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### Contributors

Maudsley, Henry, 1835-1918.
Morgner, Oscar Aurelius
King's College London

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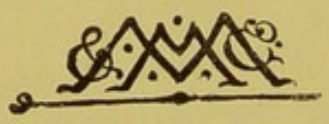
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# LIFE IN MIND AND CONDUCT:

STUDIES OF

ORGANIC IN HUMAN NATURE



# LIFE

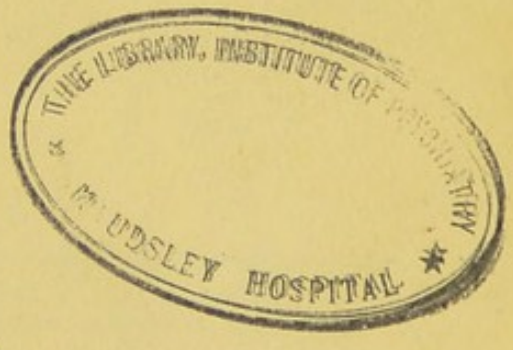
## IN MIND & CONDUCT:

STUDIES OF

ORGANIC IN HUMAN NATURE

BY

HENRY MAUDSLEY, M.D.




London

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# LIFE IN MIND AND CONDUCT

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

Men think new that which is old—Small fraction of human course on earth—Are the inventions of modern science new ?—Discovery made through rather than by the individual—No new reflections on human nature to be made nowadays—Old thoughts new to new thinkers of them—Conventional language and artificial divisions of knowledge—Separate methods of study of mind—Living structure and function in the life of mind—Origin and primal meaning of the terms of psychology—Psychical terms own a physical origin and import—Intellect, cogitation, reflection—Reason, deliberation, assimilation, rumination—Understanding, attention, ecstasy—Physical inwardness of mental feeling—Emotion and its qualities—Vagueness of metaphysical language—The organic in thought, feeling and conduct—General aim of the enquiry.

THE conclusion of a sober reflection on the brief records and various revolutions of human things has been enshrined by Shakspeare in the lines of his sonnet to Time :—

> "Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
> What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
> And rather have them born to our desire
> Than think that we before have heard them told."

And long before Shakspeare's day Laotze, the Chinese contemporary of Confucius, six hundred years before Christ, had expressed the same thought. "A vivid light," he said "shone on the highest antiquity, a few rays of which only have

reached us. It appears to us that the ancients were in darkness because we see them only through the thick clouds from which we ourselves have emerged. Man is an infant born at midnight who when he sees the sun rise thinks that yesterday never existed." The thought was probably then stale, having haply been made in Egypt six thousand years ago, and having certainly been made by the preacher who, weary of the monotony of things, declared that the thing which has been is that which shall be, and that there is no new thing under the sun. As mankind did not begin to think for the first time in ancient Greece nor first discovered their moral principles in Palestine, the vulgar belief of so late an intellectual and moral beginning simply proves with what sure and blind a faith the thoughts of people can rest circumscribed within their special epochs, and be counted new because new to them.

So brief is the record of historical time in comparison with unrecorded and forgotten time, so fabulous and false for the most part most so-called histories, that there are no sound data on which to ground a true knowledge of the remote human past. If men were ever as wise then as they are now, it is plain that we should not know it. Nor are the data adequate to warrant a safe prediction of the future fortunes of humanity on earth. Whether its past career has been a succession of alternating developments and degenerations, or a series of progresses in one place alternating with regresses elsewhere, yet with a gradual advance on the whole, even that is uncertain. To modern optimism, proud of present and sure of future human progress, Plato's fanciful notion of recurring evolutions and dissolutions of the same state of things in periodical revolutions of time will be wholly unwelcome.

Although new comers on the human stage extol the discoveries they make as new because they are new to them, as they call the moon new at every reappearance in its monthly course, exulting accordingly over their benighted predecessors, it is hardly credible that the special discoveries

and inventions of modern science are not novel, at all events on this planet; incredible indeed that the human mind ever before hit upon, and pursued systematically, such profitable methods of scientific observation and experiment as characterize its present state of evolution and have led to its great conquests over nature. Nor is it easy to agree with Shakspeare that the pyramids of Egypt were but repetitions of what had been done aforetime, notwithstanding the authority of his long-sighted imagination.

> "Thou can'st not think O Time that I do change;
> Thy pyramids built up with newer might
> To me are nothing novel, nothing strange,
> They are but dressings of a former sight."

Howbeit Shakspeare perhaps projected his imagination beyond the limits of this minor planet to a a superior planet in which such mighty works may have been done. For when we consider that other planets are constituted of the same elements as the earth, subject to the same universal laws, launched on similar courses under similar conditions, and that their elements must according to fixed chemical laws enter into the same compositions under the impact of the same forces in parallel circumstances, it is no more strange to imagine the production of a series of organic beings, similar or superior to those on earth than to expect the growth of two similar trees from two seeds of the same kind. The organic stream of tendency, so long as it is vitally quickened and propelled by due heat and light, must needs have like issues in the cosmic succession of things.

Such is reason's good conceit of itself that it is apt to pride itself on creating that which creates it. Consider how steadily and silently the stream of human tendency works in the making of scientific discoveries and inventions: particular persons are credited with the merit of them who after all are but the organs of them; for it is not the individual who clearly foresees and designedly plans them, it is the plan or course of organic nature which progressivly fulfils itself and reveals them through his development. Therefore it is that

no one makes a scientific discovery without some one else having partially or wholly anticipated him, that disputes are frequent and bitter as to who was the first to make it, and that he who proves the new thing to the understanding of his contemporaries is acclaimed and labelled as the discoverer, albeit he may actually have counted least in the discovery, most only in the demonstration. Were a single rose to flower early in its season, fading and falling before other roses blossomed on the same tree, it might suppose itself to be original and unique, not witting that roses had flowered independently on that tree in previous seasons, and would likewise flower after it in the same season without borrowing from it; and if among several roses in bloom at the same time one was foremost in height of place, perfection of form, and glory of colour, it would doubtless, had it the requisite tincture of human vanity, see therein its particular merit, and imagine that its fame would endure for ever. The growths of knowledge and virtue which flower on a particular branch of the human stock, are they any more original, unique and meritorious? From the general development of knowledge and feeling in a common social medium at a particular time and place, it must needs be that several organs thereof independently attain to pretty nearly the same structural form and function; the event is as natural and necessary as the independent production of the same or similar proverbs, superstitions, customs, errors of reasoning, vices and crimes in separate peoples of the earth.

Be that as it may with great scientific discoveries, it is most certain that no new reflections on men and their doings can be made nowadays. Human nature having been much the same since it began to think on itself, and intellects as powerful as any which exist now having existed aforetime, it was inevitable that persons of good understanding reflecting rightly on the materials of human experience should arrive at the same judgments independently. For as mind is not self-created in any mortal, nor infused into him miraculously from without, a something uncaused yet causing,

free or fortuitous in function, but both in being and function obeys strict natural laws of cause and effect, it cannot choose, when rational, but come to the same conclusion from the same premisses: must do so as surely as two persons of equal bodily powers and skill who put the same muscles into the same sort and degrees of movements must perform independently the same feat. Two mental organisms, like two bodily organisms, constructed after the same pattern and working on similar materials, necessarily produce similar products. Therefore it is that no one nowadays makes a sound reflection concerning human motives and conduct without soon discovering, if he make adequate search, that it has been made before and made probably over and over again: he may often trace it, if he be curious, from the latest modern thinker who utters it, back to some ancient sage who uttered it long ago; nay, perhaps to some old proverb which was the wise saw of a forgotten sage who thus pregnantly summed up the inarticulate wisdom of the race. The thought is essentially the same, though the mode of its outward presentation differ in different languages, and to suit the special styles of thought and feeling of different epochs.

As individuals die, and with them that which they painfully learnt in their life-travail, to be succeeded by new beings who in turn have patiently and painfully to learn for themselves before they in turn vanish, it comes to pass that old thoughts necessarily appear to be new to the young world which rethinks them for itself, and that the last thinker who utters ancient wisdom hails himself, and is often hailed by others who learn from him, as the discoverer. If he sets the truth tersely and lucidly or melodiously in a frame of fit words, or sticks it into men's minds by some apt assonance or alliteration, he may capture the long fame of it. So inveterate too is the custom to mistake familiarity of words for understanding of things when there is no real understanding of them that most people are apt to believe they utter a new thought when they only express an old

thought in new terms. Strange indeed it is to see how completely the conventional language of one age will hide a vital truth from a succeeding age speaking the same language, until it is translated into a new mode of expression. So it is that many a trite adage familiar as household words, which would be spoken and heard without real thought of its meaning, delights and instructs, seeming fresh and new, when it is divested of the custom-caked covering in which it has been enshrouded, and is clothed afresh in new words and imagery. Nay, the old platitude will prick with pleasing surprise many minds when it has been patiently enucleated from the gross crudities of ill-digested thought and jolting jargon of maimed and dislocated grammar in which the affectation of the charlatan eager, mountebank-like, to draw vulgar attention to himself and his wares has deliberately chosen to involve it.

Besides the obstacle which the hardening of words into lifeless forms is to fruitful thought, another obstacle, not less notable, is the hardening of artificial divisions of knowledge into separate classes and sciences with their special nomenclatures, although the things themselves are not really separate and not therefore to be truly comprehended as distinct and separate: the result being that terms of classification which, being names fixed to fitly sorted compartments of thought, are its convenient and indeed necessary aids of reference and memory amidst the multiplicity and variety of things, are held to denote separate realities and thereby the essential concatenations of nature obscured or quite overlooked. Thus too it comes to pass sometimes that different languages are employed to denote the same things without the least suspicion that they are the same. As it is certain that separate religions must disappear before there can be one true religion, so must the several sciences cease to be separate before true science can be.

Assuredly when the crusts of conventional terms are broken and the essential continuities beneath rigorous divisions of things discerned by insight into their deep

connections they often show themselves more simple and clear than they seemed and were thought to be. Nowhere perhaps is this more likely to prove true eventually than in the domain of the study of mind. There at present the metaphysician prosecutes his own method of study and uses his special vocabulary, the psychologist pursues his separate method and has his favourite phraseology, the physiologist follows his method of positive research and employs his special language; yet these formidable systems having their different names, pursuing separate paths, speaking different and mutually unintelligible languages, hostile in attitude towards one another, almost as averse to meet as parallel lines, are actually concerned with one and the same subject. Is there not good reason to expect that these divisions will disappear in time, and that when they are gone and facts seen as they truly are, matters will be much simplified, a vast deal of confusing and obscure verbiage relegated to oblivion, and words used which shall signify as well as sound?

As mind is life, whatever more it be, growing, maturing and decaying within its fixed period, like all life, it is hard to see how its nature and functions can ever be rightly understood without a knowledge of organic life and its processes of growth and development. Furthermore, as mind is not only life, but its particular life is demonstrably the life of the particular body in it, an adequate knowledge of its nature and functions must needs involve a knowledge of the several bodily organs and their co-ordinate functions in the unity of the whole—especially of the exquisitely fine networks of nervous organization which are the indispensable conditions of its earthly being, which grow in number and complexity with its growth, and on the integrity of which its function depends. It may not, it is true, be lawful and right, may indeed sometimes be mischievous, to introduce the conceptions and terms of a lower into a higher science; but the question here is not concerning two sciences, higher and lower, it is the question of one science which, having its root

in a physiological basis, has its flowering in the mental processes of which metaphysics and psychology claim to take exclusive cognizance. A biological study of mind in its ascending developments, animal and human, can hardly fail to help the student of it, whatever his specially esteemed method of enquiry and however wonderful his self-conscious intuitions into the operations, conscious and unconscious, of his own mind.

Those who object to bring psychology down from abstract heights to an organic basis, and to interpret mental functions in any terms of physical organization, might not do amiss to collect its descriptive terms and to consider closely their origin and primal meaning. These are essentially physical terms, bespeaking a material origin, imbued with sense-experience, and signifying in the concrete properties which are physical; and being such, it might be instructive, and not a little startling, to enquire how much meaning is left in them when all the physical meaning is taken out of them.

Such words as intellect, reason, reflection, cogitation, pondering, deliberation, brooding, rumination, which sound purely mental; such terms of feeling also as emotion, agitation, compassion, fervour, ardour, inspiration,—all tell the same story; they are terms of physical origin and import which have been applied by abstraction from physical to mental processes. Hearing that some one has had a severe shock, I must ask whether it was a mental or a physical shock; and if I go on to enquire what a mental shock which has killed a man means at bottom, I perceive that it has no real meaning except as a physical process: that it has killed him by a violent nervous commotion, just as a stroke of lightning might have done.

*Intellect* and *cogitation*—derived from intelligo (more correctly intellego) or interlego and cogo or coago—signify the gathering or collecting of things of the same kind, or of the qualities which several things have in common, into assortments or classes which are then denoted by a common name. Intellect is indeed structurally a correct classification,

the assorted experiences of things organized in their fit nervous structure, an orderly and proportioned cerebral instruction; and to revive actively on the required occasion that which has been thus suitably collected and stored is to *re-collect* it. To classify thus mentally is nothing else but, in other language, to make a generalization or induction; an ascent in thought from particulars to the general notion which can be applied afterwards deductively; to do in fact what is done at a higher mental stage when a scientific theory is formed from observation of instances and subsequently used to plan a particular invention. The physiological process is a formation of cerebral reflexes or thought-tracts to respond on the sensory side to the qualities or relations common to several particulars, which is the inductive pole of the intellectual process, so to speak, and on the motor side to react on the particulars having such qualities or relations, which is the deductive pole of it.

*Reason*, again, signifies *ratio* or proportion, which is the notable essence of sound, as its absence is the characteristic note of unsound thinking or reasoning. The cerebral registration of the facts of experience in their right ratios and relations is the rightly proportional in-formation of mental structure and consequent just balance of function. Were such registration perfect and universal, psychology might have all the certainty and perfection of mathematics; it would then be mathematical, as its hope is one day to be. The process is parallel on the mental plane to that which takes place at a lower nervous level in the fit formation and nice performance of a purposive bodily act; for a want of proportion in the special movements of such purposive act is essential irrationality. The person who, in order to take hold of a very small object where a nice use of finger and thumb would suffice and be graceful, uses his whole hand clumsily and uglily, perhaps even adds ungainly movements of arms and shoulder, like an idiot or a partially paralyzed person, exhibits essential irrationality of the nervous mechanism governing such movements, and is not unlikely

to exhibit similar want of ratio in mental to that which he does in motor apprehension.

*Deliberation*, like *pondering*, is obviously the balancing or weighing of one mental impression against another in order to find out the ratio; the new experience being compared with the old and assimilated by it, if like and liked, or discriminated and separately registered, if unlike and not liked. Here then in speaking of *assimilation* we encounter a physiological term denoting that which in psychological language is mental classification. Nor is it the only term of its kind, for it is thought natural to speak of the *digestion* of facts in the mind; to say nothing of the translation of such crude words as *rumination* and *chewing the cud* into terms of mental use.[1] Now as it is not the crude matter of food taken into the stomach which is directly assimilated by the bodily tissues and constitutes their nourishment, but the sublimed essences or abstracts of them, so to speak, which are formed in the refining processes of the various metabolic laboratories through which they pass; so it is with the mental life which is constituted and nourished, not by the direct impressions of sense but by the sublimations or representative abstractions into which they are converted at a higher cerebral plane. To gain and forthwith spend is not the way to grow rich in business, nor directly to receive and react the way to grow in mind; in both cases gains ought to be invested in capital, which investment mentally is progressive structuralization of supreme cerebral plexuses.

What is *understanding* but to stand underneath things, as it were, so as to see and apprehend their bases and bearings? What is *attention* but a special cerebral tending or tension marking a set or polarization of the molecules of a cerebral tract in one direction whereby the sensibility to the particular impression and the reactive hold or apprehension are intensified? With which attentive bent goes along necessarily more or less insensibility and inactivity of other then and

[1] Crude-sounding indeed, yet capable of poetic use, for Keats speaks of youth as "chewing the honeyed cud of thought."

thereby partially dissociated federal tracts of the mental organization, dissociations ranging in degree from mere absence of mind to rapt entrancement. For if the activity of the special tracts rise to a certain pitch, becoming convulsive, so to speak, it is completely dissociated functionally for the time from the rest of the federation; there is a break of mental contact and it stands out as an *ecstasy*. Once more it is manifest how the name denoting a physical process has acquired purely mental, in this case even high spiritual, meaning. Take out of an *ecstasy* the physical basis which the name literally implies, and what is the actual meaning then left in it?

The mental faculty or process of *reflection* rests on the physical reflection or turning of a nervous current from one to another track of the mental organization: a sort of message of enquiry to every class or compartment of the mental stores in which knowledge has been collected, sifted, laid up for use and fitly labelled. To reflect fully on an object is to put into adequate action all the associated cerebral reflexes required to constitute it mentally, the reflections on the physical side being correlative with the conscious reflections on the mental side. And forasmuch as no object in nature is ever isolated, but every object has its connections and relations, these again their connections and relations, and so on in multiplying and ever expanding radiations without end, the aim of growing reflection is the progressive establishment of a mental order of things in ever fuller and more exact conformity with their external order, so far as this can be known—that is to say, be framed internally. For the best that finite man does or can do in growth of knowledge is to lay hold of and map out for himself so much —and that an exceeding small piece—of the infinite environment as with his present organs of sense and movement he can compass and get into such definite adaptive relations as to respond to and react definitely on: thus collecting and arranging in order things which he can think and recollect, he makes for himself an internal order which is

knowledge—a mental organization in fact. The world he then knows is that which is thus translated into terms of self-experience, the world as it is to him, nowise the world of another self, still less that which is beyond the finite relations of his small self.

Common instinct, having its wonted close grip of the realities of things and expressing itself directly and coarsely, has hit upon such phrases as to jog the memory, to rack or ransack or cudgel the brains, to run in one's head, to set one's wits to work or to let them go wool-gathering, thick-witted and sharp-witted, and the like, in order to express that which is felt to be the true physical inwardness of things. Even such vulgar phrases as "knock sense into" a person and "knock sense out" of him have their physical justification; for as a blow or a fall on the head will notoriously efface all thought and memory, so it has rarely and strangely chanced that a lost memory and understanding have been restored suddenly by the shock of such a blow, for all the world as though dislocated molecules of the thought-tracks had been instantly set right by the concussion. In the common language of the people, if we consider it well, there is often a bottom of true instruction, for its terms are pregnant with the lessons of real human experience; reflecting the vital hold of things which living contact with them imparts, they fail not to throw valuable light on the origin and development of ideas. The introspective psychologist himself might not do amiss to watch closely that which goes on in his own mind when it is in process of thinking, instead of minding only the thought-products, noting the pauses in passing from one thought to another, the strains of attention or adaptive tension, the easy run or uneasy jerks of thought-junctions, the sluggish and obstructed flow of the thought-current in bad moods, and the rapid and even flow thereof in good moods; for he may then be conscious of a set of inward experiences strongly suggestive of subtile physical operations within his own brain, perhaps not rationally interpretable otherwise.

Obviously the terms descriptive of the modes and qualities of feeling testify to the same basis of physical meaning. *Emotion* signifies that which emotion was always felt to be—namely, an internal commotion or perturbation moving outwards to discharge itself. How then describe its qualities except in the language of physics? It is quick or dull, bright or gloomy, warm or cool, flutter, flurry, tremor, palpitation, cutting, piercing, sweet, bitter, caustic, thrilling, quivering, electric and so on; and the subject of it is accordingly cold or warm-hearted, cold-blooded, lukewarm, gushing, callous, torpid, hot-headed, fiery, and the like. That the heart in common language stands for emotion is popular witness to the important part which the internal viscera play in the production of feeling; a fact similarly attested by such expressions, once in use, as "bowels of compassion," "white-livered," "spleen," and others. Grief is heartache attended by a slow and weak pulse; joy, a cordial attended by a quick and strong pulse; and the saddest grief of all is heartrending and its subject sometimes heart-broken. Here, however, the mental expression goes beyond the physical fact, for the heart never is broken by grief unless it has been before so wasted by disease of structure as to be nigh bursting. All the feelings then, highest and lowest, even the transport out of self which is called spiritual ecstasy, are describable only in crude terms derived from physics. When not so describable, they are incommunicable, ineffable, not to be valued, either because they are beyond value or because they are valueless. Whatever the truth be with regard to the senses and intellect, there is nothing in the language of intellect which has not entered by way of sense.

It seems a pity that metaphysical psychology, instead of being so much beholden to physics, had not from the first its separate and independent nomenclature, seeing that it is concerned with the study of that which lies outside the domain of all physics. Then it would not have been necessary for it to divorce from sense the terms stamped and made current

by sense, to strip physical words of all physical meaning, to abstract names from matter and its properties to denote the workings of an immaterial entity. For the trouble of it now is that the translation of the terms of sense and experience into a domain of being absolutely distinct from sense-experience makes it hard to define what exact meaning they have there, and easy for no two persons to agree in their use of them; the inevitable result being, if not what Bacon called frivolous disputations, confutations and verbosities, at all events much disquisition with little or no progress. With this notable result too, that in this, as in no other science, every beginner proceeds confidently to discuss and settle the very foundations of his science, and every fully equipped worker, after going to work diligently to thresh the old problems, leaves them to be threshed over again by those who come after him. In no other region of knowledge therefore might so much that is written be entirely forgotten, as for the most part indeed it is instantly forgotten, without the world being one whit the loser. Astrology, despite its vagaries, is supposed to have pointed the way to astronomy, and alchemy, notwithstanding its futile researches, to have begotten chemistry; but it certainly cannot be said of psychology that it has yet helped to found a scientific *psychonomy*; on the contrary, it has for the most part purposely rejected any study of the facts and laws of organic life as not requisite to the construction of a mental science, taking its proud stand on an absolute breach in the continuity of nature.

As it is hard to conceive the notion of a discontinuity of nature, and harder still to discover the least evidence of it in the study of concrete men and things, the main object of the following chapters is to exhibit the continuity of organic nature through all human functions—in fact, to adduce evidence of the development of life, by gradual scale sublimed, from root in body to flower in mind, which Milton perceived clearly and emphatically expressed.

> One first matter all,
> Endued with various forms, various degrees
> Of substance, and, in things that live, of life ;
> But more refined, more spirituous and pure,
> As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending,
> Each in their several active spheres assigned,
> Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
> Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
> Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
> More aery, last the bright consummate flower
> Spirits odorous breathes : flowers and their fruit,
> Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
> To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual ; give both life and sense,
> Fancy and understanding : whence the Soul
> Reason receives, and Reason is her being,
> Discursive, or Intuitive.[1]
>
> (*Paradise Lost*, B.V. l. 472–488).

There has been no thought of writing a methodical treatise nor of setting forth any system of doctrine. By bringing several subjects usually treated as if they were separate, and for the most part abstractly, into touch with the realities of organic life and into vital relations with one another, they are put into positions in which they may be safely left to suggest their own lessons. Nor is there anything new in the moral reflections made, which for the most part have been made over and over again ; any novel aspects of them which may appear are the natural result of their fusions and oppositions, their collisions and concurrences, their qualifications and accentuations when brought into contact and connection with one another and with facts. The various applications of the argument have entailed some repetition.

[1] In his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine* Milton declares his distinct opinion that there is no ground for the supposed distinction between body and soul—"that man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable." After quoting several passages from Scripture in support of this opinion, he says that nowhere in Scripture is it said that "the spirit of man should be separate from the body, so as to have a perfect and intelligent existence independently of it," and that "the doctrine is at variance both with nature and reason."

# CHAPTER II

# LIFE AND MIND

## I

### ORGANISM AND LIFE

An organic mechanism—Its outward discharge, regular or irregular—Inward and noxious discharge—The general paralytic—The epileptic—Explosive discharge—Nature's explosive method of work—The reproductive instinct and act—Life an equilibrium of antagonistic forces—Physics and Physiology—The cycle of life: production, preservation, destruction—Self-repair of living matter—Every organism a complexity of organisms—Passive and active matter—The so-called vital force—Degenerations of life—Colloid and crystalloid matter—Homogeneous and heterogeneous—Life and death—Degrees of vital substance—Conservation of energy.

CONSTITUTIONALLY the human body, like every other living body, is an organic mechanism which, charged by nutrition, discharges itself in functions so long as it is alive: an exceeding complex, intricate, and most subtilely compounded structure, fashioned by gradual processes of adaptive interaction with its changing environment through dateless time to discharge itself in certain set ways.

Its discharge of energy may be either formal or formless—that is, functional or functionless. When the fit external object of discharge is wanting, the explosion of unfulfilled passion—irritation, affection, emotion, perturbation, or whatever the internal commotion of molecular activity be named

—spends itself in a confusion of aimless, tumultuous, sometimes grotesquely incoherent movements. Hysterical tears and laughter, sobs and wails, cries and ejaculations, contortions of joy and pain, and the like, have their subjective uses, although they serve no objective ends; they yield the ease of a discharge, are a self-relief. Behold the squalling infant or the howling idiot venting its passion in contortions and quasi-convulsive agitations of its whole body—face, voice, limbs, trunk; the fury of the passionate adult uttered in grinding teeth, clenched fists, facial grimaces, violent gestures, exclamations and oaths; the several discharges of other passions in uniformly regular movements which, being employed and known as their wonted modes of expression, have their social meaning and uses, understood of the kind, yet, having no objective ends in themselves, would but for such conventional usage and interpretation be thought as unmeaning and styled as morbid as convulsions.

