsewhere [2]. My own remarks on it will be limited.

Mr. Gide here makes two separate contentions :

(1) That homosexuality is not abnormal, but more natural than exclusive attraction to the opposite sex ; and
(2) That it is desirable to encourage pederasty generally among youths before marriage, in order to reduce, if not abolish, prostitution, and restore respect for women as mothers.

Although it must be rare for an author of Mr. Gide's eminence to advance the first view in a book published and sold openly, he is, of course, far from being original in expressing such a theory. Mr. Havelock Ellis mentions, for instance, that in 1911, the same year as the first (incomplete) edition of *Corydon* was printed :

> An American writer, under the pseudonym of Xavier Mayne, privately printed an extensive work entitled *The Intersexes : A History of Similisexualism as a Problem in Social Life*. . . . This book, from a

[1] François Nazier : *L'Anti-Corydon* (Paris, 1924).
[2] Cf. notably François Porché : *L'Amour qui n'ose pas dire son Nom* (Paris, 1928).

subjective and scarcely scientific standpoint, claims that homosexual relationships are natural, necessary, and legitimate.

In 1894 Edward Carpenter privately printed in Manchester a pamphlet entitled *Homogenic Love*, in which he criticised various psychiatric views of inversion at that time current, and claimed that the laws of homosexual love are the same as those of heterosexual love, urging, however, that the former possesses a special aptitude to be exalted to a higher and more spiritual level of comradeship, so fulfilling a beneficent social function.[1]

The point is : It is not altogether unusual for a homosexual to wish it believed that homosexuality is normal. What are probably novel—I claim no acquaintance with the literature of the subject—are Mr. Gide's reasons why it should be held normal. Yet his book is, or so it seems to me, a tissue of fallacies. I find it amazing that he should be able to say :

> J'ai longtemps attendu pour écrire ce livre, et, l'ayant écrit, pour l'imprimer. Je voulais être sûr que ce que j'avançais dans *Corydon*, et qui me paraissait évident, je n'allais pas avoir bientôt à m'en dédire. Mais non : ma pensée n'a fait ici que s'affermir, et ce que je reproche à présent à mon livre, c'est sa réserve et sa timidité. Depuis plus de dix ans qu'il est écrit, exemples, arguments nouveaux, témoignages, sont venus corroborer mes théories.[2]

For that, in these statements, he is confessing himself to have been completely misled will not, I think, be difficult to show.

His thesis, in the first part of the book, is that homosexuality is, in reality, normal. He insists that to be homosexual is in man's nature. But why should one doubt this ? He quotes Pascal :

> La nature de l'homme est tout nature, *omne nature*. Il n'y a rien qu'on ne rende naturel. Il n'y a naturel qu'on ne fasse perdre.[3]

But of course everything that man does, homosexuality included, is natural. In the words of Dr. Iwan Bloch, ' true homosexuality ' is ' a congenital natural phenomenon '[4]. Mr. Gide has, however, to show that homosexuality is normal. What, then, is his next argument ?

[1] Havelock Ellis : *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, third edition (Philadelphia, 1923), vol. II., pp. 71–2.

[2] *Corydon*, p. 10. [3] Quoted in *Corydon*, p. 46.

[4] *The Sexual Life of our Time*, translation by M. Eden Paul (London, 1908), p. 489.

He gives another quotation from Pascal :

J'ai grand peur que cette nature ne soit elle-même qu'une première coutume, comme la coutume est une seconde nature.[1]

And he asks if, since what is merely a racial custom cannot be distinguished from what is truly natural, man's heterosexuality may not be natural at all, but merely the result of long-established custom? The argument, surely, cuts both ways. If it is impossible to distinguish between nature and custom, is it not just as likely that what seems to Mr. Gide to be merely custom may, in reality, be nature?

However, that heterosexuality is the fruit of long-established custom, and not a part of human nature, he thereupon seeks to show by reference to animals. A dog is, for instance, attracted to a bitch only when she is on heat ; that is, twice, or perhaps three times, a year. During the rest of the year the dog, requiring to satisfy his desire in all seasons, has recourse to one of his own sex. Thus, it is, Mr. Gide argues, the dog's resort to bitches which is abnormal, and his satisfaction of the so-called sexual desire with another of his sex which is normal. From this should we not infer, he asks, that what is normal for dogs (and for other animals too) is normal for man as well?

But in asking this he forgets how he also says that the odour which attracts dogs to bitches, when the latter are on heat, is the same odour for all bitches. To a dog one bitch does not, at such a time, smell differently from any other bitch. Whereas, for human beings, smell, he says, plays no part in bringing the sexes together. In human beings the sexual appetite is, as he puts it, turned into play : a man comes to desire, not merely a female, but one particular woman.

Further, and this Mr. Gide omits to mention, it is not only all females which are as one to a dog ; during the greater part of the year, when the dog satisfies his desires with another of his own sex, all dogs are as one to him also. But for the human homosexual all those of the same sex as himself or herself are not as one : the human homosexual, just like the human heterosexual, comes to desire one particular person. This selection of an object of desire

[1] Quoted in *Corydon*, p. 45.

is precisely in what man differs from animals; on that account Mr. Gide contends that selection is, not natural, but a human invention. The question, however, of which it is, custom or nature, does not bear on the normality or abnormality of human homosexuality, for the human homosexual is every whit as selective as the human heterosexual. What is called homosexuality, indeed, does not (*pace* Mr. Gide) seem to occur in animals at all. I further quote Dr. Bloch:

> Original, congenital, enduring homosexuality would appear to be an exclusively human peculiarity. It is very doubtful whether a similar condition exists among animals. We recognize among the lower animals homosexual acts, but no homosexuality [Cf. F. Karsch, 'Paederasty and Tribadism among Animals as Recorded in Literature', published in the *Annual for Sexual Intermediate Stages*, 1906, vol. II, pp. 126–160; P. Näcke, 'Paederasty in Animals', published in the *Archives of Criminal Anthropology*, 1904, vol. xiv, pp. 361–2.] [1]

And if that is so, in what way can the habits of animals contribute to establishing that homosexuality—human homosexuality—is, as Mr. Gide contends, normal, and that heterosexuality is only a long-established custom?

§ 35. WHO IS THE PURSUER?

From the fact that man comes to desire one particular woman, Mr. Gide is led to ask: Is not woman's beauty merely man's desire for her? Here I find his argument very involved. He insists upon how widely it is recognized that masculine beauty is superior to feminine, and he goes on to say that any great renaissance or exuberance of art has always been accompanied by an overflow of homosexuality. Is this to be taken to mean that, when a man falls in love with a woman, he is bent solely on gratifying a desire, whereas, when a man falls in love with another man, he is animated by a love of beauty? But, if so, does the homosexual's love differ in that way from the heterosexual's? Does the homosexual ever fall in love with a picture, a building, a sonata, a natural landscape, or a racehorse? Yet in all of them there may be beauty. And, again, can human beauty—masculine or feminine—be properly appreciated if the awareness of it is fraught with

[1] op. cit., p. 530.

what I must still call sexual desire? Many thinkers, from Kant and Schopenhauer to Croce, have insisted that, for aesthetic appreciation, it is necessary to be free from desire for the object or its results. Does Mr. Gide consider that they have all been wrong? That beauty and the arousing of desire are distinct, that beauty may, indeed, inhibit desire, he himself admits when he says elsewhere:

> En Barka était beaucoup trop belle . . . ; sa beauté même me glaçait; je ressentais pour elle une sorte d'admiration, mais pas le moindre soupçon de désir. J'arrivais à elle comme un adorateur sans offrande.[1]

Thus, if Mr. Gide is trying to imply that, because masculine beauty is superior to feminine, for men to fall in love with men is more *normal* than for them to fall in love with women, he succeeds only in implying a *non sequitur*. The question of beauty is irrelevant.

His argument, in this section of the book, also assumes that, among human beings, it is always the man who chooses the woman, whereas, among animals, it is the female which chooses the male [2]. But with Mr. Shaw's *Man and Superman* in mind, can one accept this? As it happens, the data collected by anthropologists show that, among primitive tribes, it is selection by the woman which is in operation in some, and selection by the man in others. The two customs may be said loosely to survive in civilized communities, and one's own experience of life must indeed have been limited if it has not taught one that, among one's own acquaintances, it is sometimes the man, but also quite often the woman, who selects and pursues.

Now, Mr. Gide has, in his book, confined himself entirely to the man's standpoint; that woman often does this pursuing or selecting, that woman has sexual desires—all that aspect of his subject he has neglected. This being so, how can he imagine that he has seriously dealt with the problem of what is normal for human beings and what only the fruit of long-established custom?

§ 36. THE GREEKS

It is only in the final section of *Corydon* that Mr. Gide reaches the one question which is important for his readers:

[1] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. III., p. 91. [2] Ibid., pp. 118–19.

he considers whether homosexuality is desirable morally and socially. For to inquire whether homosexuality is practised by animals, whether it is normal for human beings, and so on—all that is idle unless it can be shown that homosexuality is in any way desirable.

Corydon maintains, in this section, that it is desirable, and says that he is in favour of a return to the Greek custom of *paiderastia*. He then dwells on the advantages which *paiderastia* conferred upon Greece.

The revival of this custom would, he says, revive respect for women, now, according to him, sadly in abeyance, for it would greatly reduce, if not abolish, prostitution and adultery. That *paiderastia* in Greece did not abolish, or even reduce, prostitution [1], and is not known to have prevented adultery, he neglects to mention.

He then goes on to declare that, if the Greeks attained to such a harmonious mastery of the arts, and not only of the arts, but of every manifestation of life, it was because they had also known how to regulate their lives harmoniously. The periods of great artistic efflorescence have, he continues, all been uranian periods, and he enumerates several.

His declaration about the Greeks and his statement about periods of great artistic production do not, however, indicate that there is any relation between homosexuality and art. In order to show that homosexuality has an influence upon art, it would be necessary to produce evidence that, when homosexuality has flourished, an improvement in art has always resulted. But he himself mentions [2] that the Spartans, among whom pederasty was approved, produced no artists; and the Boeotians, also homosexuals, do not seem to have been particularly artistic either. On the other hand, Homer and Hesiod, and many other great Greek poets and artists, contrived to flourish at a time when homosexuality had not, at any rate, been declared respectable.

Corydon next says that *paiderastia* fostered the martial virtues and that, according to Plutarch, the Lacedemonians and the Thebans, who both encouraged *Knabenliebe*, were

[1] Cf. e.g. Plato: *The Law*, Book I, 637c.
[2] *Corydon*, p. 159.

masters of the art of war. Is it not curious that homosexuality should be good both for artists and for soldiers? For, while a great artist may be a great soldier, or at least a good soldier, it is not the same qualities which make him a great artist that also make him a great, or rather a good, soldier.

However, the claim that *paiderastia* fostered the martial virtues has been dealt with by Plato.[1] The martial virtue of valour is not, he says, the highest of the virtues. For war itself is not virtuous. In a community or in a man the victory to be sought is not one over the foe, but victory over the self—that is, the conquest in the community, or in the individual, of the worse elements by the better. This victory cannot be gained by the coercion or expulsion of the worse elements; subjugation must be followed by reconciliation and harmony. Peace, not war, whether for the community or the individual, is the desirable state. For that end the supreme virtues are: wisdom, *sophrosyne*, and justice. Mere martial valour can rank only fourth. But it is, Plato says, the only one the Spartans instil in their young. And, further, they aim at teaching only the easier and less valuable half of that one virtue. True 'manhood' or valour does not consist only in the power to face danger, pain, and fatigue; it means also being able to face the seductions of pleasure without yielding to them—that is the nobler half of valour and the harder half to acquire. The Spartans fail to teach their young this nobler half; they do not train them to face and overcome the seductions of pleasure. On the contrary, they encourage the pleasure of *paiderastia*.[2]

Corydon, indeed, says that 'Platon lui (l'uranisme) fait la part si belle que je comprends que vous soyez alarmé,'[3] and later insists that Plato, when speaking of love, refers as much to the homosexual variety as to the other[4]; he neglects to say at the same time, however, that, although Plato has detailed the emotions of *paiderastia* in the *Charmides*, and the speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Aris-

[1] As, for example, Mr. Havelock Ellis, op. cit., has not failed to point out.

[2] Plato: *The Laws*, Book I., 628b–636b.

[3] p. 59. [4] p. 156.

tophanes, in the *Symposium*, defend it, it is Socrates undoubtedly who, in the *Symposium*, voices Plato's own views, and that Plato, in *The Laws*, condemned *paiderastia* altogether, as I have just shown.

Corydon, in short, presents a false case. He fails to mention that, if *paiderastia* was for a time honoured in Greece, it was also often held in question there. Aristotle, for instance, deemed homosexuality to be a depravation and a disease.

But the most curious feature of this section of *Corydon*, the section in which it is argued that a revival of the Greek custom of *paiderastia* is desirable, is its complete inconsistency with the earlier part of the book. In the earlier part Mr. Gide's thesis is that homo- not hetero-sexuality is the normal; but he can only be referring there to *congenital* homosexuality. The whole argument is that homosexuality is so thoroughly congenital that it must be natural, *i.e.* normal. Then, in the latter part of the book, Mr. Gide urges a revival of *paiderastia*; and *paiderastia*, 'the love of boys of Ancient Greece', was, says Dr. Bloch, 'a national custom'; it is *acquired* homosexuality—what Dr. Bloch calls: '*pseudo*-homosexuality'.

§ 37. WHAT OF WOMEN?

Altogether it cannot be said that Mr. Gide shows *paiderastia* itself and, still less, the revival of public approval of *paiderastia*, to be desirable. On the contrary, that such a revival, of the approval particularly, is undesirable cannot, I think, be disputed. Once again Mr. Gide here is entirely self-regarding: *i.e.* he considers only the individual uranian, and not that individual's relations to his fellow-men. He says, on the one hand, that nothing more fortunate can befal a lad, while he is still a *molliter juvenis*, than that some senior of his own sex should fall in love with him, since at that age the lad needs support and advice, and he can obtain these better from one of his own sex than from a woman, and admits, on the other hand, that chastity is a virtue, virtue consisting in dominating one's lust whether it be homo- or hetero-sexual [1]; and so one must ask: How would a growing lad be assisted to dominate his own lust

[1] p. 173.

by being invited to satisfy that of one of his seniors? And, if the lad came, in turn, to be encouraged to have access to one of his coevals or juniors, how would that serve the cause of virtue?

Further, what of example? In Greece slaves were forbidden to practise homosexuality. But in a twentieth-century democracy where could the line be drawn?

However, it is women that Mr. Gide ignores most completely in his 'new theory of love'. What about the example to women if *paiderastia* were brought back to public honour? Greek women—the respectable ones—were brought up to be mothers exclusively. As Mr. Porché [1] points out, marriage in Greece was very different from what marriage has become today: its object was the family and the perpetuation of the race. It was not based on mutual affection. Mr. Gide's assertion that, while the uranian period lasted in Greece, women were respected [2], can only be taken as a jest. In Greece woman—except as a mother—was esteemed very little above a slave. But today woman is allowed, not only to vote, but also to study law, medicine, &c.; she is regarded, in short, as an intelligent being; and she plays an increasingly active part in life outside the home. At the same time, while, no doubt, there is truth in Mr. Gide's reflection: 'Il faut à l'homme beaucoup d'intelligence pour ne pas, avec d'égales qualités morales, rester sensiblement au-dessous de la femme' [3], for that is a matter of feeling, woman's morals are still in man's custody. We still live, it must be remembered, in a man-made world. Imagine, then, with this being so, what would be the effect upon the morals of woman today if Mr. Gide's wish were to be gratified and *paiderastia* were to be returned to honour! First it would be necessary to put woman back in the position she occupied in Greece. Perhaps that is what Mr. Gide is proposing. But does he really conceive such a transformation of woman's status feasible?

§ 38. A WORD ON THEORY

It remains for me to say a few words regarding Mr. Gide's statement, in concluding *Corydon*, that an adolescent's

[1] op. cit., p. 93. [2] *Corydon*, p. 168.
[3] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. I., p. 146.

desires, from thirteen to eighteen, are, as it were, floating, and that it is only later that those desires concentrate definitively on women. In justice to Mr. Gide, and his plea for a revival of *paiderastia*, it should be said that, while for Dr. Iwan Bloch and other authorities, 'the love of boys of Ancient Greece' was acquired, or pseudo-homosexuality, for Mr. Gide all boys are, as his statement about the adolescent implies, at least potentially homosexual. But is his view justified?

That we are all 'latently bisexual' is a theory which, Mr. Havelock Ellis says, many writers have put forward from Plato onwards. In 1893 Chevalier, in his *L'Inversion Sexuelle*, having already applied the term '*hermaphrodisme moral*' to the anomaly, explained congenital homosexuality by the idea of a latent bisexuality. Dr. F. H. A. Marshall is quoted by Mr. Ellis as saying in his standard manual, *The Physiology of Reproduction*:

> It would seem extremely probable that the dominance of one set of sexual characters over the other may be determined in some cases at an early stage of development in response to a stimulus which may be either internal or external.[1]

And this is Mr. Ellis's own view:

> Putting the matter in a purely speculative shape, it may be said that at conception the organism is provided with about 50 per cent. of male germs and about 50 per cent. of female germs, and that, as development proceeds, either the female or the male germs assume the upper hand, until in the naturally developed individual only a few aborted germs of the opposite sex are left. In the homosexual, however, and in the bisexual, we may imagine that the process has not proceeded normally, on account of some peculiarity in the number or character of either the original male germs or female germs, or both, the result being that we have a person who is organically twisted into a shape that is more fitted for the exercise of the inverted than of the normal sexual impulse, or else equally fitted for both.[2]

But is not this hypothesis, in so far as it accounts for the exercise of the inverted sexual impulse, more applicable to what Mr. Ellis calls: 'Eonism' (inversion of the kind which 'leads a person to feel like a person of the opposite sex, and to adopt, so far as possible, the tastes, habits, and dress of the opposite sex, while the direction of the sexual

[1] 1910, pp. 655 et seq.
[2] Havelock Ellis: op. cit., vol. II., pp. 310–11.

impulse remains normal '), and Mr. Gide calls : ' *l'inversion* ', rather than to what Mr. Ellis calls : sexual inversion (' sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality towards persons of the same sex '), and Mr. Gide calls : ' *la pédérastie normale* ' ?

Where the ' male germs '—whatever Mr. Ellis may mean by ' germs '—or the ' female germs ' do not get ' the upper hand, until, in the maturely developed individual, only a few aborted germs of the opposite sex are left ', and, instead, ' the process has not proceeded normally, on account of some peculiarity in the number or character of either the original male germs or female germs ', must not what results be an effeminate man or a masculine woman ? Whereas Mr. Gide's ' *pédérastes normaux* ' are not effeminate in the least. He quotes a newspaper report of a trial scene in Germany before the War :

> Le comte de Hohenau, de haute stature, sanglé dans sa redingote, l'air hautain et chevaleresque, ne fait nullement l'effet d'un homme efféminé. C'est tout à fait le type de l'officier de la Garde, passionné de son métier. Et cependant sur cet homme pèsent les plus graves soupçons. Le comte de Lynar est, lui aussi, de belle taille. . . .[1]

Nothing effeminate either, so far as is known, about Sophocles, Leonardo, or Michelangelo. Alcibiades, on the other hand, was thoroughly effeminate ; likewise Proust's Monsieur de Charlus. Is it not the latter type of homosexual, the ' Eonist ', whose abnormality might be explained on Mr. Ellis's ' germ theory ' rather than the former type, Mr. Gide's ' pédéraste normal ' ? Is it not the ' Eonist', rather than the ' pédéraste normal ', whose abnormality can be explained on any theory of ' latent bisexuality ' ?

Except, of course, Freud's. Freud's theory is akin to Mr. Gide's conception of the adolescent's desire as ' floating '. For Freud everybody is potentially homosexual :

> In 1905, in his ' Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse ' (reprinted in the second series of *Sammlung Kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre*, 1909), Freud regards it as a well-known fact that boys and girls at puberty normally show plain signs of the homosexual tendency. Under favourable circumstances this tendency is overcome, but when a happy heterosexual love is not established, it remains liable to reappear under the influence of an appropriate stimulus. In the neurotic these homo-

[1] Quoted in *Corydon*, p. 37.

sexual germs are more highly developed. ' I have never carried through any psycho-analysis of a man or a woman,' Freud states, ' without discovering a very significant homosexual tendency.' [1]

It is also Freud's view, I understand, that a boy normally experiences a sexual love for his mother, and it is when reproof of this love results in a shock to his nervous system that the boy is particularly liable to develop into a homosexual. Regarding Freud, however, Mr. Ellis says :

> Numa Praetorius, a sagacious observer with a very wide and thorough knowledge of homosexuality, finds himself quite unable to accept the ' Œdipus Complex ' explanation of inversion (*Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, July, 1914, p. 362).

And Mr. Ellis also says that Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, author of ' the largest, the most precise, detailed, and comprehensive—even the most condensed—work that has yet appeared on the subject ', concludes ' that we can only accept the Freudian mechanism as rare, and in all cases subordinate to organic predisposition '.[2] And Mr. Ellis's own final comment is :

> While the study of such mechanisms may illuminate the psychology of homosexuality, they leave untouched the fundamental organic factors now accepted by most authorities.[3]

There is the important point : if there are ' fundamental organic factors ' in the formation of homosexuality, then it cannot also be that an adolescent's desires, from thirteen to eighteen, are, as it were, floating, and that it is only later that those desires concentrate definitively on women.

In conclusion, is it not evident that Mr. Gide's quest for a theory which shall account favourably for homosexuality, must at present inevitably remain vain ? In the words of Dr. Richard Goldschmidt :

> A correct classification of . . . intersexual types is not possible at present. We know just as little of their causes.[4]

[1] Havelock Ellis : op. cit., vol. II., pp. 80–1.

[2] Mr. Ellis's reference is : *Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (1914), p. 344 ; Havelock Ellis : op. cit., vol. II., p. 309n.

[3] loc. cit.

[4] *The Mechanism and Physiology of Sex Determination*, English translation (London, 1923), p. 246.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

§ 39. A MORAL BEING

To conclude my examination of Mr. Gide's views, I want to consider briefly his application of those views to life, as evidenced in what he calls his 'first novel': *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. I have not forgotten that he says:

> L'œuvre d'art *ne doit rien prouver;* ne peut rien prouver sans tricherie. . . .[1]

And I do not suggest that he has *sought* to demonstrate anything with this novel. At the same time I am confident that he has, even if unawares, expressed his views of life in it, and that nothing can stop his readers from finding in its incidents an application to life.

I have already given a brief account of this novel (§ 3). Here I must presume in the reader an acquaintance, not only with that account, but with the book itself.

First, then, I would mention the nervous disease from which the boy Boris suffers,[2] as a result of having been frightened into stopping a certain habit which Mr. Gide elsewhere calls: *le vice*. The nervous disease is important, since one is given to understand that it predisposed the boy to his suicide. My point is: Would a nervous disease follow in real life from the stopping of this habit? Mr. Gide supplies in another of his books a case in real life[3] which it is surely not unfair to compare with his fictitious one: in the case in real life no nervous disease followed the cessation of the practice. It may be argued that in real life there was no fright such as there is in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*; there was certainly, however, a shock.

[1] *Nouveaux Prétextes*, p. 322, his italics.
[2] *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 265.
[3] *Si le Grain ne Meurt*, vol. I., p. 97.

I mention this first because it is unconnected with anything else I have to say about the novel. I shall revert to the matter when discussing Mr. Russell's views. Meanwhile, I turn to what the old music teacher, La Pérouse, is made to say concerning temptation. One should, of course, be careful not to attribute to Mr. Gide himself an opinion expressed by one of his characters, but here there is no doubt that the author is behind his creature. La Pérouse says :

> Quand j'étais jeune je menais une vie très austère ; je me félicitais de ma force de caractère chaque fois que je repoussais une sollicitation. Je ne comprenais pas qu'en croyant me libérer, je devenais de plus en plus esclave de mon orgueil. Chacun de ces triomphes sur moi-même, c'était un tour de clef que je donnais à la porte de mon cachot. C'est ce que je voulais vous dire tout à l'heure quand je vous disais que Dieu m'a roulé. Il m'a fait prendre pour de la vertu mon orgueil.[1]

Is not this a dangerous statement ? Of course the pride of self-righteousness is to be condemned : ' He lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her.' But La Pérouse does not confine himself to reiterating that truth ; he implies that temptation should be yielded to. But is not self-righteousness the fruit of temptation just as any other sin ? And because the temptation to self-righteousness should be resisted, does it follow that it can only be resisted by yielding to all other temptations ?