The discharge of passion is not outward only; if the explosion gets not vent in visible movements it spends itself inwardly in invisible perturbations of the innermost organic processes. Such manifest effects as constricted and enlarged blood-vessels, pallor and flush of face, arrested and perverted secretions, witness to more intimate disturbances which take place inwardly; whence subtile chillings, and flushings, and spoilings of the normal metabolic processes, with the production of baneful organic compounds: whence also hurtful inflamings and vitiations of thoughts summoned to the sessions of unruly passion. The passion-infected processes of faulty nutrition and the passion-infected processes of vicious thought own a like essential origin, and are of like essential nature. He who cannot consume his passion internally by fit distribution along well-ordered paths of reflection and action, as becomes a well-composed and well-cultured mind-mechanism, does wisely perhaps to give it innocuous issue in wild speech and gesture, lest otherwise it spend itself noxiously in poisoning his mental tone and disordering his organic functions. Oaths have their hygienic

uses when they discharge passion which, failing a better vent, might do harm if spent inwardly.

Behold, again, the general paralytic whose far-gone disease has extinguished his mental and motor powers: bereft of thought, speech, voluntary movement, he lies a mere animal log, impotent to help himself in the least, able only to swallow semi-liquid food that is pushed far enough into his gullet to come within the reflex grasp of its muscles. His tracts of mind having been so devastated by the destructive disease that no current of energy can pass along them, it is now a razed oblivion and he virtually in the situation of an animal whose supreme cerebral centres the vivisector has cut away; albeit not quite like a creature naturally destitute of such centres, since he is now denatured, having lost a multitude of fine and complex channels of discharge which it never possessed. Like it, however, he is still a pretty good organic machine, digesting well the food given him and fairly nourished by it; all the internal organs, except the brain which they survive, being sound and active. What happens at last? Oftentimes violent epileptiform convulsions in such rapid sequence that he has perhaps two hundred fits in twenty-four hours before he dies, if he then dies, exhausted. That is the incontinent discharge which the gross accumulating forces of organic nutrition, wanting their many and fit means of storage and channels of fine distribution, make for themselves through the devastated machinery of the brain.

Behold, once more, the epileptic who, walking quietly along the street, abruptly flings out rigid arms, utters a strained wail or yell, and, his whole body stiffened in tetanic spasm, falls senseless to the ground, not otherwise than as if he had been transfixed by an overwhelming electric shock, and is then fearfully convulsed. All the force now convulsively displayed was before potential in him; it has only been discharged abruptly in tumultuous explosion, and though formless as regards its right forms of expression, yet so bounded by the fixed forms of his bodily structure which it contorts as to make him the hideous spectacle which he is.

In these cases the explosion is none the less natural and necessary because it is styled morbid, it is only the outburst, in large and violent volume, of energy which in normal health is finely divided and distributed through a multitude of minute and regular pulses in proper functions. One might liken the process of things to the stored electricity which, distributed fitly along the proper insulating wires, serves to light a thousand lamps or turn a thousand wheels, but when not so insulated and distributed through regular channels explodes and shatters like a lightning-flash.

It is apparently a favourite way of nature to work by means of explosions. Earthquakes and thunderstorms, volcanic outbursts and popular revolutions, the raging of the sea and the madness of peoples, pulses of muscles and thrills of nerve alike fulfil that law. A sneeze is an explosion; so also is a yawn, a sigh, a cough, a pang of pain, the expulsion of a secretion or an excretion; and at bottom every muscular contraction, every thrill of feeling, every current of thought is the cumulative effect of a regular sequence of minute explosions. Physiologically there is gratification, too, because there is relief, in the discharge. What more exasperating than the frustration of a reflex discharge imminently expected even if it be only a sneeze? What fiercer pain, intestinal, uterine, urethral, than that caused by the violent reflex spasm which strains in vain to overcome a complete block? From the discharge of secretion or expulsion of excretion, when the expected end is baulked, to the impotence of the inspired mortal to utter the ineffable, when he suffers "the burden of the incommunicable," the tale throughout is the same.

As nature's evident concern is to propagate and perpetuate life, not to continue individual life—of that there is small heed—the work is done by the domination of an imperious reproductive instinct urging gratification as a blind explosive lust, without regard to the purpose of the performance. To this overmastering instinct animal life owes half its force and all its ornament. Reason has little

or nothing to say in the business even in creatures which most possess it; for had reason implicit rule of the origin and foresight of the end of the instinct, it might frustrate its purpose or rule it out of being. Yet how quiet a means might conceivably have been devised for the propagation of the species, not unfitting the dignity of the noblest and most refined species, in a simple and graceful way with no more expenditure of passion and action than the still communion of a kiss or the touch of a gentle hand. But nature has willed otherwise; it effects the passionate purpose which it has at heart by the urgent desires and quasi-magnetic attraction of two individuals to become one in an ecstatic union of body and soul, and then to give off in an explosion of intense sensation and motion a part of the temporarily unified being to become another self; an ecstasy of union which is a sort of physiological, sometimes an actual, epilepsy. It is the underlying attraction, physical like the attraction of the sea by the moon, or of the plant by light, which expresses itself in feeling as desire, not desire which generates the attraction of which it is effect and exponent; and in that organic attraction one may discern the outward and visible operation, in mass, of the same kind of force which works inwardly and invisibly in the ascent of organic molecules to higher complexities of composition. Crude as it looks to think of the rapturous union of two sentient and rational beings as a quasi-magnetic polarization, yet if descent be made in thought from the mass to the molecules which form it, and their determinate positions pictured in mind, the conception, so far from being monstrous, seems natural and necessary.

From the simplest form of living monad to the most complex animal organism there is a progressive process of charging in structure and discharging in function, the end or aim of the discharge being determined by the form of the structure. Structure invisible sometimes, no doubt; for to say of any living matter, however seemingly homogeneous, that it is actually structureless, would be to say that there can

be no structure where our gross senses with their latest and best instrumental aids cannot detect it; which is absurd. It were as foolish to assert at noonday that the starry heavens are amorphous. Life is a process not a fixed state, a flux not a stay of being, a formal not an internal equilibrium; mobile colloid matter in continual process of making and unmaking within bounds set by a fixed or quasi-crystalloid structure; complete fixture would be death. In a living molecule, as in a solar system, opposing forces are at work to maintain by their counteractions the unity of a continuing equilibrium: attractive or constructive forces to bind together and build up counterbalancing or, as it were, coercing forces which tend to dissolve and break down. Universal is such opposing tug of forces, a perpetual tendency of things to relapse into chaos working everywhere in antagonism to forces which strain to effect the order and progress of a cosmos.

Is there not something radically wrong in the complete separation and the abrupt contrast made between life and physics? In the different applications of the words Physics and Physiology, the etymological import of which is the same, there is perchance, as Coleridge suggested, a hidden irony at the assumption on which the division is grounded. Without doubt the physics and chemics of life are infinitely more delicate, complex, condensed and tense than the ordinary physico-chemical processes, diverse from and superior to them; yet they must at bottom resolve themselves into modes of motion and be problems of molecular physics. How can we think definitely of life in the ultimate resort but in terms of motion—of motions in succession conceived under forms of time, of coexistent motions conceived under forms of space?

The habit being to think grossly of time and space, it is hard to alter the customary measures of them; more hard indeed to contract than expand them, to picture in mind their infinite divisibilities, to realize the rapid, intense, exquisitely fine and complicated motions—the perpetual additions, subtractions, substitutions and compositions of

atoms and molecules which go on in the changing whorls of the infinitely little. Custom-thralled conceptions of time and space therefore do not serve well in these regions, they rather do a disservice. Were there a sensible discharge of molecular energy at appreciable intervals of time, a measurable pause between each regular discharge, as there is between every beat of the pulse and between every movement of respiration, there would be no more need to wonder than there is to wonder now at the regular repair by night of the waste done to the tissues by day. Only perhaps by realization of the intense concentration of time and energy within the minutest imaginable compass of matter, such realization as the contraction of a year into an instant, of a mile into a millimetre, of a solar system into a molecule, will vital phenomena be made more easy of comprehension. Terrifically awful to men is the volcanic explosion overwhelming a whole city and its inhabitants, because it is so great in comparison with them, whereas it is more simple than a molecular explosion, which, because it is so little in comparison with them, they make nothing of.

Production, preservation, destruction—such is the inexorable cycle of life, be it in mollusc or man, matter or mind, and whatever the factors, processes, and periods of it. Between ordinary physical energy and the highest human energy there is an apparent deep gulf fixed, but that is because the intermediate steps are overlooked; for in nature there is no division anywhere, everywhere is the continuity of a flux of things without beginning and without end. Between animal and inanimate nature intervenes all the lower vitalized vegetable world in its manifold forms and degrees of life, from minute and mean to mighty and majestic, accumulating stores of vital matter and power which man uses either directly for his food or indirectly in more concentrated form when it has been further vitalized by the animals which feed on it and on which he feeds. The minute seed grows silently and steadily by assimilating and condensing into its substance along with suitable material

element the intensely active and most subtile-potent motions of light and heat which continuously beat upon it with their innumerable waves and continually add to its gradually growing gains; thus progressively it absorbs and funds them and their motions in living matter and its motions, so that at last through these minute, constant, intense toils of coercing construction and the accumulating increments of organic substances the tree towers aloft in all the grandeur of its mature form.

What an inconceivable concentration of condensed energies it then finally represents! All which, thousands of years afterwards, the carbonized wood gives out again for human use and comfort in heat and light; the energies stored in the multitudinous minute laboratories of its structure being unloosed and discharged at large in the coarse furnaces of human manufacture: compounded on a more than microscopic scale of minuteness by micro-physical and micro-chemical processes, they are now decomposed and displayed on a macroscopic scale. If one drop of water contain and may be made to evolve as much electricity as under different modes of display would suffice to produce a lightning-flash, what amount of concentrated energies does not the smallest particle of living protoplasm hold enthralled? The release and expansion of its condensed intensities of motion by explosion of its substance must needs be a large and voluminous display of simpler motions. Considering the still yet tremendous force exerted by the tender shoot or root which, insinuating itself insidiously into the crevice of a wall, grows silently and steadily until it cracks and shatters the masonry, one may imagine what sound and tumult there would be if the mute motions of its internal forces were discharged instantaneously in one massive explosion. When we follow then the steps of ascent of living matter in constitution and dignity from the simple vegetable protoplasm up to its highest eminence in the protoplasm of the human brain, and reflect on the progressive condensation of energies of which it is the organic climax, it is not so difficult as it

looks at first sight to think of human thoughts and doings as effects of the decomposition and regulated discharges of the subtile-complex compositions of matter and motion in the many and various elements of nature's supreme organism. Nobody nowadays resents the notion that the bread which he eats is converted into bodily strength and energy, but most persons, being wholly ignorant of minute matter and its forces, deride the notion of its conversion into mental energy, albeit the scientific theories of ether-waves and ether-whorls tend steadily to render the conception less startling.

Great stress is naturally laid on a notable difference between living and non-living matter—namely, that when decomposed and discharged living matter recomposes and recharges itself, thereby maintaining its being through a constant flux of changes. But what does the statement really signify? The actual living molecule which is spent in function does not renew itself and live again, any more than the soldier slain in the advancing line of battle comes to life to fight again. Other living matter of the same composition and pattern replaces the disintegrated matter, such repair being the work of the whole organism by means of the successive manufacturing processes in it through which the non-living substance of food passes to be made living. As a decayed brick in a house-wall is replaced by a duly manufactured sound brick, so the organism is repaired by the substitution of a duly manufactured fresh molecule for the waste and dead one.

Certainly the living body, while it is a sound whole, effects by its wonderful alchemy, physico-chemical or vital, the repair which in the case of a house must be done for it mechanically from without. In this regard it differs also from the nearly allied case of a damaged crystal of salt which has its breach repaired and form restored in a fit saline medium by the deposit of matter from without in a mechanical fashion; for although there is a formal restoration of matter in both cases there is not that intimate

reciprocal interaction of being between crystal and saline solution which there is between organic molecule and organism: in the one there is manifest addition from without by accretion, in the other there is addition by transformation of matter and evolution from within through invisible and yet inscrutable life-making processes. That is true in a sense, no doubt, but may it not be thus true only because we can neither get within nor observe from without the infinitesimal process? A closer analogy to the flux of life is a regiment of soldiers in which, as individuals fall out by death, their places are quickly filled by fresh individuals, whereby, the losses being regularly repaired, the life of the regiment goes on unimpaired. Moreover, just as the new soldier fit to replace the dead soldier is not supplied by the regimental body, but enters it from without more or less prepared and fashioned for his place and function, seeing that the recruit must be enlisted, drilled, instructed, so the fit material to replace the dead by a living molecule in every special structure of an organism has to be enlisted, so to speak, from without, and then to be fitly digested, disposed and fashioned by the various subtile agencies which co-operate in metabolism, before it can be put into place and serve to continue the life of the whole. A complex organism, like a well-ordered state, is the ordained integration of a multitude of special organizations—superordinate, co-ordinate, and subordinate—which work together in constant and essential interrelations to maintain its vital unity.

Could we trace a particle of food in minute continuity through all the successive changes undergone by it in the intermediate stages which its elements traverse in their progress from death to life, and understand the series of physical and chemical transformations which take place, the contrast between the extremes of gross dead matter and fine living matter, seemingly so abrupt and great, might be vastly lessened, if it did not wholly vanish. After all, it is but stubborn habit, not justified by facts, to make a violent separation between so-called inert passive matter and

active energizing matter; there is no real difference of kind between them; not only does the visible reaction of a passive body to action on it imply intrinsic activity, but its very capability of being acted on—its *patience*, passion, or the internal commotion which passion signifies—implies secret activity in it.[1] Therefore it is that, as Coleridge said, the division of substances into living and dead, though *psychologically* necessary, is of doubtful philosophical validity. It is because of the complexities of things within the exceeding minute compass of matter, and of the condensed subtilties, intensities and rapidities of the motions that go on within the confines of its form, that we cannot picture them in imagination, as we can in some measure picture ordinary physico-chemical activities. Be that as it may, however, certain it is that from broken crystal reconstituting its form in a suitable medium, through simplest living unit, vegetable or animal, which takes matter from without to transform directly into its substance, up to the most complex organism which elaborates the nutritive material successively in the various factories through which it is made to pass in its process of vitalization there is transition not break, continuity not interruption, evolution or development, not cataclysm nor creation. That physical and chemical activities stop abruptly at the edge of a living particle is simply incredible; it is easily credible that, entering it, they undergo a change into new and stranger complexes.

Such orderly transition does not mean that life is no more than physics and chemistry, as these sciences are yet known to us; on the contrary, rightly viewed, it means that the ultimate complex unit of life represents much more than any known physico-chemical activities, being, so to speak, the quintessence of many simples and complexes in one

[1] "It is clear that to exist is the same as to act or work (*Quantum operor, tantum sum*); that whatever exists works (=is *in action, actually* is; is *in deed*); that not to work, as agent or patient, is not to exist; and lastly, that *patience* (= *vis patiendi*) and the reaction that is its coinstantaneous consequent is the same activity in opposite and alternating relations."—Coleridge, *Lit. Corr.*

minute whole and the development of new properties in consequence.[1] It imports, in fact, a microphysics and a microchemistry which we have yet to learn; for which reason the term *vital force* serves for the present to denote the subtile and unknown processes. The objection to its use is its abuse to signify some quasi-metaphysical entity not subject to material laws and the acceptance of such imaginary entity as an explanation, or if not as explanation, at any rate as a sort of sacred and insoluble mystery which it is pious to adore and it would be impious to probe by scientific methods. As if, forsooth, life would suffer depreciation and not be the wonder it is to its conscious self by being linked in unbroken continuity with physics and chemistry, and to trace the evolution of one thing into another were to say that the one thing is the other.

It is strange that those who diligently busy themselves with researches into the beginnings of life and the transformation of lower into higher life do not, besides trying to trace the dead into the living, watch closely the degenerations of higher into lower life under suitable conditions, natural and artificial, and of lowest living into dead matter. The vital force fails signally sometimes to rise to the height of its mission even when the conditions are such as might seem to warrant the expectation of better things—as, for example, when, instead of repairing a tissue like muscle by its own proper substance, it succeeds only in replacing it by an inferior fibrous tissue; or when, out of sheer innate weakness, instead of keeping life going at its normal level, it makes a pus-cell where it ought to make a sound living cell. The phenomena of inflammation, which is the beginning of so many ways to death, present a study of the decline of strong life into weak life and of weak life into death. However, let the line of enquiry be as it may, it is not likely soon to solve the mystery of life; the subtilties of nature in

[1] As the life of the bacterium is not destroyed by the lowest producible temperature, when all chemical affinities cease, it is evident that life is more than chemistry, although having a chemical basis.

that domain far exceed the subtilties of present observation; and nothing can be more fatuous than to suppose that the microscope, which, like the telescope, has its limit of vision, will ever reveal the infinitesimal processes at the basis of life, unless it be the philosopher's fancy that whenever one veil of nature is raised he will not find another behind it, but triumphantly expose the First Principles of things.

Having considered life and death together from the standpoint of living matter, one may also consider them from the standpoint of dead matter. When the attractive forces completely predominate in a chemical substance it is so fixed and stable as to be practically inert, inwardly and outwardly motionless apparently, at rest in what Leibnitz called the sleep-state of the monads; in like manner, although not perhaps in the same degree, when the attractive affinities so predominate in a vital molecule as to render it stable and seemingly inert, it is then fixed or formed structure whose life is of a low order only, not far removed from death—dead life or living death, so to speak—being in relation to active living substance much as matter in its inert crystalloid state is in relation to matter in its active colloid state. Were a complex and unstable substance in a colloid state, its constituent molecules so delicately balanced that the least touch sufficed to explode them, to discharge its energy in the explosion, the result would be its destruction. But if the substance were to discharge its energy by minute, measured and rhythmic explosions, and, reconstituting itself regularly after each explosion, to keep its form, the result then would be a close resemblance to the simplest protoplasmic life. Conceive, then, a framework of fit form and requisite nicety and complexity of adapted parts, like the framed structure of a living organism, to be packed with an unstable colloid compound, mobile and full of pent-up energy, yet kept in due bounds by structural form, and to have its succession of minute explosions regulated to perform a definite work or function; thereupon grant to the impacked substance or plasm the power of repairing its waste in a suitable medium;

the substance would be virtually a protoplasm, and the self-feeding mechanism a living organism. Impair the machinery by which the many and minute internal motions are ruled to serve definite functions, so that they mix in tumultuous welter and discharge themselves violently, and the effect would be a tumultuous explosion like that which shakes terribly the epileptic.

Could the minute workings of a speck of simple living protoplasm, apparently homogeneous and without fixed form to give definite aim to its energies, be closely watched, little more might be seen in it, at all events not anything much more special in kind, than in the subtile and active physico-chemical compositions and decompositions of an unstable chemical colloid, were they also traceable with equal exactness. If homogeneous at first, it manifestly could not continue so when acting in external conditions opposing its full freedom of movement in all directions; for these opposing conditions against which it strikes must needs cause answering alterations, external and internal, of its plastic substance, and such alterations, if definitely kept up by the conditions of the environment, determine lines of direction of its internal forces which eventually become structural. It would grow structurally to its circumstances, as it is the characteristic of all life to do, and afterwards its structure harden by degrees, as its fate is, so as to obstruct and eventually stop plastic life. As to its power of self-repair, that need not count too much as a difference, since it always requires a fit medium for the purpose, and in an unfit medium suffers a suspension or extinction of life. When it thus becomes inert and apparently lifeless, perhaps remaining so for a thousand years, is it truly alive? Might not such suspended life be almost as fitly styled death in life, or living death? Certainly its activities are not then so much superior to those of so-called dead matter, into which by a little further deadening they insensibly merge, as to be conceivable only as absolutely different and separate.

If instead of speaking of living and dead matter any one

were to speak of living and dead activities, it would be manifest that he was talking nonsense. The activities of dead matter are real enough, infinitely more so than was at one time suspected, but dead activities would be a contradiction in terms. All inanimate substances owe their diverse powers of reaction, when acted upon, to activities within them, latent when not patent, not dead but dormant; and the properties by which they affect other substances are essentially their acts. Suspended or insensible motions with preservation of form are common to animate and inanimate matter, and can in both cases be quickened by the proper external stimuli; as the frozen energies of ice are unloosed by heat, so are the suspended energies of living matter, though dormant for years, unloosed by heat and moisture. Life and death being neither separate nor separable conceptions ought not therefore to be set over against one another as belonging to absolutely distinct categories of thought and being; for death is a constant and necessary part of the process of life, and life a constant and necessary part of the conception of death—one cannot be thought without the other. Composition, transformation, dissolution of matter and force, such is the cycle of events from death to life and from life to death.

Life viewed in the abstract as a constant entity is no more, then, than a general term or name including countless particular lives of diverse degrees and qualities according to the various structures, simple and complex, which subserve and condition it. St. Paul saw that clearly enough when, contemplating the transformation of the terrestrial into the celestial body, he declared that all flesh was not the same flesh, but that flesh differed much in dignity. So also did Milton when he expounded the various degrees of substance and in things that live of life. The life of a brain-cell is one thing, the life of a blood-cell or an epidermic cell another thing, the life of any element of fixed structure very different in quality from that of an active element of protoplasm. Of a still lower dignity than any animal life, lowest type of all, nearest to inanimate activity, is the life of a vegetable

protoplast; while the lowest animal forms of life are notably so like vegetable organisms as to render it hard to say whether they are animal or vegetable. Certainly the abstract notion of life as an entity of fixed quantity and quality, something existing somehow separate from matter, has been and still is a hindrance to a definite and true conception of its concrete nature. The name sanctioned by authority and custom has governed the facts instead of the facts governing the name.

Scientific observation of vital processes in all their varieties, degrees and periods show plainly that they obey the law of conservation of matter and energy which reigns throughout nature. Nothing is ever created out of nothing, nothing is ever destroyed absolutely. Everywhere that which disappears in one form reappears in another form: torn, twisted, triturated, compressed, sublimed, rarefied, matter is the veritable Proteus, ever one substance beneath its multitudinous transformations. To speak of life in any of its manifestations as self-creating and self-acting is not more truly rational than it would be to speak of a self-creating and self-acting locomotive; it is as if one viewed the mechanism as a separate and self-acting body without taking thought of the long and tedious antecedent processes of its formation now incorporate in its structure, of the many mind-powers which it thus represents, and of the necessary external supplies and conditions of its function. The dying mortal need not ever lament the loss he will be to the world; he may safely say to himself, "There was no addition to the matter and force of the universe when I was created, there will be no subtraction from it when I perish."

## II

### ORGANIC STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

Irritability of tissue—Unconscious purposive action—Consensus, consentience, consciousness—Consciousness and individuation—Internal activities of the organic molecule—The principle of individuation—Spontaneity and physical reaction—Excitability of nerve and reflex action—Simple and complex reflex action—Latent sensory stimuli—Reflection and will—Incorporate antecedents—Diverse qualities of brain—Fundamental sources of mental energy; self-conservative and reproductive instincts—The cerebro-spinal and splanchnic nervous systems—The intellectual mechanism—The motive forces of reflection—The expressions of emotion—Sublimations of feeling—Intellect and purposive action—Compositions and disintegrations of will—The organic basis of will—Over-sensitiveness, passionateness—Physiological conditions of sensibility—Co-operation of physiological stimuli—Different levels of volitional evolution—Organization of moral feeling and will—Life-history the exposition of character—Inane abstractions—Conditions and circumstances of reproduction—Bodily structure and character.

HALLER gave the name of *irritability* to that property of muscular protoplasm whereby it reacts to an irritation or stimulus. The living element behaves exactly as if it felt the stimulus and responded to it; only it is not thought right to ascribe feeling to that which is not supposed to be conscious. In like manner it would be wrong to perceive feeling in the lowest form of living monad reacting fitly to its stimulus, though it give all the signs of that which were it deemed conscious would be feeling, for it is destitute of that which observation shows to be the necessary physical basis of consciousness.

In face of a process of impressibility and reaction which on the one hand is not high enough to rise to a conscious plane, and on the other hand is too high to own ordinary physical agency and be called physical, the custom is to put it in a category of its own and to give it a special name. That is the usual artifice of making a separation in nature

where continuity reigns everywhere; a procedure which, though expedient for purposes of thought, is oftentimes the cause of no little wrong thought. When a particular adaptive act is done consciously, and can be done with the same ease and precision unconsciously, the right conclusion is not that the two processes are different in kind, but that consciousness is not of the essence of the process—that it is adjunct not agent. Sympathy of parts in response to a stimulus and unity of reaction by the whole—which is formal or purposive action—can and does take place without predesigning consciousness, even without conscious feeling. Is the process when unconscious so far in nature and dignity below that which it is when conscious as to warrant a trench of separation between them? All the more significant a question this, seeing that conscious purpose, being a term of comprehension by a quite limited human self, cannot be predicated of the unlimited not-self, which is incomprehensible.