The words of La Pérouse have to be taken in their context. It is being moral which Mr. Gide, when he appears in person, condemns in this book. He says of Vincent :

> Il reste un être moral, et le diable n'aura raison de lui, qu'en lui fournissant des raisons de s'approuver.[2]

Compare that with this other passage :

> Ce qu'on appelle un ' esprit faux ' . . .—eh bien ! je m'en vais vous le dire : c'est celui qui éprouve le besoin de se persuader qu'il a *raison* de commettre tous les actes qu'il a envie de commettre ; celui qui met sa raison au service de ses instincts, de ses intérêts, ce qui est pire, ou de son tempérament.[3]

Evidently ' *être moral* ' = ' *esprit faux* '. If however, to find

[1] pp. 154–5. [2] p. 184.
[3] *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, pp. 58–9.

reasons for committing a bad action does not make the action a good one, it remains—and in dealing with Vincent this is precisely what Mr. Gide fails to consider—that to seek reasons for what one wants to do is to admit that there should be reasons, that one should not do a thing unless there are reasons ; this quest for reasons is a tribute which vice pays to virtue ; it is an acknowledgment that what is right must also be reasonable.

§ 40. THE VIRTUE OF HYPOCRISY

The curious thing is—or is it ?—that elsewhere in the novel Mr. Gide gives his approval to the display of this same hypocrisy in other forms. Pauline, when confiding in Édouard, says :

> —Il y a nombre de petits manquements que je tolère, sur lesquels je ferme les yeux.
> —De qui parlez-vous maintenant ?
> —Oh ! du père aussi bien que des fils.
> —En feignant de ne pas les voir, vous leur mentez aussi.
> —Mais comment voulez-vous que je fasse ? C'est beaucoup, de ne pas me plaindre ; je ne puis pourtant pas approuver ![1]

And Profitendieu, also confiding in the ever-attentive Édouard, says, in referring to the passing of counterfeit coins he is investigating :

> Nous aurions déjà pu nous saisir des délinquents mineurs et, sans peine, leur faire avouer la provenance de ces pièces ; mais je sais trop que, passé un certain point, une affaire nous échappe, pour ainsi dire . . . c'est-à-dire qu'une instruction ne peut pas revenir en arrière et que nous nous trouvons forcés de savoir ce que nous préférerions parfois ignorer. En l'espèce, je prétends parvenir à découvrir les vrais coupables sans recourir aux témoignages de ces mineurs.[2]

In these respective instances both Pauline and Profitendieu are hypocrites, but is it not obvious that they are more virtuous in their hypocrisy than they would be in casting aside all pretence ? If Pauline cast aside all pretence, she would be confronted with the alternative of breaking up her home, or lowering her standards of approval ; and, likewise, if Profitendieu did, he would be compelled to send his friend's child to a reformatory. And is it not also

[1] p. 353. [2] pp. 430–1.

obvious that Mr. Gide approves of them? What, then, becomes of his disapproval of Vincent?

Then, Pauline's husband, Oscar Molinier, having come to be revealed as a poor specimen,[1] Édouard writes in his diary:

> Comment Pauline a-t-elle bien pu l'épouser? . . . Hélas! la plus lamentable carence, celle du caractère, est cachée, et ne se révèle qu'à l'usage.[2]

But are Mr. Gide's heroes, Bernard and Édouard, so much Molinier's superior as their author tries to make the reader believe? Bernard, at the beginning of the book, is in favour of listening behind doors, and is given to opening other people's letters and diaries, and so on. I do not include in his indictment his getting of Édouard's bag out of the cloak-room, since, not only was he impelled to do this by hunger, but, after having done it, he sought to convince himself that he was not '*un voleur*'; he was, that is, an '*être moral*' and at least a negative '*esprit faux*'. But, earlier, he and his friend, Olivier, exchange these words:

> Bernard s'était retourné vers Olivier.
> —À ta place, moi, j'aurais ouvert.
> —Oh! parbleu, toi tu oses toujours tout. Tout ce qui te passe par la tête, tu le fais.
> —Tu me le reproches?
> —Non, je t'envie.[3]

Is this '*oser toujours tout*' so different at bottom from Oscar Molinier's behaviour? Both Bernard and Molinier are egoists. It may be said that Bernard is still really a child and has not had time to learn better. But the point is that Mr. Gide approves of him, for what directs him is: 'curiosity'—that curiosity which Mr. Gide has elsewhere so highly extolled. But is Mr. Gide certain that Bernard's curiosity is that masculine curiosity he holds up to admiration, and not the feminine variety—mere inquisitiveness?

And what of Édouard? Is Édouard, who allows Laura to fall in love with him and then will neither marry her nor become her lover, and who, in his eagerness to act on the inspiration of the moment as a true Gidian hero,

[1] pp. 287–297. [2] p. 351. [3] p. 43.

engages Bernard as his secretary when he really wants Olivier, and, just as impulsively, decides later, in Switzerland, that Bernard does not suit—is Édouard Molinier's superior? I do not say that Édouard is unreal; on the contrary. But is he really any worthier than this Molinier to whom, in his diary—and with his author's evident approval—he so fatuously condescends?

That Mr. Gide does think both him and Bernard superior, morally superior, to Molinier, cannot, I think, be doubted. But Molinier's case remains entirely unexplained. He is found to be neglecting his wife, to have taken up with a 'demoiselle de l'Olympia', to like too much wine at luncheon. But what is his history? How did he come to neglect his wife? A man does not come to take up with a 'demoiselle de l'Olympia' for fun. How did that happen? All this Mr. Gide fails to say. As a result, what are all Édouard's reflections upon Molinier's character worth?

And there is another thing which ought to be noted concerning Bernard. Of his love for Laura he says:

> À présent je crois que je ne puis plus être sensible, jamais plus, à une autre forme de beauté que la sienne; que je ne pourrai jamais aimer d'autre front que le sien, que ses lèvres, que son regard. Mais c'est de la vénération que j'ai pour elle, et, près d'elle toute pensée charnelle me semble impie. Je crois que je me méprenais sur moi-même et que ma nature est très chaste.[1]

This is Mr. Gide's own view, frequently expressed elsewhere, of what love for a woman may be. But Mr. Gide has, he tells us, an abnormality. Bernard, however, has not. Is psychological verisimilitude, then, being observed here?

§ 41. THE CALL OF THE HEART

The novel opens with the discovery by Bernard Profitendieu, aged seventeen, of some letters which reveal to him that his mother's husband, whom he has always supposed to be his father, is not his father. He thereupon runs away from home. When Mr. Gide has described the effect of this flight upon the family he adds:

> Laissons Madame Profitendieu dans sa chambre, assise sur une petite chaise droite peu confortable. Elle voudrait, elle aussi s'enfuir;

[1] p. 347.

mais elle ne le fera pas. Quand elle était avec son amant, le père de Bernard, que nous n'avons pas à connaître, elle se disait : 'Va, tu auras beau faire ; tu ne seras jamais qu'une honnête femme. *Elle avait peur de la liberté, du crime, de l'aisance* ; ce qui fit qu'au bout de dix jours elle rentrait repentante au foyer.' [1]

But at the end of the novel the reader learns that Bernard, too, has returned home :

En apprenant par le petit Caloub, fortuitement rencontré, que le vieux juge n'allait pas bien, Bernard n'a plus écouté que son cœur.[2]

No doubt Mr. Gide would have the reader understand that Bernard had to run away in order to realize that his duty was to stay ; by obeying his impulse, he learned wisdom ; it was in the interval of his absence that he grew, grew sensible. But, in that case, does not what applies to Bernard apply equally to his mother? Bernard '*n'a écouté que son cœur*'. That is only a phrase. What did he really listen to? Was it not exactly what his mother heard when once she found herself away from her husband's roof? That she should at times regret having repented of her sin, as Mr. Gide puts it,[3] does not affect the motive which brought her home. She merely feels, at such times, that what she hadn't done was preferable to what she had, a common enough feeling with which Mr. Gide must be well able to sympathize.[4] Her regret was transient, the effect of a mood. There is nothing to show that her permanent belief was not that she had, in returning, chosen the only course. Later in the story the reader learns that Madame Profitendieu has definitively left her husband.[5] But how that has happened Mr. Gide shirks telling. I suggest that it was not because she had to seek '*la liberté, le crime, l'aisance*' ; but that it was because she felt that her previous flight was, while she stayed at home, a standing reproach to her. Supposing that her second flight could have happened at all, which, in view of the interval which had elapsed since her first, I cannot help doubting, it was not that she wanted to be somewhere else ; it was that she could not stay where she was—a very different matter. If, then, she, on the occasion of her earlier return, acted from the same motive

[1] p. 35, my italics.
[2] p. 499.
[3] p. 33.
[4] Cf. § 10.
[5] p. 434.

as that which prompted Bernard to return, why should Mr. Gide belittle her with his : '*Elle avait peur*', while approving of Bernard with his : '*n'a écouté que son cœur*'? Once again, I do not question that both Bernard and Madame Profitendieu act feasibly—except possibly, as I say, in the matter of her second flight ; what I question is Mr. Gide's comment upon Madame Profitendieu. As an instinctive psychologist, in fact, he is much better than as a conscious psychologist. His comment on Madame Profitendieu rings false, rings like a counterfeit coin.

§ 42. BEYOND IMPULSE AND DESIRE

Further, if the best rule of life for Bernard is : '*Tout ce qui te passe par la tête tu le fais*', and it leads him to wisdom and virtue, how is it that the same rule of life has such deplorable results in the case of Passavant, Lady Griffith, and Ghéridansol? For there can be no doubt that the latter do all act on the very same principle : whatever it comes into their heads to do, they do. Why, then, does Mr. Gide consider what they do to be wrong? I know well that it is conventionally wrong. But that is not the point. The point is that, unmistakably, Mr. Gide considers it wrong, and, in the circumstances, for him to do so is curious. For all three act, as I say, on the same principle as that which turns out so well for Bernard and Édouard, and enables Bernard and Édouard to be the heroes of the novel.

True, the principle carries Ghéridansol much further than it carries Bernard and Édouard. Bernard only indulges his so-called curiosity and inflicts pain upon his putative father and betrays his employer's daughter. And Édouard only throws Laura into the arms, first of Douvier, and then of Vincent, and allows Olivier to be exposed to the corruption of Passavant, and finally takes on, so it may be said, the job of corruption himself. But Ghéridansol does more. He brings about the murder of the boy Boris, for what is his compelling the boy to shoot himself, with a pistol that boy believes to be unloaded, but a murder?

Incidentally, this is not a very convincing episode. How did Ghéridansol actually contrive this crime? Mr. Gide, once again, merely says that he did. But how? Mr. Gide, as he has admitted, takes out of a newspaper the

report of a suicide in a school, and stitches Ghéridansol on to it. The seam still shows, however. Mr. Gide says that Ghéridansol disliked Boris, and he gives a reason for the dislike. But why, how, did Ghéridansol come to satisfy his dislike as he did? By what process, for instance, did he gain his ascendancy over the other boys?

It remains that, while for Lady Griffith acting on the principle that one should trust '*le naturel*', ends for her in her being drowned in Africa by Vincent, for Passavant and Ghéridansol acting on the principle has no worse consequences than for Bernard and Édouard. In the end they are not badly off; on the contrary. What, then, is wrong with them?

That Oscar Molinier and his sons, Vincent and Olivier, should, in comparison with Bernard, be failures is easily understood. Molinier and his sons are weak, and Bernard is strong. But Passavant, Lady Griffith, and Passavant are strong too. And for Passavant and Ghéridansol, if not for Lady Griffith, the end is success; for Passavant and Ghéridansol, just as for Bernard and Édouard, individualism triumphs. Yet Mr. Gide, who makes us like Bernard, and Édouard too, also makes us dislike, nay, abhor, Passavant and Ghéridansol. What is there about Bernard and Édouard that attracts us?

It is, I suggest, that precisely Bernard and Édouard are not really individualists at all. When Édouard has taken Olivier to live with him, Olivier's mother, Pauline, in the midst of her incredible approval of this step, says:

—C'est Olivier qui vous fera meilleur. Que n'obtient-on pas de soi, par amour? [1]

And, as I have already pointed out, it is not only love that one can rely on to get the best out of oneself. When Mr. Gide was with Wilde's friend at Biskra, and Mr. Gide worked hard because he wished to show the other that he was his superior, it was not love which actuated him; it was dislike. And what have love and dislike in common? That they are among those adventitious aids to virtue, which Mr. Gide insinuates we can forgo and yet attain virtue nevertheless.

[1] p. 404.

PART IV
ACCORDING TO DR. SIGMUND FREUD

PART IV

ACCORDING TO DR. SIGMUND FREUD

§ I. THE BIRTH OF THE GODS

IGNORING the *fait accompli*, the overthrow of the Christian philosophy of life, Dr. Sigmund Freud has written a little book [1] demanding a revision of moral (and, presumably, legal) rules. His views must command wide attention on account of the tremendous popular reputation he has won ; moreover, his views are probably representative, not necessarily of those of psycho-analysts (Dr. Freud himself insists that many do not agree with him), but of those of a large number of articulate people. It is these two considerations which prompt the examination of the views he sets forth in his book.

Dr. Freud, then, demands a revision of moral rules because he finds that they arouse in the majority of mankind a marked hostility, although these rules should be the condition of men's existence in communities, and on that account, since it is more advantageous for men to live in communities than to live alone, should be acceptable to all. He believes that a revision in the sense he indicates would greatly diminish, if not entirely overcome, this hostility. Men would be enabled to do far more what they liked, and they would become reconciled with civilization.[2]

For the hostility is, he considers, due to two causes : (1) Many of the rules are obsolete, having been laid down in another age ; (2) Men in general are not intelligent.

At present moral rules are religion ; they have supernatural sanctions. These supernatural sanctions are illu-

[1] *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* (Vienna, 1927).

[2] p. 78. My references are all to the translation by W. D. Robson-Scott : *The Future of an Illusion* (London, 1928).

sory. Men would be less hostile to the rules if they were told that the rules existed solely to enable men to live in communities. These supernatural sanctions are also mentally warping. Thus, if belief in them were abandoned, men would probably be more intelligent.

That what he calls 'religious ideas' are a community's illusions, he aims at demonstrating by advancing a theory of their historical origin. At the same time as man was, he says, faced with the coercion of the community, he was confronted by nature's supremacy over him. Towards the coercion by the community he developed hostility; how did he parry the supremacy of nature? The community relieved him of the necessity for doing so. The first step was the humanization of nature. With that, much was already won in the way of making life free of terror, of satisfying man's 'seriously menaced self-esteem', *i.e.* his 'innate narcissism', and of gratifying his curiosity. Dr. Freud says:

> If everywhere in nature we have about us beings who resemble those of our own environment, . . . we are perhaps still defenceless, but no longer hopelessly paralysed; . . . perhaps indeed we are not even defenceless, we can have recourse to the same methods against these violent supermen of the beyond that we make use of in our own community; we can try to exorcise them, to appease them, to bribe them, and so rob them of part of their power by thus influencing them.[1]

How we employ such methods as exorcism and appeasing 'in our own community', he fails to mention, however. What he does go on to say is:

> For there is nothing new in this situation. It has an infantile prototype, and is really only a continuation of this. For once before one has been in such a state of helplessness: as a little child in one's relationship to one's parents. For one had reason to fear them, especially the father, though at the same time one was sure of his protection against the dangers then known to one.[2]

Again, Dr. Freud says that Man 'has learnt from the persons of his earliest environment that the way to influence them is to establish a relationship with them, and so, later on, with the same end in view, he deals with everything that happens to him as he dealt with those persons'.[3]

[1] pp. 28–9. [2] p. 29. [3] p. 38.

Thus :

> It was natural to assimilate and combine the two situations. . . . Man makes the forces of nature not simply in the image of men with whom he can associate as his equals—that would not do justice to the overpowering impression they make on him—but he gives them the characteristics of the father, makes them into gods, thereby following not only an infantile, but also, as I have tried to show, a phylogenetic prototype.[1]

Now, obviously, this cannot be anything more than a theory : Dr. Freud cannot possibly *know* how man came by the notion of gods ; he is merely *imagining* how they may have done so. And it must be remarked that it is not a very convincing piece of imagination. So far as one can gather, Dr. Freud implies that the process is repeated with every generation : every man, as he grows up and becomes aware of the menace of nature, recalls his father's appearance in childhood. But when did this begin ? If we are treating of the origin of the notion of gods, we must know how the notion originated ; not how it is accepted by each individual. For that is all Dr. Freud deals with here. How the pre-existent notion of gods comes to be accepted by a man when he is first told of gods, is all the parallel of the infant and the father supplies. And Dr. Freud says : 'It was natural to assimilate and combine the two situations' —the father and the menace of nature. But why natural ? How natural ?

How also does the father parallel account for the deification of, for instance, the sun ? No doubt an eclipse was awful when it began, but when everybody had survived it, where was the danger ?

Also, what of the wild beasts ? Presumably, they were as much a menace as inanimate nature. But were they deified ?

§ 2. MORALITY AND WISHES

Dr. Freud proceeds :

> In the course of time the first observations of law and order in natural phenomena are made, and therewith the forces of nature lose their human traits. . . . The more autonomous nature becomes and the more the gods withdraw from her, the more earnestly are all expectations concentrated on [their making amends for the sufferings and

[1] pp. 29-30.

privations that the communal life has imposed on man] and the more does morality become their real domain.[1]

Thus morality, we are told, is the real domain of the gods.

Having explained to his satisfaction the origin of the belief in gods, Dr. Freud next asks: What are religious ideas in the light of psychology? And he replies: They are illusions. An illusion is, for psychology, the object of a belief which may or may not be true, but always conforms to a wish of the believer's. He says:

> It is characteristic of the illusion that it is derived from men's wishes. . . .
>
> Religious dogmas . . . are all illusions, they do not admit of proof, and no one can be compelled to consider them as true or to believe in them. . . . Just as they cannot be proved, neither can they be refuted.[2]

Here Dr. Freud is evidently confusing certain properly religious beliefs, such as, that, after a life of trial and tribulation on earth, one will have eternal bliss in heaven, or, that, after perishing bravely in battle, one will join the houris in paradise, with moral rules formulated by religious teachers, *e.g.* 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you'; or, 'What advantage, O priests, is gained by training in quiescence? The thoughts are trained. And what advantage is gained by the training of the thoughts? Passion is abandoned'[3]. The beliefs may be in accordance with the believer's wishes, but it is rather stretching credibility to say that the moral rules are. At least the moral rules cannot be wished; conformity to them can be wished if one has first approved of them. And even of the beliefs it may be said that most people would prefer a happy life on earth, of which they were certain, to an eternal bliss, which for them was only problematical.

Thus Dr. Freud's argument runs:

> All beliefs which fulfil wishes but are not open to proof are illusions.
>
> Religious beliefs fulfil wishes but are not open to proof.
>
> Therefore, religious beliefs are illusions.

[1] pp. 30–31. [2] pp. 54–55.

[3] Taken at random from *Buddhism in Translations*, Eighth issue (Harvard, 1922), p. 288.

But, as the remainder of his book shows, what he is asking should be discarded are, not so much the beliefs which one may grant, for argument's sake, do fulfil wishes, *e.g.* the belief in eternal bliss after death, but such beliefs as that one should love one's enemies, or that one should not lay up treasure for oneself, which certainly do not fulfil wishes. Hence the fallacy in his reasoning is that his middle term does not apply to his minor term ; consequently, his minor premise is false ; consequently, his conclusion must be false also.

Moreover, if religious beliefs, including religious moral beliefs, are illusions, that is, are fulfilments of men's wishes, how is it that the moral beliefs arouse, as Dr. Freud says they do, hostility? How is it that fulfilment of wishes should arouse hostility? Incidentally, Dr. Freud says that this hostility is not aroused in everyone. There are people in whom moral rules are 'internalized', 'thus coming under the jurisdiction of man's super-ego (a special function)'[1]. But what is this super-ego which is also a special function? And how do such people come to acquire it?

§ 3. HAPPINESS AND INTELLIGENCE

However, from his fallacious conclusion concerning religious moral beliefs, Dr. Freud goes on to assert that : 'Culture incurs a greater danger by maintaining its present attitude to religion than by relinquishing it.'[2] Then, before stating what the danger is, he declares that religion has been a failure :

> For many thousands of years it [religion] has ruled human society ; it has had time to show what it can achieve. If it had succeeded in making happy the greater part of mankind, in consoling them, in reconciling them to life, and in making them into supporters of civilization, then no one would dream of striving to alter existing conditions.[3]

Primarily he said that the object of religion was to mitigate the fear engendered in man by the behaviour of nature, and, when that mitigation was no longer necessary, to provide rules whereby men are enabled to live in communities. If such is its task, why should he expect it, instead, to make men happy, to console them (for what?), to recon-

[1] p. 18. [2] p. 62. [3] p. 65.

cile them to life (but has it not done this?), and to convert them into supporters of civilization?

Again, how can the acceptance of 'religious ideas' turn out to be a failure if those ideas are the objects of beliefs that fulfil men's wishes?

From this conclusion that 'religious ideas' have not done something which, according to his initial definition of them, they could not be expected to do, and also that they are not what he himself has said they are, Dr. Freud concludes that it would be better if moral rules, or 'cultural prohibitions', as he terms them, were imposed on the ground, not that they have been handed down from God, in whose existence, if they are to be accepted, it is then essential to believe, but that they are necessary in the interests of the community and have no other sanction.

This would result: (a) in the abolition of many moral rules that are really obsolete and only survive through their religious association [1]; and (b), in making men more intelligent. Thus, men, both being able to do more what they like and having become more intelligent, would be disposed to put up with some repression of their impulses for the sake of the benefits accompanying communal life.

It is the danger involved in forgoing such results that is, Dr. Freud considers, incurred by the maintenance of what he imagines the present attitude to religion is.

Next he indicates how, in his opinion, the relinquishing of religious beliefs would lead to an increase in the intelligence of individual men. Religion has, he says, been to an extent 'the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity. It, like the child's, originated in the Oedipus complex, the relation to the father. . . . We may say that the time has probably come to replace the consequences of repression by the results of rational mental effort, as in the analytic treatment of neurotics'. [2]

But how, he says it will be asked, how can he propose relying on 'rational mental effort' when he has himself said that men to-day are so little amenable to reasonable arguments, so completely ruled by their instinctual wishes? And to this he replies:

[1] pp. 77–8.

[2] pp. 76–7.

> Think of the distressing contrast between the radiant intelligence of a healthy child and the feeble mentality of the average adult. Is it so utterly impossible that it is just religious upbringing which is largely to blame for this relative degeneration? . . . We introduce him [the child] to the doctrines of religion at a time when he is neither interested in them nor capable of grasping their import. . . . We need not be greatly surprised at the feeble mentality of the man who has once brought himself to accept without criticism all the absurdities that religious doctrines repeat to him, and even to overlook the contradictions between them.[1]

Here are challenging statements. Has the average healthy child indeed such a radiant intelligence in contrast with 'the feeble mentality of the average adult'? It is difficult to know what the statement means, what it is we are to think of. Even in the cases of John Stuart Mill who began to learn Greek at three, of Macaulay who wrote verse at eight, of Pascal who, without a knowledge of Euclid, solved Euclidean problems at twelve, it could not be said that they became less intelligent in manhood than they were as children. And they are exceptional cases. So one cannot infer from them that adults are less intelligent than children. What evidence is there that intelligence ever diminishes during the transition from child to man—or that it increases, for that matter?

But that is by the way. The main assertion in the above passage is that the child, who is more intelligent than an adult, is not capable of grasping the import of the doctrines of religion which, presumably, an adult, who, by definition, is less intelligent than a child, is capable of grasping, and that the child who has thus been introduced to the doctrines of religion at a time when, although he is more intelligent than an adult, he is incapable of grasping their import, is also the man who has brought himself to accept without criticism all the absurdities that religious doctrines repeat. We are therefore being informed that, in order to grasp the import, *i.e.* the absurdities, of religion, a lesser rather than a greater intelligence is required, and that a man who, as a child, has been introduced to religious doctrines before he could grasp their import or absurdities and so has accepted them, has also brought himself, *i.e.* made an effort of will, to accept these absurdities without criticism. But

[1] pp. 82–3.

how, when a child is told by a person of authority something, the absurdities of which it is incapable of grasping, it is also making an effort of will to accept these absurdities, Dr. Freud does not explain.

Such is the reasoning upon which Dr. Freud apparently bases his hope that human beings will grow up more intelligent 'if education is not abused by being subjected to religion'.[1] Incidentally, he refers to the change from a child's loss of its radiant intelligence, to its retention of that intelligence, as a change in human nature.[2]

§ 4. FACING REALITY

But it may, Dr. Freud says, be objected that man cannot do without the consolation of religion. To this, having apparently forgotten how, earlier in his book,[3] he has asserted that religion has not succeeded in being a consolation, he replies :

> Man cannot remain a child for ever ; he must venture at last into the hostile world. This may be called '*education to reality*' ; need I tell you that it is the sole aim of my book to draw attention to the necessity for this advance ?[4]

The reference is no doubt to what happens to a neurotic when by psycho-analysis he is cured of an obsession : he is then, presumably, educated to reality. But the claim which Dr. Freud makes[5], that religious beliefs are an obsessional neurosis of humanity, originating 'in the Oedipus complex, the relation to the father', depends, for its acceptance, on the correctness of Dr. Freud's theory of the origin of the notion of gods[6], and, as I have pointed out, there is no evidence, in this book or elsewhere, that the theory is correct.

Moreover, what, in the case of humanity, is the meaning of : 'education to reality' ? What is reality ? It is apparently what scientific work discovers about the world, the discoveries being that 'through which we can increase our power and according to which we can regulate our life'.[7] That, however, only leaves open the questions : (1) How is that which scientific work discovers about the world reality ? and (2) How can we regulate our life morally accord-

[1] p. 84. [2] loc. cit. [3] p. 65.
[4] p. 86, his italics. [5] p. 76. [6] pp. 28–30. [7] p. 95.

ing to scientific discoveries? And these questions Dr. Freud does not answer.

§ 5. WHY HAVE FEWER RULES?

Then, in addition to this so-called increase in intelligence, whereby communities will be able to rely on 'rational mental effort' on the part of members, for the observance of moral rules, or, as Dr. Freud calls them, 'cultural prohibitions', there is the prospect that, if moral rules are purged of their religious content, and sanctioned only by the needs of the community, many of these rules will be abolished:

> By withdrawing his expectations from the other world and concentrating all his liberated energies on this earthly life he will probably attain to a state of things in which life will be tolerable for all and no one will be oppressed by culture any more.[1]

And if these two prospects are, as Dr. Freud admits they may be, an illusion, just as, so he says, religious ideas are, there is yet, he tells us, this difference between them: that religious ideas have failed, but his proposals have not failed because they have not been tried. Should they be tried, and should the experiment of a non-religious education prove unsatisfactory, he would be ready to give up the reform.[2]

To this it must be rejoined that, of course, the experiment has been tried: within the last thirty years millions of children must have grown up without 'religious education'; and it does not appear that their 'education to reality' has succeeded where, according to Dr. Freud, religion failed, that it has consoled them, reconciled them with life, made them into supporters of civilization, and made them happy, whatever happy may mean. No doubt, however, it is too early to say whether the concentration of man's 'liberated energies on this earthly life' can result in his attainment of a state of things 'in which life will be tolerable for all and no one will be oppressed by culture any more'.

The result in question must partly depend on what is meant by: tolerable. I am not concerned to defend religion, of course, but to examine the grounds Dr. Freud produces for basing moral rules exclusively 'on the interests

[1] pp. 86–7. [2] p. 84.

of the community' and for reducing their number. These grounds, as I have examined them so far, do not appear adequate. That the abolition of many moral rules or cultural laws, which abolition is, Dr. Freud says, involved in a general revision of them,[1] will solve his 'appointed problem of reconciling men with civilization', one may venture to question. For what can the abolition of many out of many more moral rules provide us with at best? Only with the possibility of indulging a greater number of our impulses and desires than we can at present, and, especially, than we could in the past. But, assuming that the satisfaction of impulses and desires can make for contentedness, does the indulgence of a mere quantity of impulses and desires satisfy? Does not a man usually have impulses and desires of varying intensity, and would he not rather indulge one most intense desire than any number of less intense ones?

[1] p. 78.

PART V

ACCORDING TO THE HONOURABLE BERTRAND RUSSELL

CHAPTER I

THE MESSAGE

§ 1. THE MILLENNIUM WITHIN REACH

I COME now to the last of the four writers I have selected as representative fathers of our present philosophy of life: the Honourable Bertrand Russell. What I propose to examine here is the particular version of that philosophy put forward by Mr. Russell in those four of his recent books which are addressed to the general public, *viz* *What I Believe*, *On Education*, *An Outline of Philosophy*, and *Sceptical Essays*.

The last, *Sceptical Essays*, opens as follows:

> I wish to propose to the reader's favourable consideration a doctrine which may, I fear, appear wildly paradoxical and subversive. The doctrine in question is this: that it is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatever for supposing it true.[1]

What, then, I wish, as far as possible, to ascertain is the following: Mr. Russell, in the four books in question, puts forward certain propositions either as being true or as deserving of belief. Are there, I want to ask, any grounds whatever for supposing these propositions true?

Mr. Russell is, it is well known, a mathematician, a philosopher, and a popularizer of physics. But he is more than those things: he is also a prophet; he has a message. And the message is that the millennium lies within reach.

Such is the burden of the four books I am to examine. He says, in one of them:

> I have tried to bring before the reader the wonderful possibilities which are now open to us. Think what it would mean: health, freedom, happiness, kindness, intelligence, all nearly universal. In one generation, if we chose, we could bring the millennium.[2]

---

[1] p. 11.

[2] *On Education*, p. 247.

All that is required, in order to attain it, is the proper utilization of the knowledge at present in our possession :

> The world is full of knowledge of all sorts that might bring such happiness as has never existed since man first emerged.[1]

But that knowledge is not being utilized ; there are obstacles which prevent its utilization : 'But,' he adds, 'old maladjustments, greed, envy, and religious cruelty, stand in the way.'[2] However, the obstacles can, he tells us, be removed ; the way can be made clear. And, thereupon, he purports to show us how.

§ 2. THE POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION

In order that the millennium should be reached, we must, he says, do two things : (a) Produce suitable social institutions, and (b) Avail ourselves of the possibilities of education. The production of suitable social institutions he has discussed in an earlier popular book, *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. But it is not too much to assume—and such, indeed, appears to be Mr. Russell's own present view—that, before the suitable social institutions can be produced, the possibilities of education must be exploited first—if they can. At any rate, suitable education, if it is feasible, can perhaps assist the production of the suitable institutions, more than the institutions can assist the production of the suitable education. I shall, therefore, disregard the question of suitable social institutions, and confine myself on this occasion to Mr. Russell's conception of the possibilities of education.

He first points out that the important period in education is not, as has been commonly thought, during school-life and even later, but during earliest childhood. He says :

> In human beings, the important time for education is from conception to the end of the fourth year.[3]

Elsewhere he also says that habit-formation is of the greatest consequence, and that the critical period for habit-formation is the first year of life, because, for one thing, 'the new-born

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 214. [2] loc. cit. [3] Ibid, pp. 206–7.

infant has reflexes and instincts, but no habits'.[1] But, no doubt, precision as to the actual period is not essential; the point is: you must catch your child young.

What and how a child is taught when it is older, when it is at school, are very important things also. At school knowledge should be imparted, not to prove some political or moral conclusion, but for an intellectual purpose. The pupil's curiosity should be stimulated, and he should be shown how to satisfy it for himself. Prohibitions should be avoided. Disinterestedness is to be inculcated, and the habit of regarding every question as an open one. The pupil should learn voluntary concentration; he should be able, that is, to concentrate at will. Patience and industry must be taught, and not by enforcements, but by stimulation. Under the old methods of education a greater degree of exactness was attained than is under the new; but exactness is essential to much of the most interesting and useful work, and it should not be neglected. Throughout schooling the pupil should be given a sense that the work he is doing is important. An interest in current controversial questions is also to be encouraged. But regarding these, as regarding the facts of history or of any cognate subject, the truth should never be concealed. Let the pupil know the truth, and provided only the habit of independent judgment has been instilled, he will be able to decide rationally. Mr. Russell would have school-pupils imbued with an all-pervasive scientific spirit.

Whether such teaching is later on carried out or not, will, he holds, greatly affect the making or marring of an individual. But, nevertheless, it is what happens to such an individual in earliest infancy that is crucial. For, if we are to reach the millennium, human nature must be changed, and the moment for changing human nature is in earliest infancy.

There are, he says, people who assert that human nature cannot be changed. They are people who like existing evils. He declares:

> Those who like existing evils are fond of asserting that human nature cannot be changed. . . . If they mean, as they usually do, that there

[1] *On Education*, p. 70.

is no way of producing an adult population whose behaviour will be radically different from that of existing populations, they are flying in the face of all modern psychology.[1]

Or else they are ignorant people. He says further :

If human nature were unchangeable, as ignorant people still suppose it to be, the situation would indeed be hopeless. But we now know, thanks to psychologists and physiologists, that what passes as 'human nature' is at most one-tenth nature, the other nine-tenths being nurture. What is called human nature can be almost completely changed by changes in early education.[2]

Of course, we are merely on the threshold of what may be discovered with respect to altering human nature. Mr. Russell says :

It may be found that the addition of suitable drugs to the diet, or the injection of the right substances into the blood, will increase intelligence or alter the emotional nature. Every one knows of the connection of idiocy with lack of iodine. Perhaps we shall find that intelligent men are those who, in infancy, got small quantities of some rare compound accidentally in their diet, owing to lack of cleanliness in the pots and pans. Or perhaps the mother's diet during pregnancy will turn out to be the decisive factor. I know nothing about this whole subject ; I merely observe that we know much more about the education of salamanders than about that of human beings, chiefly because we do not imagine that salamanders have souls.[3]

But that is physiology, and the time when we can alter human nature by physiological means has not yet arrived. There is, however, also psychology, and in that domain the necessary discoveries have already been made. All that is requisite is to apply the knowledge obtained from these psychological discoveries. And the moment in a person's life at which the knowledge should be applied is the person's earliest infancy.

Mr. Russell attaches 'great weight to modern psychological discoveries which tend to show that character is determined by early education to a much greater extent than was thought by the most enthusiastic educationists of former generations'[4]. Indeed, when he says that he attaches great weight to these discoveries, he is speaking too mildly. He is convinced that what psychologists have, so he tells us, discovered is so. He says :

[1] *On Education*, pp. 245–6.
[2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 250.
[3] Ibid., p. 207.
[4] *On Education*, pp. 11–12.

The crude material of instinct is, in most respects, equally capable of leading to desirable and undesirable actions.[1]

Thus, a child, during its first year, must be fed at regular intervals, not whenever it cries. For if an infant finds that crying produces agreeable results, such as being fed, it will cry. And it may then grow up with a habit of complaining. He adds :

The same thing is true of rich men. Unless the right methods are adopted in infancy, people in later life will be either discontented or grasping, according to the degree of their power. The right moment to begin the requisite moral training is the moment of birth, because then it can be begun without disappointing expectations. At any later time, it will have to fight against contrary habits, and will consequently be met with resentful indignation.[2]

Again, the child must not be allowed to feel important. Thus it is not, in order to get it to sleep, to be wheeled up and down or taken in its mother's arms. If it is left alone, where it is comfortable, it will go to sleep of its own accord.

So much for the changing of human nature in the child during the first year. If, however, that year is the most important, the process of changing is not to be stopped as soon as the year is up. It is, Mr. Russell says, to go on until the child is six years old. Between the beginning of the second and the end of the sixth year, fear can be dispelled ; the will to power can be deflected from destructive into constructive channels ; a sentiment of justice can be inculcated ; and, if humbug be avoided, the habit of truthfulness can be produced. The child, however, must also have the society of other children, if its nature is to be inclined completely in the right direction. As for love, that should not be taught at all ; it should result spontaneously from the proper treatment of the child. At the same time, the parents must not expect their child to feel towards them as they feel towards it, for that is normally impossible.

Let all this be done, and understood, and the child will assuredly display the four characteristics which seem to Mr. Russell ' jointly to form the basis of an ideal character : vitality, courage, sensitiveness, and intelligence '.[3]

[1] *On Education*, p. 246. [2] Ibid., pp. 71–2. [3] Ibid., p. 48.

Then, 'by the time the child is six years old', he says, 'moral education ought to be nearly complete'.[1] For I have omitted to mention that this changing of human nature which has become possible as the result of the discoveries made by psychologists, and which is to take us to the millennium, is nothing but moral education.

§ 3. OTHER REQUISITES

Thus will the 'old maladjustments, greed, envy, and religious cruelty', disappear. But, of course, it is not merely a hypothetical child who must be morally educated on the lines Mr. Russell lays down; it is essential that this moral education should be received by every child. Nursery schools, of which the first was started at Deptford many years ago by Miss Margaret McMillan, must become universal. That 'could, in one generation, remove the profound differences in education which at present divide the classes, could produce a population all enjoying the mental and physical development which is now confined to the most fortunate'.[2]

It is also requisite for the achievement of the millennium that the transformation of human nature, once effected in any particular child, should endure. This demands that, when the child comes to go to school, the teacher should respect the child's 'personality'—a word Mr. Russell neglects to define—and feel his pupil as an end in himself. Mr. Russell says:

> No man is fit to educate unless he feels each pupil an end in himself, with his own rights and his own personality, not merely a piece in a jig-saw puzzle, or a soldier in a regiment, or a citizen in a State. Reverence for human personality is the beginning of wisdom, in every social question, but above all in education.[3]

It is the teacher who will be responsible for the cultivating in his pupil an all-pervasive scientific spirit and for making the pupil much more rational than people are at present. What is the scientific spirit? It is something which 'demands in the first place a wish to find out the truth' In addition, there must be 'certain intellectual qualities. There must be preliminary uncertainty, and subsequent

[1] *On Education*, p. 80.
[2] Ibid., p. 181.
[3] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 201.

decision according to the evidence '.[1] What the evidence, when it is obtained, is going to prove must not be settled in advance. Likewise, one must not be a lazy sceptic and regard objective truth as unattainable and all evidence as inconclusive. The scientific spirit is present, that is, when a man lets the available evidence decide for him. How he, in turn, decides what evidence is available Mr. Russell does not say.

And how can the pupil be made more rational than people are at present? By utilizing psycho-analysis:

> It [psycho-analysis] gives a technique for seeing ourselves as others see us, and a reason for supposing that this view of ourselves is less unjust than we are inclined to think. Combined with a training in the scientific outlook, this method could, if it were widely taught, enable people to be infinitely more rational than they are at present as regards all their beliefs about matters of fact, and about the probable effect of any proposed action.[2]

Thus, by being led to acquire an all-pervasive scientific spirit, and by being taught the technique given by psycho-analysis for seeing oneself as others see one, the already morally-educated child will grow up rational and with a capacity for independent judgment.

Then, in addition to the abolition of class distinctions in schooling, and to the teacher's realization that the pupil is an end in himself, one further essential for Mr. Russell's millennium is that there should be no more criminals. But that, too is a matter for education. 'Some think,' he says,[3] 'that prison is a good way of preventing crime: others hold that education would be better.' He, of course, is among the others. However, it is too late to educate existing criminals. For them also, though, Mr. Russell has his prescription: they should be treated as if they were suffering from a contagious disease. He says:

> I . . . suggest that we should treat the criminal as we treat a man suffering from plague. Each is a public danger, each must have his liberty curtailed until he has ceased to be a danger. But the man suffering from plague is an object of sympathy and commiseration, whereas the criminal is an object of execration. This is quite irrational.[4]

---

[1] *On Education*, p. 225.
[2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 51.
[3] *What I Believe*, p. 27.
[4] Ibid., p. 62.

§ 4. PHILOSOPHY

Such are the measures we may take, if we choose, in order, within a generation, to bring about the millennium. But what would that millennium be? The reply is a matter for ethics. The millennium will be when evil is banished and good alone prevails. What is evil? What is good? The answers lie with ethics.

Ethics has been commonly regarded as a department of philosophy. In fact, ethics is also called moral philosophy. This Mr. Russell believes to be a mistake. 'I hardly think myself,' he says [1], 'that it [ethics] ought to be included in the domain of philosophy.' He hardly thinks so, he explains, on account of the real nature of good. But the exclusion of ethics from philosophy is also a consequence of having the right philosophy. Hitherto most philosophers have relied for their philosophies upon their invention. 'The philosopher,' Mr. Russell says [2], 'first invents a false theory as to the nature of things, and then deduces that wicked actions are those which show that his theory is false.' In Mr. Russell's philosophy, however, there is no attempt, by invention or otherwise, to explain the nature of things. He tells us:

> It [the new philosophy] does not aim, as previous philosophy has usually done, at statements about the universe as a whole, nor at the construction of a comprehensive system. It believes, on the basis of its logic, that there is no reason to deny the apparently piecemeal and higgledy-piggledy nature of the world. . . . In particular, it does not attempt, as German idealism did, to deduce the nature of the world as a whole from the nature of knowledge.[3]

The new philosophy, the new realism, as Mr. Russell tells us it is called, has an aim, but it is a strictly limited one. Concluding that 'all knowledge is scientific knowledge, to be ascertained and proved by the methods of science':

> It aims only at clarifying the fundamental ideas of the sciences, and synthesizing the different sciences in a single comprehensive view of that fragment of the world that science has succeeded in exploring.[4]

Such a synthesizing of the different sciences in a single comprehensive view is, presumably, what Mr. Russell

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 233.
[2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 92. [3] Ibid., pp. 69–70. [4] Ibid., p. 79.

purports to have accomplished in his book, *An Outline of Philosophy*. That is indicated by his preliminary remarks there concerning what philosophy is. The substance of these remarks is that of the passage just cited, except that, throughout *An Outline of Philosophy*, 'the new philosophy', or 'the new realism', is always referred to as: philosophy *tout court*. Another indication is the arrangement of the book. First, Mr. Russell considers man's psychology as it appears 'from without'; next, he discusses 'the physical world'; then, he views, in the light of physics, 'man from within', inquires what is consciousness and what 'man's place in the universe'.

We learn that 'perception is a species of a wider genus, namely *sensitivity*', sensitivity not being confined to living things and being 'best exemplified by scientific instruments'[1]. The respect in which perception involves something more than is found in scientific instruments is that 'living bodies are subject to the law of association or of the "conditioned reflexes"'[2]. That is to say, what, according to Mr. Russell, enables a perceptive being to interpret its perceptions is inference, and the operation of inferring is inductive, and, he says, in reality a physical process, the same as that of which the occurrence has enabled the law of association to be formulated. That law is:

When the body of an animal or human being has been exposed sufficiently often to two roughly simultaneous stimuli, the earlier of them alone tends to call out the response previously called out by the other.

It is, Mr. Russell says,

the modern form of the principle of 'association'. The 'association of ideas' has played a great part in philosophy, particularly in British philosophy. But it now appears that this is a consequence of a wider and more primitive principle, namely, the association of bodily processes. It is this wider principle that is asserted above.[3]

And induction is, he says, nothing but this physical tendency to association. He says:

A child touches a knob that gives him an electric shock; after that, he avoids touching the knob. If he is old enough to speak, he may state that the knob hurts when it is touched; he has made an induction based on a single instance. But the induction will exist as a bodily

[1] p. 62. [2] p. 63. [3] p. 36, his italics.

habit even if he is too young to speak, and it occurs equally among animals, provided they are not too low in the scale. The theories of induction in logic are what Freudians call a 'rationalization'; that is to say, they consist of reasons invented afterwards to prove that what we have been doing is sensible. . . . Verbal induction is a late development of induction in behaviour, which is nothing more nor less than the principle of 'learned reactions'.[1]

And inference is what enables a perceptive being to interpret his perceptions. Mr. Russell says:

You say, 'What can you see on the horizon?' One man says, 'I see a ship' . . . . The man who says 'I see a ship' is using inference. Apart from experience, he only sees a queerly shaped dark dot on a blue background. Experience has taught him that that sort of dot 'means' a ship.[2]

The black dot which the man sees when he says, 'I see a ship', is what he *knows*. What the man thus knows Mr. Russell calls: a percept. Now percepts are, he says, in our heads. They must, he argues, be in our heads, because we only see what we see a short time after we should (if we could see it at all) have seen what we think we see, *viz* the ship itself. Hence, what we see is not the object we think we see, but an image of it inside our heads. Suppose, Mr. Russell says, that a physiologist is observing a living brain:

Light-waves travel from the brain that is being observed to the eye of the physiologist, at which they only arrive after an interval of time, which is finite though short. The physiologist sees what he is observing only after the light-waves have reached his eye; therefore the event which constitutes his seeing comes at the end of a series of events which travel from the observed brain into the brain of the physiologist. We cannot, without a preposterous kind of discontinuity, suppose that the physiologist's percept, which comes at the end of this series, is anywhere but in the physiologist's head.[3]

Percepts are what we know most accurately and most certainly. He says:

Suppose you are asked to repeat after a man whatever he says as a test of your hearing. He says 'How do you do?' and you repeat 'How do you do?' This is your knowledge-reaction, and you hear yourself speaking. . . . Our knowledge, in such a case, is very intimate. And it is, in fact, as intimate as it can hope to be, when our knowledge-reaction reproduces the very event we are knowing, or at

[1] pp. 83–4. [2] p. 68. [3] p. 146.

least an event extremely similar to it. This *may* be the case on other occasions, but we can only know, with any certainty, that it is the case when what is known is a percept. This accounts for the fact that our most indubitable and complete knowledge is concerning percepts, not concerning other mental events or events in the external world.[1]

The reason the intimacy of our knowledge is to be attested by our knowledge-reaction is that, according to Mr. Russell, 'if we wish to give a definition of "knowing", we ought to define it as a manner of reacting to the environment, not as involving something (a "state of mind") which only the person who has the knowledge can observe'.[2]

Apart from this knowledge which results in a reflex, there is knowledge which results from learning. This latter knowledge is related to desire. Mr. Russell tells us:

We cannot define any knowledge acquired by learning except with reference to circumstances towards which an animal's activity is directed. We should say, popularly, that the animal 'desires' such circumstances. . . .

'Knowledge', . . . as we saw, is a term correlative to 'desire', and applicable to another feature of the same kind of activity. . . . If our definition of knowledge is accepted, . . . there is no such thing as purely contemplative knowledge: knowledge exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire, or, as we say, in the capacity to choose the right means to achieve our ends.[3]

To return to perception, a percept, for Mr. Russell, is not only mental, *i.e.* an event just as much inside our heads as a thought is: it is also physical, *i.e.* from the standpoint of physics, a percept occupies a volume in the brain where it is occurring. He says:

I take it that, when we have a percept, just what we perceive (if we avoid avoidable sources of error) is an event occupying part of the region which, for physics, is occupied by a brain.[4]

Moreover, we never have a perception unless it has been preceded by happenings in the physical world. 'Thus,' Mr. Russell says, 'what is called perception is only connected with its object through the laws of physics.'[5] Accordingly, he concludes:

There is no difficulty about interaction between mind and body. A sensation is merely one link in a chain of physical causation.[6]

[1] pp. 224–5. [2] p. 20. [3] pp. 92–5. [4] p. 292. [5] p. 155. [6] p. 156.