Pondering well the basis of things in vital reaction it is evident that it is the organic affinity or sympathy of parts which is the basis of consciousness, not consciousness which causes the sympathy. The co-operation of the several parts of a whole to an end imports a *consensus* or sympathy of them, and such consensus is a step on the way to *consentience* or *co-feeling*, which, again, at a still higher remove, becomes a *con-sciousness*—that is, a *co-knowing* or *cognoscence*. For the progressive development of life means a progressive specialization and complication of structure, whereby the correlations of manifold parts within a formal whole are multiplied and the quasi-physical sympathy rises to its highest and most compound expression—that is to say, to consciousness. The bounds set by its external form circumscribe, if they do not constrain, sympathy of the internal motions of a living monad. The unconscious process has its plain parallel in the conscious operations of daily life: let a number of persons work together to a common end, their energies thus loosely defined and directed, they soon begin to feel together, co-operation

breeding consentience, or synergy sympathy; and from feeling together they go on afterwards to think or know together, consentience or sympathy crystallizing, so to speak, into definite consciousness or synthesis, from which common consciousness of fellowship in aim and work emanates in time the corporate conscience which, just because it is special and limited in its range, may nowise be the fine fragrance of feeling which true moral conscience is.

Whatever the conscious element in a vital reaction, and wherever in the scale of life it first faintly dawns, it manifestly develops insensibly and progressively from unconscious reaction. The new and strange transformation is a mystery no doubt; but, after due wonder at it, no more so than the mystery of vital or any other energy, or of the transformation of one energy into another, which are accepted facts of our relative experience, inexplicable within it and meaningless outside it. Why wonder more at vital energy than at electric energy, or at the organic traction of a logical sequence than at the inorganic traction of gravitation? Though custom blind us to the mystery of common things it does not efface the mystery of them; nor does the want of custom make uncommon things more a mystery. Is there anything essentially stranger in self-perceptions by the inner sense of consciousness than in the different special consciousnesses of the several senses? If the mental organization of the brain incorporate the experiences of these outer senses through untold ages, registering in its structure the manifold affections of their several consciousnesses, it is easily imaginable that such stored compositions of sense, when excited together internally, must needs produce an internal common sense or consciousness. Certainly, if the separate sense-consciousnesses did not combine in the perception of a particular object, that object would be as many different objects as there were senses affected by it; but inasmuch as the senses combine their special modes of affection in a unity of perception or apprehension, which they do by virtue of being functions of one body, there results a consciousness in

common which, being effect and exponent of individuation, is a self-consciousness.[1]

The gap between organic irritability and physical reaction is much lessened when we picture in mind the intensely quivering intestine motions of the organic unit. Although the visible rebound of an elastic ball thrown against a wall, or of a billiard ball driven against the cushion of its table, is entirely physical, yet the result is not haphazard, even though the throw or stroke be made at random; the rebound is exactly determined in force and direction by the force and direction of the resistance which its impact meets in the wall or the cushion. Such definite effect might be called the aim of the operation, and is so called when the expert billiard-player, conceiving and achieving exactly the stroke he wishes to make, so appreciates and combines the forces engaged as to make them fulfil his precise aim. Conceive, then, on the one hand, the motions of a multitude of bounding balls to be invisibly contracted within the minute compass of an organic unit, its form circumscribing their complex interplay of motions and determining the resultant motion of the whole, and along with this spatial condensation a necessarily corresponding compression of the times of their motions, now therefore inconceivably swift and subtile in the minute space; on the other hand conceive the infinitesimally fine and intensely quivering internal motions of the organic unit to be decompounded, expanded in space, and proportionately lengthened in time, so that each motion equalled in measurement that of a visibly rebounding ball;—then if we bring the two conceptions together and compare them, the two orders of physics, visible and invisible, will not be so far aloof as they seem superficially. Could any one imagine himself inside the organic molecule and able to watch its rapid intestine motions as he can watch the easy motions of

[1] All the more conceivable if we accept what Bacon calls the *vestigia communia* of the senses, the latency of all in each, and reflect that, physiologically, they are so many specializations of a general diffuse sensibility which is not that of any one of them.

the billiard ball, or the seemingly slow but actually most rapid motions of the starry heavens, matters might be more simplified.

To say with the metaphysician that an organism possesses, or is possessed by "a principle of individuation" is to say in other language that an organic unit is a complex organic compound which, once formed, resists disintegration, holding together as long as it can, not otherwise than as a chemical compound does. Every being naturally resists, passively or actively, its unbeing, and organic being most actively of all. The reactions shown by it in fulfilment of its nature to be and grow in suitable conditions for its ordained period, are rightly described in other terms than those applied to chemical reactions: attraction or affinity becomes active liking or desire—it affects or selects that which, being agreeable, it can assimilate or make into its like and so use for its maintenance and growth; indifference or incompatibility becomes dislike or repulsion—it shuns or rejects that which it cannot assimilate and, being disagreeable, it can make no use of or is hurt by. That is the fundamental motive of all organic being, high and low.

Undoubtedly the necessary descriptive terms have been a hindrance to close investigation of the basic facts, separation of names having led to a separation of things in thought. So it came to pass that the like or dislike was accepted as itself an explanation, without considering more deeply that the attraction or repulsion had a material basis, and what it signified physically. Nay, it further led to the assumption of an intangible mysterious something behind the substance, a hidden vital entity, which liked and disliked, loved and hated, rejected and embraced. Yet, when all is said, the organic element reacting to embrace the fit and repel the unfit stimulus no more makes a spontaneous election than one chemical element does of another in order to form a compound, or than the sunflower does when, responding to the sunbeam's caress, it turns to greet it. The reaction, in fact, is not something spontaneous within the organic

substance which goes before the movement to determine it, but simply the physical reaction of the specially constituted matter to the stimulus suited to act on it. How imagine spontaneity in the reaction of the tender shoot to the stimulus of light, and in the gradual growth, steadily, imperceptibly, molecule by molecule, of the branch by the incorporation of innumerable successive reactions into structure? Because the attraction is fixed, definite, certain, we do not speak of spontaneity as we might and probably should do were there any show of uncertainty, doubt, choice; as he, indeed, can hardly help doing who watches a wavering vine-tendril swaying to and fro slowly in seeming indecision before definitely fixing itself.

From lowest organic irritability to highest organic reaction there is continuity of natural process, no break or pause in the ascent from monad to man. Whatever the superior agency at work in the highest nervous processes, the basis is physical reaction: that which is *irritability* in muscular substance becomes *excitability* in nervous substance. When a nerve is stimulated there is a constant sequence of events: it is excitable, a nervous energy of some kind is excited, and this subtile energy travels as a wave or current along a nervous track to its terminals, to spend itself there in work of some kind, good or bad. Simple reflex action is just such process along fitly fashioned structure. The wink of an eyelid—nowise an instance of the simplest reflex action—is as direct an effect of its special nervous mechanism as any stroke which does its special work in a physical machine; it imports a nervous machinery formed and fitted through remote ages now to act automatically. Such vital automatism, representing the then active memory of embodied experiences, may be called the present awakening of their silent memories. In every acquired reflex action the fit organization is seen in manifest process of gradual formation by repeated practice of a special nervous tract in a special work, and the automatic function of it when completely formed. A man spits as

easily as he coughs, but the one is an art which he has had to learn gradually for himself, and he may do well or ill, whereas the other is a function which has been learnt for him in a dateless past and he now inherits ready-made.

In the simplest reflex act the single impulse goes directly from start to issue of fit-linked movement, but in complex reflex action the impulse is distributed along various co-ordinated tracks, to end in the combined movements, simultaneous and successive, of the final act. A configuration or composition of motions is organized in the mental confederation—an organ, so to speak—the elements of combination being simple reflexes that have been formed previously and duly articulated and fixed in structure; for as an organ is composed of different tissues, so a compound reflex is composed of different simpler reflexes. What, then, must its full excitation by a fit stimulus be? Nothing else but the ordered discharge of its store of acquisitions, the unloosing in function of its consolidated purposive movements.

Here due attention may be drawn to the fact, nowise adequately appreciated, that the definitely organized configuration or pattern of a complex reflex contains implicitly the sensory as well as the motor elements of its composition; not only the simpler constituent reflex movements, that is to say, but a latent incorporation of the sensory stimuli in response to which they were formed in the past and now tacitly respond. Though not consciously felt, these are silent memories represented in structure and functioning in its function. Therefore it is that the external stimulus, exciting them according to their mutual ordering, produces a resultant activity out of all apparent proportion in kind and degree to its quality and quantity. What evident ratio between the leap of a hunter and the gentle stimulus of the rider's touch? Yet the horse could not make the leap had not countless ages of perfecting practice embodied the fit sensory and motor elements in the present equine structure; its mysterious inmost mechanism containing implicitly the

many potential impulses which are now, by virtue of special training and in response to a special stimulus, exploded within rule in so swift succession as to seem instantaneous.

In the most complex reflex action of all, which takes place in the supreme cerebral centres of man when the sensation elicits reflection, and the reflection, whether narrow or wide, shallow or deep, is followed finally by the proper voluntary act, the process is essentially parallel. An act of will is a purposive act, a more or less compound formal act, in which a nervous impulse stimulating and gathering forces in sequent motion issues after traversing definite paths of reflection—in other words, after implicating its definite reflexes. Here, however, the complexity of things is apt to obscure the simplicity of the conception. In the first place, we have not to do immediately with sensations and their respondent movements, but with their supreme cerebral representatives, their functions raised to a higher power, in fact with abstractions of them; for these pregnant forms or compositions of represented sensations and movements subserving general and abstract thoughts mean physically the finest nervous plexuses on the highest cerebral plane, representative plexuses abstracted from constituent nervous processes of a simpler and lower order. They are indeed just the parallel nervous processes of the ascending processes of mental development, the processes, that is, of generalization, classification, judgment. As always in the ascent of organic matter in dignity, there is a progressive concentration of energies into more minute compass of finer and more complex substance. In the second place, as the working of reflection is indirect, circuitous, complex, the currents of energy passing swiftly along several tracts to reach their end, the underlying physical process is easily lost sight of. Conscious that they instantly will a certain end, men stay not to consider how the unconsciously traversed paths of the purposive act have been gradually fashioned by practice, so that the act of will is possible and now done instantly. Did they but think well on it they would perceive

that the largest part of any act of will is always unconscious, and the best-fashioned will unconscious in largest measure.

It follows naturally, then, that as with composition of movements in the compound reflex, so with combination of thoughts in reflection, there is no apparent proportion between the large and deep reflection of the wise brain and the simple impression which perchance solicits and elicits it. How could there be? The present wise reflection never could be performed had it not been made potential by the incorporation in the brain of millions of ancestral reflections reaching back immemorially to simpler primal forms, any more than a man could grow to think and do as he does but for the long line of his organic antecedents quintessentially and invisibly incorporate in the richly pregnant germ from which its mature structure is step by step evolved visibly. If every brain contained mental stuff of the same quantity and quality structurally fashioned after the same pattern, it would perform mechanically the same reflection on the occasion of the same stimulus: it could not do otherwise than reason in exactly the same way from exactly the same premisses. When a sane brain habitually works irrationally it is no accident, nowise a freak outside mental laws; it is the fault of ancestral formation, bespeaks an irrational foundation uncorrected by rational training.

As brains are not simple and uniform in constitution but differ much in complexity and quality of structure, and as every object has several facets or aspects of appeal, it results that an impression which elicits little or no reflection in one brain excites wide reflection in another brain and different reflections in different brains. The premisses never are quite the same: as many minds so many modes of perception, feeling, thought and judgment. Now to say of one mind that it thinks differently on something from another mind—of the botanist, for example, that he has other ideas of a tree than the peasant—is to say that the structure of it in the relation to the object differs, its information or mode of formation by nature, training and culture having been

different, and that the special reflection is the natural function of the special structure. For in no case is the object which is perceived and thought either outside or within *the* mind, as ordinary language implies, it is *mind* then and there active, the synthesis or product of subject and object, the *thing* and the *think* in one: there exists no separate mind to lay hold of and think on an external object, but a concrete brain brought into suitable contact with the particular external object makes the particular thought or mind.

If the human body, like every other organism, be a complex mechanism adapted to generate and framed to store force when suitably supplied with nutritive fuel, and thereafter to distribute and use it in manifold ways, a natural question is: What are the working forces which prompt and sustain its doings? They are obviously two—the self-conservative instinct to maintain and increase its life and the reproductive instinct to propagate and perpetuate life; these the two deep sources of motive energy from which all feelings and actions spring. They depend not on reason, but go before it in the order of organic being, are elemental; they attest indeed the energic force—the *nisus formativus*—of organic evolution working in the individual.

Physiologically the self-conservative instinct is served by the visceral organs co-ordinated by the *splanchnic* nervous system to co-operate in unity of function; the propagative instinct specially by the reproductive organs, which not only serve its special function but, likewise co-ordinated, play their part in the unity of the whole body. Had the animal organism been fixed to one spot like a tree, and able so to obtain its requisite nourishment, such purely organic system might have sufficed; no further mechanism would have been needed to maintain and propagate the self. But inasmuch as the animal had to move about to get its food, another system of organic mechanism was added for the purpose—a locomotor system to serve as means and instrument of the gratification of the fundamental instincts.

Thence ensued a concurrent need—the need of a special nervous system, the so-called *cerebro-spinal*, to co-ordinate and direct the instruments or members subserving the life of active relation with the external world. These two nervous systems, although having their special dominions, are not separate and independent: how indeed could they be separate in *one* body, itself an organic whole, in which every part, mutually related, works in the whole and the whole in every part? Intermixed throughout they are in vital interrelations through a central nervous system of brain and spinal cord representing a complex hierarchy of fine nervous plexuses with afferent nerves from and efferent nerves to all parts of the body, every part of which is represented centrally in it, and all parts kept in co-ordination and unity of function by it. On the one hand then stands the organic system serving the life of feeling and linking man to the nature which was and is; on the other hand, the motor system which, serving the life of relation, is the means and instrument to the nature to be through him; and between them is the internuncial cerebro-spinal system, mediator-like partaking the two different natures and thus subserving their mutual interaction.

Now this intermediation supposes, and its cerebro-spinal basis imports, an intellectual mechanism in the supreme centres to minister to the formation of ideas and the fit associations of them. The increasing speciality and complexity of the individual's relations with the external world are accompanied by a corresponding specialization and complexity of the organic machinery, which embodies in its structure and thereafter displays in its functions these multiplying relations of sensory impressions and adaptive motor reactions. Their incorporate ratios are the basis of conscious reason, which is indeed the effect and exponent of them, nowise the pre-existent dictator of their successful adaptations; if they existed not in structure it could not be performed in function. Nor does this intellectual system, any more than the motor system, supply the motive impulses of action; these spring

from the organic life and supply the energy which is guided and ruled by the understanding through paths of reflection—that is to say, through the fitly-formed cerebral reflexes which mental reflections import. The idea is impotent to act, it has no motive force in it; is simply the form, clear or obscure, distinct or vague, through which the force of feeling works well or ill to its end. Obviously force and form ought to co-operate in full and nice adaptation to achieve the best result—the force of desire or feeling find its fit stay, rule and instrument in the intellectual mechanism, and the mechanism be adapted to use the force functionally in the best way and with the least waste. No machine can function otherwise than badly which has not adequate motive force to work it, and it is but a poor machine in which, as in many physical machines, a large proportion of the force is wasted in its working. How rare in human life the happy chance of an exact fit of force and mechanism, the just proportion of feeling to intellect in the brain! And how many miseries, vexations, errors, follies, failures, calamities and catastrophes does their disproportion not occasion!

A just reflection on the exquisitely fine and admirably perfect mechanism of a gnat's body, which contains implicitly more reason than is yet explicit in human reason, might almost tempt a wonder, if not a regret, that reason ever became conscious in man, seeing how excellent was its workmanship before it was conscious. Further reflection, moreover, on the structure and function of the human body, if unbiassed by preconceived opinion of its perfect construction, might even warrant the conclusion that nature has yet much reason to learn and apply before it reaches perfection in its highest organic work.

Passions or emotions signify nervous commotions which discharge themselves in movements, visible or invisible. When their outward and visible movements obey the rules of social convention they are called natural and proper, perhaps beautiful; they are reckoned irregular and uncouth, perhaps ugly, when they overleap such rules. Although a

convulsive grimace is as natural as a smile—more natural, indeed, sometimes to an intensely neurotic temperament—it is not pleasant to see, because, having no social meaning attached to it, it is not a sign of intelligent import; not being the outward translation of a friendly mood, as the smile is, but meaningless movement on a face where the onlooker expects the reflection of intelligence, it is called defacing and deemed a deformity. Every passion is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, according as it does or does not mark and promote the gratification and well-being of the bodily organism in which it is roused and the social organism of which that body is a living member, that is to say, according as it physiologically quickens and aids, or weakens and hinders, the individual organic processes, socially aids or hinders the processes of the collective life. Is it not pretty much to these fundamental principles that all elaborate disquisitions concerning the nature and value of human motives and acts are reducible at last?

The forms of emotional expression in physiognomy, gestures, gait and attitude being for the most part conventional, different peoples select, train and employ their respective specialities of movements for the purpose; and as each nation persistently teaches its own forms by example and precept to its members from their cradle, and the infant is constitutionally a most imitative reflex mechanism, these are so imperceptibly grafted and firmly fixed as habits as to seem most natural. Thus it comes to pass that the expression of a passion which is pleasing and grateful to one human section looks disgusting and ugly to another section, and that peoples are prompt to dislike, hate, fight and kill one another because their languages or their grimaces differ. Liking can be expressed by licking as well as kissing, and is just as natural, albeit not so polite, an art, nor ranking so high in the order of mental evolution. For as men grow in refinement a sort of abstraction or sublimation of the concrete is registered in delicate reflexes at a higher cerebral level—ascent, for example, made from the playful bite, the

lick and sniff of coarse liking or lust to the most refined expressions of the passion; from the angry bite, the snarl or sneer of dislike, and the scowl of hatred to cold motionless disdain. What takes place in this process of humanization is a progressive refinement and condensation of force in more delicate cerebral mechanism, which then expresses itself in fine and restrained function; witness, for example, the calm contained power in the quiet reserve of good breeding, when exhibited in contrast with the tumultuous agitation of vulgar feeling; or, again, the gross, uncouth, howling laugh of the imbecile who is incapable of the gentle restrained smile of intelligence; or, again, the rapt, almost breathless ecstasy of the spiritual love-transport in contrast with the fierce and violent commotion of brutal lust.

When the organic mechanism discharges itself through currents of ideation and reflection in purposive action, the function is called voluntary. The real motive power is not then, of course, in the ideation or reflection, but in the force of feeling or desire which thus presses to and expresses itself in action suited to discharge and ease it. The paths of reflection by which, being fitly ruled and conducted to its end, the force becomes purposive are the suitably fashioned intellectual means or mechanism of its fulfilment; as without the force of feeling the intellect would want motive power, be impotent to act, inert mechanism only, so without its fitly instructed or structural means the feeling would issue in unruly, random, explosive, perhaps hurtful action. Indispensable condition of every definite act of will is the silent intuition or distinct conception of its purpose or aim—of its defined form, so to speak; and such intuition or conception presupposes and implies the acquired mechanism of organized reflection, which, like the fit muscular mechanism, constitutes the definite means of its performance.

As the reflection preceding an act of will is little or much, narrow or wide, shallow or deep, the consequent volition is more simple or composite accordingly. Wills are indeed most various in composition and quality, there being no

such thing as a constant will apart from each particular will; and it is always the individual who performs the particular will, not an abstract will which actuates him and performs itself. Beneath every volition, as beneath every reflex process, runs a fine wave of physical energy presupposed by and conditioning it; the course of this motion may be comparatively straight and simple or circuitous and complex, but in either case its purposive path has been organized by practice so that the particular will can now be done which never could have been done had it not been thus fitly instructed or structuralized. For it is gradually fashioned not by an autocratic will from some higher sphere intervening to pre-concert and command execution, but by a steadily perfected interaction between the proper muscular movements and the object, the purpose perfecting with the perfecting execution and not perfect until the execution is perfect. The unlearnt will can no more will than the untaught hand of the child can grasp.

Every act of will, whether of high or low degree—the will to blow a nose, to scratch a pimple, to fasten a button, to hold a pen, to meet a shock, to suffer or avenge a wrong—being a matter of gradual instruction, can therefore be done well or ill; the particular will being strong or weak, definite or indefinite, perfect or imperfect, according as its nervous mechanism has been completely or incompletely organized by the instructing practice. He who knowingly puts out his hand to grasp an object which he wants or to push away an object which offends him—both acts possible to him only because he learnt them from his cradle—is said to put his will in action, although it would be more exact to say that he performs a particular will. His present instant and definite purposive act prompted by desire is thus instant and definite because it is done by the instructed means of perfected reflex action incorporating in its organization antecedent reflection of which he is now unconscious. In like manner the most complex will which is performed owns the same principle of structural formation, *in-formation* or

*in-struction;* it is a case only of composition of reflections and a resultant compound volition with richer contents. There is not indeed a single act of perfectly formed will, simple or complex, which might not be performed in exactly the same way in response to the right electric stimulus precisely and exclusively applied, were that feasible, to the proper area of the cerebral cortex. Such will is actually so performed in a sort when disease, disintegrating the mental organization of the supreme cerebral area generally, yet dissecting out, so to speak, a special nervous tract which it leaves unhurt, excites and exhibits the dissociated function of the surviving tract: articulated normally in the mental organization, the volitional tract is then disarticulated by the disease. The intelligent observer may patiently watch instructive displays of such disintegrations as they are grotesquely presented by the grimacing features of the dying general paralytic; for the dismembered volitions then exhibit in strange distortions the irregular actions of the devastated organic mechanism.

Although feeling supplies the motive force of will, yet feeling itself is not original but derivative, being the conscious outcome of the fundamental attraction or repulsion in the nervous element whose excitability has been affected by the impression. Without this underlying physical affection or commotion the passion, emotion, or affection of mind could not be, and because of the special constitutional dependence the quantity and quality of feeling differ in different persons, in the two sexes, in the same person at different seasons of life. Thus, as always, ultimate analysis reaches and strikes a physiological basis of molecular physics—the fundamental facts of the stimulation of nerve-element, the excitation of a current of energy in consequence, and the distribution of that energy along definite nerve-tracks. Will comes out at last as organic irritability raised to its highest terms of cerebral expression, and the best will as the present culmination of organic evolution.

Individuals notably differ much in sensibilities. Some

have such over-sensitive and irritable temperaments, such low flash-points of sensibility, so to speak, that they cannot stay to control sensations, but are moved by the present sensation, if at all urgent, and act according to the few servile ideas summoned hastily to its sessions; they cannot rule and guide the sensation in right ratio along paths of reflection so as to maintain due proportion—that is to do rationally; which is to say, in other language, that they cannot pause to muster and weigh reasons and judge and act well accordingly. The will they perform then is necessarily of a very low order of composition. They say of themselves, and like others to say of them, that they are very sensitive, highly strung, which is true in a sense, but they have no right to count their infirmity a superfine quality, as they are apt to do. It is a constitutional defect: they have not the stillness and continence, the quietness and confidence, which signify strength: the stimulus to which a strong character responds inwardly in function of a higher order of mental composition being overstimulation to them, provokes an outward explosion of tumultuous agitation which is sometimes almost convulsive. Great irritability is indeed the note of nervous weakness; for which reason it is most manifest in women, in feeble neurotics, in sick persons and young children.

Many persons are in like manner the victims of their passions. They cannot control and rule the forces of them by fit distribution and ordered method at the higher level of reflection, and though they perform a more complex will than the low-willed victims of sensations, this is far from being of the highest order of composition. Wanting the right composition of passions which exists in the higher mental organization subserving large reflection, sane judgment, and stable will, they cannot form and perform the most composite volition, are incapable of attaining to that calm, strong, rational will which philosophers preach and poets praise as the aim and crown of wise mental culture. Nevertheless, when their mental energies are concentrated

in one passionate aim, a resultant fanatical will may be a potent force and do great work, good or ill, in the world.

The stronger the stimulus to sense within physiological limits the stronger, generally speaking, is the excitation of nervous energy and the stronger the consequent will. But the general proposition is subject to the qualification that there is no constant physiological limit, an equal addition to the strength of a stimulus producing very unequal effects in different minds, and in the same mind in different states of health and at different seasons of life; effects indeed which differ not in degree only, but sometimes virtually in kind. Between the impression and the expression there is the complex individual nature and all therein implied. The stimulus which produced one effect at twenty-five will produce an opposite effect at fifty-five years of age, different effects, too, in different conditions of the atmosphere; while an atom gone astray in metabolism may notably so change the nervous tone of a person, precipitating him from a height of joyful energy into an apathy of dismal despair, as to render the impression which in the former case elicits brisk and strenuous will utterly impotent to excite any will in the latter case. Compared with the exquisite subtilties and complexities of the human organism and its fine susceptibilities to jars of structure and function, the most complex and delicate musical instrument with its easy liabilities to be put out of tune may perhaps be counted a simple and crude mechanism.

The effect of the external stimulus is of course increased not only by direct increase of its force, but also by the co-operation of other stimuli, as happens notably when an object is more eagerly desired and more firmly grasped because it pleases more senses than one—is at the same time grateful to the eye, pleasant to the touch, sweet to smell or taste. Mark, for example, how one sense notoriously joins with another to kindle a resultant fire of lust when liking is inflamed into lust and lust flames into brutal passion. It may be objected that lust pressing forward to

passionate gratification is then in the man, as always in the animal, the expression not of will but of passion in action. But is not that to make the usual mistake of letting words govern facts instead of using the facts to govern the words? Where is there an utterance of will more fierce, more persistent, more full of devices sometimes, than that exhibited by lust in the wiles and guiles it employs and the efforts it makes to gratify its yearning? If it be then called passion, it must be allowed to be sometimes passion working by wit to obtain its wilful end. Let the passion rise to the higher plane of love, putting on the decent drapery of a delicate reserve and the graces of refined expression, there is then no scruple to see and own will at work; it is when the unpurified passion presses rudely to its end by coarse and less complex ways that there is a repugnance to admit any presence of will in it, or at all events a determination to ascribe the conduct to a low, debased will, seduced or enthralled by passion, which is somehow at the same time will and yet not true will.

All which goes to show how much it might conduce to deliverance from the thrall of words and to clear freedom of thought if the truth were distinctly realized that there is no such thing in nature as an abstract will to be bond or free, no spiritual entity which, soaring free aloft, is only lamed in utterance by extraneous hindrance, but always a particular will, lofty or low in composition, of inconstant strength and quality, and that no two wills are ever exactly equal. Be it lust of the flesh or lust of the spirit, it is not will which is absent in the one case and present in the other, but its composition and plane of exercise are different; in the former an inferior will, coarse and comparatively simple in composition, works along lines of a lower evolutional level; in the latter a superior will, finer and more complex in composition, works along lines of a higher level. The low-willed man lacks *elevation* of mind in its literal sense.

Here again the separateness of names tends to obscure

the continuity of things. Neither will in its highest form as the agent of supreme reason, nor the moral feeling which is then its finest ingredient, is separable from the lower qualities and feelings of human nature, or could ever have existed without them; both are rooted in and cannot be parted from these, but grow from them by continuity of development, as flower from stem and stem from root. Physiologically they import a most fine and complex network of nervous organization which, like each subordinate network in the nervous hierarchy, has its special sensibility, is excitable by its proper stimulus, and discharges its own currents of energy along the paths organized therein by inheritance and education; for such network implies not only a multiplication and refinement of feelings, esthetic and moral, but specially linked movements, ideal or actual, together constituting the exquisitely fine apprehensions or cerebral reflex grasps which take place. Where there are no such fine plexuses in the supreme cerebral plane, as is the case in the lowest savages, there can be no refined moral sentiments nor corresponding wills; when the plexuses are defective or defaced in civilized persons the moral feelings and will are defective or debased; and when disease erazes these acquisitions of superior culture the moral feeling and will are effaced.

When all is said, it is neither passion nor will which is the real working force; they are but general names denoting the conscious outcomes of underlying organic operations; it is the concrete person, a compact whole of manifold tissues and organs who, diversely affected according as they differ, feels and shows passion more or will more—that is, passion less or more controlled in form and ruled in expression. As it is the man who thus wills the will, he is necessarily determined by his constitution, culture and situation to will good or bad wills, weak or strong, turbulently passionate or calmly rational, coarsely and loosely, or finely and compactly compounded. They inevitably represent his essential character, bodily and mental; for there is not a particle of his body, even

to his finger-tips, not an elemental nutrition or secretion, which is not felt in mind and does not feel mind in it. The man's life-history, being the inevitable expression of his character in his various situations and circumstances, is the true record of his will; wherefore a single scientific biography, if ever made, must needs be a psychological contribution of inestimable value. Such scientific study of will by observation and induction may turn out to be a far more excellent way than to anticipate the voluntary effect and then convert it into antecedent agent, as the wont is.

The psychologist who abstracts passion or will from the concrete processes and converts the abstraction into entity and agent does very much as a farmer might do who should go to work to abstract and equalize all the dogs, horses, oxen, sheep, pigs and other living things on his farm as animals, and thereupon deal with them abstractly and uniformly, treating each individual not according to its kind and character, but as abstract animal which could eat the same food, do the same work, and required the same handling. An odd sight truly that would be, but hardly more incongruous than that of the metaphysician who diligently occupies himself in subliming and abstracting his material, and in then dealing with his mental sublimates as realities.

As differences of individual character reach down to the organic depths of mind, the native differences of organic sensibility with their accompanying differences of reaction necessarily build up differing reflex mechanisms—that is to say, differing modes of feeling, thought, judgment and conduct. No two persons, even of the same family, resemble one another exactly in sensibilities any more than they do in features, voices, or movements; for no two persons of different families contain and sum up the essence of the same ancestors, and no two children of the same parents, though they contain the same ancestral essences, are begotten and bred under the same conditions, mental and bodily, inherit therefore exactly the same complex combinations of infinitely fine elements and motions, and transmit their

inheritance to be developed under exactly the same conditions. Considering that the minute reproductive germ, apparently almost homogeneous, contains the quintessence of its long line of ancestral beings and the potentialities of all the structures and functions of the mature human body into which it eventually develops, its seemingly amorphous substance secretly impregnated with their potential forms and motions, it is easy to understand why differences of qualities show themselves in the heterogeneities of growth; considering again that the microscopic speck, quivering intimately and intensely with infinitesimally subtile and complex motions, cannot fail to be affected by the special circumstances, mental and bodily, of the act of fertilization —to have perhaps the very tone of its whole being, harmonious or discordant, thus determined by the present mood and action, mental and bodily, of the agents; considering, lastly, that two such marvellous condensities of strangely pregnant substance—ether-whorls of complex motions, so to speak—meet either to combine lovingly and perfectly, or imperfectly and discordantly;—it is not in the least strange that of two children of the same family one perchance has a goodly and the other a poor heritage. Instead of wondering that two sons of the same parents pretty equally endowed mentally, and living in pretty nearly the same circumstances, yet develop differently in life, the one succeeding well where the other fails, the wonder would be if it were not sometimes so.

If the subtilties of organic processes did not far exceed the subtilties of observation and exposition it might be possible to read and interpret mind in correlated structure and correlated structure in mind—the cat's mind in the cat's structure, the sheep's mind in the sheep's structure, the monkey's mind in the monkey's structure, and every human mind in the features of its special bodily structure. Give the tiger the sheep's foot and tooth, and what would become of its fierce and destructive proclivities? Give the sheep the tiger's tooth and claw, and how long would its inoffensive

meekness last? In the conformation, carriage, gait, attitudes, gestures and physiognomy of a person an acute observer may sometimes detect the distinct or faintly traced likeness of some animal—of the fox in one person, of the tiger in another, of the cat, the elephant, and varieties of dogs in others, and find, if he inquire closely, that the mental characters correspond. Without doubt the character of every mind is written in the features, gestures, gait, and carriage of the body, and will be read there when, if ever, the extremely fine and difficult language is fully and accurately learnt. It is language studied and partly interpreted in his picture by the great Painter who paints a human portrait which is not merely a mechanical likeness but a living exposition of the person.

# CHAPTER III

# THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

## I

### ITS CONSTRUCTION AND DESPOTISM

The social source of the moral imperative—Benefits of social union—Social composition of vices and virtues—Social development through marriage, family, tribe, nation—Individual rights and social authority—The social necessity of superstitious hypotheses—Ceremonies, taboos, customs and fashions—The disintegration of a community—Social variations—Suppression of variations—The conatus of organic growth and the sun's energy—The self-regarding passions as motive forces of social progress—The prudence of social conformity—Morality the selfishness of the species—Immoralities as natural degenerations—Universal brotherhood and a reign of righteousness.

How plain and urgent the rules of wisdom and virtue to be observed in order to strengthen the health, to heighten the intellect, to refine the morals of mankind! By diligently observing them every one is assured that he will perfect himself and be most happy; for he will then be the best example and most useful organ of his kind. But whence comes the authoritative assurance and what is its worth? Immediately from the social body of which he is an element, whose interest it is thus to prompt and instruct him; its natural aim being so to inform him, so mentally to fashion him, that he shall perform well, and be pleased to perform, function which, most benefiting by, it most approves.

Solemnly then with awe-inspiring invocation of supernatural sanction it proclaims the duty and prescribes the ways of knowing all he can in order to do all he can for its service; and as he cannot do that if he act solely for himself, it imposes on him the imperative moral mandate to join with others of his kind in mutual love and service. Universal synergy through universal sympathy, that is the ideal moral end: to effect such an attraction of units by crushing their egoistic angles and smoothing their altruistic facets as may fit them to combine into a stable social body, instead of yielding to the personal repulsions which tend to drive them apart in pursuit of separate and self-regarding interests; to perfect, in fact, such an altruistic transformation of egoisms that the individual pleases his self-love by doing good to his kind and does good to himself by pleasing his kind.

Strangely antagonistic are the means which nature thus employs to develop the human species socially, for it is by the reciprocal struggle of opposite forces in action and counteraction that a progressive equilibrium is maintained. A perpetual tendency to social union goes along with a perpetual tendency to dissolution; self-regarding passions and propensities being in continual conflict with socialistic passions and propensities. Instability of the forces which produce it is, indeed, the essential condition of the existence of social as of all life. The individual, by reason of being individual, is necessarily egoistic, moved at bottom by self-interest, eager to appropriate things to self as centre, to force them into compliance with his moods and wishes, essentially therefore hostile to and inclined to hate his neighbour who, on his side, has the same fundamental feelings and the same impulses to personal growth and gain. But two persons meeting in frequent intercourse soon find out that they cannot enjoy a state of perfect liberty, that they must needs bear and forbear, and, secondly, that by living in social union each gains largely in power and comfort. Thence it comes to pass in a settled social system that everybody, losing some personal freedom, gains a larger

freedom, profiting immensely by the combinations of forces and opportunities of action which it puts at his service. The weakest member who is wronged claims and obtains all the power of the civilized state to have right done to him; the trained skill of its organized police to hunt, capture and convict the thief who steals his purse, and all the formidable and expensive array of its judicial machinery to enforce restitution from the wrongdoer who defrauds him, and to punish the ruffian who assaults him. It is clearly the interest of the individual, who is but one and weak, to obey social restrictions, seeing that it is his interest that others, who are many and strong, should obey them. For any one to repudiate such rules and to act antisocially is to become an alien from the social body, and to be branded by it in consequence as a culprit who, having renounced civil duties, has forfeited civil rights. Thus it is that the repulsion of individual egoism is counteracted by the social attraction, and the equilibrium, stable or unstable, of the social state established.

Happily, for the progress of things on earth, it comes to pass, in the complex composition of a society, that a man cannot help acting in its interest even when he acts from self-interest. There is hardly a single private vice which may not be shown to work immediately or remotely, directly or circuitously, for the public good; while every private virtue, if carried to excess, becomes demonstrably hurtful to it. The compound social whole is a composition of many and diverse elements, some apparently having opposite properties, yet all necessary, which it absorbs, mixes and transforms to make its own compound quality. Little thought is needed to show that men were not at first bound together into society by the pure attraction of liking or love, or that any society would hold long together which depended entirely on that force for its continued union; societies, tribal and national, have owed their formation and maintenance as much to the compulsion of hostile pressure from without and their so-called vices within, as to the

social sympathy which was the effect of necessary rather than the cause of predesigned social co-operation. In social as in other sorts of life the coercion and keeping of matter in form is constantly opposed to a persistent tendency to dissolution into its elements.

As in the process of humanization, which a progressive civilization signifies, organic evolution is raised to its highest power in social growth, it is no marvel that the intricate delicacy and large complexity of the mental organization implied by a lofty morality has required a long time and travail to be effected, or that the process is still incomplete and at its best unstable. Nor is it to be wondered at if, in spite of ardent hopes, cool doubts may intrude into a reflective mind whether the whole human race ever can be so knit together in complete unity and amity as to establish a perfect universal society. Here, however, as elsewhere, it was perhaps the first step in the ascending series which cost and counted most—to wit, marriage, the close and firm union of which, coercing the selfish impulses of the individual to primitive social ends, wrought that solid combination of units into the family which was the basic germ of more complex social unions. Thereby egoism worked in spite of itself to produce altruism; the selfishness of the individual, gratified to be the sole sanctioned possessor of a person of the opposite sex, stimulated by the need of keeping exclusive possession, and strengthened by the intimate interests and uses engendered, expanded into such primitive altruism as is implied in the selfishness of the family. Thereupon in due course the selfishness of families needing and using mutual services developed a more complex social body, and therewith the altruism implied in the selfishness of a tribal society. And so on to higher and still higher complexity of social combinations, in which the natural inclinations of the individual to lawless freedom, compelled to ever more and more disciplines under the restraints of the social community, have led to the achievements of arts and culture which adorn civilized life, and to the moral principles which have

been proclaimed to govern it. Beings who have borne the stress of wedded union, and grown painfully and tediously through innumerable ages in the scale of social complexity of composition, may be destined at last perhaps to attain the climax of combination into one human family.

Meanwhile the unit in a social state seldom realizes, hardly suspects, that he is being moulded and ruled and systematically used by the social body to which he belongs, or asks himself whether he gets the most he might get out of life by bowing to its authority and submitting tamely to its rules and exactions. Here an inevitable, almost insoluble, difficulty fails not to present itself—namely, how far the self-regarding individual ought to be curbed, and how far the authority enforcing restraint is justified. That authority being the social system in which he lives, what is to hinder it from being too self-regarding and egoistic, and doing him wrong? It may lodge its power in one person as its supreme and sacred representative, ascribing to him a kind of divine right, or in a special class of privileged persons, or in several representatives whom it chooses to govern it, but in each case the power may be, and often has been, abused. After all is said, it never is an ideal, sometimes is a quite unideal or anti-ideal society which owns and uses the individual. Societies notoriously differ much in constitution and development, and therefore the unit in a low social community may have a wretched time of it while he lives, even if he be allowed to live out his natural life. In the slow and toilsome travail of human development through the ages men have gone through dark and cruel stages in which individual rights have counted little or not counted at all. To be slain as a solemn sacrifice, whether with merciful expedition or mercilessly after slow torture, in order to bribe the spirit of vegetation to make the crops grow, or to propitiate the demons in wait to inflict diseases and other evils on the community, or to placate the angry god greedy for the fat of human sacrifice, and be an atonement for the sins of the people, might well have made many a poor wretch bethink himself,

had he been able to make the reflection, that he was not owing much to the social system which so used him.

Happily for him he could not thus ponder things; the world in which he lived was the limit of his thought and feeling; his fate he abjectly accepted with helpless awe as an ill-betiding event in a fixed order of things, inevitable, inconceivable to him otherwise, much as he might have looked on it had he chanced to have been struck down by a fever which his fellows were fortunate enough to escape. Withal he might, because of his poor thought and dull feeling, be better off than the more tender and reflective social victim of a later civilization who was subjected to the cruellest tortures imaginable, and finally burnt alive, for speaking a truth which, though it was for the world's good to have it spoken, his world did not then want to hear. The vital principle of all sacrifices, human or animal, corporeal or spiritual, being to propitiate the unknown power or powers, pernicious or protective, it followed that to deviate from the religious or social system of belief by which they were ordained was to fall out with the ruling principle of the social union and to undermine its unity—to sap faith in and impiously offend the national god or gods whose wrath would then surely be wreaked on the people.

In its standing conflict with external nature to make, maintain and increase itself, human nature was driven to invent and use many such working hypotheses to inspire and rule its doings; by placing behind the mysterious and all-powerful physical agencies which overawe and overwhelm it spiritual beings of like make and temper to itself whom it can propitiate and pray to, it creates something definite to apprehend and deal with, persuades itself that it can thus influence things for its benefit, gains courage to endure and hope to act systematically. Before it finds out the laws of nature and learns to conform to them, what else can it do but hold to such belief if it is to uphold and increase itself in its vast and unintelligible environment? As one person can only deal with another by supposing a

like mode of thought and feeling in him, so man in his dealings with nature must suppose either that it thinks and feels as he does, which is the old theological way of using prayer and magic as its means, or that he thinks and feels as it does, which is the modern scientific way of submitting the mind to things and conquering by obeying, as Bacon expresses it. In both cases the aim was to get into some sort of reconciliation and union with the environment.

It is an inexhaustible wonder, though the phenomenon be familiar as a household word, to see how stone blind people can be to rank unreason of thought and conduct in themselves which amazes and horrifies them in others. To the Christian of to-day nothing is more hideous and unspeakably revolting than human sacrifice by a barbarous people to its national god or gods; yet what were the innumerable deaths by torture inflicted on unbelievers by Christians in the name and for the glory of God but just as truly human sacrifices, and just as superstitiously motived, as any sacrifice offered up on Druid altar or by Astec priest? The Mexican hierophant who tore out the heart of the human victim and with outstretched arm offered it bleeding and palpitating to the god was not more essentially superstitious than, nor nearly so knowingly cruel as, the Christian who tore out the tongue of the blaspheming heretic guilty of uttering a premature and inopportune truth, and then burnt the poor wretch alive, or who watched with pious thrills of holy approbation the writhing agonies of his tortured victim. To refine a superstition by making it less gross and revolting is not to make it less essentially irrational. By its traditions, customs, laws, usages, ceremonies, education, language, its whole constructive and constant influence, sensible and insensible, the particular society so persistently and effectively moulds and fashions its units that they, living in, by, and for it, show forth in function what has been built up in the structure of their mental organization; they are, so to speak, its manufactured products, its incarnate traditions and customs, incapable therefore of thinking and feeling outside the set

grooves of their manufacture or believing in a better type of human product than they represent.

Whosoever stays quietly to reflect sincerely on the facts of human life as set forth in history and presented in present process may easily discern ample evidence of such social manufacture, and perhaps find in it the only explanation of the manifold absurd burdens and painful torments which the race has persistently devised and wilfully inflicted on itself, sometime and somewhere, in relation to almost every event of life from birth to death. So monstrously gratuitous and often grotesquely silly some of them, that they would have seemed unimaginable had they not been imagined, and utterly unnatural had they not been actual conditions of social development. "Thou shalt" has indeed inflicted more pain than "Thou shalt not" as a social edict. Considering the various customs, magic ceremonies, taboos, sacrifices, social rites, oftentimes most irksome, humiliating and painful, which peoples in all parts of the earth have invented and observed in their progress from primitive savagery, as if their only purpose had been to make themselves suffer as much as they could; considering, again, the wearisome ceremonies, the senseless customs and conventions, the ridiculous fashions of demeanour and dress, the dreary amusements, the shams and hypocrisies of social life which civilized people still invent, endure, and esteem as marks of achieved superiority over their savage ancestors; then weighing these considerations impartially, there seems no good reason to wonder at what men have done formerly, seeing that they do so absurdly now, and very good reason not to underestimate the power of social manufacture to fashion the mode of feeling and thinking of the unit. Reflecting furthermore that savage peoples in all times and in all parts of the world have independently invented and observed the same or similar irksome and irrational customs, and that to-day civilized peoples in different countries are pleased to endure and extol their similar ceremonies and fashions, however absurd, the conclusion seems just that, notwithstanding the incalculable

play of passion and the caprices of will, the evolution of human mind is governed by laws as fixed, natural and necessary as, though more complex and obscure than, those which govern the increasing complexities of chemical composition or the evolution and dissolution of suns and stars; the more so certainly when it is borne well in mind in how lame and inept a fashion primitive reason worked, not having logic enough to correct the grossest fallacy which was inflicting quite needless suffering in practice. Viewing which things objectively in reason's dry light, we perceive that they mark the steps of the *conatus fiendi* of organic matter as it rose progressively to more complex compositions and adjustments, stumbling and blundering on its tedious and tentative way.

When a social community has fashioned its units so perfectly that, like a nest of ants or a hive of bees, every one does just what is required by its rules of feeling, thinking and doing, it rests at a stay, being a very stable organic formation in the circumstances; and it may continue so apparently for an indefinite time when, being isolated, it receives no jarring impact from differently organized societies. But when it comes into contact and has to reckon actively with a social compound of different structure, too unlike to assimilate, yet too like to be indifferent, then it is liable and likely to suffer a disintegration and to break up into new compounds which, turning out better or worse, develop or degenerate: a process this which has gone on steadily from the beginning and still goes on, since nations have notoriously acted, and still often act, towards one another very much as tribes of savages which have not attained to the social state.

The more complex a mental organization becomes as the level of civilization rises, the more modifiable it is; the more apt therefore are variations to occur in the most plastic and developing substance of it, which is the human brain. Not only are such variations or new starts of thought more frequent but in natural consequence they meet with less antagonism and have more freedom when they

occur; the tyranny of the social environment is less rigid and repressive. Still a mean has to be kept between the erratic impulses to go off old paths and the sluggish disposition to stay on them; for if individual variations are extreme and active and the social inhibitions not proportionately strong and effective, it is obvious that the tendency of the deviations will be to disintegration. The special society, having the might, has then the right to restrain or suppress its too ardent reformers who would disturb violently and perhaps overthrow its equilibrium; it would carry toleration too far if it tolerated the promulgation and practice of a new doctrine subversive of its constitution. A healthy instinct of self-conservation recoils naturally and energetically from change which is not beneficent reform but destructive revolution. Rightly so too for the most part, seeing that the individual who feels no respect for the past in a present which is, and he in it, its natural outcome, and from which a future must proceed by natural order of development, but despises the wisdom of the long line of his predecessors of whom his life is, so to speak, the prolongation, must needs be possessed with such a disproportionate conceit of himself as is utterly irrational and may well border on madness. That is the notorious fault of the unstable, fanatical, half-insane temperament which, although representing sometimes good impulses and playing a great part in human movements, is rapt in a delirious enthusiasm, contemptuous of oppositions and opportunities, incredulous of counter-evidence and of the honesty of those who present it, unscrupulous in the use of means, instant to have unrealizable aspirations realized in a day. The difficulty for every social system to hit on the happy mean between stagnant conservatism which prevents wholesome change and the innovations which go beyond safe development and cause disintegration is all the greater because the structure of a society, like that of an individual, tends to harden into rigidity with age, so that impulses to variation are then few and weak, and restraints strong, whereas in youth when plastic substance abounds and structure is

soft and pliant, impulses to variation are frequent and restraints weak.

Variations and fitness to survive are one thing in a simple and comparatively homogeneous organism; they are quite another thing in a complex and very heterogeneous organism. In the former a variation suiting the surroundings might grow freely by direct natural affinity, whereas in the latter a variation, although itself suited to grow directly, might be checked, or stifled, or modified by manifold inhibitions—a thousand invisible threads, so to speak—arising out of the complex correlations of parts in the organic whole from which it proceeded, its free growth being incompatible with their intervital functions; it is not then a case of outward environment only, but also of the thousand latent environments which such constitutional correlations imply. As it is thus in the bodily organism, so it is in the social organism; a new idea good in itself is ignored, or suppressed, when, untimely born, its propagation would be pernicious to the particular social economy. A natural kindness of heart may compassionate the martyr who uttered it, and lament that he was not listened to and honoured in his day instead of being violently suppressed; but such tenderness of feeling betrays weak reflection, seeing that nature spares not the individual when it is necessary to sacrifice him, the species being its supreme concern, and that it must be supposed to fulfil its destiny best in its own way. If man cannot discern the reason or *ratio* of its course, that is because his egoism, obscuring his sense of proportion or *ratio*, causes him to judge irrationally whenever he is concerned.

The progressive development of organic matter from the simple and general to the complex and special in ascending series one must accept as a positive observation, endeavouring to trace the *How* without vainly troubling to know the ultimate *Why*. Of all bootless quests for a finite being who cannot think and speak but in terms of himself, none is more absurd than to search out the primal motive or first

principles of things.[1] This much he can know certainly—that the earth, as constituted and situate in the solar system, owes the constitution and progression of its organic matter, including himself, directly to the silent, constant, subtile-potent action of the archchemic sun's energy.[2] For as the solar mass holds the revolving planet in its just poise and orbit, so do its beams animate and maintain the motions of life on it, inciting and keeping the subservient molecules in their just poise and movements. Were its fire to go out to-night, where would life be to-morrow? Not then wholly ill-inspired in his adoration was the sun-worshipper, albeit it might be styled poor philosophy on his part to stay in secondary causes and worship them as agents. But is a more abstract philosophy which creates and worships a primal power in form of human thought so vastly superior and not, perchance, really a disguised self-idolatry?