He considers that a percept occupies a certain volume in the brain and that a sensation is invariably related to 'a chain of physical causation', and upon these considerations, he decides that percepts are both physical and mental simultaneously. He says:

> Everything we can directly observe of the physical world happens inside our heads, and consists of 'mental' events in at least one sense of the word 'mental'. It also consists of events which form part of the physical world. The development of this point of view will lead us to the conclusion that the distinction between mind and matter is illusory. The stuff of the world may be called physical or mental or both or neither, as we please; in fact, the words serve no purpose.[1]

Further, since percepts are part of the physical world, they, like everything else in that world, must be, he says, events in space-time. In view of this, Mr. Russell believes that we must consider 'the persistent ego' to be 'as fictitious as the permanent atom. Both are only strings of events having certain interesting relations to each other.'[2]

Thus, just as what is called physical is not specifically physical, since we obtain our knowledge of what we call physical only through knowledge of our minds, *i.e.* what we take to be in the external world is really inside our heads, so what he has called: mental, cannot, if mind does not exist, be specifically mental. Accordingly:

> It [the datum] is neither mental nor physical, just as a single name is neither in alphabetical order nor in order of precedence; but it is part of the raw material of both the mental and physical worlds. This is the theory which is called 'neutral monism', and is the one that I believe to be true.[3]

§ 5. ETHICS

All that, however, has, according to Mr. Russell, nothing to do with ethics. And it is his ethics which can tell us what would be the nature of that millennium which we could, if we chose, bring about in a generation. It is his ethics which must tell us what is the nature of the good which the advent of the millennium would make universal. What, then, is his ethics?

Ethics, although it should not be included in the domain

[1] pp. 147–8.
[2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 77.
[3] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 217.

of philosophy, does not differ, he says, from philosophy as to its data. Ethics, like philosophy, is not distinguished from science by any special knowledge. 'The knowledge required in ethics is,' he says [1], 'exactly like the knowledge elsewhere.' What distinguishes ethics from science is merely desire.

Mr. Russell formerly shared Dr. G. E. Moore's view, that good is an indefinable notion. But he was led, through reading Mr. Santayana's book, *Winds of Doctrine*, to adopt another view. He now thinks that 'good and bad are derivative from desire' [2]. There is, he also tells us, no such thing as sin. He says :

> It seems that sin is geographical. From this conclusion, it is only a small step to the further conclusion that the notion of 'sin' is illusory.[3]

And he explains how the notion arose :

> Originally certain acts were thought displeasing to the gods, and were forbidden by law because the divine wrath was apt to descend upon the community. Hence arose the conception of sin, as that which is displeasing to God.[4]

Thus superstition is the origin of moral rules. And, no doubt, it is superstition which is responsible also for the maintenance of arbitrary moral rules. Enlightened people understand, however, that 'the emotions are what make life interesting, and what makes us feel important. From this point of view, they are,' Mr. Russell says,[5] 'the most valuable element in human existence'. And thus, 'outside human desires there is, he insists [6], no moral standard'. What, accordingly, is peculiar to ethics is that :

> Certain ends are desired, and that right conduct is what conduces to them. Of course, if the definition of right conduct is to make a wide appeal, the ends must be such as large sections of mankind desire.[7]

The manner in which the good, *i.e.* certain desired ends, come to be ends such as large sections of mankind desire, is that, while 'primarily we call something "good" when we desire it, and "bad" when we have an aversion

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 40.
[2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 238.
[3] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 16.
[4] *What I Believe*, p. 48.
[5] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 228.
[6] *What I Believe*, p. 40.
[7] Ibid., pp. 40–1.

from it, . . . our use of words is more constant than our desires and therefore we shall continue to call a thing good even at moments when we are not actually desiring it', and, 'moreover, the use of words is social, and therefore we learn only to call a thing good, except in rare circumstances, if most of the people we associate with are also willing to call it good'.[1]

So, when we are speaking from a social point of view, and refer to bad desires, there is really no question of sin: bad desires are 'those which tend to thwart the desires of others, or, more exactly, those which thwart more desires than they assist'.[2]

Hence the conflict of desires in communities. But this conflict arises, not only between the desires of different men, but also 'between incompatible desires of one man at different times, or even at the same time, and even if he is solitary, like Robinson Crusoe'.[3] Robinson Crusoe will experience conflicts 'between fatigue and hunger, particularly between fatigue at one time and foreseen hunger at another'.[4] If he makes an effort, in spite of being tired, to provide food that he will need on some later occasion, this effort will have 'all the characteristics of what is called a moral effort'. Further, Mr. Russell adds:

> So far, only intelligence is involved; but one may assume that, with the progress of intelligence, there goes a growing desire for a more harmonious life, *i.e.*, a life in which action is dominated by quasi-permanent desires.[5]

It is to this progress of intelligence, not only in the individual, but in the community, that Mr. Russell pins his faith. There are certain desires which everybody can satisfy without depriving anyone else of satisfying them also, but there are other desires which individuals can satisfy only at the expense of their fellowmen. He gives an example:

> If A and B desire to marry each other, both can have what they want, but if they desire to kill each other, at most one can succeed.[6]

---

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 242.
[2] *What I Believe*, p. 74.
[3] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 238.
[4] loc. cit.
[5] Ibid., p. 239.
[6] Ibid., p. 241.

Hence, Mr. Russell considers that since good is what we desire, the more desires, not only one individual, but everybody in the community, can satisfy, the more good there will be. And for everybody in the community to satisfy the greatest possible number of desires, evidently it is necessary that their desires should not conflict with those of other people, who, when the desires do conflict, oppose their satisfaction. As he says, 'There can be more good in a world where the desires of different individuals harmonize than in one where they conflict'.[1]

And he adds :

> The supreme moral rule should, therefore, be : *Act so as to produce harmonious rather than discordant desires.*[2]

Now, whether an individual is going to be good, *i.e.* have harmonious desires, desires which he can satisfy without thwarting other people's satisfaction of their desires, or without other people's attempting to thwart his, or whether he is going to be bad, *i.e.* have discordant desires, desires which he cannot satisfy without thwarting other people's satisfaction of their desires, and which other people will accordingly attempt in turn to thwart—that is not a question which is decided by nature ; it is purely a matter of environment. Mr. Russell says :

> Neither the old belief in original sin, nor Rousseau's belief in natural virtue, is in accordance with the facts. The raw material of instinct is ethically neutral, and can be shaped either for good or evil by the influence of environment.[3]

Hence his insistence upon the necessity for changing human nature in the first six years of a child's life. As he puts it :

> This [method of enabling men to live together in a community in spite of the possibility that their desires may conflict] is to alter men's characters and desires in such a way as to minimize occasions of conflict by making the success of one man's desires as far as possible consistent with another's.[4]

There we have it. The millennium which we could, if we chose, bring about in a generation, would, since good is

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 242.
[2] loc. cit., his italics.
[3] *On Education*, p. 108.
[4] *What I Believe*, p. 46.

what we desire, be an era in which the greatest possible number, the greatest quantity, of desires were satisfied, and this, not by any particular group, but by all mankind. And for this era to be attained—in, if we choose, one generation—all that is requisite is that men's characters and desires should so be altered, that men would never desire anything which they could not obtain without thwarting someone else, or being thwarted by someone else.

That is Mr. Russell's ethical doctrine. That is what would be for mankind what he calls the good life. In addition, there are certain rules he would lay down. For instance, he considers that we should be prudent.[1] Also, he thinks it is better to lie ' with full consciousness ' of what one is doing than to deceive oneself first sub-consciously and then imagine that one is being virtuous and truthful.[2] Nevertheless, he would have children be truthful in thought and word, ' even if it should entail worldly misfortune, for something of more importance than riches and honours is at stake '.[3] He condemns hypocrisy. ' Practically all men are,' he says[4], ' unchaste at some time of their lives ; clearly those who conceal this fact are worse than those who do not, since they add the guilt of hypocrisy.' As to unchastity, he believes its opposite can be carried too far. The evil thing is jealousy. He says :

> I shall not teach that faithfulness to our partner through life is in any way desirable, or that a permanent marriage should be regarded as excluding temporary episodes. So long as jealousy is regarded as virtuous, such episodes cause grave friction ; but they do not do so where a less restrictive morality is accepted on both sides. Relations involving children should be permanent if possible, but should not necessarily on that account be exclusive.[5]

But perhaps what he regards as most desirable is sympathy. Not merely physical sympathy, which appears to be spontaneous, but abstract sympathy, which is ' as rare as it is important '. This abstract sympathy may, he says, ' go so far as to enable a man to be moved emotionally by statistics '.[6]

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 44.
[2] *On Education*, p. 125.
[3] Ibid., p. 132.
[4] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 198.
[5] *Education and the Good Life* (American edition of *On Education*), p. 221.
[6] *On Education*, p. 56.

Such abstract sympathy is a form of love, and if we are to attain the good life, we shall only do so by means of such love and by means of knowledge. We want knowledge, for ' knowledge is what gives us power to realize ' [1] the ends that our emotions determine we shall pursue. But of the two, love and knowledge, ' love is in a sense the more fundamental, since it will lead intelligent people to seek knowledge, in order to find out how to benefit those they love '.[2] And, as I say, abstract sympathy is for Mr. Russell a form of this love. He says :

> Love at its fullest is an indissoluble combination of the two elements, delight and well-wishing. The pleasure of a parent in a beautiful and successful child combines both elements ; so does sex-love at its best. . . . In a perfect world, every sentient being would be to every other the object of the fullest love, compounded of delight, benevolence, and understanding inextricably blended.[3]

This insistence upon the fundamental importance of what he calls love may be regarded as the final article of Mr. Russell's ethics. We can, if we choose, bring about the millennium, and enable all mankind to lead the good life, the good life in which the community in general will be satisfying the greatest possible quantity of desires, but if we do choose to bring about that millennium, we must not only alter human nature in infants during their earliest years ; we must also foster love and knowledge, especially love.

Such is Mr. Russell's message. Whether it is a message we can accept I now go on to inquire.

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 228.
[2] *What I Believe*, p. 29.
[3] Ibid., pp. 32–5.

CHAPTER II

CHANGING HUMAN NATURE

§ 6. THE QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

Is Mr. Russell's message that the millennium lies within reach, a message which we can accept? The question subdivides itself into others. On the one hand, he commends certain means whereby the millennium can, he says, be brought about, and, on the other hand, he describes the end these means are to produce: he defines his millennium. Thus, what I have to inquire is: (a), Can the means produce the end? and (b), Would the end be what he says it would? Mr. Russell has a particular conception of the good, which good can, he says, be made universal; and he declares that, apart from the production of suitable social institutions, education is the chief means to that end. Accordingly, I have to ask: (1) Can education do what he asserts it can? and (2), Can his definition of the good be accepted? That is, I have to examine Mr. Russell's claims for education and, also, his ethics. Further, although he hardly thinks, he says, that ethics ought to be included in the domain of philosophy, I fancy that the nature of his ethics is not unconnected with the nature of his philosophy, and so I must, in addition to examining his ethics, also examine his philosophy. Why I think that the philosophy and the ethics are not unconnected I shall try to make clear at the same time. I shall consider his claims for education first, his philosophy next, and finally his ethics.

§ 7. FEAR

In dealing with Mr. Russell's claims for education, let me begin with some of the changes which are, according to him, to be wrought in the child's nature during the period between that child's first and sixth birthdays. One

of Mr. Russell's requisites for the millennium is that we should all be fearless; fear is to blame for much of the unsatisfactory character of the world. And it is during this early period of the child's life that fear can, he says, be dispelled.

Incidentally, he distinguishes, between instinctive fears, which are, he says, only a few, and fears which arise from experience or from suggestion.[1]

He then goes on to show how he and his wife dealt with fear in their son. The son was, he tells us, afraid of shadows and mechanical toys. Mr. Russell cured him of the fear of shadows by making shadows himself and getting the child to make them too. To remove the fear of mechanical toys 'we produced gradual familiarity; and we persisted till the fear completely ceased'[2]. The most difficult fear to overcome in the boy was fear of the sea. In this case also familiarity was produced, the child being forcibly immersed until he acquired a liking for being in the sea. Again, fear of the mysterious can be eradicated, Mr. Russell holds, by teaching a child to assume that everything can be explained. The way to prevent shyness is to accustom the child to meeting, and being handled by, strangers.

Now, is there, I ask, anything novel in this treatment adopted in particular cases with a particular child? Do not all people severally outgrow their particular fears, not only of shadows and of things that jump, but also of the dark and of noises, through gradual familiarity? And cannot such particular fears be overcome just as completely at, say, the age of twelve or eighteen, as at the age of three or five? Again, what has the nature of the particular fear, whether, that is, it is instinctive or the result of experience or suggestion, to do with its being overcome?

Moreover, what is there to prevent such a fear, once dispelled, from being acquired afresh? Take fear of the sea. Supposing Mr. Russell's little boy had, after once becoming fond of being in the sea, had his leg seized by a crab or had stepped on a jelly-fish—might he not thereupon have acquired a new fear of the sea? Also, did his overcoming of fear of the sea and of shadows assist him in overcoming his fear of, say, mechanical toys? Moreover,

[1] *On Education*, p. 50. [2] Ibid., p. 85.

how about fears he might have acquired and kept to himself—out of shame to confess them? Do not many children have secret fears to which they do not confess?

What I am suggesting is that all Mr. Russell has to say on the subject of fear and education does nothing to justify his belief 'that it is possible so to educate ordinary men and women that they shall be able to live without fear'[1]. Incidentally, his distinction between instinctive fears and fears which result from experience or from suggestion, is unnecessary, for, as he shows, the three kinds of fears can all be dispelled in the same way. The main thing is, however, that the instances he gives of fear being dispelled are not only instances of a treatment of fear which, it would seem, has always been in operation; they are also merely instances of dealing with particular fears. Whereas, if we are, as he demands, to become fearless, what is required is not a means of dispelling particular fears, but a means of eradicating the liability to fear in general.

So his discussion of 'the methods by which fear and anxiety may be minimized' fails to contribute one tittle to the solution of the problem. This he himself admits when he says: 'Practice and skill in dangerous situations are very desirable. But when we come to consider, not courage in this or that respect, but universal courage, something more fundamental is wanted. What is wanted is a combination of self-respect with an impersonal outlook on life.'[2] But that leads away from the subject of fear to the subject of love, which I must discuss later.

Meanwhile, allied to the subject of fear is a subject to which I have already briefly referred in § 40 of Part III.: I mean, the subject of certain nervous disorders. Mr. Russell says:

> Competent authorities state that this practice [masturbation] is all but universal among boys and girls in their second and third years, but usually ceases of itself a little later on. . . . It has been the custom to view it with horror, and to use dreadful threats with a view to stopping it. As a rule these threats do not succeed, although they are believed; the result is that the child lives in an agony of apprehension, which presently becomes dissociated from its original cause (now repressed into the unconscious), but remains to produce nightmares,

[1] *On Education*, p. 52. [2] p. 53.

nervousness, delusions, and insane terrors. . . . If you do nothing, the probability is that the practice will soon be discontinued. But if you do anything, you make it much less likely that it will cease, and you lay the foundation of terrible nervous disorders.[1]

I have mentioned earlier how a character in Mr. Gide's novel, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, the boy Boris, is made by his author to suffer from serious nervous disorders as a result of the cessation of the practice alluded to by Mr. Russell. Boris is, however, considerably older than the 'boys and girls in their second and third years' of the passage just cited. Thus two of the writers whose views are being considered in this study, lead their readers to believe that 'terrible nervous disorders' may follow in the young upon either the mere cessation of the practice, or upon threats—futile threats—made to induce its cessation. Are not these serious statements to make to parents, who usually are entirely ignorant of nervous pathology? Who, then, are Mr. Russell's 'competent authorities'? He does not say. Yet, in spite of his assurance that the view he advances is held by 'competent authorities', I can find no reference whatever, either in such a book as Mr. Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* or in such a standard textbook as Dr. Charles A. Dana's *Nervous Diseases*, to this occurrence of 'terrible nervous disorders' following upon the cessation of the practice, or upon the use of threats to the agent with a view to making him stop it.

§ 8. JUSTICE

A problem analogous to that of fear is, Mr. Russell says, the problem of selfishness. But children can, he asserts, be taught justice. 'I do not believe that a sense of justice is innate, but I have been astonished to see how quickly it can be created.'[2]

But when it comes to showing how the sense of justice is to be created, he says that 'it is difficult, if not impossible, to teach justice to a solitary child'[3]; association with other children is indispensable; and thereupon, here also, the instances he gives of justice being understood are all particular instances:

[1] pp. 168–9. [2] p. 119. [3] p. 118.

> Where there is competition for a pleasure which can only be enjoyed by one at a time, such as a ride in a wheelbarrow, it will be found that the children readily understand justice.[1]

And he himself says: 'The rights and desires of grown-up people are so different from those of children that they make no imaginative appeal.'[2] Thus what was said against his belief that ordinary men and women can be so educated that they shall be able to live without fear, applies exactly to his contention that they can be so educated that they shall have a sense of justice in general. For how does it follow that, because a child can learn assent to the justice of the nursery in particular instances, the same child will grow into an adult with a clearer sense of justice in general than adults usually possess now? Do not most children, who, as Mr. Russell stipulates, are not solitary, already learn to accept the justice of the nursery, when it is imposed by their fellow children, and yet fail, when they become adults, to have a universal sense of justice? Ability to recognize the justice of a procedure or of a decision in particular instances is common enough, but that which is requisite if people generally are to be more just than they are at present—the sentiment of justice—is very rare. All Mr. Russell does is to show how a child can acquire what is already common, what children have already acquired in the past. How human beings are to acquire what they do not already have, what has not been acquired hitherto, but must be acquired if his millennium is to be brought about, he totally fails to indicate. As with the problem of fear, so with the problem of justice: we are left precisely where we were before Mr. Russell came forward to enlighten us and point the way.

Indeed, as one advances in the examination of his claims for education, one comes to feel that there is one respect in which he closely resembles his son. The boy had at first, Mr. Russell tells us, great difficulty in realizing that there had been a time when he was not alive. So Mr. Russell himself appears to have great difficulty in realizing that there was a time when he was not a parent, yet when other people were parents. He appears to imagine, because he is being a parent for the first time, that parenthood

[1] p. 119. [2] p. 118.

itself is just beginning, and that no children have ever been brought up before.

§ 9. TRUTHFULNESS

Like selfishness, untruthfulness is, Mr. Russell says, allied to fear: 'Untruthfulness, as a practice, is almost always a product of fear.' [1] But truthfulness is, according to him, essential to that future of the world when we shall all be happy and good will be universal. And education can produce truthfulness, and not truthfulness in speech only, but also in thought; 'indeed,' says Mr. Russell [2], 'of the two, the latter seems to me the more important.' And he adds: 'No man who thinks truthfully can believe that it is *always* wrong to speak untruthfully.' Again, there are advantages about truthfulness: 'Truth and frankness,' he says,[3] 'dispel difficulties.'

Now, the way to make a child truthful is, according to Mr. Russell, for the parents never to be other than truthful with it, and always to avoid incentives to the child's lying:

> It does not at first occur to a young child that it is possible to lie. The possibility of lying is a discovery, due to observation of grown-ups quickened by terror. The child discovers that grown-ups lie to him, and that it is dangerous to tell them the truth; under these circumstances he takes to lying.[4]

But, I ask, if the possibility of lying is a discovery, what is to prevent the child from making that discovery later on? Its parents are not the only persons with whom it will be in contact: what is to prevent it from discovering the possibility of lying through other grown-ups and, especially, through other children? Also, are not many children already brought up to be truthful, and yet do they not become liars at times, both as children and as adults? So far, we are once again only being told what intelligent and careful parents already know and what other parents are not likely to learn, even with the help of Mr. Russell's book.

Further, however, is it true that the possibility of lying always is a discovery? Are there not children who seem

[1] p. 125. [2] p. 125. [3] p. 120. [4] p. 126.

to be unable to avoid lying, who are natural liars? At least one such case has been reported to me, that of a French girl, Jeannette, who, according to her mother, displayed, as it were, an innate propensity to simulate and dissimulate. The propensity may have been related to the love all children have of make-believe and of acting, but, although Mr. Russell wisely points out that a child's memory is often confused, and that it loves make-believe, he does not really illuminate the problem. Are there not, I ask, cases of instinctive or natural lying? What of the German, whom Mr. Gide reports meeting [1], and who told him that he could not stop himself from lying, even when he was aware that the lie would not be believed? And could not Mr. Gide supply Mr. Russell with other cases?

§ 10. THE WILL TO POWER

Another characteristic of human nature which Mr. Russell claims education can alter is what he calls: the will to power. That many people like, and strive for, power, is a commonplace. Mr. Russell, however, discerns manifestations of his will to power in far from obvious quarters. For instance, he says:

> One day, when we were returning from a walk, I told him [his son], as an obvious joke, that perhaps we should find a certain Mr. Tiddliewinks in possession of our house, and he might refuse to let us in. After that, for a long time, he would stand on the porch being Mr. Tiddliewinks, and telling me to go to another house. His delight in this game was unbounded, and obviously the pretence of power was what he enjoyed.[2]

But how was the boy's enjoyment of the pretence of power the *obvious* attraction of the game for him? Why should he not have played the game purely out of a childish, and very keen, sense of humour?

Again, Mr. Russell assumes that this will to power of which he speaks is displayed in our liking 'to effect *something*', and he adds: 'But so far as the love of power is concerned we do not care what we effect.' [3] But here is he not making a play on the word: power? He further says:

[1] Cf. § 22 of Part III.

[2] *On Education*, p. 99.

[3] p. 109.

> Construction and destruction alike satisfy the will to power, but construction is more difficult as a rule. . . . When a child first has bricks, it likes to destroy towers built by its elders. But when it has learnt to build for itself, it becomes inordinately proud of its performances. . . . The impulse which makes the child enjoy the game is exactly the same at both stages, but new skill has changed the activity resulting from the impulse.[1]

But how does the child's behaviour with its bricks show that 'construction and destruction alike satisfy the will to power'? When the child displays pleasure in destroying towers of bricks its elders have built, I do not see that it is manifesting any will to power; it is merely manifesting enjoyment in the crash. Let us consider, instead, the case of older children. When a boy destroys, say, his sister's doll, he is, it may be assumed, actuated by a desire to assert himself over his sister. On the other hand, when the sister makes a doll, she will not be asserting herself over anyone. In other words, it is destruction alone which, of the two, construction and destruction, can satisfy the will to power, *i.e.* the will to have or exercise power; construction does not do so.

If particular interests which are manifested in particular activities were so many forms of the will to power, then construction would satisfy that will. But these interests are not such forms. Mr. Russell, that is, confuses exercising one's powers with exercising power. Everybody enjoys exercising his powers; but that does not mean exercising power. Exercising power, means dominating others, as the boy who destroys his sister's doll thereby dominates her; exercising your power of swimming or waiting at table does not mean dominating others. The will to power may be gratified by riding a spirited or vicious horse; it will not be gratified by surf-riding.

Thus the will to power, the impulse to dominate others, cannot possibly, whether by the teaching of new skill or by any other means, be directed to some other activity, not the activity of dominating others.

Naturally, however, the will to power is not the only thing that destruction may satisfy. I have earlier quoted Mr. Gide's account [2] of how he was, as a child, sent into

[1] pp. 109–10. [2] § 4 of Part III.

erotic ecstasy by reading the passage in Madame de Ségur's *Les Dîners de Mademoiselle Justine*, which describes how the servants, in the absence of their masters, have a celebration, and all the crockery is smashed. I suggest that the child's pleasure in destroying towers of bricks built by its elders is, *mutatis mutandis*, of this order rather than a pleasure akin to that of dominating others.