In the mental region the development of new sensibilities and desires, and the discovery and employment of new means to gratify them, accompany and evince the addition of cerebral reflexes and the increasing complexity of organic structure; by working together in complex social union men not only multiply their wants and interdependences, but sharpen their intelligence, enlarge its range, and augment their powers. Though the individual loses some freedom by what he gains socially, yet the spirit of individuality is nowise wholly extinguished in him. All the passions of self-love come into varied social play to urge him to gain distinction among his kind: pride, ambition, avarice, envy, emulation, imitation, admiration, and the rest of them are so many forces which, gratifying individual feeling, yet serve by their complex interactions to promote social development; the bounds set to their self-regarding actions by the rules

[1] C'est ce qui a donné lieu à ces titres si ordinaire des *Principes des choses*, des *Principes de la philosophie*, et aux semblable, aussi fastueux en effet (en realité) quoique non en apparence que cet autre qui crève les yeux, *De omni scibili*.—Pascal.

[2] *Archchemic* is Milton's descriptive term.

governing the weal of the community, whereby individual freedom is disciplined to consort with the freedom of others, being eventually refined and sublimed into moral principles. To suppress their self-regarding strivings would be to stifle the very motive impulses of social growth. The aspiration after universal concord therefore expresses only the dumb prophetic longing of organic life for the repose death will one day give it; for it is plain that nature, knowing better what is requisite for the development of the species, ordains present unrest and discord, strife and struggle, as means of life and progress. All the apparent evils which spring from the antagonisms and anti-social tendencies in the social fermentation, being the necessary counteractions of the good, are not devil's work, unless it be the devil's special province to do good work by evil means, they are no less divine than any other cosmic events.

For his own interest's sake, and to make the most of himself while he is alive, the individual does well not to look too far ahead of the spirit of his own social community, which always takes stern order to enforce on its members conformity to edicts pronounced by it to be social, moral, and religious. And although a higher society enforce not its rules with the ruthless severities practised by lower societies, yet the mortal who is overmuch individual, coming into painful collision with its traditions, customs, conventions and beliefs, will be sure to suffer so much in consequence that he may prudently deem it to be wiser to go along with them than to go against them, even when he clearly perceives them to be bad. Self-interest dictates present profit out of the system by one who lives in it rather than a doubtful reform of it by self-martyrdom in standing out of or withstanding it. Besides, he may deliberately persuade himself that it is more right to go on working quietly in a system which on the whole and at the time is for the general good—all the more surely and placidly, too, the greater the place he fills in it—than to do anything prematurely to alter it. What matters it that therein he feigns to be what he is

not, or dissembles what he is, or, systematically feigning and dissembling, is himself an organized hypocrisy, so long as the community is gradually moralized and its progress promoted? He has the right, as believer in a universal plan, to expect that it will accomplish itself in its own good time and way, and quietly to abide that fulfilment. Nevertheless, a reflecting unit in a complex social system, thinking closely on the persistent and prosaic way in which he has been artificially fashioned from his cradle to think, feel and be as it would have him do, might from time to time be tempted to emancipate imagination from the cramping conventions of his community and to ask himself whether he would not have been happier as a simple social being with fewer desires, less ambitious aspirations, lower intellect, and ruder morals.

Such outcry of the natural man would be thought to mark a low level of intellectual and moral being in him who uttered it, and the society to which he belonged would be sure to think meanly of him in consequence. Its self-interest is to do all the pruning and training of the individual necessary to make him serve it best; not otherwise than as the close and well-trimmed hedge exacts much subordination, deformation and mutilation of the single shrub. In the end it comes simply to this—that the despotism of morality is the self-seeking of the species and the servitude of the individual, who is expected to find full compensation for his self-sacrifices in the implicit belief of its inestimable worth and the knowledge that he is ministering to its glorious destiny.

It is in like conformity with its solely selfish ends that it claims and mercilessly uses its right to do just as it pleases with all other living creatures. Man's supreme moral law does not stretch itself out to embrace them; on the contrary, his moral duty to himself and therefore to them is to enslave and use them for his service, and to feed and fatten in order to kill and eat them. His inhumanity to his kind, when the tale of

it is plainly set forth, is pronounced shocking, odious, deplorable, just because it betrays a want of fellow-feeling, a literal unkindness, an alienation from the spirit of the human hive, pious regard for which, however low and despicable its particular state, is counted supremely laudable in theory. How shrill an outcry of righteous indignation would be raised against any one who in a time of famine gave food to his starving horse rather than to a starving man, or did not kill his deserving horse, if need were, in order to feed an undeserving and utterly despicable man! Yet the horse may have been a most patient and submissive drudge, which never shirked an effort nor spared a strain to do him willing service, whose faithful servitude no kindness could adequately repay, while the man was the most vicious, scurvy, lazy, abject specimen of his species, loathsome to every sense, whom the world would have been well rid of at any moment. The regard is not then to the moral worth of the vile creature, it is to the postulated dignity of humanity in him who is himself contemptible enough—to the kind in the particular man, which is glorious and to be glorified in spite of its wretched example in him: the species thus exacts that its superiority be respected in its basest specimen, revering therein a desecrated shrine of itself. Such being the principle of man's self-worship, he is naturally disposed to condemn and bewail his past inhumanities, even while continuing them; than which nothing can be more truly illogical, seeing that he, being what he is now by virtue only of what he has been, the lamentation is no better than a conceited regret that he was not taken into the council of creation and permitted to shape its course.

Human morality being effect of the supreme selfishness of the species urged and urgent to consolidate and promote its growth to higher levels of collective being, it naturally follows that the divers developments of immorality are disowned as degenerations; for they are manifestly opposed to and signify the undoing of the slowly and laboriously fashioned kind. Nevertheless such degenerations are as

natural as the progressive steps of development, of which indeed they are the necessary antitheses, the two processes, like height and depth, involving one another. For in man's social nature, as throughout the universe, opposing forces work in reciprocal action and counteraction: a labouring impulsion towards a higher complexity of being on the one hand, which is called progress, and a counterworking tendency towards disintegration, which is called regress. That he does not clearly perceive and own this truth, but is apt in present process of living evolution to overlook the inevitable dissolution of human things, is doubtless owing mainly to the fact that his imagination is tied to measurable and comparatively short periods of time in the immeasurable flux of things and cannot well take a large enough flight.

A legitimate doubt then may well arise whether human self-worship will at last raise mankind to the height of a universal brotherhood pervaded and maintained by mutual love, which shall be the crown of organic creation. The history of the race on earth thus far hardly warrants the expectation of such a perfect consummation and bliss; nor is it easy to understand how a complex human economy could hold together in just poise and movement if pervaded by one force of attraction only, antagonistic forces being annulled, any more than a solar system could keep up its just poise and movement if subject to one force of attraction only. However, the optimistic believer in human perfectibility and perpetuity may reply, firstly, that the fraction of the human orbit yet known is so small as to afford no adequate data to predict what the complete whole will be; and, secondly, that there is distinctly evident through human history a slow stream of tendency making for righteousness, which presages a moral purpose to be fulfilled in time to come.

## II

### SOCIAL ATONEMENT

Individual and social being—Law of social atonement—Reward and retribution by natural social law—Prevalence and uniformity of sacrifices—Well-doing the function of a sound social nature—Debt and credit in the social system—The manifold atonements of social life—Composition and compensation in social evolution—Vices and virtues equally necessary—Evil a factor in the development of good—A temper of philosophical acquiescence—The social source of the moral mandate—Action and reaction of individual and social medium—Variable mean between egoism and altruism.

THE two ways of looking on the world—namely, either wholly from the anthropocentric standpoint or, so far as may be, from an outside station, involve necessarily different estimates of its events. Man's manifest concern is with self as centre and its relation to the small fraction of the universe with which alone it is in touch; having to live as well and as long as he can in the world, he must to that end make the best use he can of that without and around him which acts on him and he reacts to. So doing he cannot do otherwise than estimate things practically in relation to self, however fancifully he may speculate about that of which, being beyond the range of thought, he can know nothing and can only talk non-sense.

As it is an essential condition of every commonwealth to subordinate the self-regarding interests of the unit to the interests of the whole body, a law of social atonement is a fundamental principle of its economy. I speak not now of consciously formulated moral law, but of the pervading law of social atonement which is in silent and constant operation as an indispensable condition of social union; whereby all the members, though having their diverse functions, yet being members of one body and members one of another, suffer inevitably for one another's faults and profit by one another's virtues. A society in which such vital reciprocity of parts an

functions was abolished would be no society; it would be literally dismembered or disintegrated, and would have to be *re-membered* or reintegrated in order to regain unity and remembrance; not otherwise than as a dismembered federation of the supreme brain-tracts would be the abolition of mind and have to be *re-membered* in order to restore mental unity and remembrance.

That honesty is the best policy is not always manifestly true for the individual mortal, it might be so were he immortal; that a good action is not without its blest reward is untrue for many a benefactor whose reward is ingratitude and calumny, for the recipient too sometimes whom it helps to demoralize. As things are, within the short span of a life one person suffers oftentimes for virtues in him the possession of which makes for pains and the absence of which in another makes for gains. He must have been but a poor observer of men and things who at the end of a long life can join heartily in the Psalmist's exultant exclamation —"I have been young and now am I old, yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." Perceiving the falsification of the saying in this life, yet eager to uphold its useful credit, men look and long for another life after death in which amends shall be made, unrequited virtue duly recompensed, triumphant vice punished—"Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Thus to eternity and immortality are relegated the postulated compensation and retribution which a closer and more continuous and scientific view of things might show to be worked out vicariously and inevitably by natural social law in time and on earth.

Although his virtues be sometimes a let and hindrance to the individual in the social struggle, they are without doubt a good to the civil society. The cardinal principle of the social fabric is that a virtuous life is good because it is beneficial, a vicious life bad because it is hurtful, to its economy; or perhaps to speak more logically, that the life

which is good for it is virtue, the life which is bad for it is vice. The scattered few in the world who severally embody and perform virtue in one or another of its shapes are the leaven which leavens the whole lump and is used up in the process; of whom, indeed, it may be said in their several situations and qualities that they suffer for the world's transgressions, the just for the unjust, that they bear the burden of its sins, that by their stripes it is healed; the righteousness and strength of the few making atonement for the frailties and iniquities of the many. Crowned with applause, perhaps, when, being no more, they cannot heed it (should some curious inquirer chance to make a retrospective study of their lives) their daily wear is not unlikely to be a crown of thorns. The martyr dies for his kind but his name liveth for evermore. That is the reward by which his kind, celebrating him, glorifies itself and inflames others to work for its glory. Thus do mortals confer immortal fame, glorify a name for evermore, who themselves can easily foresee, nay, even calculate, a time when they shall be no more.

The dawning notion of social atonement now gradually perhaps emerging into scientific clearness, is discernible in the crude superstitions of primitive social communities and in the solemn sacrifices made by them with great ceremonies on special occasions, first of human beings and later of animals, to obtain good crops, to ward off famine and disease, to carry away by atonement the sins of the people. As primitive peoples everywhere, abjectly fearful and adoring, have notably made such sacrifices, invocations and prayers to the dread mysterious powers in the encircling gloom, which to them seemed to work capriciously to help or hurt, yea, often to kill for their sport, and made them, too, in like fashion independently in sundry times and divers places by apparent organic necessity, the conclusion is natural that they witness to an abiding law of social growth.

That there is found among men a sufficient leaven of self-renunciation to keep the social structure sound is somewhat surprising when the cost to the individual is studiously

weighed; it would be more so if the altruism were not really necessity rather than choice. Organic evolution fulfils itself by various scattered distributions of virtue, some qualities placed in some and other qualities in other individuals; and it is the pleasure of every organization to perform its function, the pleasure, therefore, of a well-endowed organization to do well because it would be repugnant and painful to its nature to do wrong. The essential reward of well-doing, moral and intellectual, is not praise or fame or profit, present or posthumous, nothing which the community can bestow or take away, it is the gratification which a well-constituted nature feels in the full utterance and perfect fulfilment of its being. The good man does good work, as the man of great mental powers does great work, as self-utterance and self-realization for his own comfort's sake. Pondering quietly the events of his life when nearing the end of it, many a mortal might, were he to think of himself and the recompenses of his work only, see grave reasons to regret the good actions which he did to others and not to regret the bad actions which served him at their cost. But it would be a fanciful and futile reflection; he could not in the interest of his own comfort have done differently on the whole, and need not take seriously to heart either praise for the one or blame for the other.

Small consideration is needed to show any one that he is inevitable debtor and creditor in the social system before he thinks on it, and when he little thinks on it, and larger consideration will easily teach him that he is immensely more debtor than creditor. Whatever reward he merits or claims for the good which he does to his fellows, he owes vastly more to the long line of antecedent beings who by their pains and gains built up the social structure in which he lives, moves, and has his being; the little that he can do at best for those who are to be after him will fall infinitely short of that which he owes to those who have gone before him. On that score there is a funded debt so large as to be quite beyond repayment: let him do all the good service he can to

the last hour of the longest life, he inevitably dies debtor at the last. That is a reflection which may serve to console him for the seeming waste of his well-doings and the pains which his virtues cost him. Besides, he might bethink himself whether in relation to his contemporaries he is not apt to be far more keenly alive to that which he does for them than to what he owes to them; his bread cast on the waters comes back to him fourfold sometimes, it may be by circuitous and unexpected ways after many days, and he often enjoys, without desert on his part, the bread which others have cast on the waters. A singularly lucky thinker is one who thinks a thought which some one has not thought before him, and he is intoxicated with a signal self-conceit who is not most distrustful when he feels most original. The sober-minded member of the human community will be content, bee-like, to serve his special social hive, to be one with it while one of it, without vexing himself with an exact computation of his debit and credit.

To spend himself for the good of the species, having a sure faith that his own true good lies therein, is no doubt work which is hard and sometimes exasperating in practice, and calls for a strong infusion of sound social feeling in the individual. Too often in real life events mortify just expectation: sincerity in promise and punctuality in performance encounter hollow promise and loose or counterfeit performance, self-denial is coolly exploited by self-interest, magnanimity requited by meanness, favours repaid with ingratitude and exaction, modest merit displaced by honour shamefully misplaced, forethought thwarted by selfish improvidence, truth discomfited by falsehood, the morality of the Sermon on the Mount trodden under foot by the morals of the Stock Exchange. The father cannot help expiating the sins of the son, the son those of the father; the husband bears the burden of the wife's and the wife the burden of the husband's error and evil behaviour; the industrious and provident citizen is taxed to support the lazy and improvident; the little leaven of good service leavens the mass of indifferent

and negligent service. Everywhere and always some one expiates the faults of another and makes social atonement for him. Were it not that virtue is thus crucified daily by natural operation of social law, it is certain that triumphant vice would carry all before it.

The divers moral and immoral qualities variously distributed in individuals meet, mix, and interact in the social economy to issue in the collective product: the social wine, so to speak, good or bad, the result of their tumultuous fermentation. What matters it how the necessary ingredients, sweet and sour—and sour as necessary as sweet—are distributed? To the particular person it is no doubt of mighty moment how he is intellectually and morally constituted, and wins or loses, grieves or joys, in consequence, but it is small matter to the social body whether the mental elements are gathered in one or two persons, or dispersed through several, or how they are mixed in the same person, so long as they are present in it in proper quantity and quality and do their ordained workings. Looking on himself as an end instead of as means in a process without end, and important only as means, he cannot readily make the belittling confession; yet a straight and wide look at things as they are in themselves and as a whole, might easily show him that when he is lame, or deformed, or stunted, or vicious in mind or body, he is indifferently used for what he is worth, and compensation made for his defects elsewhere. Then also it might appear that he need not consume himself in vexing regrets and mortifying reflections, as foolish as futile, about his doings, but tranquilly remit the affair to the charge of the universal plan to make the right compensations. As the social system gets the benefit of what he does well, though he suffer wrong thereby, so he is entitled to the benefit of its welldoing to cancel what it does amiss, though it suffer wrong thereby.

The egotistical notion of man that his race is an end in itself because it is an end to him, not merely a transient ripple of an endless flux of things, puts it out of his power

to realize his true position in a social system, and the relation of his manifold changing social systems to the cosmic process. The unceasing conflict of so-called good and evil amazes and confounds him, because his colossal self-idolatry likes not to think that they are terms of his relations only, having no meaning outside such limitations. Yet sins and sunstrokes, earthquakes and embracements, heroisms and adulteries, battles and murders, volcanic and national explosions are obviously alike natural and proper events in the inexorable sequence of things; neither good nor evil as they are in themselves, only so in his thinking. A vice in his constitution is no vice in the constitution of the universe, nay, hardly perhaps a vice in the constitution of society; anger, however wrong in him no more wrong nor unprofitable in nature than sourness in a salt; homicide as natural an event as an eclipse, and however blameworthy when done by the individual for his own ends, praiseworthy when done by him in battle for his country, or by his society to get rid of an anti-social criminal. Like the combination of the acid and the alkali to form a chemical salt, the union of vice and virtue in the social organism is necessary to constitute morality; vice could not live without virtue, nor virtue live without vice: for any one to live exclusively in the one or the other, were that possible, would be to be conscious of neither. Besides, viewing things closely and impartially as they interwork positively in the complexities of social life, it is plain that a vice in the individual sometimes works more good than a virtue; which is doubtless the reason why their respective sums on earth have always remained pretty equal in quantity and counterpoise.

It will be said perhaps that the evil which man does to his kind is unquestionable evil, and no verbal sophistry can make it otherwise. How can that have been evil, save in a narrow and false sense, the doing of which has actually been an essential factor in the development of the race on earth? It were a strange thing if that has been an evil to the race by which the race has so plainly profited! Those who suffer

wrong now that it may grow in power and dignity might be excused if they cry out against the evil they are made to endure, seeing that their feelings count for much to them, were it not that they can subdue themselves to, perhaps felicitate themselves on, their sufferings by taking large enough views of the principles of social evolution and joyfully expecting its perfect products in far off times to come. Be that as it may, the fact that the present spirit of humanity reprobates and would gladly disown the iniquities and cruelties of past human doings on earth, although they have been the necessary stepping-stones to a higher being, is just the natural consequence of the monopoly of the strain of organic evolution by the race, seeing that its moral ideal is plainly an essential condition of its self-regarding progress.

If such views of the mode of constitution and development of human society and of its position in the cosmic system seem calculated to breed a state of humiliation and despair in mortal breasts, the humiliation and despair, should they some day come, will also be in the natural order of things. In no case, the love of life being what it yet is, need a general revolt against human procreation, still less a general suicide, be apprehended. The "brooding East" has not refrained from reproduction nor committed suicide, although it has traversed the heights and depths of philosophical speculation and found out the nothingness of things; on the contrary, it has subsided into a quiet resignation to the will of destiny, renouncing the turmoil and struggle of life so dear to a turbulent West still urged on by the lust and force of vigorous animality. On the other hand, it is possible that a frank cognition and vital feeling of the existence of a larger order of things than the human order might help to impart such serenity of thought, equanimity of feeling, acquiescence in what is and quiet expectation of what is to be, as shall constitute the bliss of a peaceful mind. The noxious mortal being as natural and necessary as the noxious microbe, may then be accepted without vexation, albeit the hurt done in either case be deplored and resisted.

What is apparently wanting to impart the vital touch and sympathy necessary to generate a real feeling of duty to the kind is a clear and distinct perception of its solidarity and of the direct internal derivation rather than the external imposition of the moral mandate. Two convictions, silent or express, are indispensable: that the individual clearly recognize his duty to the whole, and believe the whole to be worthy of his devotion to it. He must not only entertain the somewhat arid moral precepts which are the corollaries of the principles of philosophy, but feel also the moral inspiration and sympathy which, though hitherto associated with theological religions, some are fain to hope may eventually be derived from a worship of humanity. Reason alone, not speaking the language of feeling, might peradventure teach him that the end was not worth the labour. At the same time a practical conviction of the solidarity of mankind, whereby when good or hurt is done it is never an isolated act, but is a lasting benefit or injury to the whole, and the fit esthetic or moral feeling which in due course would be the emotional effluence of such mentally organized system of thought, could hardly fail to enforce a modest and fruitful union of the ideal and real in actual life, and to furnish a more effective motive of well-doing than a pure ideal floating aloft in shadowy abstraction and almost as much aloof from natural things in function as in its fancied supernature. That theology spurns the notion of such a natural derivation of the spirit of humanity is no proof of the truth of the loftier supernatural doctrine which it would substitute; it testifies rather to a deep-rooted latent conviction on its part of the vanity of the best evolution of the race on earth, which may be well grounded, and of its hope of a superior human race in a future world, which may not be so well grounded.

As he who produces a fine work of art or makes a great scientific discovery has no pleasure nor profit from it if he keeps it to himself, but obtains a reflected or reverberated joy from the appreciation and admiration which other selves

bestow on it, or at any rate which he imagines they will bestow on it, so he who acts socially with sole regard to self robs himself of the true pleasure and profit of his doing. A man never can be his best self as unit of an organized society unless he lives for as well as in and by it; therefore the life is most full and happy which is feeling most with and doing most for others. Not only does every one need the sympathy and support of his social medium to enjoy his own work, but without them he cannot work well for himself by doing it well. It is wonderful, for example, how silently and effectively ideas are stimulated, defined, clarified and developed by social intercourse, in which an hour's conversation is sometimes more profitable than a week's solitary reflection. He who, esteeming himself superior to the society in which he lives, disdains and shuns it, has still an ideal society which he creates for himself out of the past and the present and lives in; and such ideal society which he gladly affects is seldom so wholesome and invigorating, being complacent and nowise critical, visionary and not practical, as the real society which he shuns might well be.

As the relations of man with his social environment become more special and complex the higher he rises in the grade of civilization, so the suppressions and renunciations of self which he must practise in the interests of the society are more numerous and various. Inequalities of natures and varieties of circumstances entailing of necessity unequal fulfilments of social duties, the enforcement of an abstract and inexorable rule of right and wrong is impracticable; equal fulfilments would necessitate natures fashioned as closely alike in relation to similar surroundings as those of ants and bees seem to be. Of such uniformity of conduct two crude savages would certainly be more capable than two specialized members of a civilized society. It is with moral as it is with ocular vision; although there is only one true point of best vision of an object, yet as this point differs in different persons, so it does in relation to truth and morals. Everybody's duty no doubt is to see the object as clearly and

distinctly as possible, but it does not follow that one will thus see it best by taking another's point of vision. Moreover, the individual's own focus of vision changes naturally in the course of years, so that if things themselves had not several facets, as they have, and thus are seen differently, he presents different facets of self to them at different seasons of life and inevitably sees them differently. Morality in practice is not therefore the pure essence which it is in theory, not a sublimate of constant quality; it is in various degrees a matter of expediency and accommodation to circumstances. No society could probably exist long in which everybody made a complete renunciation of self, any more than a society could exist in which nobody made any self-renunciation: the problem in the particular case always is to reconcile individuality with solidarity—to find the just mean between egoism and altruism, a mean which must vary according to the individual nature and the conditions of the society.

# CHAPTER IV

# IMAGINATION AND IDEALISM

## I

### IMAGINATION

Rational and irrational imagination—The delight of delirious imagination—Pathological interpretation—Dissociation of mental function—Delirium of thought and of feeling—Transcendental feeling and reason—Imaginative shapings of transcendental feeling—Imagination in the different mental functions—Anthropomorphic interpretation of elemental energy—Is the feeling of transcendental union illusion?—Imagination a function of organic matter—Dreams.

It is strange to see how vague and weak is the usual thought and talk about imagination. The word does duty for a noble faculty of mind working independently of other faculties, owing little or nothing to them, needing no physical basis for its flights, moved by a quasi-divine influx. Naturally then it comes to pass that the pleasing fashion is incontinently to image in mind something fantastic or grotesque, which is not nor could in the nature of things ever be, and thereupon, enamoured of the monstrosity, to laud it as lofty imagination. Truly a sort of Jack the Giant-killer's imagination well fitted to please children, and adults not yet out of the mental nursery. Sane imagination always has and must have its solid basis of being and constitutional rules of proportion or ratio of structure in true observation of things and right reflection

on them—that is to say, in clear and just perception, right feeling and sound judgment of them in themselves and in their relations. Imagination in the service of self-satisfied ignorance or silly sentiment will only create cognate prodigies of fallacies and follies. No one then need flatter himself that he can have sound imagination without sound reason, or the highest imagination without the highest reason. It is true that in its best plastic work imagination goes beyond actual observation, not copying but creating, but it cannot then go against the rules of sound observation and reflection; if it does that, it is unruly, fantastic, irrational, the begetter of deformities and incongruities which are ridiculous. Now to perform irrational imagination is no more laudable really than to perform irrational reason, notwithstanding the singular pleasure of the procreative performance. Moreover, as irrational phantasy does not evince, so it does not conduce to, good mental development; those who perform it and whom its performances please show thereby that they lack a well-based and well-proportioned or rational mental structure, and are pleased to enjoy their irrationality.

The dear delight of its delirious flights, which is felt and adored as a sort of sacred and self-sanctified inspiration, has no more value in the province of feeling than a delirium of thought in the province of reason; it is akin to the exquisite rapture felt sometimes in dreams, which is perceived on awaking to be the illusion it was; to the ineffable bliss of the saint who, rapt out of self in a spiritual ecstasy, no longer feels it when the transported self returns to its natural self; to the inflamed joy of flashing thought exhibited in the mental ignition which often precedes an outbreak of acute mania; to the sense of extraordinary mental illumination, when no problem of thought seems insoluble, produced by the inhalation of nitrous oxide gas; in all which cases, when the elated being sinks back to his sober self, as he is bound to do, the revelation, for the most part, turns out to be commonplace or absurd. Yes, truly, it may perhaps be said, if the illumination be not a spiritual insight, only a

convulsive mental strain and illusion; but what if it be the exponent of the transcendental real, the transient gleam of a higher function than reason, a revealing flash of the infinite real, of which the apparent real is only a poor show? In that case men ought, if not deliberately to derationalize themselves in order to be wise, as Pascal recommends, at all events to cultivate an occasional strain of delirium, paying homage to it as divine.

There are indeed two ways of viewing such mental transport and estimating its import—either from the stable stand-point of the forms and rules of reason common to all sane minds, or from the shifting standpoint of formless and ineffable feeling peculiar to the particular mind. Viewed scientifically in reason's light, the rapture is interpretable as an over-stimulated tract of the mental structure strained to such a pitch of activity as to be severed functionally from the ties of its normal associations, which now therefore no longer act upon, to inhibit and regulate, the disarticulate, dissociate, so to speak dismembered tract; the feeling accompanying this supranormal or delirious action being a transport of delight, the rapt tract expresses itself in a rapture of feeling. Just in like manner, though in opposite feeling, when a mental organization, much dejected or depressed, has a special tract engaged in a quasi-convulsive strain of morbid activity, unchecked and unqualified by the normal associations from which its cramplike activity wrench it functionally, the accompanying feeling is then unspeakably sad, an abysmal despair, the clean contrary of the ecstasy of delight. In both cases the ineffable feeling is imbued with a sense of in finity and eternity, a sort of boundlessness in space and time, which is the necessary consequence of the disintegration of the forms of mental function; for it is the loss thereby of the normal relations of place, time and proportion on which definite thought depends. Time, space and order not being outside but in the mind, no forms of them can exist without it when their forms are lost within it. There is then only the formlessness of so-called infinity and eternity; the

external world inevitably loses its meaning, becoming a not understood language, because the internal world has lost its key of interpretation, and imagination, serving disjointed thought and feeling, creates a vague and void without answering to the formlessness within.

Very notable it is, though not well noted for the most part, how completely a rapture either of joy or woe can cripple a mind, so maiming it as to sever parts from their normal associations and to suspend a whole class of functions: the transport of joy such as to render the person quite insensible to any touch of sorrow, the transport of grief such as to deaden him absolutely to any touch of joy. He then walks about entranced, distantly conscious of things but not in living touch with them, seeing them as through a veil, hearing them as though through a partition-wall, hypnotized by his passion. All which the traditional notion of mind as a metaphysical entity, one and indivisible, something super-organic, has hindered and continues to hinder right understanding and appreciation of.

Viewed from the scientific point of view, then, the apocalyptic illumination of the mental transport is illusion, not a heightening but a dazzling of mental vision. It is not the infinite but the indefinite, not the absolute but the dismembered relative, which is revealed. As thought off the track is literally delirium, so the delight or despair going along with it is a delirium of feeling. To descry the divine in it when it is delight, as is still done, or the diabolic in it when it is despair, as was once done, is much like discerning the divine or the diabolic in a mania or a convulsion, as has often been done; it is to ascribe to supernatural agency that which is pathological aberration, to impute to a power outside nature that which is anomalous, because not understood, in human nature. As a vertigo makes the world turn round him who reels in it, translating the internal disorder into external motion, so the delirious transport projects its subjective formless feeling into objective formless being.

A quite other way of viewing the ecstatic transport is as an inspiration of transcendental feeling concerning which reason can have nothing to say, since it does not speak the same language, but to which imagination may give sublime shape. Reason, it is argued, is at best but an anthropomorphic system of rules and means, a laboured and discursive process of knowing, not that which is, but the intellectual machinery by which that which is works through man to be in him; whereas the transcendental feeling, being an influx of primal being, bespeaks a direct communion with the infinite, reveals intuitive truth which reason is impotent to fathom, and it would be utter unreason to try to fathom and fashion in forms of thought. Still, however infinite and absolute in essence and beyond all soundings and appraisements of reason such feeling be, it must needs be limited and relative in its human experience and utterance—anthropomorphic, therefore, like reason—since it is manifested through an individual and limited medium, so far as it is sensible and expressible. Moreover, in no case can reason be dispensed with, since reason is invoked to demonstrate its own impotence.

Thus far all might have gone well had men been content to stay in surety of feeling and ignorance of thought, since the transcendental postulate might be true, and, if untrue, was nowise refutable. So far, however, from resting content in quiet nescience, the different peoples of different times, countries, and levels of mental growth proceeded confidently to interpret the transcendental feelings in terms of their own thoughts and imaginations, each people counting its special interpretation absolutely true, supernaturally authorized, and then endeavoured to impose its dogmas on others. Unruly imagination, striving vainly to give form to the formless, ran its natural riot in fabulous inventions answering to the different levels of moral and intellectual culture; whence a long succession of diverse fables and myths concerning the creation and government of the universe, which, although useful provisional hypotheses in their day and

place, became obstructive and pernicious superstitions when stubbornly clung to after the time had come for them to be cast off as outworn vestures. They remain memorials of the wild, fantastic, and often puerile work of imagination uninstructed by sound understanding, not ruled rationally but recklessly licensed.

Separate names having made their usual divisions of thoughts where continuity of things prevails, the custom of thinking of imagination as a special faculty obscured the constant and essential part which it plays in the other functions of mind. So far from being separate from them, it is intermingled and works regularly with them; if it be true that there can be no sound imagination without sound reason, it is equally true that it is impossible to reason well without imagination. It is mind as full expression of the concrete man, not an abstract imagination, which imagines; not imagination which performs but is performed. All the world easily perceives that the poet and the artist imagine or ought to imagine; nor is much reflection needed to show that the scientific inventor and discoverer must use fit imagination; or that the general who cannot imagine what his adversary may be designing or doing is unfit to command an army; or that the statesman who cannot see beyond his nose is ill qualified to govern a country. But it is not so readily perceived and acknowledged that instructed imagination is in constant need and use to make a clear perception or form a definite plan, and that it is owing to the want of imaginative plasm when people are hardened in prejudices and formalisms of thought and feeling, and habitually irrational in their observances and conduct. How few are they who can put themselves in imagination at another than their wonted standpoint, so as to see things in their relations outside the narrow range of their habitual vision, and fewer still those who can objectify imaginatively and humorously criticize themselves! It is not, again, to the instruction of his understanding only, but to the power of picturing things to his mind's eye that the good thinker,

whose thought is lucid, logical and vital, and who gives it fit expression in words, owes his success.

Even memory, which is the present imagination of things past, contains more than the exact reproduction of former experience; for which reason no two memories of the same event by different persons quite match, nor indeed are ever exactly alike in the same person, delicate differences giving rise to differences of testimony, however slight. Subconscious undercurrents of thought and feeling from the depths of the character, whether stirred by mental or by bodily impressions, permeate and colour the conscious reproduction, and, according to their qualities, impart its mood or quality of imagination to the particular memory. Such subtile working of imagination in memory it is impossible to eliminate. One may guess how silent and constant its activity is by considering how wonderfully it works in dreams, and with what ease it then creates forms, faces, scenes, events and dramas more vivid than any waking experiences. Could the mind when awake create as vividly as it frequently does, and as logically as it sometimes does, in dreams many a person of ordinary talents would produce work of extraordinary merit. In all mental operations, then, imagination is more or less active—in dreams, in reverie, in perception, in judgment, in poetry, in style, in invention, in discovery, in daily work, and aberrantly in madness; nor could it well be otherwise, since it expresses directly the productive mental energy of the individual, indirectly the productive energy of nature.

Man being a unity himself necessarily seeks and finds unity in the diversities of things. What else can he do but thus anthropomorphize—that is, interpret in terms of himself, be they grossly concrete or finely abstract? Because he is individual he thinks the universe to be individual work, unmindful the while that his individuality is a partial and temporary separation from the whole, and therefore a limitation which he cannot predicate and is not predicable of the universe. In the end, then, he cannot choose but

imagine one primal and universal force or substance—*substantia una et unica*—of which all known forces and substances are so many diverse phenomena. The question for him is in what terms he shall think it, or in what form imagine it, at his present intellectual and moral level. A supernatural force it certainly in one sense is, seeing that it manifestly transcends him and the nature which he knows or ever can know, and that he cannot think it otherwise than as infinite and eternal. Here, however, a caution is needed to prevent the use of the words infinite and eternal to mean something positive in thought, to mean more than they really mean—namely, the negation of that which, being finite and temporary, is thinkable; otherwise he may go on to figure an infinite and eternal personality of more or less mightily magnified human form, and of like qualities, temper, manner of thinking, feeling and doing; not forsooth human only in form and feeling, but human-like in a colossal personal egoism and self-idolatry, adoration-craving and self-adoring. Surely a monstrously egoistic interpretation of the incomprehensible and inscrutable: that man, himself only a passing moment in the eternal process of things, should take any human function, even the best in quality, and make it a characteristic quality of the primal power and substance working in and through all phenomena to create, sustain, and change them, seems audacious enough; but is it not a veritable climax of self-idolatry to fashion the power in form of a magnified and glorified human self?

It is true that imagination, being the highest productive energy in man, is the supreme organic expression of the force working in things, the present culmination of natural evolution, and may therefore be argued to contain a partial revelation of primal and absolute being. In that case the superior mind, by strenuously looking into itself, might perchance, without being self-duped, perceive or feel itself in union or identity with the infinite, provided that it descends not to the concrete but prudently stays in the general and abstract. Here again, however, it is well not

to be too swift to judge, seeing that productive imagination shares in the illusive rapture of delight which accompanies productive work throughout nature, and is therefore wonderfully pleased with itself even when it goes wildly astray in the production of absurd and foolish phantasies. Not that its products are then necessarily worthless, although illusions, since they serve to distract mankind from thought of the miseries of the real world, to lure them into aspirations and hopes, and to stimulate labours of progress which unenchanted reason might perhaps interdict as at last and best only vanity. Now if, as human annals prove, many such illusions have had their useful day as incentives, and afterwards, their work done, have vanished, it is obviously possible that the supreme imagination of a union or identity with the primal energy may also be the useful illusion of its season. If that be scouted as extravagant scepticism, one may bear in mind that the custom of mankind is to call sceptics those who do not share their illusions.

The truth to be realized is that imagination is just a function of organic matter, nowise the work of a free and independent spirit flitting about the brain and playing on its chords, in tune or out of tune, as the capricious whim seizes it. The notion which has been entertained of such a spirit leaving the body during sleep and going through strange experiences which it remembered as dreams, when re-embodied, was a singular misinterpretation of the nature of dreams, in which imagination notably disports so freely and freakishly. Dreams testify as effects to brain-states; for it is not a separate and more or less maimed mind which creates the dream, whether coherent or incoherent, but a brain which, according to the measure and degree of its suspended functions, brings forth comparatively orderly or quite disorderly mental products. In such case consciousness has manifestly nothing whatever to do, as agent, with the production, any more than it has really to do with the production of castles in the air and created scenes

of personal exploits during wandering reveries; the products create consciousness, are not created by it, are mental only when they *are*, not before they are formed. Creative activity is the law of plastic organic matter in the human brain; for which reason it proceeds by natural laws of composition to construct an imagination, an invention, a dream, and eventually a State, not otherwise than as at a lower level of development in the organic scale it constructs a web by the spider, a well-planned gallery by the ant, an admirable comb of mathematically built cells by the honey-bee.

Dreams have for the most part been dismissed too lightly by psychologists, who have thereby missed the instruction which they are fitted to yield. At all events these facts ought to be considered well: (*a*) That dreams, following the prosaic rules of cerebral construction and function, are sometimes quite orderly and rational; (*b*) that following such rules partially and disconnectedly only, they create wonderfully novel scenes, dramas and dialogues, in which individuals, strangely placed, yet sometimes act according to their characters and pursue logical trains of thought and conduct; (*c*) that they may be, as they commonly are, quite fantastic, foolish and disorderly; (*d*) that they betray by their dominant tones and particular creations the prevailing mood of mind, whether this be caused by bodily conditions or precedent mental experiences, being, for example, terribly distressing in times of affliction and tribulation, and fraught with indescribable horrors of imagination and feeling in brains inflamed by fever. Assuredly no experience of waking life, unless in madness, ever reaches either the exulting height of bliss or the abysmal depth of horror which is sometimes experienced in dreams. Always the particular dream, coherent or incoherent, delightful or distressing, is mind, whole it may be, but mostly maimed; the diverse dreams representing the mental functions of differently conditioned brains, which necessarily produce according to their tones and proportionately to their degrees of disintegration—and

it is fundamentally a matter of subtile vibrations, rather than of any quasi-mechanical association of ideas—corresponding disintegrations of the normal forms of thought. Whatever their intrinsic value then, whether wonderfully rational or utterly irrational, dreams are experiments of imagination presented for observation and induction, which may be expected some day to yield instruction to a systematic scientific study.

## II

### THE IDEAL

The partial truth of proverbs, maxims, adages—The ideal in theory and the real in practice—Moral principles idealizations of the real—Constant war between the ideal and the real—Proverbial half truths—Indispensable coexistence of the ideal and the real—Universality of ideals—Optimistic and pessimistic ideals and temperaments—The mean between ideal and real—The ideal of the race—A moral equilibrium incompatible with increase of knowledge—Over-valuation of knowledge—Knowledge essentially selfish—Its glorification in the interest of the species—The cement of society not knowledge but charity—Scientific inventions baneful as well as beneficial—Can knowledge grow to an ideal perfection?—Or moral perfection be attainable?—Confusion of moral ideals—Fanatical enthusiasm of humanity—The eternal paradox—Symbols—Degrees of belief—Worship of symbols—Idols of wood and stone—Idols of the heart and imagination—The doctrine of the Trinity—Religious worship of pictures and statues—Decay of symbols—Transformation, not cataclysm, in organic development.

THE various proverbs, aphorisms, adages, maxims and sage precepts current among peoples through the ages, prove often when closely examined to be only half-truths, and therefore essentially untrue seeing that no truth can ever be only half true. Some of them are true only in the abstract, would-be-truths, ideals of desire, nowise concrete truths; for it is the distinct and pervading note of human life to profess constantly in principle a number of precepts which

are constantly repudiated in practice. The golden rule to do unto others as men would have others do unto them, is a quite ancient precept of well-doing, largely and fervently lauded in theory and persistently neglected everywhere in practice. Wisely so too, if they have done right to go the way of development they have gone. A just and universal instinct has taught them how ruinous it would be to apply concretely that which was right abstractly; so that human evolution to its present height has not been governed by the great ethical rule of conduct, but by a quite other working rule.

The principle on which it has actually proceeded is that, while it is a good and excellent thing to cherish the ideal as an inspiration, it would be madness to think it realizable, seeing that such realization must necessarily be impracticable so long as mankind falls short of perfection. The function of the ideal in present human affairs is not realization of itself, it is idealization of the real—to inflame feeling, not to teach conduct. Thus it comes to pass that beliefs and practices subsist quietly side by side with beliefs and practices which they directly contradict. A cynical spirit might see therein only the natural effects of human hypocrisy, pleased to cultivate the noble show as cover or excuse of the ignoble fact, but a larger and more impartial judgment, looking beyond the incidents of individual hypocrisy, perceives the natural counteractions of the ideal and real in the maintenance of the mean, and the consequent working value of half-truths.

It is the everlasting war between the ideal and the real which keeps man in a perpetual unrest between being and striving to be. Could he live in the unattainable ideal he might enjoy perfect truth and happiness; had he no ideal he might live peaceably in the real untroubled by the longing for unattainable truth and happiness. He is restless and discontented because he is incapable of attaining and at the same time incapable of ignoring the ideal. That is the penalty he pays for having usurped into himself the line

of organic development on earth; for it is the evolutional force of nature working in him which thus impels him continually to endeavour after happiness by ways of knowledge, to believe that the more knowledge he gets the more happiness he will get, and to be sure, if he cease not his strenuous striving, he will get it in full fruition somewhere. The *conatus sentiendi*, the *conatus sciendi*, the *conatus dominandi* are they not fundamentally so many manifestations in him of nature's *conatus progrediendi*?

It might be curiously instructive to take one after another of the proverbial maxims of wisdom and morality and to inquire closely what it means really, and how far, thus realized, it is true. Great is truth, and it will prevail, is a familiar and favourite saying habitually and gladly repeated; but is it true in fact? Certainly it is not true, unless that which prevails is always to be deemed truth, and that which prevails not is to be deemed untruth. A candid survey of the course of human things clearly shows that lies, being many, supple and plastic, not, like truth, one and comparatively rigid, do work most subtly and powerfully and have played an immense part in human progress. The truth of today might sometimes be grateful to the lie of yesterday, the lie of today be excused by the truth of tomorrow. To say that truth will always prevail, then, is to utter an ideal truth, an idealization of the real, which it is a comfort to believe; it is at the same time a salutary deterrent from lying and a useful incentive to virtuous practice. To explode it as an illusion, if feasible, would not be advisable. Is virtue always its own reward, as it is piously proclaimed to be? No doubt that is an excellent maxim to impress on the individual in order to make him virtuous, but he will not fail sometimes to find the reward exceeding grievous, unless he be of a temper of mind to feel the joy of reward in the pains of suffering, as the social organization of which he is a living element would have him do, and tells him it will be his perfection and glory one day to do. For it is the social body which sanctions and extols the idealizations of

the real in order to incite and encourage its members to aim high in practice and thereby to promote its growth. The wages of sin is death, it is true, but not to the individual whose pleasant and prosperous life is the wage of his successful sin.

As it is not ordained in the nature of things that the ideal and real accord, their inconsistencies are natural and necessary events of the human process. Naturally, too, each being one-sided in its extreme condemns the other, the ideal despising the coarse and mean qualities of naked realities, the real ridiculing the quixotic pretences and extravagances of the ideal. Meanwhile neither can do well without the other. Logic may stagger at the ensuing gross contradictions and hypocrisies, but that is no great matter, for logic is a quite human and relative process to which the universe nor owes nor shows obedience; it has a way of striking its logical course out of the contradictions of human logic and of welding virtue out of the antagonisms of vices. So proceeding on its ordained course it is serenely indifferent to the little adjustments out of its immensity which mortal men carve for themselves as their petty circles of methodical function, and, according as they succeed or not, christen order or disorder, right or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate, nay, most absurdly, natural or unnatural. On them too it fails not to impose practically three tacit rules of conduct which they fail not to obey in their natural course: to ignore what they have been actually in the past; to profess and pretend to be what they are not; to hope and aspire to be what they never will be. The happy perfection to come, viewed in reason's light, is as pure an idealism as the perfect happiness lost erewhile.

No one could live a day without his ideal, good or bad; for there are bad as well as good ideals, ideals in black as well as in white. Thus every human pursuit, even the criminal career, has its ideal to incite it no less than its real to practice. The licentious sensualist, teased and egged on by the eternal hope and expectation of finding a novelty of

sensation or interest in the same stale sport of sated lust, through new fashions of enjoyment and new persons with whom to enjoy it, would be sure at last, even had he an experience rivalling that of Solomon or the artistic ingenuity of Nero in his "spintrian recreations," that his search was but vanity. In the end the monotonous reality sadly disappoints the lubricities of erotic imagination. The adventurous poacher who chants in merry song the delights of his pursuit in the silence of the shining night gives it a pleasing representation which is in gross contrast with the rather squalid realities. The Indian savage by the camp fire, vaunting in wild yells and grotesque gesticulations the heroic triumphs which he has gained over his enemy and the still more splendid deeds which he will do, idealizes the real and uses the ideal to inflame valiantly himself and his tribe; which in fact he does, though at the bottom of their hearts they know him to be lying at large. So too the impassioned preacher who pictures in words of burning eloquence the transcendent glories of heaven and the unspeakable horrors of hell idealizes magnificently the rewards of virtue and the penalties of vice, inflaming himself and his hearers thereby, albeit he and they believe not at heart, believe only conventionally, what he says. As many as are the different forms of thought and feeling, so many and various are the ideals in which imagination shapes desire.

In the two opposite views of life—optimistic and pessimistic—contrary ideals witness to different qualities of individual temperament. Whichever of the two be the truer, it is certain that both in their extremes reveal the defects as well as the effects of imagination. The optimist, thrilled with the pleasant lust of life, translates impressions into terms of his own feeling; it is a joy to him to live, and his joy of life pours itself into his ideal of life; he is unmindful of, if not actually blind and deaf to, the perpetual and all-pervading agonies of nature. Looking out of his chamber window on a fresh spring morning, when the sun shines brightly and the birds palpitate in raptures of song,

and all nature leaps joyously to life and revels in the pulse and sap of it, he is transported into a sympathetic rapture of being, and cannot contain his admiration and delight ; for he casts no side glance, at all events no side thought, on the spectacle of the poor panting mouse on the lawn, which caught and tormented by the cat, makes run after run to escape, crouching at rest for a while after each futile attempt, either to gain breath for a new start or in wistful hope to have escaped from its tormentor, repeating its desperate efforts time after time, until, utterly spent, it can respond no more to the tormenting stimulus and is crunched and eaten by its sportive enemy, if this be not so glutted as, like a human sportsman, to revel only in the joy of pursuing and killing. Nay, such may be the sway of optimism that it shares piously in the cat's delight, seeing in the spectacle an illustration of the beneficence which has provided fit food and sport for all creatures on earth. Again, when the optimist gazes in admiration on the calm surface of the sunlit ocean rippling in innumerable laughter, and is transported into an ecstatic hymn of adoration and praise, it would be a rude hurt and offence to ask him to picture in mind its gloomy depths, teeming with innumerable creatures fiercely occupied in pursuing, killing and devouring one another; that would be an ill-timed suggestion of a state of things which would not merely be repulsive to him, but he would probably lack the imagination to realize. For the life of him he cannot stretch his imagination to embrace the whole order of organic nature, animal and human, and realize the dark and cruel side of it.

The pessimist, on the other hand, being imbued with only a comparatively weak love of life, realizes vividly the dark and cruel side of it, and is so saddened by the agonies, carnage and horrors of it that, were he supreme ruler of things, he would commit suicide rather than continue to be responsible for them, and does sometimes so die in order that, though they continue, he may no longer live to behold them. Naturally then to him death, which to the optimist

is the dreaded ending of life, is the not unwelcome recompense of it.

Obviously, both views, being extremes, are right in measure, wrong in excess. As nature goes steadily on its mixed course of pleasure and pain, that is plainly the right course; it is right also that man, who is product and part of nature, reflect in feeling its differing streams of tendency and make his optimistic and pessimistic meditations accordingly. The curious thing to know would be whether his feelings are to grow more tender and his moral reason to expand until he revolt against, as he now tenderly shrinks from nature's plan, and separate himself from it to start a new and more merciful order on his part, refusing at last, either for his pleasure or profit, to inflict one pang of pain on the meanest thing that lives.

As the man has his ideal, so has the race of men. But it is not easy to discover and state precisely what that ideal is. Ever-growing knowledge so long as life on earth lasts and a final standstill of perfect morality? If so, it is strange to think that while knowledge is to grow indefinitely through the ages, the principles of morality are to remain the same, fixed and unchangeable, the practice of them only improving until it becomes perfect and universal. Seeing that man, so long as he is capable of progress, must go on making his perfecting adjustments to his environment, physical and human, and can never exhaust its infinite extent and variety, knowledge has unlimited scope of increase, whereas morality, having relation only to himself as a social being, is of special and limited application, and may perhaps be perfected. Its golden rule is after all a very simple thing: if that sums up the essence of morality, the range of progress is limited and visible enough. When he has attained to a perfect social state in which, personal selfishness eliminated, nobody shall suffer if anybody can help him, and everybody, mourning another's woe, shall do to everybody what is kind and right, finding his own gratification in such well-doing, there can be no more moral progress. But what certainty is

there that the cessation of the self-regarding struggle to increase on the part of individual or sectional mankind, which is and hitherto has been the note of the fierce struggle of progressive life in the making, will be compatible with intellectual progress, or even with the maintenance of a high intellectual level? What is then to hinder the apathy of a stagnant or regressive life in the unmaking and therewith an accordant ideal? That which has reached maturity by progress perishes at last by regress. History shows plainly enough that large sections of mankind in different ages and places have lost their higher ideals and gone backwards, content in their declension with ever-declining ideals; and it is certainly possible that mankind as a whole may get near uniformity without getting near unity.