Furthermore, Mr. Russell, in pursuing his theory that construction can satisfy the will to power, advances the notion that most of us can become artists or scientists and thereby satisfy our 'will to power'. He says:

> Hitherto defence and attack have provided most of what is serious in life. . . . But there are other sources of emotion which are capable of being quite as powerful. The emotions of aesthetic creation or scientific discovery may be as intense and absorbing as the most passionate love. And love itself, though it may be grasping and oppressive, is also capable of becoming creative. Given the right kind of education, a very large percentage of mankind could find happiness in constructive activities, provided the right kind were available.[1]

Again:

> It is desirable that men and women should, as far as possible, find their happiness in ways which are not subject to private ownership, *i.e.*, in creative rather than defensive activities.[2]

However, can the notion be accepted? Let it be admitted that scientific discovery, and what Mr. Russell calls artistic creation, may provide intense satisfaction in those who practise them successfully. Let it even be admitted that such satisfaction is an emotion quite as powerful as that experienced in successfully attacking a foe, or in successfully warding one off. How does it follow that, 'given the right kind of education, a very large percentage of mankind' could find happiness in—I disregard love for the moment—in artistic or scientific activity? For it to follow, surely it must first be shown that the artistic and scientific faculties can be engendered by education. But what evidence is there that they can? None is supplied by Mr. Russell. Perhaps he makes his assertion on the strength of a belief now current, that all children are artists, and that, if all adults are not artists too, it is because our education now

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 250. [2] *On Education*, p. 121.

causes the artistic faculty in the great majority of growing children to atrophy. But even if this belief were correct, it would not follow that, once education were reformed—assuming it could be reformed in the required direction—all children would grow up into artists whose work would provide them with the same powerful satisfaction that successful artists now experience. For it is only the artists with a considerable talent who can be described as successful artists, *i.e.* artists who get a powerful satisfaction out of working and accomplishing works. And there is not the slightest reason—or at least I am unaware of any—for believing that, even if all children have some artistic faculty, that faculty is considerable. Indeed, when one considers, on the one hand, how easily the faculty atrophies in the majority of them—supposing they possess it—and, on the other hand, how talent does frequently resist all efforts to stifle it, there seems good reason to believe that the faculty said to be present in all children is not a very strong one.

Moreover, instruction in artistic activity has to some extent already been tried. Several generations of girls have been taught to play the piano; many girls in their time have been instructed in painting with water-colours. Yet has piano-playing or aquarelle-painting brought to any great number of them that satisfaction which is associated with successful artistic work? Also, every secondary schoolboy in France learns how to write; how to write, not merely a letter, but an essay. The result is that the number of men who in France can express themselves on paper, not only correctly, but with a certain grace, is very high. Yet is the number of men with literary talent any higher proportionately in France than elsewhere?

Of course, as to piano-playing and painting in water-colours, Mr. Russell might retort that if, for instance, the girls who learned piano-playing did not find happiness in it, it was because their gift was for cookery, and that, if the girls who learned to paint in water-colour did not satisfy their will to power thereby, it was because they were intended to be scientists. And so on. For, of course, constructiveness, as Mr. Russell calls it, is not confined to art and science. But are there not people without any gift for anything in particular—people who can be trained to do certain work,

and often work which is far from easy, but who have no special aptitude? And are they not the majority? At any rate, Mr. Russell certainly fails to produce any evidence that they are not, and since the present condition of the world suggests that they are, surely evidence that they are not is required. So, altogether, it does not seem that his arguments on behalf of what education can do to deflect the will to power are convincing.

§ II. THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

I pass to Mr. Russell's contentions that by education the scientific spirit can be made all-pervasive, and that education can make us all rational. I have already indicated what he means by the words: the scientific spirit. It is something which, he says, 'demands in the first place a wish to find out the truth'. In addition, there must be 'certain intellectual qualities. There must be preliminary uncertainty, and subsequent decision according to the evidence'.[1] What the evidence, when it is obtained, is going to prove must not be settled in advance. Likewise, one must not be a lazy sceptic and regard objective truth as unattainable and all evidence as inconclusive. The scientific spirit is present, that is, when a man lets the available evidence decide for him. And it is for the teacher to cultivate this scientific spirit in his pupils, and make it in each of them all-pervasive.

What I want to ask is: (a) Why should Mr. Russell expect that a teacher can make the scientific spirit all-pervasive in his pupils? and (b), Is the scientific spirit, as he defines it, desirable—not ethically desirable, but scientifically desirable?

He says:

> Many eminent men of science do not have this spirit outside their special province; I should seek to make it all-pervasive.[2]

But how would he seek to make it all-pervasive? Why, if many eminent men of science, men who have had a training in this spirit, who clearly know what attitude of mind they should adopt, yet fail to have the spirit outside their special province, why should he expect that in average boys and

[1] *On Education*, p. 225. [2] p. 225.

girls it can be made all-pervasive? Is not the very fact that many eminent men of science lack the scientific spirit outside their special province an indication that the open-mindedness, the absence of preconceptions and prejudices, which are the scientific spirit, cannot, in fallible human beings, ever be all-pervasive?

But, further, is it truly the scientific spirit that Mr. Russell wants cultivated? The scientific spirit is present, he says in effect, when a man lets the available evidence decide for him. 'Truth, so far as it is humanly attainable, is,' he says [1], 'a matter of degree.' But does not his definition suggest that the scientific spirit is no more than a methodology, a reduction of reasoning to an automatic process? Have great scientific discoveries been made by letting the available evidence decide? Have they not, on the contrary, been made because men refused to let the available evidence decide and sought fresh evidence? For, as I said, in the preceding chapter, how a man is to decide what evidence really is available Mr. Russell fails to explain. Yet, surely, what is valuable in the scientific spirit is, not letting the available evidence decide, but being able to tell what evidence is adequate. As it is, the independent judgment which Mr. Russell would have the teacher cultivate in his pupils could be nothing but, as I say, an automatic process. Every pupil, on being presented with certain evidence, would make the identical reply. That may be desirable for the solution of quadratic equations, where the solution, whether single or double, is always the same; but is it the scientific spirit?

Again, according to Mr. Russell, in order that children should grow up with a capacity for independent judgment, it is requisite, not only that they should cultivate the scientific spirit, but that they should be much more rational than people are at present. And this again is, he says, a matter for education. But is it? The capacity to reason can, of course, be trained, but is there any ground for believing that the capacity itself results entirely from training? How, then, account for the fact that, of a dozen, or it may be a hundred, people, all having had the same training, one can reason so much better than all the others?

[1] p. 226.

However, it is hard to tell if, on the subject of making people much more rational than they are at present, Mr. Russell is serious. In addition to saying that the technique given by psycho-analysis for seeing ourselves as others see us, combined with a training in the scientific outlook, could, if widely taught, enable us to be infinitely more rational than we are at present [1], he says :

> We do not know how to teach people to be shrewd or virtuous, but we do know, within limits, how to teach them to be rational : it is only necessary to reverse the practice of education in every particular.[2]

And again :

> Logic ought to be taught in schools with a view to teaching people not to reason. For, if they reason, they will almost certainly reason wrongly.[3]

Also :

> The average man's opinions are much less foolish than they would be if he thought for himself.[4]

§ 12. PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Supposing, however, that the possibilities of education were what Mr. Russell claims they are, there would still remain the question : Can those possibilities, in the world as it is, be exploited ? For, otherwise, for him to dwell on those possibilities is to treat us as Richard II. is said to have been treated in Pontefract Castle, kept without food for several days, and then placed in sight, but out of reach, of a table loaded with good things. Mr. Russell calls upon parents to be invariably just, invariably fearless, invariably truthful ; never to make their children feel important, never to break a routine, never to get angry ; and so on. And, remember, it is not merely intelligent parents who must behave thus, if the possibilities of education are to be fully exploited ; it is all parents. Likewise, it is all teachers who must cultivate in their pupils an all-pervasive scientific spirit and make them capable of independent judgment, who must respect their pupils' personality and feel each pupil an end in himself.

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 51. [2] Ibid., p. 22. [3] Ibid., p. 98.
[4] *On Education*, p. 63.

No doubt parents should possess many of the qualities Mr. Russell demands of them; and no doubt teachers should be far more able and disinterested than they are; and it is extremely important to point out what both parents and teachers should be. But does Mr. Russell, or anyone else, believe that either parents or teachers are going to be metamorphosed into paragons for their respective spheres? Of course not. Mr. Russell himself, at the end of an indictment of current institutions in one of the four books before me, concludes:

> We have seen that no one of them [the State, the Church, the schoolmaster or the parent] can be trusted to care adequately for the child's welfare, since each wishes the child to minister to some end which has nothing to do with its own well-being.[1]

His reason why 'no one of them can be trusted to care adequately for the child's welfare' in his sense of *adequately* may be dubious. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that they cannot be trusted because both the schoolmaster and the parent are human, and the State and the Church are made up of human beings, for that would cover any element of truth there may be in the statement that 'each wishes the child to minister to some end which has nothing to do with its own well-being', and much else besides, such as that parents are liable to err, to get angry, to be, intentionally or unintentionally, unjust, &c.; but the fact that 'no one of them can be trusted' to exploit the possibilities of education Mr. Russell holds out, in the way he proposes, cannot well be disputed.

What, then, is the sense of insisting upon these possibilities if their realization is illusory?

§ 13. INSTINCT V. NATURE

Nevertheless, there are still one or two questions to be put. Mr. Russell insists that 'no man is fit to educate unless he feels each pupil an end in himself, with his own rights and his own personality'.[2] But what does he mean by: personality? He does not say. Does he, by any chance, mean what might be called the child's nature? At any rate, he does say:

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 190. [2] Ibid., p. 201.

We have to be careful not to thwart a child's nature. It is useless to shut our eyes to his nature, or wish that it were different ; we must accept the raw material which is provided.[1]

Again :

Human nature we should respect because our impulses and desires are the stuff out of which our happiness is to be made.[2]

But if a child's nature must not be thwarted, if human nature should be respected, how is human nature to be changed? For, remember, it is the changing of human nature—nothing less—that Mr. Russell has declared to be possible in infancy thanks to recent psychological discoveries. Those who deny that human nature can be changed are, he suggests, either people who like existing evils or they are ignorant : they are flying in the face of all modern psychology [3]. At the same time, however, as he says that ' what is called human nature can be almost completely changed by changes in early education ', he also says that ' the crude material of instinct is, in most respects, equally capable of leading to desirable and undesirable actions ' [4]. Is that the same thing? I scarcely think so. To shape instincts, supposing they can be shaped, is not to change human nature. In order that human nature should be changed, the instincts themselves, and not their manifestation, would have to be transformed. That Mr. Russell does not pretend is possible. On the contrary, he says that we must respect human nature, and that we must be careful not to thwart a child's nature. Thus, although he says that people who deny that human nature can be changed are either people who like existing evils or else are ignorant ; people who fly in the face of all modern psychology, it turns out that his programme is not to change human nature at all, but to direct instincts. And the most important period for this direction of instincts is, he says, in early childhood. Yet, when his advice is examined, all that he suggests should be done in this way during the first year of the child's life, the crucial period, according to him, in education, is to feed the child regularly

[1] *On Education*, p. 117. [2] *What I Believe*, p. 92.
[3] *On Education*, pp. 245–6, and *Sceptical Essays*, p. 250.
[4] *On Education*, p. 246.

and to let it go to sleep regularly of its own accord. It is to be inured to routine and not made to feel important.

Is it not curious that so little as these measures, and the other measures which are, he says, to be taken with a child as it grows older, and which I have examined in this chapter, should, if only we choose to carry them out, be enough to lead us to the millennium?

And now let me consider what that millennium would be, let me consider Mr. Russell's ethics.

CHAPTER III

MR. RUSSELL'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

§ 14. PERCEPTION

BEFORE turning, however, to Mr. Russell's ethics, to his conception of the good, I want, as I said, to consider briefly his philosophy, at least as expounded in his recent popular book, *An Outline of Philosophy*. My reason for wanting to do this, when really my concern is with his ethics, is that, although he says he hardly thinks that ethics 'ought to be included in the domain of philosophy' [1], it seems evident to me that his philosophy and his ethics have a common basis—as it will be part of the business of this chapter to indicate—and thus the question whether a philosophy erected on such a basis can be accepted, is a question pertinent to my main theme.

Mr. Russell's philosophical doctrine, as I have stated in § 4, is what he calls: neutral monism. That is to say, he concludes, from a study of some of the problems of philosophy, that the distinction between mind and matter is illusory, and that the world is composed of only one stuff, *viz* events, which are neither exclusively mental nor exclusively physical, but which may be called mental or physical according to the standpoint from which we consider them, *i.e.* they are, in reality, neutral. He reaches this conclusion, in one way, by his analysis of perception. And, indeed, any such theory as that the distinction between mind and matter is illusory, must chiefly depend upon a theory of perception, for perception is the operation by which mind becomes aware of matter. So it is with his analysis of perception that I begin.

He holds that perception itself is at once mental and physical. How, for him, is it mental? He says:

[1] p. 233.

'All facts that can be known about human beings are known by the same method by which the facts of physics are known'. This I hold to be true. . . . I hold that the facts of physics, like those of psychology, are obtained by what is really self-observation, although common sense mistakenly supposes that it is observation of external objects.[1]

What does he mean by: 'really self-observation'? He explains with a description of what happens when someone is observing a process in someone else to the extent that that process can be observed from outside the someone else. He says:

A physiologist [is] observing, say, what goes on in the eye when light falls upon it. His means of knowing are, in principle, exactly the same as in the observation of dead matter. An event in an eye upon which light is falling causes light-waves to travel in a certain manner until they reach the eye of the physiologist. They there cause a process in the physiologist's eye and optic nerve and brain, which ends in what he calls 'seeing what happens in the eye he is observing'. But this event, which happens in the physiologist, is not what happened in the eye he was observing; it is only connected with this by a complicated causal chain. Thus . . . we do not know any more about our eyes than about the trees and fields and clouds that we see by means of them. The event which happens when a physiologist observes an eye is an event in him, not in the eye that he is observing.[2]

Thus, according to him, what we know when we think we are knowing an object in the external world, a physical object, is, in reality, something mental—a thought. He says further:

Whenever we say, 'I see a table', we are knowing a thought, since an event in our brain is the only invariable antecedent of such a statement (assuming it to be made truthfully). We may *think* we are knowing a table, but this is an error.[3]

And thoughts of this kind, thoughts which, when we know them, may lead us to 'think' we are knowing an object in the external world, he calls: percepts. He defines percepts as follows:

The sun looks red in a London fog, grass looks blue through blue spectacles, everything looks yellow to a person suffering from jaundice. But suppose you ask: What colour are you seeing? The person who answers, in these cases, red for the sun, blue for the grass, and yellow for the sick-room of the jaundiced patient, is answering quite truly.

---

[1] p. 180. [2] pp. 131–2. [3] p. 224, his italics.

And in each of these cases he is stating something that he *knows*. What he knows in such cases is what I call a 'percept'.[1]

That is to say: when a person thinks he is seeing a red sun, blue grass, or a yellow sick-room, he is, in reality, knowing a thought of a particular kind, a thought resulting from a physiological process inside his body, which process is, in turn, the result of a physical process outside his body. As Mr. Russell puts it:

What we know most indubitably through perception is not the movements of matter, but certain events in ourselves which are connected, in a manner not quite invariable, with the movements of matter.[2]

If this is granted, it follows for Mr. Russell that 'what we call "perceiving"' is 'something private and subjective, at least in part'[3].

But in reaching this view, that what we know in perception is something private and subjective, something 'inside our heads'[4], Mr. Russell, it will have been noticed, assumes, simultaneously with the existence of the percept inside the perceiver's head, the existence of a whole series of external objects—the object corresponding more or less with the percept, the light-waves travelling from the object to the perceiver's retina, that retina itself, and also the head in which, for him, the percept is situated. Such an assumption inevitably raises the question: How have we come to be aware of the existence of all these external objects simultaneously with the existence of a percept, if all we can know, in the act of perception, is a thought inside our heads of the kind Mr. Russell calls a percept? Or, otherwise, how is it that, when we know a certain thought, of the kind Mr. Russell calls a percept, we can think we are knowing, say, a table? The light waves, he says, puts the percept inside our heads. What puts it outside again? Mr. Russell appears to reply: Inference. He says, for instance:

He [Dr. Watson] means that he refrains from inferring anything about the rat beyond its bodily movements. That is all to the good, but I think he fails to realize that almost as long and difficult an inference is required to give us knowledge of the rat's bodily movements as to give us knowledge of its 'mind'.[5]

[1] p. 139, his italics. [2] p. 140. [3] p. 136. [4] p. 143. [5] p. 135.

He means here, of course, that when Dr. Watson thinks he is knowing the rat's bodily movements, Mr. Russell believes Dr. Watson is only knowing 'private data patent to self-observation'[1], and that Dr. Watson can only obtain knowledge of the rat's actual bodily movements by drawing a series of inferences from these private data. And, presumably, he also believes that this is what Dr. Watson does. For he says elsewhere :

> You say, 'What can you see on the horizon?' One man says, 'I see a ship' . . . The man who says 'I see a ship' is using inference. Apart from experience, he only sees a queerly shaped dark dot on a blue background. Experience has taught him that that sort of dot 'means' a ship.[2]

But to say this is merely to evade the question. That question is not : How do we believe, when we see a dark dot on a blue background, that the dot is the appearance of a ship some distance out at sea? No doubt the process whereby we identify the dot with an object we call a ship is a process of inference. But it does not matter whether it is or not. For the question is : If, when we have perceptions, all we know are thoughts, *i.e.* the thoughts Mr. Russell calls percepts, how do we come to be aware, when we have such a thought, that something has occurred outside our heads? How are we aware that there is to our heads an outside in which things occur? Certainly not by inference. Mr. Russell derides syllogistic inference; actual inference is, he says, always inductive, and he further declares :

> Induction, as it appears in the text-books, consists, roughly speaking, in the inference that, because A and B have been found often together and never apart, therefore they are probably always together, and either may be taken as a sign of the other.[3]

The question thus becomes : Suppose we perceive a queerly shaped dark dot A, what is the B which we have found often together with A and never apart from A, which, on this occasion, enables us, if the dot is nothing but a thought, to identify that thought with the appearance of something outside our heads? Either there is a B, or there is no inference in perception.

The fact is, of course, that, in speaking of inference, Mr.

[1] Ibid. [2] p. 68. [3] p. 83.

Russell is not accounting for perception at all, as the following passage shows :

> There is an objection . . . which might naturally be made, but it would be in fact invalid. It may be said that we do not in fact proceed to *infer* the physical world from our perceptions, but that we begin at once with a rough-and-ready knowledge of the physical world, and only at a late stage of sophistication compel ourselves to regard our knowledge of the physical world as an inference. What is valid in this statement is the fact that our knowledge of the physical world is not at first inferential, but that is only because we take our percepts to *be* the physical world.[1]

If we are able at first to take our percepts for the physical world, and we only infer at a later stage, then obviously inference is something quite distinct from perception. So the question remains : How do we come to be aware that there is to our heads an outside in which things occur ? If we are able to go on ' at first ' taking our percepts to be the physical world, what is it that happens at the ' late stage of sophistication ' Mr. Russell mentions, to compel us ' to regard our knowledge of the physical world as an inference ' ? If it is possible for us to take at one time our percepts to be the physical world, and yet a percept is ' the only possible starting-point for our knowledge of the physical world ' [2], how do these percepts ever come to be such starting-points ? What occurs to make them starting-points? Here Mr. Russell's doctrine appears to call forth an objection akin to that which disposes of Locke's conceptualism. How can we, as he asserts we do, infer that our percepts are signs of corporeal things forming the physical world, unless we also know that physical world directly? But he says that we know it only through our percepts.

Yet, and this is not the least curious feature of his theory of neutral monism, he also argues as though our knowledge of the physical world were correct. This brings me to his complementary contention on behalf of neutral monism, that what is mental is physical. At the same time as he assumes that our direct knowledge of the external world is confined to thoughts, he also assumes that, whenever we have a thought of the kind he calls a percept, we know that thought to have been preceded by a series of happen-

[1] p. 136, his italics.

[2] p. 136.

ings in the physical world. Thus one must ask: How is it, if all we can know directly are thoughts, that at the same time as we know only these thoughts, we can also know that the thoughts have been preceded by the physical happenings in question? He considers he elucidates the problem by introducing the notion of two spaces. He says:

> When I say that my percepts are in my head, I am saying something which is ambiguous until the different kinds of space have been explained, for the statement is only true in connection with *physical* space. There is also a space in our percepts, and of this space the statement would not be true. . . . A man's percepts are private to himself: what I see, no one else sees; what I hear, no one else hears; what I touch, no one else touches. True, others hear and see something very like what I hear and see, if they are suitably placed; but there are always differences. Sounds are less loud at a distance; objects change their visual appearance according to the laws of perspective. Therefore it is impossible for two persons at the same time to have exactly identical percepts. It follows that the space of percepts, like the percepts, must be private; there are as many perceptual spaces as there are percipients. My percept of a table is outside my percept of my head, in my perceptual space; but it does not follow that it is outside my head in physical space. Physical space is neutral and public: in this space all my percepts are in my head, even the most distant star *as I see it.* Physical and perceptual space have relations, but they are not identical, and failure to grasp the difference between them is a potent source of confusion. . . .
>
> The physical space in which you believe the 'real' star to be is an elaborate inference; what is given is the private space in which the speck of light you see is situated.[1]

But this notion of two spaces only serves to expose the falsity of Mr. Russell's whole position. If there are a plurality of perceptual spaces, as many 'as there are percipients', how have we come to construct, out of these many private spaces and their respective contents, a single and neutral physical space? For until I have the thought of this one neutral physical space, I have no ground to suppose that there are, in addition to my space, other people's private or perceptual spaces, nor have I the means of saying, as Mr. Russell purports to say, what these other people's spaces must be like, and how they and their contents will resemble and differ from my space and its contents. But until I am acquainted with the nature and contents of

[1] pp. 143–5, his italics.

other people's private or perceptual spaces, I lack the materials out of which to construct Mr. Russell's neutral and public physical space.

Likewise, until we know that there are objects in the external world, and light waves which travel from these objects to the retina, and a retina, and a head, we have no ground for supposing that percepts are inside our heads. But if percepts are inside our heads, we can have no means of knowing that, when we have a percept, it has been preceded by a series of happenings in the external world, for we can have no means of knowing that there is an external world at all.

But why does Mr. Russell dwell so insistently on the physical and physiological happenings which precede our having a percept? In order to maintain that, at the same time as everything physical is mental, everything mental is physical. To this end he has to assume the existence of two kinds of space and that what he calls percepts make the best of both spaces. He says:

> We first identify physical processes with our percepts, and then, since our percepts are not other people's thoughts, we argue that the physical processes in their brains are something quite different from their thoughts. In fact, everything that we can directly observe of the physical world happens inside our heads, and consists of 'mental' events in at least one sense of the word 'mental'. It also consists of events which form part of the physical world. The development of this point of view will lead us to the conclusion that the distinction between mind and matter is illusory. The stuff of the world may be called physical or mental or both or neither, as we please; in fact, the words serve no purpose.[1]

One might well inquire in what way do we 'identify physical processes with our percepts', but there would be no elucidation to be found in *An Outline of Philosophy*. However, what has to be asked here is: How does 'everything we can directly observe of the physical world' consist 'of events which form part of the physical world'? And that question Mr. Russell answers in the following passage:

> I take it that, when we have a percept, just what we perceive (if we avoid avoidable sources of error) is an event occupying part of the region which, for physics, is occupied by a brain. In fact, perception

[1] pp. 147–8.

gives us the most concrete knowledge we possess as to the stuff of the physical world, but what we perceive is part of the stuff of our brains, not part of the stuff of tables and chairs, sun, moon, and stars. Supposing we are looking at a leaf, and we see a green patch. This patch is not 'out there' where the leaf is, but is an event occupying a certain volume in our brains during the time that we see the leaf.[1]

The percept, that is, must be in both perceptual and physical space at the same time. But for this there must be the two kinds of space, and that there are two kinds is what Mr. Russell fails to show. However, there is a further difficulty about a percept's being just as physical as it is mental, and that is the difficulty raised by Mr. Russell's statement that 'this patch' [*i.e.* the percept of a leaf] 'is not "out there" where the leaf is, but is an event occupying a certain volume in our brains'. It will be remembered that Mr. Russell defines a percept as being a thought. He says: 'Whenever we say, "I see a table", we are knowing a thought, since an event in our brain', &c.[2] That being so, how can a percept occupy 'a certain volume in our brains'? What is the usual volume of a thought, or how many thoughts to the bushel?