Is it credible that an equilibrium of perfect morality can be unless knowledge also be perfect and universal? Were everything knowable about nature known completely, the human race might conceivably settle into a stable bee-like equilibrium in which the moral imperative ruled supreme, albeit in a sinless world there would be no need for it to command, no place therefore for the starved-out *ought*, no ethical postulate possible; but it is hard to believe that there will be contented rest at a stay in quiet bee-like ignorance so long as there is something left to discover and something to gain by discovery. Would not the beauty of morality be gone also, seeing that beauty consists much in flowing lines of motion from one equilibrium to another? Now any striving of intellect to grow could hardly fail to be an unsettling of the moral equilibrium, for it would be selfish in its desire to grow, selfish too probably in the desire to make use of its strength for its growth. If two branches grow on the same tree in the same direction, they cannot occupy the same space; they must collide when they strive to do so, and if one outgrows the other, the latter is overshadowed and will be stunted. Were the stronger branch, altruistically inspired, benevolently to slacken or stay its growth in order not to outgrow the weaker branch,

that would not be for its good nor for the good of the whole tree.

Boundless is the praise which men nowadays bestow on knowledge and stintless the admiration they show of themselves for their possession of it, especially when it is called science. But when all is said, knowledge is fundamentally selfish. Man's aim is, and his knowledge his means, to get more and more power over surrounding nature, physical, animate, and human, by finding out more and more about it and organizing for his use what he learns. That is the plain reason of all the searchings out of the secrets of nature by observation and experiment which he sets before himself as a transcendentally noble aim and on the success of which he glorifies himself so greatly. In the prosecution of this aim all other living creatures are ruthlessly sacrificed—for food, for sport, for clothing, for service, for scientific experimentation, for every use that he can selfishly make of them, dead or alive. Unspeakably horrible would be the record of his doings to his fellows and other creatures were it possible to contract within the compass of an imagination and thus vividly to realize the ghastly and hideous details of the whole; so appalling then would the picture be that he could hardly survive the shock of its realization. Happily oblivion gently hides procedures which from his point of view were necessary and right to increase his comforts, heighten his powers, and promote his exultant development. Still it is the simple truth that when by minute and patient study of the living structures and functions of the animal world he has found out something which serves to alleviate human suffering and to prolong human life, he has only done in a less gross and more refined way essentially that which every animal does coarsely when it kills and eats another. Nay more, when men and women sit down in company at table to use their knives and forks to cut the flesh or fowl which they eat, they too only do at a higher remove—the butcher and the shambles in the background being interposed between them and their food—what the animals do which tear their victims

to pieces with tooth and claw and greedily devour them. Why then fall into such transport of admiration of his knowledge and power and refinement, extolling them as divine? Why count his lust of knowledge so sacred an inspiration and its acquisition so noble an achievement as to glorify him exceedingly and to justify his absolute despotism over the lives and fortunes of all other living creatures less clever and strong than he? In his triumphant pride of march upwards he might not do amiss to stop for a moment to gaze and meditate on that which is perhaps one of the most pathetic sights in the wide world—to wit, the antique face and wizened features of some sadly solemn-looking specimen of his simian next-of-kin chained to a barrel-organ, in the dim yearning of whose wistful eyes glow dully the silent disappointments of a failed destiny, minding the while the wonderful abortion of himself which the poor creature is and his triumphant development has probably made it be; if he abate not then his conceit of self, he may at any rate pause to bestow a throb of pity on the animal world over which he exults and insults so mercilessly.

His growth of knowledge is nothing else at bottom but a growing means of gratifying the two fundamental instincts of his and all animal nature, the leading and guiding lights to their larger, more varied and exquisite fulfilments: it owns the same primal impulses as those which urge the animal to seek and seize the best food, the best lair, the best mate, the best place in the sun, to get the best for itself in the station of life in which fate has placed it. The boundless laudation of knowledge is therefore directly the outcome of the exultant self-idolatry of human egoism joying in and extolling its gains of power, and remotely the effect of that evolutional force of nature whose progressive incarnations in its process of humanization are effected at the cost of lower incarnations.

If knowledge or science so called be at bottom the self-seeking of the human species, denoting its struggle to make the most of itself and to do the best for itself in the world,

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it can yet be truly said of it that it represents not individual selfishness, but oftentimes individual self-sacrifice, since its gains are for the whole human race. That is the end which is held to ennoble the struggle and to cover the innumerable sufferings and sorrows incident to its achievement. The patriotic work of the great statesman is done for the good of his particular country, he never doubts that its interest is his supreme concern, and it accordingly keeps his name and fame in remembrance so long as its history endures; like the bee animated by the special hive-spirit and devoted to the service thereof, he is heedless of, or hostile to, the interests of other human hives; whereas the work of the great scientific discoverer is for the good of all mankind, the whole human hive, and will last as long as knowledge lasts. That is its grandeur and glory. Meanwhile the question is not considered why the self-interest which is condemned as selfishness in the individual should be glorified as sovereign virtue in the species; all suspicion is extruded and no doubt allowed to intrude of the supreme worth of the collective selfishness.

Individual gain of knowledge, even when it involves self-sacrifice, is after all a pleasing gratification of self, made gladly for the kind, because it pleases the kind in the individual and is praised by the kind outside him, and few, if any, are they whose use of it, directly or indirectly, for reputation or gain is not selfish. While glorifying science, the eminent scientific man is not unmindful of his own glory; in guise of parade of science he is prone enough to parade himself. See how proudly one whose merits or importunities have gained for him some coveted title or distinction wears his ribbon or cross or scarf, or like badge of social honour, and flatters himself that he is science in distinguished person, or that science is distinguished in his person. If he cared only for his service to science why should he care thus openly to attract the admiration or secretly to exult in the envy of his kind? Nor among the unselfish few who in modest seclusion pursue

knowledge for its own sake will there be found one who owes his unselfishness to his knowledge—this he will owe to his character; the tendency of knowledge is all the other way—to stimulate the greed of increase and the pride of superiority. Besides, the retired worker is not always so modest as he seems; he may have less vanity, but he has sometimes more pride, than those who strut and pose for public admiration; his contempt of such applause bespeaks his contempt of those who shout it. The truth is that there is nothing benevolent, however much there be that is ultimately beneficent, in science. As *libido sentiendi*, so *libido sciendi* may be lust only. The cement of society is not indeed knowledge, it is charity in St. Paul's sense of the word. It is quite possible for a profound knowledge of mathematics to go along with a mean moral character, for a person eminent in science to be destitute of conscience, for a distinguished lawyer to be a despicable intriguer, for a prominent politician to be a mental prostitute.

Concerning science and its glorification, again, there is this further consideration to be kept in mind: that its beneficences have their compensatory maleficences. So little regard has it to the apparent well-being of mankind that it seldom confers a benefit without some equivalent evil, indifferently inventing instruments of use and destruction and with equal ardour searching out poisons and medicines; so that it is no absurd question whether, perverted to wrong ends, its maleficent may not ultimately outgo its beneficent work—albeit it will not be right then to call maleficent such destructive work of the cosmic process. In the end science may be famed for the ill not for the good it did, like Dædalus of old who, though he was a wonderfully ingenious architect and built many goodly buildings, is remembered now chiefly for his devilish invention of the Minotaur.

What then is to be said of the two ideals of human progress—an ever-growing knowledge and an ever-perfecting moral practice? If the first wither in human imagination that will be because the vital inspiration of mankind is weak

and spent and they are no longer quickened by desire to increase their being, not because the scope of inquiry can ever be exhausted by the complete realization of the ideal. A disappointing end, no doubt, that would be to ardent hope, but not therefore quite inconceivable, seeing how many peoples in past time not differing essentially from what men are now, nor inferior in intellectual and moral powers, are now names only or lost in nameless oblivion. Hitherto there has always been a fresh supply of the rude and vigorous animal plasm of some young and comparatively barbarous people to seize the torch which was falling from the feeble grasp of stagnant and decadent mind and to carry it triumphantly onwards; but it does not appear that such a reserve of virgin vitality will always be available, and it is possible that the whole race may then go the way of the nations which, having ceased to strive to know more, quickly lost in degeneracy that which they once knew. Uniform and constant the stream of human tendency has never been; like the river Helicon, it has from time to time, here and there, sunk underground to reappear at a distant spot or time. Apart from the legitimate consideration whether ignorance be not a necessary condition of existence in the future as in the past, and life could go on without illusion, it is most certain that the human race is not capable of indefinite progress, certain indeed that, like everything organic, it has its appointed term. Time was when it was not, and there will be a time when, the sun extinct, it will not be on earth.

The expectation of a gradual and slow progress to moral perfection is an ideal which, if one may judge the future of mankind by its past—and what other grounds of rational judgment have we?—is not likely to fail because of a complete realization. Men need not be disheartened practically from fear of losing that high aim, nor need they perhaps be too ardent and urgent to reach the stagnation of it, seeing that stagnation leads to corruption and degeneracy, progress of desire prompting ever new progress in knowing and doing having been the motive principle of human development.

Organic life cannot indeed rest at a stay; it has its period when, having reached its maturity, it begins to decline: motion being its life, it inevitably goes back in regress when it moves not forward in progress. Should men become so good universally that they cannot be better, they must straightway begin to be so bad as soon to get worse. Humanity exempt from mortal fate is a mere abstract notion; there are so many concrete human beings of all sorts and conditions of being, having organic structure and subject to organic destiny; and as the life of morality is not in the abstraction, suspended in air, but in the lives of the concrete individuals who live it on earth, the plain logic of thought demands the relegation of a perfect morality to the abstract life of an abstract humanity. This too of a surety, notwithstanding it be justly said that although individuals die, like leaves on trees, yet fresh individuals, like new leaves, succeed them, so that the life of the race continues and perfects itself; for the tree itself dies at last, and always its life and growth depend on the leaves and their lives.

Meanwhile, whatever the future hide in store, the manifest interest and duty of men are to go on seeking the truth and adoring the moral ideal, content to believe that the impulse so to do works well in the present to incite and sustain their struggles to reach a higher level of social being, and that if they continue their strivings to know more and more and to use for their profit the increasing power which increasing knowledge gives they will have multiplying opportunities and means of applying what they learn to the perfecting of moral practice. The result they may be content to leave to the power above whose concern alone it is.

The present perplexity of things is that moral ideals are so mixed and confused, lacking clearness and unity. On the one hand, men adore in theory as semi-divine the great moral teacher who, proclaiming the brotherhood of mankind and the beauty of holiness, urges them to fulfil the grand ideal

of unity of life in the bonds of peace and brotherly love. That marks the sympathetic and uniting force of the social instinct in them—the attractive force of the universe working in their composition as love—and is the inspiration and aspiration of the future. On the other hand, they extol with jubilant clamour the great conqueror who in prosecution of his ambitious aims has cared nothing for human brotherhood or human life, but treated its morals with heroic contempt. That marks a latent distrust of the moral ideal to effect human progress practically, and is the legitimate induction from the past. How many persons living to-day would be willing to die to-morrow could they be sure of the everlasting fame of Alexander the Great? More probably than would be content to die could they achieve thereby the fame of the great legislator or moral teacher. How many, again, who would not envy "Cæsar's bleeding fame" rather than "Aristotle's wit"? No virtue is more fervently extolled than national patriotism, no wretch deemed more despicable than a traitor to his country; yet the patriotism may be directly opposed to the larger worship of humanity and the enemy of his country be the friend of humanity. To reconcile the ideal in theory with the real in practice every nation must persuade itself, as it fails not to do, that its cause is the cause of righteousness, when it can confidently and consistently invoke the blessing of Heaven on its work of subduing and exterminating its enemies, chaunt a joyful *Te Deum* when it is successful, appoint a day of humiliation and supplication when it is not succeeding fast enough. All which, being right at present, is therefore righteous, seeing that it is by nature-ordained steps of inhumanity that man rises to humanity. As his fate is thus to travel onwards to morality through immorality his ideals are naturally and necessarily mixed. For the speculative philosopher it might be a curious inquiry whether as mankind attains to moral evolution by immoral ways it may not be destined to decline into immoral degeneration through morality.

No rational person knowing well what the process of

organic growth and development is can doubt that for a long time yet to come the perfecting of mankind must be a slow and painful business. Could anything be more fatuously fanatical than to expect an early and sudden transformation from its past and present nature to a reign of universal brotherhood? Those who cherish such a burning enthusiasm of humanity may justly preach the glorious ideal in order to inflame feeling, which is the prophet's function, but they are foolishly and perniciously blind to the circumstances and conditions of human progress when they clamour for an instant realization of their ideal. Right or wrong in their optimistic expectation, they have no right as rational beings to ignore laws and conditions of growth obvious to cool sense and sane judgment, and violently to denounce others for not being as hotly irrational as themselves. Would they, if they could, have an oak grow up in a single night? Moreover, they might not do amiss, trying to see themselves as others see them, calmly to bethink them whether a human race addicted to habitual self-abuse of sentiment, and consisting wholly of the like of them, would be complete in all the virile qualities necessary to make it thrive and prosper, or at all comfortable for persons of saner mind to belong to, either on earth or in heaven.

The end of the matter is that, in accordance with nature's eternal paradox of a concordant conflict of antagonisms, one must recognize that there are always two mankinds at work in human things, the ideal and the real mankind, in manifold and constant oppositions to one another, the one or the other low-ebbing or high-flowing in different times and places. From the beginning of thought on earth much the same ideal truths have been thought out independently and proclaimed as incentives to virtuous and deterrents from vicious conduct. Nor could it have been otherwise seeing that these ideals were fundamentally the conscious expressions through and by man, the translations into his feeling and thought, of the unconscious impulse of evolution thus fulfilling itself in his ascent, and being so, the necessary

conditions of such ascent. Many ideal shapes, grotesque and grand, has this elemental feeling taken in his imagination in the course of human development through the ages, but these have all in their times and seasons, as working hypotheses, served their good office of raising him in the scale of being through worship—not otherwise than as the dog is raised to a higher level of being by its worship of man, however poor a god the particular man—and of thus promoting organic evolution on earth.

### *Symbols.*

To embody the ideal in forms and symbols which, appealing to direct apprehension, are then adored in themselves, not for what they signify, has been a constant need and habit of the human mind. The musing traveller, sauntering in a churchyard or cemetery, who sees above a grave the statue of an angel poised on half-raised foot with uplifted face and outstretched wings, as though intent to take instant flight heavenwards, would err greatly if he concluded that those who placed the statue there, or those who behold it with pious admiration, really believe in the existence anywhere of such an incongruously shaped being. The winged statue is the concrete symbol of human aspiration to rise from a low animal to a moral or spiritual nature, and of a yearning hope that the aspiration will obtain realization some time somewhere. Without question then the curious traveller of a superior race of men perchance to be in far off time to come, who disinters and examines the broken statue of an angel, will conclude wrongly if he conclude that the men of to-day were foolish enough to believe in the existence of beings thus fashioned. He would make the mistake then which those make now who cite the statues of the Grecian gods as monuments of the gross theological belief of the ancient Greeks, or that he would make who should conclude that the Christian prayer to be covered with the feathers and kept safe under the shelter of the Almighty's wings implied the

belief in a winged God. Such statues represented not, nor were believed to represent, concrete beings; they were works of fine art symbolizing the mysterious forces, felt but not known, in the processes of nature, physical and human. As well tax the sober bishop of an English church with believing literally all the stories which he devoutly reads as part of the ceremonial of his worship, or accuse the pious member of a Greek or Roman church of worshipping the actual picture or image before which he prostrates himself.

Idols of wood and stone, having eyes and seeing not, having ears and hearing not, were never meant nor ever believed to see and hear. Not the grossest savage who invokes the favour of the rudest fetish or idol believes at heart that it has the power to do what he asks of it, any more than the little girl believes that her doll actually hears her praises or heeds her chidings; the practical proof being that he scruples not to maltreat it when he gets not what he prays for, which he would hardly venture to do had he real faith in its almighty power. He prays to it as symbol representing the mysterious forces and conditions, overwhelming and inscrutable, by which he is begirt and on which his unknown future depends, wishing and half-expecting somehow so to influence their recondite workings and concurrences as to bring good luck to and turn bad luck from him. Therein he differs not essentially from the civilized person who does some trivial act of superstitious folly when he goes to bed at night or gets up in the morning, or leaves his house to embark on an enterprise, though at heart he believes not in the efficacy of what he does. But it is a comfort to him to have thus obscurely tried and half-persuaded himself to propitiate or prejudice in his favour the unknown forces which, working around and on him in the complicated and incalculable relations of a universal concatenation of things, co-operate or conflict to determine the good or bad luck of the day or the adventure; or at all events to have secured amid the uncertainties of things and the turmoil of his own dubieties an indubitable fiat of fate.

A more sublimed and purified instinct, imbued and illumined with religious faith, prays to an overruling Providence to be guarded and led safely on, step by step, "amid the encircling gloom."

"I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," is the utterance of a natural state of mind the precise import of which is seldom adequately realized. Why help that which, if it really be, needs no help to be? Make me to believe that which I believe not, but heartily wish to believe or to believe that I believe—that is the real prayer. The truth, of course, is that belief is not something of constant quantity and quality; on the contrary, it is diverse in quantity and quality, shallow or deep, weak or strong, obscure or clear; at one time a mere conventional affirmation by the lips of that which it is thought proper to confess and not proper to probe, at another time an absolute conviction of heart and mind. Which absolute belief, be it noted, though absolute truth for him who entertains it, need not therefore be either true at all, or even true for the time in which he lives, if his mind has not been constituted by nature and moulded by training either to think rationally or to think with the spirit of his epoch and society. Besides, to cover the face of unbelief by professed belief is a great principle of proper social behaviour.

After all is said human life consists mainly, and must consist, in the worship of symbols. When the people rise in respectful salutation of the judge who, bewigged and ermined, shambles into court to take his seat on the bench, it is not the ridiculously costumed old man, who may be a babbling dotard, but the great office and the principle of justice which they reverence: not the symbol, but that which is symbolized. It matters little what the symbol is provided that the principle represented be sound. Wig and ermine are ancient symbols sanctified by tradition and custom, wherefore to show disrespect to them would be to outrage the dignity of the social sanction which they symbolize and to weaken the structure of social order.

Meanwhile there are no more real sense and dignity inherent in them than in the most monstrous symbol or "custom" ever hallowed in Dahomey or other barbarous country. How pitiful and pernicious is the folly of the thing, therefore, when civilized peoples hasten with reckless and contemptuous violence to destroy all the ancient symbols of a barbarous people, persuading themselves that they will thereby raise it to a higher level of being and promote its progress. All the more senselessly pernicious the folly too when they proceed forthwith forcibly to impose their own sanctified symbols on the wreckage they have made and to expect them to take root and flourish there. To salute reverently the flag of their own country, which is only a specially figured piece of silk or calico, without deeming themselves anywise superstitious, yet at the same time to discern gross superstition in a similar salutation of some national emblem by a less civilized people, shows a lack of imagination which is not to be counted such an achievement of mental culture as civilized peoples can properly pride themselves on.

Violent denunciations of idols of wood and stone might properly be tempered by sober recollection that there are idols of the heart and imagination, and that these also are symbolic. As he who, yearning to comprehend the incomprehensible, vainly tries to conceive a creation of the universe of which he is but an atom and a moment, must have something definite which he can picture in mind, take mental hold of, feel himself in relation with—since he must necessarily think everything thinkable in terms of himself —he cannot help making for himself some kind of individual power or personal creator. But such personality is necessarily a subjective Idolism, nothing better than a transcendental self, a symbol only of that which is incomprehensible and ineffable; it is naturally, therefore, of gross human form and quality in the mental infancy of mankind, becoming formless and of more ethereal or spiritual quality in riper growth of mind. Thence another natural development

of things in due course: having risen by gradual ascent to the conception of abstract power, impersonal and absolute, out of a desire not to degrade the divine into any human shape, the concrete worshipper pants in the void, feeling instinctively that he has so sublimed and volatilized its substance as to have virtually dissipated it, and to have nothing left which he can pray to, adore, and be in living relation with; whence the immediate and instinctive need of a being who, superior to himself, but inferior to the Supreme Power, indued with both divine and human qualities, can by virtue of his twofold nature act as mediator. Him then he adores, not as the supreme incomprehensible, but as inspired prophet or symbol. Knowledge itself being at best but knowledge of phenomena, cannot ever be more than symbolic and immeasurably inadequate. As the individual exists as such by virtue of his partial and temporary separation from the stream of universal being into which he is ultimately absorbed, so his notion of creative individuality, being a term of self, naturally vanishes with him, being meaningless when he is not.

Has not the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity been made a darker mystery than it need be by the overlooking of the symbolic element and the presentation of it for belief in the harsh and crude language of the Athanasian creed? Three persons in one—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—are symbols representing to finite understanding in terms of itself the incomprehensible, inscrutable, ineffable power behind phenomena, which is revealed in part through the word or reason of the inspired spirit, reason or spirit partaking of the same nature as that which they partially reveal. That which was from the beginning, the eternal life of the Father, manifested to men as the word of life by the inspired Son (John ch. i., vv. 1 and 2); the primal and eternal power of things made known partially as truth to the weak understanding of men by the inspiration of the wisest of them. What else is each succeeding revelation of the unknown, in the progressive course of man's communion and conflict with

nature, but a revelation, equally divine, of the eternal and infinite to finite mortals through the seership of an inspired teacher, who may be called, therefore a son of God? The higher the seer stands above the level of common understanding, the more use must he make of symbols and parables comprehensible by them in order to be understood by and to instruct them; how otherwise could he plant in their minds the germs of new ideas which they lack? The revelation of the divine in nature and the revelation thereof through the inspiration of a special human nature are plainly parallel processes; for the seer is a part of nature, a nature-made means or organ.

Considering how necessary to religious worship symbols are, it is no wonder that such gross symbols as pictures and statues have always been and still are most helpful to it by kindling the appropriate feeling and thereby actuating conduct; indeed, they may well have done more for it than prayers and sermons. Due account is not taken of the powerful effect on male and female mind respectively which the ecstatic adoration of the beautiful pictures of the Virgin Mary and of the exquisitely carved images of the crucified body of her Son is calculated to produce by kindling a passion of feeling, and how subtilely in such case the physiological and spiritual passions are apt to commingle. Nor is the surmise unreasonable that the ecstatic contemplation of the beautiful face of the Virgin by generations of pregnant women in their transports of prayer may have so affected their offspring as to endue Italian women with the grace of carriage and beauty of features which they often show to-day.

Obviously it must be right, since it is the constant order of nature, that men cling to the symbol regardless often of what it represents, and cling to it long after the soul has gone out of it. In the fulness of time an awakened and slowly growing spirit of inquiry moves them to look through the symbol and see what it really stands for. Then the wonders, signs, miracles, myths and like shocks to reason are

no longer interpreted literally; they are discarded aids, which, once necessary to support the uninstructed mind and to nurse faith in its infancy, become less and less necessary as men rise to higher understanding and need more rational beliefs. At last they take their place in the history of mental development beside extinct gods, angels, and other obsolete creations of uninstructed imagination.

A natural impatience of stubborn adherence to the formula, whose substance has been dissolved or quite transformed, may be checked by the sober reflection that a stealthy dissolution of doctrine, the name of which is fervently clung to, is vastly more effective to change it into something new and more true than a direct and rude attack on it would be: a dissolution which may be christened evolution more insidiously sapping and less provocative of resistance than the revolution which a violent assault of it could only be. In all organic growth gradual transformation, not cataclysm, is the rule. Let men keep passionate hold of the formula, its whole substance may then be changed gradually and imperceptibly without provoking serious resistance. In the long run it is perhaps more dangerous to destroy the symbol while leaving the principle intact than to dissolve the principle while leaving the symbol intact; indeed, it fails not to come to pass sometimes that the sacred symbol is used to signify the direct opposite of that which it first signified, and is still piously adored. Though the ancient Greeks had small belief in their gods, who, when wounded in battle by a mortal spear, yelled more loudly than any wounded mortal, yet they showed no mercy to the culprits who blasphemed them, and were wrapt in a frenzy of fury at the impiety which mutilated their statues. When all is said the difference between the folly of the multitude, infatuated with the formula and clinging to it with passionate grasp, and the wisdom of the minority undermining it, is not so great as it appears to be; for the few wise folk are all too prone to over-estimate knowledge as exceeding magnifical, without perceiving it to be at best but symbol, and their adoration of it, being an adoration of what they think, a

self-idolatry. All which, of course, is right and fitting, seeing that nature's one purpose is to push the species on to a higher evolution by hook or crook, a higher hook or crook being fixed when the lower, having served its purpose, is done with.

## III

### HYPOCRISIES

Habitual hypocrisies—Waves of pessimism—The necessity of hypocrisy—Its good uses—Self-respect and hypocrisy—Unconscious hypocrisy—Mental duality—Hypocrisy concerning the reproductive organs and functions—Mental disintegrations and disintegrate developments—Observance of the mean by effective hypocrisy—Life a mean between extremes—The mean in conduct—Special standpoints of morality.