Yet it is only by identifying a percept, which is both a thought we have and the green patch we see when we look at a leaf, with a process which, according to him, occupies a certain volume in our brains, that he is able to contend that percepts are just as physical as they are mental. He says:

It used to be thought 'mysterious' that purely physical phenomena should end in something mental. That was because people thought they knew a lot about physical phenomena, and were sure they differed in quality from mental phenomena. We now realize that we know nothing of the intrinsic quality of physical phenomena except when they happen to be sensations, and that therefore there is no reason to be surprised that some are sensations, or to suppose that the others are totally unlike sensations.[3]

He then proceeds to give his conception of what happens when we see an object. He comes to the light-waves and he says:

On coming in contact with the human body, the energy in the light-wave takes new forms, but there is still causal continuity. At last it reaches the brain, and there one of its constituent events is what we call a visual sensation.[4]

[1] p. 292. [2] p. 224. [3] p. 154. [4] *loc. cit.*

And he concludes: 'Thus what is called a perception is only connected with its object through the laws of physics.' [1] He adds: 'According to the view I have been advocating, there is no difficulty about interaction between mind and body. A sensation is merely one link in a chain of physical causation.' [2]

All this, however, leaves the mystery of how 'purely physical phenomena should end in something mental' as deep as ever. To begin with, if: it, in the sentence: 'At last it reaches the brain, and there one of its constituent events is what we call a visual sensation', refers to 'the energy in the light-wave', how this energy, even if it has taken 'new forms', comes to have 'constituent events', one of which is 'what we call a visual sensation', is something Mr. Russell should certainly explain, but he entirely neglects to do so. Then, whether or not a sensation is 'merely one link in a chain of physical causation', when Mr. Russell refers to a sensation, presumably he does not mean: a perception, or he would not use a different word, and, moreover, he cannot mean: a perception, for however the two words, sensation and perception, are respectively defined, unless it be as synonyms, a perception must be *preceded* by a sensation; so the reader is still in the dark as to how 'what is called a perception' can be 'only connected with its object through the laws of physics'. What is the perception's object? Mr. Russell tells us that to perceive is to know a thought [3]. Does he then mean, when he speaks now of a perception being connected with its object: connected with a thought? If not, if he means, by the object of a perception, an object in the external world, *e.g.* the table which, when we say, 'I see a table', we think we are knowing, how, if to perceive is to know a thought, do we come to know that there is, when we know a thought, a corresponding physical object in the external world? Mr. Russell's argument for locating percepts inside our heads is this:

> Causal continuity makes the matter perfectly evident: light-waves travel from the brain that is being observed to the eye of the physiologist, at which they only arrive after an interval of time, which is finite

[1] p. 155. [2] p. 156. [3] p. 224.

though short. The physiologist sees what he is observing only after the light-waves have reached his eye; therefore the event which constitutes his seeing comes at the end of a series of events which travel from the observed brain into the brain of the physiologist. We cannot, without a preposterous kind of discontinuity, suppose that the physiologist's percept, which comes at the end of this series, is anywhere else but in the physiologist's head.[1]

Either, then, when we have a perception, our doing so includes our becoming aware of something in the external world, and in that case, since the physical process of seeing involves our seeing what we see a short time after we should (if we could see it at all) have seen what we think we see, *viz* the object in the external world from which the light-waves travel to our eye, there must be, in perception, something connecting the perceiving with its object, *i.e.* its object in the external world, which is not accounted for 'through the laws of physics', or else, when we have a perception, we only know a thought, *i.e.* a percept, and in that case it remains for Mr. Russell to explain how we come to be aware of an external world at all. He says:

Now it is contrary to all scientific canons to suppose that the object perceived, in addition to affecting us in the way of stimulus and reaction, also affects us directly by some mystical epiphany.[2]

Now, whether there is or is not any 'mystical epiphany' about perception I need not inquire, but does Mr. Russell, in this passage, mean that, if the facts of perception do not square with 'all scientific canons', those facts must be distorted? To that point, I shall revert.

Meanwhile, Mr. Russell apparently maintains that all that occurs in perception, in addition to the bare sensation, which sensation is, he says, 'merely one link in a chain of physical causation', is that the sensation 'gives rise to tactual and other expectations and images'[3]. But how do we come to associate these expectations and images with an external world? Mr. Russell replies: By inference. But, as I have pointed out, it is not by inference. This brings me, however, to another of Mr. Russell's arguments in favour of considering what is mental as physical. In addition to saying that perception is physical, he says that inference is physical.

[1] p. 146. [2] p. 135. [3] p. 221.

According to him, Dr. John B. Watson, the principal advocate of a brand of psychology known as Behaviourism,

considers one principle alone sufficient to account for all animal and human learning. . . . This principle may be stated as follows :

When the body of an animal or human being has been exposed sufficiently often to two roughly simultaneous stimuli, the earlier of them alone tends to call out the response previously called out by the other.

This, he says,

is the modern form of the principle of ' association '. The ' association of ideas ' has played a great part in philosophy, particularly in British philosophy. But it now appears that this is a consequence of a wider and more primitive principle, namely, the association of bodily processes. It is this wider principle that is asserted above.

Then he gives an example of this association of bodily processes. He says :

The pupil of the eye expands in darkness and contracts in bright light. . . . Now take some person and repeatedly expose him to bright light at the same moment that you ring an electric bell. After a time the electric bell alone will cause his pupils to contract.[1]

Later he indicates how, for him, induction is identical with this physical proclivity to association. He says :

A child touches a knob that gives him an electric shock ; after that, he avoids touching the knob. If he is old enough to speak, he may state that the knob hurts when it is touched ; he has made an induction based on a single instance. But the induction will exist as a bodily habit even if he is too young to speak, and it occurs equally among animals, provided they are not too low in the scale. The theories of induction in logic are what Freudians call a ' rationalization ' ; that is to say, they consist of reasons invented afterwards to prove that what we have been doing is sensible. . . . Verbal induction is a late development of induction in behaviour, which is nothing more nor less than the principle of ' learned reactions '.[2]

As I have already quoted him as saying, for him ' the physical space in which you believe the " real " star to be is an elaborate inference ' [3]. Presumably, then, the elaborate inference in question is carried out by this unconscious, or physical, form of induction. But since he neglects to mention what is the material wherewith the induction is carried out, his A and B which are found often together

[1] p. 36, his italics. [2] pp. 83–4. [3] p. 144.

and never apart, whether induction is physical or mental, has no bearing on the nature of perception.

§ 15. CONSCIOUSNESS

Mr. Russell also seeks support for the doctrine of neutral monism by attempting to maintain that 'the persistent ego' is 'as fictitious as the permanent atom'. Both, he says, 'are only strings of events having certain interesting relations to each other'[1]. First, he refers to recent theories as to the nature of matter and as to space and time. 'Matter . . . has,' he says, 'lost its solidity and substantiality. . . . Now electrons and protons themselves are dissolved into systems of radiations,' and he goes on:

> Another department of theoretical physics, the theory of relativity, has philosophical consequences which are, if possible, even more important [than the analysis of matter]. The substitution of space-time for space and time has made the category of substance less applicable than formerly, since the essence of substance was persistence through time, and there is now no one cosmic time. The result of this is to turn the physical world into a four-dimensional continuum of events, instead of a series of three-dimensional states of a world composed of persistent bits of matter.[2]

But even if the theory of relativity does turn the physical world into a four-dimensional continuum of events, and it would surely be more accurate to say that it *assumes* the world to be such a continuum, it remains that, when the observers, who sought to verify the theory at the eclipse of 1919, found that the stars which appeared near the sun at the instant of the eclipse showed an appreciable displacement, as compared with their normal positions, those observers were treating the stars whose light they saw at the instant of the eclipse, as the same stars whose light had been seen coming from the stars' normal positions? Presumably, also, a ray of light which, according to the theory of relativity, follows a world-line, this world-line being a geodesic of the space-time continuum, is the same ray of light throughout its line, *i.e.* presumably it is considered to persist in the continuum just as formerly it would have been said to persist in space and in time? Thus, in stars and in light-rays, persistent matter presumably survives.

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 77. [2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 304.

. However, having thus disposed of ' persistent bits of matter ', Mr. Russell declares that his ' four-dimensional continuum of events ' exists, not only for physics, but also for psychology. For him, what we call matter and what we call mind both consist, in reality, of one kind—for there is only one kind—of space-time events. He says :

> He [Descartes] would say that thoughts imply a thinker. But why should they ? Why should not a thinker be simply a certain series of thoughts connected with each other by causal laws ? [1]

His affirmative answer to the second of these questions is to be found in his account of the interaction of mind and body which I have already discussed : it is not an answer that can be accepted. But furthermore he invites his readers to consider the proposition : I see a triangle, ' and ask ourselves whether the whole of this, or only part, can be accepted as a primitive certainty '. He continues :

> A moment's reflection shows that both ' I ' and ' see ' are words which take us beyond what the momentary event reveals. Take ' I ' to begin with. This is a word whose meaning evidently depends upon memory and expectation. ' I ' means the person who had certain remembered experiences and is expected to have certain future experiences. We might say ' I see a triangle now and I saw a square a moment ago '. The word ' I ' has exactly the same meaning in its two occurrences in this sentence, and therefore evidently has a meaning dependent upon memory. Now it is our object to arrive at the contribution to your knowledge which is made by seeing the triangle at the moment. Therefore, since the word ' I ' takes you beyond this contribution, we must cut it out if we want to find a correct verbal expression for what is added to our knowledge by seeing a triangle. We will say ' A triangle is being seen '. This is at any rate one step nearer to what we are seeking.[2]

But, for one thing, is there any more reason for believing that the ' I ' who saw the square a moment ago is not the same ' I ' who is seeing the triangle, than there is for believing that the stars which by their light showed an appreciable displacement at the instant of the eclipse, were not the same stars which had previously occupied normal positions ? And, for another thing, can we conceive of a triangle's being seen or being visual (Mr. Russell, in the paragraph following the one cited above, substitutes the word : visual, for the word : seen) unless it is being seen by someone or

[1] p. 171. [2] p. 215.

is visual for someone? The question Mr. Russell is raising here is not whether the self can be known, but whether there can possibly not be a self as knower. It is not a question of the known, but a question of knowing.

If there must be a knower, then, when Mr. Russell says:

> We have already seen that 'matter' is merely a name for certain strings of sets of events. It follows that what we call motion of matter really means that the centre of such a set of events at one time does not have the same spatial relations to other events as the connected centre at another time has to the connected other events. It does not mean that there is a definite entity, a piece of matter, which is now in one place and now in another. Similarly, when we say, 'I think first this and then that', we ought not to mean that there is a single entity 'I' which 'has' two successive thoughts. We ought to mean only that there are two successive thoughts which have causal relations of the kind that makes us call them parts of one biography, in the same sort of way in which successive notes may be parts of one tune; and that these thoughts are connected with the body which is speaking in the way (to be further investigated) in which thoughts and bodies are connected.[1]

If we cannot conceive of a triangle as being seen or as being visual unless it is being seen by, or is visual for, someone, if there must be a knower, then is Mr. Russell, when he says what I have just cited, doing any more than substituting for the word: I, in the one case, the words: 'one biography', and, in the other case, the word: 'body'? Does he, in fact, in the above passage, do anything more than illustrate what the theory of a space-time continuum is, illustrate it by showing, thanks to the verbal substitutions in question, what it would be like *if* it were a psychological theory, what it would be like, that is, *if* it were applicable to thoughts and thinkers? Indeed, when he says: 'What we call motion of matter really means that the centre of . . . a set of events at one time does not have the same spatial relations to other events as the connected centre at another time has to the connected other events', is he not either substituting the word: centre, for the word: matter, or else saying something quite meaningless?

His other arguments in favour of our discarding the notion of 'the persistent ego' are: (1) that 'perception is a species of a wider genus, namely *sensitivity*,' sensitivity not

[1] p. 171.

being confined to living things, and being 'best exemplified by scientific instruments' [1]; the respect in which perception involves something more than is found in scientific instruments being that 'living bodies are subject to the law of association or of the "conditioned reflex"' [2], and the manifestations of this law are fundamentally physical processes; and (2), that:

> What has hitherto seemed one of the most marked peculiarities of mind, namely subjectivity, or the possession of a point of view, has now invaded physics, and is found not to involve mind: photographic cameras in different places may photograph the 'same' event, but they will photograph it differently.[3]

But, as I have pointed out, what perception involves which is more than the sensitivity of scientific instruments is not that 'living bodies are subject to the law of association'; and can it be seriously imagined that, by human subjectivity, anyone would mean no more than the possession of a point of view, such as photographic cameras display when—if indeed events are what they photograph—they photograph events?

§ 16. MR. RUSSELL'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

It would seem, then, that neither what Mr. Russell has to say concerning perception, nor what he has to say concerning consciousness, will justify our accepting his doctrine of neutral monism. Yet if neutral monism cannot be justified by the facts of perception and those of consciousness, it cannot be justified at all. That being so, I want now to go on to ask if such a doctrine could possibly be a sound one, given the material with which Mr. Russell undertakes the investigation of philosophical problems—given his theory of what constitutes the knowledge with which the investigation of these problems may be undertaken.

For what is the peculiarity of his, 'the new', philosophy? Most philosophers hitherto have, according to him, relied for their philosophies upon their invention. 'The philosopher,' he says [4], 'first invents a false theory as to the nature of things.' But the new philosophy

[1] p. 62. [2] p. 63. [3] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 78. [4] Ibid., p. 92.

does not aim, as previous philosophy has usually done, at statements about the universe as a whole, nor at the construction of a comprehensive system. It believes, on the basis of its logic, that there is no reason to deny the apparently piecemeal and higgledy-piggledy nature of the world. . . . In particular, it does not attempt, as German idealism did, to deduce the nature of the world as a whole from the nature of knowledge.[1]

The new realism, as Mr. Russell tells us the new philosophy is called, concludes that 'all knowledge is scientific knowledge, to be ascertained and proved by the methods of science', and

aims only at clarifying the fundamental ideas of the sciences, and synthesizing the different sciences in a single comprehensive view of that fragment of the world that science has succeeded in exploring.[2]

But, apart from whether the theory of neutral monism is not a 'theory about the nature of things' or a statement 'about the universe as a whole', *viz* the statement that the universe consists of neutral events, does Mr. Russell, in order to elaborate his philosophy, first synthesize 'the different sciences in a single comprehensive view'?

Here I want to quote Mr. Russell on the subject of knowing. He says:

If we want to give a definition of 'knowing', we ought to define it as a manner of reacting to the environment, not as involving something (a 'state of mind') which only the person who has the knowledge can observe.[3]

And I also want to recall, as I said I should, his statement with regard to perception which I have already mentioned, the statement that 'it is contrary to all scientific canons to suppose that the object perceived, in addition to affecting us in the way of stimulus and reaction, also affects us directly by some mystical epiphany'[4]. For these two quotations supply the answer to my question. Mr. Russell claims to be an exponent of the 'new' philosophy, and he says that the new philosophy aims at synthesizing 'the different sciences in a single comprehensive view'. But this is not what he does[5]. Instead, he seeks to elaborate

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, pp. 69–70.
[2] Ibid., p. 79.
[3] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 20.
[4] Ibid., p. 135.
[5] Cf. H. G. Wood: *Why Mr. Bertrand Russell is not a Christian* (London, 1928), p. 100: 'Mr. Bertrand Russell, who writes an *Outline of Philo-*

a doctrine, the doctrine of neutral monism, on the basis of what may be termed fragments of science, (a) the brand of psychology known as Behaviourism, mixed with a little psycho-analysis, and (b), theories of, or derived from, theoretical physics. It is according to Behaviourism that 'knowing' is no more than a manner of reacting to the environment, and it is the canons of theoretical physics which only allow perception to be explained, if it is sought to explain perception by theoretical physics, as part of a chain of physical causation.

Whether, then, a philosophy could be produced by synthesizing 'the different sciences in a single comprehensive view' may be doubtful. But, in any case, that is not what Mr. Russell does. He seeks to deal with such philosophical problems as perception and consciousness, and to account for them with means supplied by Behaviourism and by theories of, or derived from, theoretical physics—and nothing else. But obviously we do have knowledge which is not either what is knowledge for Behaviourism, or theories of, or derived from, theoretical physics, and is it not equally obvious that, if philosophical problems are to be investigated, there is required knowledge which is neither what is knowledge for Behaviourism, nor theories of, or derived from, theoretical physics? Thus I do not think it surprising that the doctrine which results from Mr. Russell's examination of certain philosophical problems should turn out not to be a sound doctrine.

Yet it is, he says, exactly the same belief concerning what constitutes the knowledge with which one is to set out, that directs his theory of ethics. 'What distinguishes ethics from science,' he says [1], 'is not any special kind of knowledge, but merely desire. The knowledge required in ethics is exactly like the knowledge elsewhere.' That is what I meant when I said, at the outset of this chapter, that Mr. Russell's philosophy and his ethics have a common basis. Both depend upon a particular conception of what

sophy and does not find it necessary to mention in his index or discuss in his text either Darwin or evolution or biology. Yet he supposes he has constructed an adequate philosophy of Nature on the basis of modern science!'

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 40.

shall be knowledge for them. But must we not, for ethics just as for philosophy, draw instead upon knowledge which is neither what is knowledge for Behaviourism, nor theories of, or derived from, theoretical physics? And is it not therefore probable *a priori* that what is inadequate as a basis for philosophy, must be equally inadequate as a basis for ethics?

CHAPTER IV

HARMONIOUS DESIRES

§ 17. THE IDEAL CHARACTER

And now, after the excursus devoted to Mr. Russell's philosophy which occupied the last chapter, I come to his ethics, to his conception of the good. Good, for him, is, with qualifications, what we desire. 'All moral rules must,' he says, for example,[1] 'be tested by examining whether they tend to realize ends that we desire.' To begin with, then, let me ask how far one typical characteristic among those characteristics he deems essential for what he calls: the good life, would satisfy his test for moral rules.

He holds that, if mankind is to lead the good life, we must be truthful. He would have children be truthful in thought and speech, 'even if it should entail worldly misfortune, for something of more importance than riches and honours is at stake'.[2] As to this, I would remark that, if good is what we desire, always to think truthfully is not good. We cannot desire always to think truthfully, since one of our strongest desires is to convince ourselves that we are superior to what we actually are, and we can reach the conviction of this only by not being truthful in thought.

And if, to that, Mr. Russell were to object that what he means by good, is not what we desire indiscriminately as individuals, but only what we desire in harmony with the desires of others, good being, for him, those desires which can be gratified without thwarting the desires of others, it would remain that our believing ourselves superior to what we are, *i.e.* our thinking untruthfully, does not—at least directly—thwart the desires of others.

Further, he says that he would have children truthful in

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 37. [2] *On Education*, p. 132.

their thoughts and words, 'even if it should entail worldly misfortune, for something of more importance than riches and honours is at stake'. But what is at stake? He does not say. At all events, one notices that truthfulness is not one of the four characteristics which seem to him 'jointly to form the basis of an ideal character'.[1] Those four characteristics are, he says, 'vitality, courage, sensitiveness, and intelligence'. But can such qualities alone be the basis of an ideal character? All four were certainly possessed by, for instance, Oscar Wilde. Yet would Mr. Russell regard Wilde as an ideal character? Thus, especially if there is something—whatever it may be—more than riches and honours at stake which makes truthfulness desirable, and truthfulness is not among the four characteristics of the ideal character, is it not possible that these four characteristics are not enough?

Moreover, is truthfulness itself invariably desirable? May it not be desirable to refrain from admitting certain truths for the sake of more important truths? Mr. Russell says:

> Practically all men are unchaste at some time of their lives; clearly those who conceal this fact are worse than those who do not, since they add the guilt of hypocrisy.[2]

But why: 'clearly'? Possibly what he here calls hypocrisy may tend to thwart more desires than it assists. Nevertheless, can it invariably be condemned? As I have remarked in considering both Mr. Shaw's and Mr. Gide's views, may not the man who pretends he has not committed, or is not committing, a certain deed, be actuated by the belief that what he has done, or is doing, is wrong? If a man normally conceals that he has been unchaste, may it not be that he is ashamed of his unchastity? Thus, is not what Mr. Russell calls hypocrisy a tribute paid to a truth, *viz* the truth that the wrong *is* wrong, and is not what he advocates, the unashamed admission of a misdeed, a profanation of that same truth? In other words, is the condemnation of that shame which leads to concealment, and which Mr. Russell brands as hypocrisy, compatible with respect for truth?

[1] *On Education*, p. 48. [2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 198.

Mr. Russell, it is evident from the American edition of his book, *On Education*, does not look upon unchastity as wrong. He says in that edition :

> I shall not teach that faithfulness to our partner through life is in any way desirable, or that a permanent marriage should be regarded as excluding temporary episodes.[1]

But that is another matter. I refer to it later.

§ 18. KNOWLEDGE AND DESIRE

For the moment, having thus briefly considered a typical essential of what Mr. Russell terms the good life, I turn to the grounds he gives for his conception of the good. He holds that the good consists in the satisfaction of the greatest possible number of desires by the greatest possible number of individuals. This theory is based upon two other theories, which, in turn, are : (1) That knowledge is correlative with desire ; and (2), that sin is illusory.

The first is part of what he has to say about knowledge when he is speaking from a would-be philosophical standpoint. Here, again, his philosophy and his ethics form one domain. He says :

> We cannot define any knowledge acquired by learning except with reference to circumstances towards which an animal's activity is directed. We should say, popularly, that the animal 'desires' such circumstances. . . .
>
> 'Knowledge', . . . as we saw, is a term correlative to 'desire', and applicable to another feature of the same kind of activity. . . . If our definition of knowledge is accepted, . . . there is no such thing as purely contemplative knowledge : knowledge exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire, or, as we say, in the capacity to choose the right means to achieve our ends.[2]

Here, surely, Mr. Russell is once more performing a verbal sleight-of-hand. First he refers to a particular sort of knowledge, *viz* 'knowledge acquired by learning', and then he goes on to speak apparently of all knowledge. But if, for the sake of argument, one admits that 'knowledge acquired by learning' can only be defined 'with reference to circumstances towards which an animal's activity is directed', what about the knowledge which is not 'acquired by

[1] p. 221.

[2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, pp. 92–5.

learning'? He can scarcely suggest that there is no such knowledge. Elsewhere he says:

> Percepts are known with more accuracy and certainty than anything else either in the outer world or in our own minds.[1]

Now I have given reasons why we should be dubious about what his word: percepts, refers to, but, apart from that, if it is admitted that we obtain any knowledge whatever by means of perception, then surely the knowledge that we thus obtain cannot be knowledge which 'exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire'. True, Mr. Russell defines perception as 'a species of a wider genus, namely *sensitivity*'[2], and he says, when he is referring to knowledge as 'a term correlative to "desire"', that 'there is another sort of knowledge—at least it is *prima facie* another sort—which consists of increase of sensitivity'[3]; so he may consider that 'increase of sensitivity', *i.e.* increase in our perceptive powers, is 'correlative to "desire"'. But even if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted—although actually it cannot—that perception is a species of sensitivity, and even if the increase of such sensitivity results only from learning, he cannot possibly suggest that perception itself, whether it is sensitivity or not, has to be learned, or that the knowledge which perception affords—if what it affords is knowledge—has to be learned. Hence, accepting all his own definitions, perceptual knowledge is not knowledge which 'exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire'. So if there are only two kinds of knowledge, the knowledge which exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire and contemplative knowledge, then perceptual knowledge must be contemplative knowledge. Thus it becomes nonsense to say: 'There is no such thing as purely contemplative knowledge.'

And if perceptual knowledge is not knowledge existing only in relation to the satisfaction of desire, should one confine the knowledge which is to be taken into account when one comes to consider ethics to the knowledge which is acquired by learning and which, according to Mr. Russell, exists only in relation to the satisfaction of desire? Should

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 225.
[2] Ibid., p. 62, his italics. [3] Ibid., p. 98.

not other knowledge, knowledge which is not acquired by learning, be taken into account when one is attempting to form a theory of ethics? This brings me to Mr. Russell's second theory for the basis of his ethics, the theory that sin is illusory.

§ 19. SIN

Mr. Russell says:

> It seems that sin is geographical. From this conclusion, it is only a small step to the further conclusion that the notion of 'sin' is illusory.[1]

And he explains how the notion arose:

> Originally certain acts were thought displeasing to the gods, and were forbidden by law because the divine wrath was apt to descend upon the community. Hence arose the conception of sin, as that which is displeasing to God.[2]

But what evidence does he offer that 'the conception of sin' did arise in this way? Is there any such evidence? And what does he mean by: 'It seems that sin is geographical'? He does not say. But no doubt he means that the particular acts which are regarded as good and evil respectively vary according to different parts of the world. If that is what he means, why should it be from this fact, 'to the further conclusion that the notion of "sin" is illusory', only 'a small step'? If 'sin is geographical', then, although the conception of what constitutes sin, *i.e.* wickedness or a wicked act, varies according to different parts of the world, the notion that wickedness inheres in certain acts, far from being 'illusory', must be ubiquitous: 'the notion of sin' must be possessed by all human beings.

And, as I mentioned in dealing with Mr. Shaw's views (Part II, § 17), this is precisely what such writers as Professor W. R. Sorley and Renouvier have pointed out. I will now quote again the essence of the passage from Renouvier:

> L'innocence diffère profondément chez l'homme et chez la bête en ceci que la bête l'a gardée et que l'homme l'a perdue; phénomène dont il n'y a pas d'histoire naturelle au monde qui puisse rendre compte. . . . D'où que l'homme soit sorti, quel qu'il ait été d'abord, un jour est venu, si ce n'est le premier de sa vie consciente et de sa vie réflechie, un jour est venu pour lui où, faisant quelque chose, il s'est dit que

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 16.

[2] *What I Believe*, p. 48.

cela n'était pas bien. À dater de ce jour, nous avons réellement l'homme, et c'est le seul homme que nous connaissions, mais dont l'origine *quatenus homo* nous est absolument inconnue. Il n'y a pas, il n'y a jamais eu d'autre homme que celui-là.[1]

Now, if Renouvier is right, then evidently 'the notion of "sin"', *i.e.* the notion of wickedness, must be the reverse of illusory. Moreover, since, as Renouvier says, no traveller has ever brought back news of the existence 'des hommes qui n'eussent point la notion d'un *devoir faire* ou d'un *devoir d'abstenir*, en des choses qu'ils regardent comme également possibles, celles-ci désirables pour eux-mêmes, et celles-là dangereuses', may it not be that the notion, although not acquired by learning and not correlative with desire, is yet knowledge? And not only knowledge, but knowledge which must be taken into account when one comes to consider ethics?

Mr. Russell says that the conflict of desires 'is not only between the desires of different men, but between incompatible desires of one man at different times, or even at the same time, and even if he is solitary, like Robinson Crusoe'. He continues:

> In him [Robinson Crusoe] there will be conflicts, for example, between fatigue and hunger, particularly between fatigue at one time and foreseen hunger at another. The effort which he will require in order to work when he is tired with a view to providing food on another occasion has all the characteristics of what is called a moral effort: we think better of a man who makes the effort than of one who does not, and the making of it requires self-control.[2]

If, however, Renouvier is right, and all human beings have the notion of a duty to do and a duty to refrain, concerning things equally possible, the one set of things being desirable for them, the other set dangerous, then when Robinson Crusoe makes an effort 'to work when he is tired with a view to providing food on another occasion', merely because he realizes that the food will be required on that other occasion, it can only be said that his effort 'has all the characteristics of what is called a moral effort', except that of being moral. If man is a moral animal, if all men have a moral sense, regarding certain things as desirable (as

[1] *Critique philosophique*, supplément trimestriel, 1880, p. 21.
[2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 238.

distinct from being desired) and certain other things as undesirable, then Robinson Crusoe's effort can only be a moral effort if it is undertaken, not because it is necessary, but because it is desirable, *i.e.* if Robinson Crusoe is aware that to make the effort is good irrespective of whether or not there is any necessity for him to provide himself with food for some future occasion.

Related to Mr. Russell's contention that the notion of sin is illusory is his view of crime. He says :

> I . . . suggest that we should treat the criminal as we treat a man suffering from plague. Each is a public danger, each must have his liberty curtailed until he has ceased to be a danger. But the man suffering from plague is an object of sympathy and commiseration, whereas the criminal is an object of execration. This is quite irrational.[1]

This passage, which suggests that, as to crime, Mr. Russell shares Mr. Shaw's view, is elucidated by another, as follows :

> The modern psychological criminologist . . . believes that the impulse to crime could, in most cases, be prevented from developing by suitable education.[2]

For Mr. Russell then, crimes are acts due to a misdirected desire for activity, *i.e.* the desire for activity has been allowed to get diseased. But this belief in a *neutral* desire for activity, of the misdirection of which crime would be the result, reduces crime, it seems to me, to mischief, the mischief which children get into out of high spirits or devilry, as the phrase goes. When we are criminal, we are simply being active, and our activity takes that particular form because we have not been trained to some other kind of activity. Is not Mr. Gide's view, with which I have dealt, more tenable ? It is the view that there are two kinds of crime : (a) crime for profit and (b), crime in obedience to a mysterious internal impulse. Crime for profit would then be, when it is detected, crime committed in the belief that it could succeed : it would be the result of a deficiency of the cunning which enables a man to do well for himself in the world, coupled with a strong desire to enjoy the fruits of doing well. That, of course, is my

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 62. [2] *On Education*, pp. 34–5.

description of crime for profit, not Mr. Gide's. Needless to say, the desire to 'have a good time' and the desire to possess property—which is what the strong desire to enjoy the fruits of doing well amounts to—must be quite distinct from the desire for activity: a desire to get money is not a desire to be active. The trouble with Mr. Russell is, it seems to me, that he wants too much to make what is various uniform, *e.g.* to reduce different kinds of desire to one kind, *viz* the desire for activity, or, as he calls it, the will to power. Is this not to carry the Law of Parsimony—*Frustra fit per plura quod fieri potest per pauciora*—too far?

As to (b), crime in obedience to a mysterious internal impulse, that, if it exists, would, in my opinion, be really the result of insufficient self-control. Mr. Gide's view appears to be that the way to increase self-control is to renounce it. He approvingly quotes Blake: 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.' I have taken it that he condemns adventitious aids to self-control on the ground that they are often powerless, and that, in any case, the internal impulse, even if repressed by such aids, is not banished: it remains a constant menace. But is he right? Hastings Rashdall has a paragraph worth considering on how the existence of deterrents may create a state of feeling which obliterates the impulse: the impulse, as it were, gradually atrophies.[1]

Yet, if deterrents do reinforce self-control, crimes due largely to insufficient self-control nevertheless occur. Thus, to return to Mr. Russell, while no doubt suitable education can increase self-control, is it likely—even if lack of self-control were the only cause of crime—that education alone would ever be enough to make crime impossible? Is his 'modern psychological criminologist' whoever he may be—Mr. Russell does not name him—to be relied on?

One may, indeed, ask more than that. Does Mr. Russell, when dealing with such subjects as sin and crime, really expect to be taken seriously? Some of his statements lead one to doubt that he does. For instance, he says:

> Confucius taught that men are born good, and that if they become wicked, that is through the force of evil example or corrupting manners.

[1] Cf. *The Theory of Good and Evil*, I, p. 299.

. . . Another result of the absence of the notion of sin [in China] is that men, &c.[1].

Can Confucius have possibly taught anything of the kind? If men were born good, how would evil example or corrupting manners arise? Who was the first man who, born good, gave an evil example; who, born good, corrupted manners? But, of course, it is no more true that Confucius taught this than that the theory of relativity has abolished the concept of matter. Here is what Confucius did teach:

It is the nature of man that at the time of his birth he is in imperturbable peace and calm (he is free from desires). This is what Heaven makes him to be. He begins to show response when external things act upon him and thereby indicate the direction of his desires. As he continues to come into contact with things of the outside world, he expands the limits of his knowledge, and he begins to learn which things attract and which repel him. If there is not an organizing power within him, he gets more and more involved in the things and gradually comes to lose the power of control over himself. And the best that is given to him by nature is extinguished.

Now external things continue to act upon him without any pause. If there is no power within him that is able to regulate their activity, then there is danger that he become transformed according to their respective nature. If he is in such a condition, he loses his divine gifts, and he inevitably abandons himself to his natural lusts and affections. That is how treason, injustice, falsehood, violence, rebellion, and disorder come to exist.[2]

In any case, if, as Mr. Russell says, Confucius taught that men do, in certain circumstances, become wicked, *i.e.* sinful, how can Mr. Russell also say that the notion of sin, *i.e.* the notion of wrong, is absent in China? Thus, can he, on the subject of sin, expect to be taken seriously?

§ 20. HARMONIOUS DESIRES

So much for Mr. Russell's grounds for his conception of the good. I come to his ethical theory itself. What is peculiar to ethics is, he says, that:

Certain ends are desired, and that right conduct is what conduces

[1] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 107.

[2] The *Li Ki*, xvii., 11, 12; quoted by Dr. Chang Hsin-Hai in The Essentials of Confucian Wisdom (*Hibbert Journal*, vol. xxvi, pp. 410–26). I am indebted, for the reference, to Professor Irving Babbitt, of Harvard.

to them. Of course, if the definition of right conduct is to make a wide appeal, the ends must be such as large sections of mankind desire.[1]

The manner in which, according to him, the good, *i.e.* certain desired ends, come to be ends such as large sections of mankind desire, is that, while 'primarily we call something "good" when we desire it, and "bad" when we have an aversion from it, . . . our use of words is more constant than our desires and therefore we shall continue to call a thing good even at moments when we are not actually desiring it', and, 'moreover, the use of words is social, and therefore we learn only to call a thing good, except in rare circumstances, if most of the people we associate with are also willing to call it good.'[2]

So, still according to him, when we are speaking from a social point of view, and refer to: bad desires, there is really no question of sin: bad desires are 'those which tend to thwart the desires of others, or, more exactly, those which thwart more desires than they assist'.[3] Hence, likewise, good desires are those which everybody can satisfy without depriving anyone else of satisfying them also. For instance, he says: 'If A and B desire to marry each other, both can have what they want, but if they desire to kill each other, at most one can succeed.'[4] Accordingly he concludes:

> The supreme moral rule should, therefore, be: *Act so as to produce harmonious rather than discordant desires.*[5]

That is to say, we should so act as to bring about the satisfaction of the greatest possible number of desires by the greatest possible number of individuals.

Thus, his argument is perfectly clear: it is that the value of the desires we have lies in their quantity: the more numerous the desires satisfied, the greater the good. One understands why he will not teach 'that faithfulness to our partner through life is in any way desirable'[6]. For more desires can be satisfied when there is unfaithfulness than when there is faithfulness. When a person A is faithful to

[1] *What I Believe*, pp. 40–1.
[2] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 242.
[3] *What I Believe*, p. 74.
[4] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 241.
[5] Ibid., p. 242.
[6] *Education and the Good Life* (American edition of *On Education*), p. 221.

another B, in spite of desire to be unfaithful with a third C, only one desire, he would say, is satisfied, B's desire to enjoy exclusive possession of A. But when A is unfaithful to B with C, then two desires are satisfied, A's to possess, or be possessed by, C, and C's to be possessed by, or possess, A.

But will it be any satisfaction to A, B and C severally, that, instead of one, two desires are being satisfied? No doubt in physical possession the knowledge that the other party is likewise desirous adds to the enjoyment obtained, but that does not apply to desires in general. When one considers desires in general, can it make A and B severally any the more pleased that, in one case, both can have what they want, whereas, in another case, at most one can succeed? I am asking: Can we believe that an individual's happiness is added to by the satisfaction of someone else's desire, quite distinct from his own?

Moreover, if the question is confined to the desires of a single individual, can the satisfaction of a mere quantity of them produce contentment? As I remarked in concluding my discussion of Dr. Freud's views on this same subject of moral rules, does not every person have desires of various kinds, some more, others less intense, and would a person not rather satisfy a few of his more intense desires than any quantity of the less intense ones?

Thus, when Mr. Russell places the value of desires in their quantity, declaring that, since good is what we desire, the more desires are satisfied the more good there is, he is no longer proposing to mankind the fulfilment of what it desires, but only the fulfilment of what he desires. He himself is guilty of precisely what he condemns in the following passage:

> All moral rules must be tested by examining whether they tend to realize ends that we desire. I say ends that we desire, not ends that we *ought* to desire. What we ought to desire is merely what someone else wishes us to desire.[1]

§ 21. LOVE

However, Mr. Russell has an answer to the objection. It is that an essential requisite for the attainment of the

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 37, his italics.

millennium which we may, if we choose, bring about within a generation, is love. If we are to lead what he calls the good life, we can only do so by means of love and knowledge. Of the two, 'love is in a sense the more fundamental, since it will lead intelligent people to seek knowledge, in order to find out how to benefit those they love.' [1] What does he mean by love? He says:

> Love at its fullest is an indissoluble combination of the two elements, delight and well-wishing. The pleasure of a parent in a beautiful and successful child combines both elements; so does sex-love at its best. . . . In a perfect world, every sentient being would be to every other the object of the fullest love, compounded of delight, benevolence, and understanding inextricably blended.[2]

This 'love at its fullest' can be developed, he holds, and evidently from what he further says, he intends us to understand that, if only it is developed sufficiently, we shall be able to find just as much happiness in others' pleasure as in our own.

But can we believe him? Obviously if the objects of this 'love at its fullest' should be all other beings, then it would often have to be entertained for beings we had not yet seen, for beings whose existence we did not suspect: a great deal of it would be potential love or, in fact, abstract love. And, indeed, he himself says that sympathy is a form of this love; not mere physical sympathy, which appears, according to him, to be spontaneous, but abstract sympathy, which, incidentally, is 'as rare as it is important'. He further declares that this abstract sympathy may 'go so far as to enable a man to be moved emotionally by statistics' [3].

Now, no doubt a man may be 'moved emotionally by statistics'. A man may be moved by anything. But we do not rate all emotion as equally valuable; we distinguish, for instance, between sentiment and sentimentality. In other words, what is important about an emotion is its object. Two men look at a picture and both are moved; but one is moved by the composition, the colour, the way in which properly pictorial effects have been obtained; the other is moved by the pretty faces of the girls depicted and

[1] *What I Believe*, p. 29. [2] Ibid., pp. 32–5. [3] *On Education*, p. 56.

by memories, which come to him when he looks at the picture, of pretty girls he has known. Or two men are both devoted to their respective wives; but the source of one's love is his wife's actual manner, behaviour, kindness, &c.; the source of the other's lies in a conception which he has of what a wife is. Likewise, two men may be devoting themselves to what is called the service of mankind; one, however, is moved by his job—if he is a reformer, the steps involved in accomplishing a reform; whereas the other is moved by a feeling of devotion for mankind, or a feeling of how wonderful men really are at bottom, or a feeling that man's perfection is possible. In all these cases, do we not consider that the first of the two men has a sentiment and that the second is a sentimentalist?

If, then, a man is 'moved emotionally by statistics', what is he really moved by? What is his emotion's object? Of course it is not the actual figures, unless he is a statistician; it is what the figures represent. And, obviously, the figures must represent something moving. Suppose they indicate that a thousand men are out of work and starving, and the man who is 'moved emotionally by statistics' says, 'How terrible! How sad!' or even says, 'By God! This must not be!' he is a sentimentalist. For suffering, as Mr. Shaw remarks [1], is not cumulative. No doubt one should feel sympathy with others as far as possible, but one can do so only with actual others, not with abstractions. Accordingly all abstract sympathy of the type which manifests itself in the presence of statistics must be sentimentality.

Moreover, while for Mr. Russell sentimentality is no doubt a good, since men certainly desire to be sentimental, for sentimentality is reassuring, can sentimentality ensure for mankind any happiness that will be durable?

[1] *The Intelligent Woman*, p. 455: 'What you yourself suffer is the utmost that can be suffered on earth. If you starve to death you experience all the starvation that ever has been or ever can be. If ten thousand other women starve to death with you, their suffering is not increased by a single pang: their share in your fate does not make you ten thousand times as hungry, nor prolong your suffering ten thousand times. Therefore do not be oppressed by "the frightful sum of human suffering": there is no sum: two lean women are not twice as lean as one nor two fat women twice as fat as one. Poverty and pain are not cumulative.'

Yet there can be no mistake about it : Mr. Russell does bid mankind seek in sentimentality its salvation. For instance, he is speaking of courage and he says :

> Thus the perfection of courage is to be found in the man of many interests, who *feels* his ego to be but a small part of the world, not through despising himself, but through valuing much that is not himself.[1]

Here he is resuscitating that mind or ego which elsewhere he has declared extinct, declared to be only 'strings of events having certain interesting relations to each other'[2]. How these strings can be felt, and also what they are felt by, one may inquire in his pages in vain. However, my point is that, in this passage, there is again an indication of how 'every sentient being' should be for 'every other the object of the fullest love'. The requisite is put forward most clearly, perhaps, in this other passage, which, although it does not form part of the four books by Mr. Russell to which I wish to confine myself, I yet quote on account of its definiteness of statement :

> The transition from the life of the finite self to the infinite life of the whole requires a moment of absolute self-surrender, when all personal will seems to cease, and the soul feels itself in passive submission to the universe.[3]

Is not this passage in key with his reference to love as what, in a perfect world, every sentient being would feel for every other ? How can there be self-surrender, surrender of self, except in favour of something else as definite as self ? How can self be surrendered in favour of something, such as 'the infinite life of the whole' or 'the universe', to which surely one can only apply the term : nebulous abstraction ?

Contrast this invitation to the surrender of self with some of Mr. Russell's other statements. 'We have,' he assures us, 'to be careful not to thwart a child's nature' ; again, we must, he says, respect personality. But what is the child's nature ; what its personality ? Evidently not the

[1] *On Education*, p. 55, his italics.
[2] *Sceptical Essays*, p. 77.
[3] The Essence of Religion, *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XI, p. 49 (October 1912).

self, for the self has, he says, to be surrendered, and such care and respect could scarcely have to be exercised over something which was going to be surrendered. Can the child's nature and its personality be, since self has to be surrendered, anything but ' cet état vague, disponible, à la merci de toute influence extérieure ', which Mr. Gide finds extolled by Dostoievsky, and which, more than reason, he is himself prepared to trust ? Again, for what, according to Mr. Russell, is the self to be surrendered ? Is it not for this same ' état vague ' ?

Then, consider this further passage of his :

> They [the children] are at an age at which the formation of new habits is still easy ; and good habits can make a great part of virtue *almost automatic*.[1]

How can virtue ever be ' almost automatic ' ? Is not the essence of virtue its being voluntary ?

It seems, then, that, on the one hand, we are invited to barter the sense of personal identity and personal responsibility for something variously referred to as, (a) ' abstract sympathy ' (or the capacity to be moved emotionally by such objects as statistics), (b) love for all other sentient beings, and (c), ' passive submission to the whole universe ', and that, on the other hand, we are to labour to make virtue, not only common, as to which nobody could protest, but also ' almost automatic '.

Such is the ideal towards which Mr. Russell's theories as to ethics bid us, chiefly by means of education, to strive. Evidently if we do some day attain that ideal, and Mr. Russell says we can, if we choose, attain it within a generation, we shall then be very different human beings from what we are to-day. Yet in a way we shall be the same. Something in us will have developed, and so must already be latent. And consideration of this leads me, in conclusion, to revert to Mr. Russell's philosophy. His philosophy of neutral monism is the doctrine that the world consists of only one stuff, *viz* events, and that what we call mind is an aggregate of these. He asks : ' Why should not a thinker be simply a certain series of thoughts connected

[1] *On Education*, p. 35, my italics.

with each other by causal laws?'[1] And he declares further:

> When we say, 'I think first this and then that', we ought not to mean that there is a single entity 'I' which 'has' two successive thoughts. We ought to mean only that there are two successive thoughts which have causal relations of the kind that makes us call them parts of one biography . . . and that these thoughts are connected with the body which is speaking in the way . . . in which thoughts and bodies are connected.[2]

But if we, *i.e.* our minds, are but aggregates of events ordered in certain ways, and are analysable into those events, then how can Mr. Russell expect us, or our sons or grandsons, to develop into something different from what we are now? For how, in a purely agglutinative world, can anything develop?

[1] *An Outline of Philosophy*, p. 171. [2] loc. cit.

PART VI
CONCLUSION

PART VI

CONCLUSION

§ 1. THE BELIEFS WE ACT UPON

WITH the discussion of Mr. Russell's ethics, which occupies the preceding chapter, my examination of the views expressed by the four writers I have selected as representative fathers of our present philosophy of life is complete. There remains to say only this.

In my introductory chapter (Part I., § 1), I pointed to certain social changes of recent years, which are, I went on to say, symptomatic of a change in our beliefs about life. I spoke of the change in the relations of adults to the young, which is, I said, largely visible in education. I spoke of the change in the relations of the sexes. I referred to the growth of class hostility. I mentioned the increased dislike shown throughout the world to foreigners. I spoke of how, in all civilized countries, the state has come more and more to control and regulate individual action. I pointed to our welcome of an ever more lavish supply of fleeting and trivial objects of interest. Finally, I referred to the supreme value now *openly* attached to the possession of money.

Do these changes imply, as I said they do, a change in our beliefs? That seems to me unmistakable. As I remarked at the outset of this study, the aim of education is now said to be to respect and develop personality. Insistence upon personality is, indeed, what has wrought the change in the relations of adults to the young. Further, if adventures between the sexes outside marriage tend to be no longer clandestine, and divorce has, to a great extent, ceased to be regarded as either scandalous or regrettable, it must surely be that we now deem the enjoyment of sexual experience with a satisfactory mate more valuable to human

beings than respect for the institution of marriage. If of late class hostility has grown immeasurably, and national hatreds have become deeper and fiercer than ever, it is, I submit, because, on the one hand, the less 'prosperous' classes and nations believe that they have an equal right with the more prosperous classes and nations to possessions and 'prosperity', and, on the other hand, the more prosperous classes and nations believe that it would be fatal for them to lose what they have. If we acquiesce in the curtailment of individual independence, and welcome the ever more lavish supply of fleeting and trivial objects of interest, it must be, I suggest, because we now believe in irresponsibility. Finally, if the supreme value has *openly* become the possession of money, it can only be because we now believe that the sole experiences worth having are those which require money [1].

Thus it may be said that the beliefs we act upon today are fundamentally a belief in the necessity of personality, and a belief in, for personality's sake, experiences and irresponsibility. I do not see how it could be denied that such are our present beliefs. Nobody can hope nowadays for much of his fellows' esteem unless he can be found to have personality. Even a certain Atlantic liner, according to a recent advertisement in an American magazine, is credited with personality, and personality is also attributed to bank premises and the like. It is equally noticeable that people now commonly talk of going somewhere, or of doing something, for the experience. That an undertaking or a journey will be, according to them, an experience seems to be, in their eyes, its all-sufficient justification. Of irresponsibility we do not, it is true, hear quite so much.

§ 2. PERSONALITY

Now, of course, I maintain that the essential beliefs of the writers whose views I have been discussing are likewise

[1] The belief is implicit in the following typical passage from an American short story: 'He realized that the day has passed when Americans need instruction as to methods for making money and that salvation now depends on their learning the rudiments of how to spend it.' (George Agnew Chamberlain in *The Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 202, No. 5, p. 3.)

a belief in the necessity of personality, and a belief in, for personality's sake, experiences and irresponsibility. Take Mr. Gide. For him there is never any question that our ideal in life should be the achievement of our true personality. Moreover, he is convinced that the only way for a man to be his true personality is for that man to be naïf, spontaneous, sincere, doing what Mr. Shaw says capable persons do, 'what they naturally want to do. We must, according to Mr. Gide, let life come to us, as another writer once told us that art comes, 'proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake'[1]. We must live in the moment, and pass from one moment to another before the first is exhausted. This means, as Mr. Du Bos has pointed out, that we must ever be finding a new moment in which to be. We can never rest content: always there has to be something that must happen. Thus Mr. Gide's recipe for achieving one's true personality involves anyone adopting it in fatalism, *i.e.* in irresponsibility. So Mr. Gide evidently expresses, in his way, the beliefs which animate us today.

What, however, does this view of how one should set about being one's true personality assume personality to be? Since, according to Mr. Gide, one can be one's true personality only by living in each moment as it passes, and by never lingering in any moment to the point of its exhaustion, experience, and, of course, irresponsibility too, are the conditions of what he terms true personality. And since, according to him, the way to live in each moment is to be spontaneous, and do what one naturally wants to do, then, further, personality must be the doing of what one sincerely wants to do, *i.e.* personality must be the fulfilment of our desires as they come to us. Now, the fulfilment of our desires is precisely what Mr. Shaw, Dr. Freud, and Mr. Russell, also want, in their various ways, to have made possible for all mankind.

§ 3. THE ETERNAL MADE TEMPORAL

The novelty is not, needless to say, that we should be attempting to fulfil our desires; the novelty lies in the

[1] Walter Pater: *The Renaissance*, p. 252.

claim now being made that our attempt is legitimate. Would-be justification is, in fact, what seems to me to be the outstanding characteristic of all four of the writers I have been considering. It is not enough for Mr. Gide, for instance, that there should be uranians; he needs must contend that uranism is justifiable. More remarkable and significant, however, than this general would-be justification in itself is the method by which it is nowadays, and by these four writers in particular, carried out. There can be no doubt that what Mr. Gide terms true personality is something thoroughly carnal and temporal, as opposed to what has hitherto been meant—whether it exists or not, which is not the question—by the spiritual and eternal. Yet Mr. Gide insists that it is in being one's true personality one attains eternal life. So Mr. Shaw claims, in support of his theory of human will, a human will directed to unquestionably material ends, that Creative Evolution is a religion. So Dr. Freud, in arguing that the sanction of moral rules is that they are necessary to men's existence in communities, speaks of religious moral beliefs as being the fulfilment of wishes. So Mr. Russell gives to his doctrine, that our aim should be the satisfaction of the greatest possible quantity of desires by each individual, a falsely spiritual air by dwelling on 'abstract sympathy', 'love', and 'passive submission to the whole universe'. What especially distinguishes our present philosophy of life is, then, that it is a thorough-going materialism, which it is yet found necessary to pass off as a spiritual philosophy of life, and that this is attempted by claiming that the spiritual *is* material, and that the eternal *is* temporal.

However, having indicated that the beliefs we act upon today, and the beliefs promoted and defended by the quartet of writers I have considered, are identical, I need only say that it is not here, of course, but in the body of this study, that, to the extent I have been able to supply one, an answer will be found to the question I set out to investigate:

> Is the philosophy of life which so many of us apparently now believe really believable?

INDEX

ABNORMALITIES, sexual, 159, 193–206, 302.
Acquired characters, 111.
Actes gratuits, 129, 156–8, 186.
Adulation, public, 71–3.
Aeschylus, 35–7.
Aesthetics, 31, 164–5.
Agamemnon, 187–8.
Alcibiades, 205.
Allier, Raoul, 117, 192.
Amiel, H. F., 39.
Amyntas, 131–2.
Androcles and the Lion, 60, 80, 88, 97, 98, 100, 106, 112, 120, 121.
Arc, Joan of, 100–1, 107–8.
Aristophanes, 201–2.
Aristotle, 32, 37
Arms and the Man, 66.
Arnold, Matthew, 47–8.
Art, 30–48, 119–22, 177–83; as revelation, 42–6, 121.
Artist, the, 177–80, 201, 255; as instrument of the Life Force, 121–2; as prophet, 42; as teacher, 120; duality of, 150–4, 177–80.
Artistic efflorescence, 194–5, 200; necessity, 36; training, 254-6.
Association, Law of, 237, 272.
Aurevilly, Barbey d', 153, 182.

BABBITT, Irving, 288n.
Back to Methuselah, 62, 94, 100, 102, 103, 106, 107, 108, 111, 119.
Balzac, Honoré de, 140, 168.
Barrès, Maurice, 144.
Bashkirtseff, Marie, 72.
Bateson, William, 104n.
Baudelaire, Charles, 147, 150–3, 178, 180–2.
Beauty, 198–9.
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 33, 45.
Behaviourism, 272, 278–9.
Beliefs, 23–4, 217–25, 299–302.
Benda, Julien, 24.
Bennett, Arnold, 183.
Bergson, Henri, 104.
Bible, The, 121, 122.
Bielschowsky, Albert, 45.
Biology, Mr. Shaw's deductive, 104.
Blake, William, 28, 139, 147, 149, 169, 171, 177, 287.
Bloch, Iwan, 196, 198, 202, 204.
Boeotians, the, 200.
Bosanquet, Bernard, 43.
Bovarysme, le, 148.
Bradley, A. C., 45–6.
Bradley, F. H., 109.
Brain power, 103.
Bridge-building, 182.
Brion, Marcel, 25.
Broadcasting, 19.
Brockway, A. Fenner, 83–4n.
Brown, William, 118.
Buonarotti, Michelagniolo, 205.
Business ability, 68–71; men, 67–71.
Butler, Samuel, 28.

CAESAR, Julius, 58, 59, 63, 72, 79–80, 96.
Caesar and Cleopatra, 58, 79.
Candida, 67.
Capable persons, Mr. Shaw's, 55, 59–60, 63, 105, 112.
Capitalism, 64, 65, 67.
Carey, H. C., 137–8.

Carpenter, Edward, 196.
Carritt, E. F., 35.
Caves du Vatican, Les, 129, 140, 141, 156–7.
Chamberlain, George Agnew, 300n.
Changes, Social, 17, 21, 299–300.
Chang Hsin-Hai, 288n.
Characters, Acquired, 111.
Child, the, 230–5, 243, 246–54, 257–61.
Christ, Jesus, 98, 100, 116, 120, 160–1, 163.
Christian philosophy of life, the, 21–4, 217; religion, the, 22, 116.
Church, the, 259.
Churches, the, 161.
Cinema, the, 19.
Class hostility, 17, 299.
Classes, relations of the, 17, 299.
Classicism, 125.
Coleridge, S. T., 44.
Columbia University, 19.
Commercial success, 65–71.
Common sense, 145, 147, 166, 172.
Comte, Auguste, 109.
Conflicts as subjects for literature, 20, 177–80.
Confucius, 287–8.
Conrad, Joseph, 20, 158.
Corydon, 193–206.
Consciousness, 273–6, 278.
Construction, 253.
Cookery, 253.
Copeau, Jacques, 176n.
Corneille, Pierre, 136, 147–8.
Courage, 233, 281, 293.
Creation in literature, 40–4, 183.
Creative Evolution, 93–105, 106–18, 302.
Crime, as irrevocable, 76–8, 81–3; as pathological, 76, 83–4; kinds of, 156, 286–7; the isolated, 155, 169, 176, 183–6.
Criminal, the, 154–9, 235, 286–7.
Croce, Benedetto, 199.
Cruelty, 76, 81.
Curiosity, 139, 210.
Curtius, Ernst Robert, 26.
DANA, Charles A., 249.
Dante Alighieri, 47, 183.
Desires, 143, 144, 226, 241–5, 280–95, 301–2.
Destruction, 253.
Development, 294–5.
Devil, the (v. Satan), 163, 165, 177.
Digging, 181.
Discovery, scientific, 254.
Divorce, 17, 299; without reasons, 86–9.
Doctor's Dilemma, The, 82, 85, 87, 88, 91, 96, 101, 106, 112.
Doctrines, origin of, 23.
Dogs, 194, 197.
Domination, 59–60, 253–4.
Dostoievsky, Feodor, 28, 125, 146, 147–9, 150–4, 159–60, 193, 294.
Dostoïewsky, 136, 146, 147, 148, 149, 153, 154, 156, 159, 160, 162, 171, 177, 179, 191.
Drugs, 232.
Dryden, John, 43.
Du Bos, Charles, 129, 164, 165–6, 193, 301.

ECONOMIC dependence of women, 85.
Eddy, Mary Baker, 114–17.
Edmonds, James E., 66–7n.
Education, 17, 230–5, 246–61, 287, 294, 299.
Eliot, George, 28.
Eliot, T. S., 20, 47n.
Ellis, H. Havelock, 195–6, 201n, 204–6, 249.
Emigration, 144.
Emotions, 241.
'Eonism', 204–5.
Equality of Income, 51–2, 55, 56, 60–2, 63, 65, 85–6, 89, 105.
Eternal, the, 165, 302; life, 160–1, 302.
Ethics, 236, 240–5, 246, 262, 278–9, 280–95, 299.
Evans, Wainwright, 90n.
Events, 262, 263, 268–9, 271, 273–6, 277, 294–5.

Evil, 82–3, 169.
Evolution, biological, 104 ; Creative, 93–105, 106–18, 302.
Experience(s), 299, 301.

FAITS-DIVERS, Les, 135, 155.
Fallacy, the Pathetic, 189–90.
Fame, the pursuit of, 71–3.
Fanny's First Play, 88.
Fatalism, 166, 301.
Fate, man's internal, 157–8, 186–9.
Fathers of our present philosophy of life, 24–9.
Faux-Monnayeurs, Les, 130–1, 141, 154, 176, 207–14, 249.
Fear, 246–8, 251.
Force, the Life, 55, 59, 93–105, 106, 113, 121, 122 ; as God, 99–100, 109.
Foreigners, 17–18, 299.
Forgiveness, 76, 77, 78–81.
Fortune-telling, 115.
Freethinkers, 56, 60.
Freud, Sigmund, 24, 27, 29, 205–6, 215–26, 290, 301, 302.
Frye, P. H., 45n.
Future of an Illusion, The, 27, 217–26.

GALTON, Francis, 107–8.
Garnett, David, 20.
Gaultier, Jules de, 148.
George, Henry, 28.
German Romantics, the, 43.
Germ-plasm, theory of the immortal, 110.
Getting Married, 88.
Gide, André, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 38, 123–214, 249, 252, 281, 286–7, 294, 301, 302.
Gladstone, W. E., 28.
God, 100, 109, 113, 147, 162, 208, 241 ; the Kingdom of, 160–1.
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 28, 45–6, 173.
Goldschmidt, Richard, 206.
Good, the, 241–4, 280–95.
Gosse, Edmund, 26.
Government, 52–6, 57, 58–61, 106, 112.
Grace, 167.

HABIT-FORMATION, 230–4.
Hamlet, 43.
Happiness, 89–90, 143–9, 221–2 ; in nature, 189–91.
Hartmann, Eduard von, 170.
Heartbreak, woman's, 85–6, 89.
Heartbreak House, 67.
Hesiod, 200.
Hewart, Lord, 18n.
Hirschfeld, Magnus, 206.
Homer, 41, 42, 200.
Homosexuality, 193–206, 302.
Horace, 41, 42.
Horse-racing, 181–2.
Human nature, changing of, 231–4, 260 ; will, 55, 56, 73, 93–105.
Huxley, Aldous, 20.
Huxley, Thomas, 21, 27, 28.
Hypocrisy, 69–70, 140, 168, 209–11, 244, 281.

IBSEN, Henrik, 28.
Idealism, German, 236, 277.
Imagination, the, 30, 44.
Imaginative literature, 20, 29, 30–48, 136–9.
Immoraliste, L', 127–8, 141, 174.
Immortality, 111.
Incidences, 136, 141, 147, 151, 160, 174, 193.
Induction, 237, 265, 272–3.
Inference, 237, 264–8, 271.
Inspiration, 119–22.
Instincts, 260.
Intelligence, 221–4, 233, 281.
Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, The, 25, 60, 61, 63, 64, 68, 74, 86, 89, 90, 105, 106, 109, 114, 115, 116, 292.
Interests, trivial, 18–19, 299.
Interference, state, 18, 59–61, 90–2, 299.
Irresponsibility, 19, 300.
Isabelle, 174.

JEALOUSY, 244.
Jesus Christ, 98, 100, 116, 120, 160–1, 163.
Jenner, Edward, 114–17.
Joan of Arc, 100–1, 107–8.
John Bull's Other Island, 63, 64, 76, 77, 97.
Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, 136, 151, 163, 166, 172, 208.
Joy in nature, 189–90.
Judgment, private, 52, 55, 56, 58–60.
Junod, Henri A., 192n.
Justice, 201, 233, 249–51.

KANT, Immanuel, 171, 199.
Knowledge, 230, 236, 238–9, 245, 266, 274–5, 276–9, 282–4, 288; scientific, 108.

LAWRENCE, D. H., 20.
Legends, 119–20.
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 32.
Lever, Charles, 28.
Liberty, 112, 212; individual, 18, 59–61, 142, 299.
Life, Eternal, 160–1, 302.
Life Force, the, 55, 59, 93–105, 106, 113, 121, 122; as God, 99–100, 109.
Li-Ki, The, 288.
Lindsey, Ben B., 90n.
Lister, Joseph, 114–17.
Literature, imaginative, 20, 29, 30–48.
Locke, John, 266.
Love, 233, 245, 290–4, 302.
Luther, Martin, 193.

MACAULAY, T. B., 223.
Macchiavelli, Niccolo, 47, 99.
Magic, 114–18.
Mahomet, 193.
Major Barbara, 65, 67, 76, 97.
Mallarmé, Stéphane, 46.
Malraux, André, 26.
Man and Superman, 51, 89, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 101, 110, 113, 120, 121, 199.
Marriage, 17, 85–92, 299.
Marshall, F. H. A., 204.
Massis, Henri, 26n.
Masturbation, 133, 134, 207–8, 248–9.
Materialism, 302.
Mathematics, 182.
Matter, 240, 273, 275.
Mauriac, François, 20, 129n.
Meaning in poetry, 30–48.
Metaphysic(s), 32, 109.
Michelangelo, 205.
Mill, J. S., 223.
Millennium, the, 229, 230, 234, 235, 240, 243, 245, 246, 261.
Milton, John, 37, 47.
Mind, 240, 273–6, 295–6.
Misalliance, 59, 60, 67, 73, 88, 90, 94, 100, 101, 120.
Money, the possession of, 19, 21, 63–70, 299.
Monism, Neutral, 240, 262, 273, 276, 294.
Montaigne, Michel de, 47.
Moore, G. E., 170, 241.
Moral rules, 217, 221–2, 225–6, 241, 290, 302.
Morals, 140, 178–80.
Morceaux Choisis, 138, 143, 152, 153, 158, 170, 180, 186, 190.
Mrs. Warren's Profession, 65, 85.
Mussolini, Benito, 58, 59, 63, 72.
Mystics, 108.

NAPOLEON, 43.
National hatreds, 17–18, 299.
Nature, 189–91, 196, 218–19, 221.
Nazier, François, 195.
Neutral Monism, 240, 262, 273, 276, 294.
Newman, J. H., 41.
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 28, 120, 150, 167, 170.
Noble Savage, the, 158, 191–2.
Notoriety, 71–3.
Nourritures Terrestres, Les, 26, 142, 143, 144, 145, 164, 168, 169, 174–5.
Nouveaux Prétextes, 126, 136, 137, 140, 161, 173, 178, 179, 186, 188, 207.

Nouvelle Revue Française, 126, 135, 139, 157, 163, 165, 171, 174, 177, 184.
Numquid et Tu? 160.
Nursery schools, 234.

OEDIPUS, 187–8.
Oedipus complex, 222.
On Education, 27, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 243, 244, 247–61, 280, 286, 289, 291, 293, 294.
Orthology, 109.
Oscar Wilde, 152, 153, 166.
Outline of Philosophy, An, 27, 229, 236, 237–40, 241, 242, 243, 245, 262–79, 282, 283, 285, 289, 295.
Overman, the, 150, 179.
Overruled, 88.

PAGANISM, 186.
Paiderastia, 200–3.
Paludes, 142, 143.
Parents, 258–9.
Parsimony, Law of, 287.
Pascal, Blaise, 163, 196–7, 223.
Pasteur, Louis, 114–17.
Pater, Walter, 301.
Pausanias, 201.
Pederasty, 193–206, 302.
Pepys, Samuel, 39.
Perception, 237–40, 262–73, 277, 278.
Percepts, 239–40, 263–73.
Perfect Wagnerite, The, 52–5, 56, 57, 60, 61, 71, 84, 93, 94, 97, 105, 112.
Personality, 259–60, 299–302.
Phaedrus, 201.
Philoctète ou le Traité des Trois Morales, 146.
Philosophy, 236–40, 246, 262–79, 294–5.
Philosophies of life in literature, 30–48.
Physics, 229, 278–9.
Piano-playing, 255.
Plato, 39, 99, 200, 201, 202, 204.
Plays Pleasant, 67, 107, 121.
Plays Unpleasant, 66, 73, 74.
Plutarch, 200.
Poetry, meaning in, 30–48.
Porché, François, 195, 203.
Porte Étroite, La, 26, 128–9, 141, 174.
Poucel, S. J., Victor, 28, 174–5.
Poverty, 63–70.
Power, the will to, 252–4.
Powers, exercising one's, 253.
Pragmatism, 22.
Prayer, 167.
Press, the popular, 19.
Prétextes, 137, 139, 144, 150, 164, 167, 172, 173, 187.
Principles of Social Reconstruction, 230.
Prisons under Local Government, English, 76, 83.
Progress, 55, 56, 94, 97.
Prometheus, 35–6, 54, 93, 187–8.
Propaganda in imaginative literature, 30–48.
Prostitution, 73–5, 85.
Protestantism, 53, 167.
Proust, Marcel, 38, 205.
Psycho-analysis, 224, 235, 278.
Psychology, 109, 188, 211–13, 220, 231–3, 237, 260, 272, 278.

QUINTESSENCE OF IBSENISM, The, 58, 64, 72, 82, 89, 113, 121.

RACINE, Jean, 20, 45–6, 136, 178.
Racing, horse-, 181–2.
Rashdall, Hastings, 170, 287.
Rathenau, Walter, 146.
Rationality, 235, 257–8.
Realism, the new, 236–7, 277.
Reality, 224–5.
Reason, 108.
Relations, sexual, 17, 85–92, 159, 244, 299–300; social, 17, 21, 299–300.
Relativity, the theory of, 273.
Religion, 106–21, 167, 217, 219–23, 302.
Renouvier, C. B., 82–3, 284–5.

Repentance, 169.
Responsibility, 81–3, 294.
Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue, Le, 145–6.
Retour du Tchad, Le, 158.
Ricardo, David, 137–8.
Riding, 253.
Rivière, Jacques, 142.
Robertson, J. M., 100n.
Robson-Scott, W. D., 27n, 217n.
Rockefeller, Junior, J. D., 19.
Roi Candaule, Le, 179.
Romantics, the, 138; the German, 43.
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 138, 193, 243.
Rouveyre, André, 125, 180.
Rules, moral, 217, 221–2, 225–6, 241, 290, 302.
Ruskin, John, 190.
Russell, Bertrand, 24, 27, 29, 172–3, 208, 227–95, 299, 301, 302.
Rutherford, Mark, 148–9, 163.

ST. JOAN, 100, 107, 114.
St. Paul, 120, 193.
Saints, 107.
Sand, George, 134.
Santayana, G., 241.
Satan (v. the devil), 147.
Saül, 144–5, 175.
Saurat, Denis, 47n.
Savage, the Noble, 158, 191–2.
Sceptical Essays, 27, 229, 230, 232, 234, 235, 236, 240, 241, 244, 254, 258, 259, 260, 273, 276, 277, 281, 284, 288, 293.
Schiller, F. C. S., 27.
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 28, 199.
Schwob, René, 177.
Scientific knowledge, 108; spirit, the, 234, 256–7.
Scott, J. W., 172.
Ségur, Sophie de, 134, 254.
Self, the, 145, 163–4, 240, 274–6, 293–5.
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, 47.
Sensation, 270–1.
Sensitiveness, 233, 281.
Sentiment, 291–2.
Sentimentality, 291–2.
Sexual abnormalities, 159, 193–206, 302; relations, 17, 85–92, 159, 244, 299–300.
Shakespeare, William, 43, 47.
Shaw, George Bernard, 24–6, 28–9, 31, 49–122, 199, 281, 284, 286, 292, 301, 302; as a teacher, 51; nine articles of doctrine of, 55–6.
Shelley, P. B., 35–7, 47.
Sidgwick, Henry, 170.
Si le Grain ne Meurt, 133–4, 140, 141, 145, 161, 171, 172, 176, 186, 188, 189, 193, 199, 203, 207.
Sin, 145–9, 241–3, 284–6.
Sinbad the Sailor, 139.
Smith, M. Hamblin, 83n.
Social relations, 17, 21, 299–300.
Socrates, 39, 193.
Sonnet-writing, 181.
Sophocles, 45–6, 47, 205.
Sophrosyne, 201.
Sorley, W. R., 82, 284.
Souvenirs de la Cour d'Assises, 132–3, 141, 155, 156, 183, 184, 186.
Space, 267–8.
Space-time, 240, 273, 275.
Spartans, the, 200–1.
Speculation, stock-exchange, 181.
Spiritual, the, 165, 302.
State, the, 259; interference by, 18, 59–61, 90–2, 299.
Statesmanship and moral teaching, 98–9.
Stendhal, 38, 41–2.
Sterne, Laurence, 181.
Stirner, Max, 170.
Stoics, the, 170.
Sublimation, 154–5, 180–3.
Suffering, 145–9, 292.
Super-ego, the, 221.
Superman, the, 51–2, 53, 55, 61–2, 94.
Surf-riding, 253.
Swimming, 253.
Sympathy, abstract, 245, 291–2, 302.
Symphonie Pastorale, La, 174.

TEACHERS, 59–60, 234, 235, 258–9.
Temporal, the, 165, 302.
Temptation, 208.
Tennyson, Alfred, 45.
Tentative Amoureuse, La, 126–7, 141.
Theatre as school and church, the, 121.
Thebans, the, 200.
Thoreau, Henry David, 169.
Three Plays for Puritans, 58, 59, 77, 80, 82, 96, 97, 100.
Tolstoy, Leo, 153.
Traité du Narcisse, Le, 165.
Truthfulness, 233, 251–2, 257, 280–1.
Turner, J. M. W., 45.
Tyndall, John, 28.

URANISM, 193–206, 302.

VALOUR, 201.
Value, the Supreme, 19, 299.
Vinci, Leonardo da, 205.
Vindictiveness, 76, 78–81.
Virtue, 171, 209, 294; aids to, 167, 182, 202–3, 213–14.
Visionaries, 108.
Visualizers, 107–8.
Vitality, 233, 281.
Voyage au Congo, 158, 191.

WAGNER, Richard, 28.
Water-colour, painting in, 255.
Watson, John B., 264–5, 272.
Watson, D. M. S., 104n.
Weight-lifting, 103.
Weismann, August, 103–4, 110.
Wells, H. G., 42.
What I Believe, 27, 229, 235, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 278, 280, 284, 286, 289, 290, 291.
Whitman, Walt, 28.
Widgery, Alan G., 27n.
Wilde, Oscar, 28, 134, 152–4, 158, 166, 176, 281.
Wilde, Oscar, 152, 153, 166.
Will, human, 55, 56, 73, 93–105, 302; supremacy of, 55, 56, 93–105.
Will to power, the, 252–4.
Wisdom, 201.
Woman in love, 198–9; her heartbreak, 85–6, 89.
Women, economic dependence of, 85; in Ancient Greece, 202–3.
Wood, H. G., 277–8n.
Woolf, Virginia, 20.
Wordsworth, William, 47.

ZUKUNFT EINER ILLUSION, Die, 27, 217–26.