From time to time in the procession of things a wave of self-knowledge drifts over men revealing to them in what an atmosphere of conventions, formalisms and hypocrisies they are wont to live. Simulating and dissimulating habitually, they speak not the truth to themselves nor to others, speak of one another quite differently in presence and in absence, so deceive and flatter openly that if they knew what they think and say of one another in private there would not, as Pascal said, be four friends in the world. These conventional masks and hollow formalisms, discerned always by disillusioned minds, are more widely perceived at times when many persons are stirred to look through the show of things and see them as they are; especially when in due vital process shams harden into such rigidity as to have no vital hold of things. Then the several trickling currents of despair meet in a general stream of pessimism which sweeps over the spirit of the time. Are they who thus feel and think no better than weaklings or morbid derelicts of life's full stream? Or do they forebode and foreshadow a general state of mind to come when men shall learn to know more positively and to imagine less fancifully? To think so sadly of the human future would be stigmatized as pessimism.

To label a truth pessimism and forthwith to count the nickname a refutation is a common but not conclusive argument; the assumption or pretence that it is disproof being but another instance of the habitual falsity in which men love to live. For it is undeniable that they keep up a continual show and act a perpetual comedy: profess solemn belief of that which they do not believe, use conventional words of respect for persons whom and forms which at heart they respect not, observe senseless and almost intolerably irksome customs, and employ a language of hackneyed phrases in speech and writing which is not only without vital hold on the truth and logic of things but ofttimes not even in touch with them. So it comes to pass that literature, art and religion tend to degenerate into conventional forms, artificial and empty, with no real life in them. Strange indeed is it to see how minds not wanting in intelligence can be so completely captured and captivated by forms and phrases as to rest content in them, and to absorb themselves in ingenuities of elaborate expression and execution without any living thought to express and execute. At last, from the little leaven of sincerity working silently in the mass emerge open protests against empty formulas, false pretences, barren professions, and overgrown hypocrisies; the impatient outcries of those who, unable to live quietly in shams, revolt against them; the result being a wave of depression from which a reaction takes place in due time or the apathetic disillusionment of a declining vitality for which there is no remedy. For at bottom optimism signifies lusty life fraught with the strong lust to live, naked and not ashamed, so to speak, pessimism weaker life lacking such transporting lust, sensible of its nakedness, slack to assert and vaunt itself. Feeling being the expression of the real force of life, it is out of feeling, whence springs desire, that the ideal is born. One may be sure that a Diogenic contempt of the world would be natural to a people which had spent its lusty vigour and was in declension, not natural to a people which was in the full sap and pulse of life.

The prevalence of an organized system of conventionalism, or so-called hypocrisy, may justly breed a suspicion, nay, warrant a conviction, of its necessity and usefulness. Its survival is plain proof that it has the right to survive in the nature of things. Like the snail's shell, though not in vital connection with the life beneath, it serves to protect it. Is not nature itself profoundly hypocritical in the glorious show which it makes of things and the deceptive promise of perpetuity? The two constant counterworking strains in it —namely, to hold together in cosmic order and to lapse back into chaos, instil corresponding strains of human thought and feeling which show themselves dispersedly in individuals, and collectively sometimes in whole peoples. In maintaining the organic complexities of social bodies, present and progressive, hypocrisy is clearly an ordained factor.

Hypocrisy, when one considers it well, is not merely the homage which vice pays to virtue, it is also the social curb which virtue puts on vice. Did men feel free to lay their true natures bare, to be openly what they are privily, and to speak as they really think, it is certain that, emancipated from the strong restraints which curb and check them, they would soon become more gross and vicious than they are, and that a cynical parade of sincerity would wreck the social system under which they are what they are. The result might be nothing less than the destruction of the ideal in human life, which would be humanly calamitous; for although nature outside humanity exhibits its lusts, cruelties, deformities and the like openly and coarsely, disdaining all soft concealments and apologies, yet in human nature it takes on the new function of hiding, euphemizing, apologizing and idealizing. Now although it may not be safe to judge a society by its ideal, if its professed ideal be high and its conduct low, yet it is certain that no society can reach or keep a high level of conduct without an aspiring ideal. For the ideal acts to exalt the mind by inflaming aspirations and inciting endeavours to attain it; and by the unanimous praise of such high-reaching strivings men flatter and

instigate one another to become what they wish or would be thought to be. Can any one withal genuinely and persistently feign to be what he is not without in a measure becoming that which he would seem to be? The pity of it is that his pious strain to be the ideal is sure to be often rudely interrupted by the natural practice of being the real.

It would be no easy task to estimate in detail the good uses of hypocrisy in the social organization. How necessary its shelter, and how valuable its function to preserve self-respect and uphold personal dignity! To the easy but shallow objection that a person cannot feel self-respect who is a hypocrite, the just reply is, Why should he care to dissemble what he is when he is bad, and to simulate the something better which he pretends to be, if he had no self-respect? His self-respect requires that others should respect him and he feign to be what they respect. A cynical or abject indifference to the good opinion of his kind would show that he had relinquished his function in the social economy; a desertion which, not conducing to his own health of mind, might spread much infection through the rapid contagion of a corrupt example. For while he who refines and hides his vices works no great public harm, an open and gross parade of vice works a great deal of harm beyond the immediate wrong itself, because bad example, being a most rapid solvent of self-respect and shame, is a more potent teacher than good precept, and the seed of it once sown on suitable ground needs no attendance to make it grow fast.

Even the hotly self-righteous person who preaches fervid righteousness to others while himself doing daily iniquity, though seemingly a paragon of sanctimonious hypocrisy, is not really the complete and distinctly limned hypocrite which he looks; not so much the clearly conscious self-duper as he is one who in guise of conscious profession and praise of virtue masks a lurking protest against the base instincts which he feels in himself and feels himself to be mostly actuated by. The hypocritical mask of virtue covers an instinctive craving of weakness to be protected against itself,

and to be fortified by the belief of such protection. In the depths of his mind besides his real self he harbours and cherishes an ideal or imaginary self for whom he speaks and acts, whose approval and support he solicits, whom he exalts and would persuade others—perhaps persuades himself, though he may have many dark spells of secret doubt—is his real self. It is his ill fortune to have united in one person opposing qualities which would have worked consistently had they been separately bestowed on two persons. Instead of wondering and grieving then at the frequent fact that the professor of burning piety and superfine morality is apt to be tricky, subtle, shifty, self-centred and selfish, perhaps concupiscent and secretly criminal, an indulgent judgment may note and applaud his strenuous struggles to build up in himself an ideal self to supplant and atone for the real self. As in truth the social judgment often does for him after his death, if he die in the odour of sanctity without unlucky scandal; hastening in the interests of its own welfare and dignity to extol his fine spirituality and to ignore his mean actuality.

It is not an inconsistent moral being only who is fashioned by this process of self-dualization, for it works also to produce an intellectual duality. Hence the strangest logical inconsistencies which sometimes subsist quietly side by side even in intelligent minds. It is notorious that good people will believe, or persuade themselves they believe, as articles of faith, preposterous fables which belie the very principle of reason, and were an impossibility in nature if nature's fixed cosmic order was not then and there unnatured into chaos; all the while the validity of outraged reason being an actual, though unavowed, implication of the article of faith. The truth, of course, is that they deceive themselves gladly, and only half believe, as the saying is, veiling the irreconcilable contradiction in an effusion of formless feeling; there is a duality, not a unity, of mind, each half of it when in function functioning separately and believing after its kind; although a reasoning being among reasoning

beings in customary trains of thought and the ordinary transactions of life, the dual-minded person harbours a second self, living apart, dissociate, self-sufficing, which has its own anti-rational or supra-rational theory and practice of belief. An intellectual incongruity then, certainly, but nowise therefore a conscious monster of hypocrisy. Nevertheless, being mentally a duality, not a unity, it lacks mental integrity, is prone to duplicity of doing or double-dealing, nurses a divided conscience which is apt to condone or approve on one side of its being what it disapproves on the other side. Thence an inevitable tendency to wily subtleties, tricky shifts and sincere insincerities of thought and feeling, which are evident enough when the particular life is viewed closely, critically, and candidly as a whole. Such self-dualization has its counterpart and, as it were, caricature in morbid mental function, where one may see sometimes the odd spectacle of grossly absurd delusion and conduct living side by side with sane reason and conduct, and alternating in function with it.

As many as are the several ideals of mankind in social life, so many are their several forms of hypocrisy. Nowhere is hypocrisy more notable and systematic than in relation to the reproductive function, and nowhere are its benefits more evidently counterweighed by accompanying evils. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that the rigid rule of decent behaviour, taught to infants from their cradles onwards, is to ignore the existence of its organs, to conceal them as a shame or a blame, to make timid use of them in time of need, and to be so modest as not to name them directly or without a blush. All the while the passion they subserve is the strongest passion in nature, effects a complete revolution in the whole being, mental and bodily, of the individual when it springs up, is the source of the greatest joys and of a large portion of the propulsive force of human conduct. The natural and necessary consequence is that it is always felt and often thought of, though not spoken of, working constantly and powerfully in secret, while it is openly ignored or tacitly assumed

to be continent or even non-existent. How prodigious and systematic the hypocrisy practised in relation to its functions, licit and illicit, is credible only to those whose opportunities of knowing have acquainted them with what goes on actually below the decent surface of things.

What then is to be said in explanation of so strange a contradiction between seeming and being? Here is a natural force and function which yet is naturally almost disavowed openly, nature working in man almost to disown itself, at least in theory; for all the world as if human nature, secretly ashamed of the coarseness of the function and dubious of its final worth, were striving to get away from itself in its rise to higher being. Certainly, if men were ever really to be what they seem in respect of it, the apparent to be the actual, the force of human propagation on earth would be vastly diminished; so much so, indeed, as almost to presage the ending of human evolution, which, after all, may possibly be the cosmic meaning of the colossal hypocrisy shown in regard to it. Be that as it may, present hypocrisy performs its natural function of keeping up the show of reconciliation between two opposite tendencies—the tendency of the refined and spiritual self to reach a higher evolution, and the tendency of the gross and animal self to stay at or sink below its present level.

Mind being no abstract and undecomposable entity, as fancy long feigned, but a complex confederation of parts, each of which can act with greater or less independence, and into each of which its energies may be more or less completely absorbed for a time, such disintegration of itself and subsequent disintegrate development of the dissociated parts as self-dualization implies, must be looked upon as a quite natural—though not, therefore, quite wholesome—process. Mental physiology presents passing, and mental pathology fixed, illustrations of it. When any one reads to himself or aloud, or has read to him, some book, without understanding or remembering a word of what he reads or is read to him, because his attention is distracted and his mind engrossed by

some painful or otherwise absorbing train of thought, the process is parallel to, though less in degree than, that of a complete mental dissociation. So likewise is it in mental pathology: take, for example, the so-called monomaniac who, though only a common rustic confined in a lunatic asylum, believes himself to be a royal person; notwithstanding his belief that he is so exalted a personage, he conforms quietly to the real situation for the most part, perhaps doing menial work placidly and regularly day after day, and claiming no impossible respect to his latent pretensions; yet if he be much excited for some reason or other, and especially if his delusion be rudely derided or denied, and its quiescent morbid tract thus stimulated to fierce activity, his whole mind is then engrossed in its ecstasy and he exhibits a fury of passionate belief. For the time being his morbid self is his whole self and the rest of his mind in a state of suspended life. A very clever man may notoriously be a very poor geometrician; so supremely eminent a mathematician as Newton could and did write the most puerile nonsense concerning the interpretation of prophecies; and every day some hysterical young woman, whose supreme nervous centres are unstable and liable to functional dissociations, falls to pieces into two differing personalities, either of which feels irresponsible for—even when it recollects, as it only dimly does sometimes—the other's doings, thus presenting a most false and hypocritical spectacle. Nay, it would be no error to say that this process of throwing the federal constituents of mind out of gear may sometimes go on to a sort of triplification or quadruplification of the person. It is the inveterate notion of a metaphysical unity of consciousness which has led to the stubborn neglect of oft-recorded instances and still conduces to hinder understanding of them.

In the matter of personal hypocrisy, then, as in every other matter, to understand is in a measure to excuse. It has its proper function in the social economy, and, when kept within the mean, is a necessary condition of social progress. Nay

more, the repugnant spectacle of it when it overleaps the mean and is overdone does good by provoking a revolt of healthy disgust, indignation and contempt. No one affects to admire or ventures to praise, not even the inexpert performer himself, rank and patent hypocrisy; it is bad art, and its exhibition a beacon to warn, not an example to follow. Thus once more one sees how the soul of good in things seeming evil works laudably in complex social fermentation to produce a required social product, and how surely, here as elsewhere, the golden rule of nothing in excess applies.

It is the fault of logic, which is a human rule, by pressing rigorously to extremes, to land thought in untenable positions. Life in every aspect is a mean between extremes that concern not man, since he is insensible to them. Too low and too loud sound he does not hear; light too swift or too slow in its undulations he does not see; too great cold and too great heat he cannot feel; too much and too little food are alike hurtful; passion rightly ruled is virtue, and virtue in excess becomes vice; prudence in excess cowardice; courage in excess rashness; economy in excess avarice; liberality in excess prodigality; liberty in excess license; submission in excess slavery; pride in excess contemptible conceit; meekness in excess abject humility; shame a good motive to preserve chastity, a bad motive to infanticide in order to destroy the evidence of unchastity; constancy in a bad cause obstinacy, obstinacy in a good cause constancy. Everywhere an inconsiderate and exclusive pursuit of the ideal would be the annulment of the real, an entire absorption in the real the extinction of the ideal. Sincerity and simulation in due measure are both right, for an excessive sincerity would be the disruption of society, an excessive hypocrisy the loss of all vital hold on realities and the degeneration of life into an artifice of empty ceremonies, formulas, and forms. In morals, as in the arts, soberly to idealize the real, and thereafter to work soberly to realize the idealized real, that is the true principle of the humanization of nature. No matter if

the realization cannot be done; it is the aim and belief thereof which constitute the spring, the joy, and the glorified grandeur of human life.

To walk warily in the mean, so balancing between extremes as to guide well the going, is true wisdom of conduct. Success in life, as the world counts success, is notably not due to superior intellectual and moral merit so much as to prudent observance of this rule. Neither a too aggressive nor a too retiring nature is best fitted to succeed. Most successful is the calmly strong and quietly self-seeking nature which, coldly self-possessed and steadily persistent, has its definite aim and works definitely for it, sees and praises the best side of men and things, offends not by criticism and scorn of errors and faults, avoids outspokenness, is discreet and judicious, makes many friends and no enemies, has just imagination enough to picture clearly the interests of self and to see and take the line of least resistance; which, in fact, adapts itself best to its environment, using the exact measure of special hypocrisy needful in the circumstances. Not perhaps the most noble nature in the abstract nor best fitted to instigate human progress, which has owed its impulses to another sort of help, seeing that it suffers abuses prudently rather than injure its interests by attacking them, and would rather stand with fools in their folly, if necessary, than hurt itself by trying to withstand them, but in the concrete an admirably efficient instrument of personal advancement. To cherish lofty aspirations ideally but prudently to forbear going where strict logic of conduct would lead, that is the good sense of the practical reason; not overestimating the virtue of the ideal on the one hand, nor on the other hand overestimating the viciousness of vice, the foolishness of folly, the criminality of crime, since such overestimates spring from a limited regard to the present and do not view things in a sufficiently large perspective. So doing, the individual will not make a sacrifice of himself by fighting against the approved order of things in the quixotic cause of pure reason and ideal morality, but live comfortably all

the days of his life, which is the sober and sage aim of the practical reason. What advantageth it him to crucify himself as a social atonement in order to be despised while he is alive and praised when he is dead?

The sage advice to avoid extremes and keep the right mean expresses the need of a just balance of mutual adjustment in the interaction between the individual and his medium, physical and social, in order to ensure the best development of himself, and therefore of nature through him. Neither overaction by him, when he is too self-confident, domineering, optimistic, nor underaction, when he is overawed, self-distrustful, pessimistic; for as overaction or underaction in the performance of a bodily feat is fatal to perfection of execution, so is excess or defect of individual action injurious in all the relations of mental life. By the most happy adjustment only of the man and his circumstances can the perfect growth and development of his mental organization be effected. Perfect practically, that is, not ideally; for as he cannot control entirely his own organization nor the circumstances in which fortune places it, its fate of nature and place being mainly determined for him, not by him, he cannot will an impracticable result, must learn for himself the right rules of his particular adjustment. One person's mean, again, not being that of another, their respective moralities must needs differ whatever the circumstances; and as time and chance happen to all men, they changing in relation to changing seasons and circumstances, the mean is thereby altered and the basis of morality shifted. With moral it is as with ocular vision; although there is one focus only of best vision, yet the focus varies for different eyes and for the same eyes at different seasons of life. A morality which was sincere and right at one time and in one set of circumstances might be hypocritical show, laudable or not, at another time and in another set of circumstances. To tell every one that he ought to control circumstances and not suffer them to control him is excellent counsel in the abstract, but it is only to tell him

that which a native strength of character, if he has it, will dictate to him instinctively, and that which, if he has not such strength, he cannot choose but be deaf to.

## IV

### LIES—AFFECTATION

Why men love to lie—Lies are idealizations: witness to productive energy of nature in mind—The liar not wholly and wilfully false—Justifiable lies—Gradations of quality in lies—The heroic liar—Veracities necessarily impracticable—Illusions the incitements of progress—Affectation and lying—Artistic and useful affectations—Affectation injurious to character.

In his essay "Of Truth," Bacon, struck by what he calls man's natural but corrupt love of the lie itself, confesses his inability to tell why men should love lies where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchants. But is the explanation really far to seek? Inspired by the evolutional impulse of organic nature energizing in them, they love to idealize; and to idealize themselves and circumstances, picturing the ideal as real, is to lie. When lies then are not made directly for pleasure or profit, they yet please and are often of present service: in any case too they spare mental indolence the tedious pains of finding out the truth.

Lies please in themselves apart from any profit they bring, because, being effects of the productive impulse in mind, the elemental force working in the creations of imaginations, they share the universal joy of nature in generation. Two great raptures are notable throughout organic life—the rapture of destruction, when one organism pursues, kills and devours another life, growing at its cost, and the rapture of procreation, when two organisms passionately unite in order to produce another at their cost. Striking historical instances are not wanting to prove that rabid human lust has sometimes tried to effect a monstrous combination of the two raptures. Lying being then an expression of the creative or

poetic *(poietic)* force in human nature, men are prompted thereby and pleased to represent the fact otherwise than as it soberly is, magnifying and glorifying those features of it calculated to heighten its impression. If it was pleasing to feeling at the time, they ignore its faults and glorify its beauties; if painful, they magnify its horrors and ignore all qualifying features: they create in fact the proper ideal in white or black for the circumstances, an ideal of redundant grandeur or redundant horror as the case may be. An act of ordinary courage is translated into heroic bravery, an act of vulgar cruelty into transcendent wickedness, a nowise extraordinary calamity into a scene of indescribable horror. As this is done under the spell of excitement craving fit food to feed itself, as every passion naturally does, rather than from premeditated design to speak falsely, the invention is excused as exaggeration or romance, not branded as simple lying.

Even the barefaced liar who coolly lies to hide his fraud or other shameful act is not always so wholly and wilfully false as he looks on the face of it; he lies not solely because he thinks that the lie makes for his advantage at the moment, but because he also, in a measure, idealizes the circumstances to suit him and himself to suit them, transforming them into what they were not, and himself into something better than the mean person he would be as crude liar, and ending perhaps by believing his representations to be true.

If it be true that to lie is to idealize, can it be said conversely that to idealize is to lie? When the ideal is noble, making for human progress, like the moral ideal, it is repugnant to call it a lie, but there is no scruple to call it so when it is base and ignoble, making for human degeneration: service or disservice to the species the crucial test. Yet it may be as contrary to the facts in the one case as in the other, and according to a strict moral code a lie ceases not to be an essential lie because it serves a good end. Therefore the loftiest moralists when they descend from abstract heights to touch with facts are hard put to it to prove that a lie may not sometimes be justifiable, that is, be a good lie.

Whatever the condoning or cancelling value of the motive in such case, the lie is not only a violation of the sanctity of truth, but it is also a breach of the supreme moral law to do to another as you would have him do to you; for who would have another tell him a wilful lie whenever the liar thought the circumstances made it right for him to do so? Is it, again, ever lawful and right to teach lying stories to the common people as allegories or sacred mysteries which it is beneficial to them to believe, albeit the allegory, being taught to and taken literally by them, is actually a lie to them? All that the rigid moralist can say when he is perplexed by ugly instances of sanctioned lies is that a general rule of lying would not make for the good of society, and that a general rule of truth-telling does manifestly make for its good; wherefore truth-speaking ought to be the general rule. Rightly so, no doubt, since the whole quality of a lie, as immoral consists in being a hurt or a hindrance to the social body of which the liar is a member; and when he has repudiated the obligations of citizenship and become anti-social, he is an alien who has no longer the right to claim the benefits which belong to its organic members, among which the right to have the truth spoken to him is one. Even the purblind liar, were he to consider well, might perceive that his real self-interest lies in others believing him and not lying to him. On such concrete basis rest at last all the abstract ethical disquisitions out of which substance has for the most part been vapourized.[1]

Here reflection, as wherever it turns, is in face of the constant and natural conflict between the ideal and the real,

[1] It may be said of course that the criterion of morality is one thing, the inborn sanction of moral truth another thing, which does not vary. But that is an absolute distinction which it is not easy to uphold in face of the consideration, first, that moral truth does actually exist only in concrete persons, having no universal and absolute existence, except in theory; and, secondly, that the result of an organized system of thought respecting a class of subjects is an emanation of special feeling, wherefore a moral conscience is just as natural a product of organization as a sanitary conscience.

the abstract notion of perfect and the real apprehension of imperfect things, the pure reason of the postulated *ought* and the practical reason of the expedient and possible. Whatever they may profess in theory, men habitually use and practically approve the beneficial lie. Nations lie to one another diplomatically, accept one another's lies politely, and show no compunction for the lies they tell, because each nation, desiring not absorption of itself into the unity of a human family but preservation of its own unity, works naturally for its own independent life and growth. A lie between citizens of the same country, who ought as good citizens to have wholesome social feeling, is more wicked, or at all events more culpable (unless it be a duly sanctioned conventional lie, when it is blessed), because it is a vice which is hurtful, and would, if general, be destructive to national organization and unity. A lie between parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, has blacker qualities of wickedness in itself, though the circle of its evil working be not wide, because it strikes at the very root of family unity, which is the foundation of society. Thus the lie, being everywhere a pernicious solvent of social union—in love, in friendship, in family life, in citizenship, in human affairs and intercourse, is naturally condemned as wicked and odious.

Meanwhile there is obviously no such thing as an abstract lie of constant quantity and quality, the ideal lie is itself a lie; there are particular lies of all sorts, varying in degrees and qualities of wickedness from the blackest lie to the lie which is benevolent and perhaps beneficent, being a welcome idealization of unwelcome facts, however displeasing in naked crudity. For in respect of human nature's subtilties and complexities, its various aspects and shifting inconstancies, it is not as it is with nature's physical operations, in which, constant and inexorable, no lie serves, no pretence avails, where sincerity and veracity of doings are essential to success, and doings only, not words count. As the subtle lie which is only half a lie sometimes does more harm

than the gross unmixed lie, and the truth which is only half a truth more good than the whole truth, so the truth which is only half a truth may work worse than a lie, and the lie which is only half a lie be more beneficial than a whole truth. When a person of illustrious genius appears on the scene to lead mankind onwards and lies largely in the process—lawgiver, prophet, conqueror, statesman—he is excused and admired because of the mighty work which he did, and could not have done without the means he used; nay, he is glorified greatly sometimes because of his genius, when he was a destructive scourge whose ambitious achievements were triumphant devastation and slaughter. Human egotism thus gratifies its self-idolatry by admiration of the hero; for which reason it cannot help deploring as sadly pathetic the tragic spectacle of his fall when, like Lucifer, he falls to rise no more.

Nevertheless it being necessary to uphold the duty of veracity as making for the good of mankind in the mass, these rare and extraordinary constellations are to be regarded as exceptional beings who, having the might, take by quasi-divine right their own paths, leaving the beaten tracks of respectable morality to ordinary mortals, who need a made road to travel on. Conscience appeases itself by condemning the hero's lies in the abstract, while acclaiming the man, or by persuading itself that the hero was transported out of self in a divine fervour in which, his energy partaking of and fulfilling the will of destiny, he was himself more deceived than deceiver.

It is not a little striking to think how much idealizations of the real, oftentimes with small basis in the real, have had to do with inciting and sustaining processes of human evolution on earth. Truth has been immensely beholden to the lie, though quick to repudiate the helpful steps after it has done with them; illusion after illusion having in turn been cherished and, its useful work done, abandoned; lie after lie worshipped by men in their struggle to live and to rise to higher life. Is it then a base and entirely baseless

suspicion that the impulsion of progress may itself at last turn out to be a lie in so far as it promises perfection and perpetuity?

Affectation is usually a rather contemptible form of lying; it is the fashion of one who tries to simulate that which he would be thought to be but is not, and thereby, when not of strong wit and character, commonly reveals what he really is and would not be thought to be. Thus he provokes a derision and contempt which a thoroughly natural character, even if common, would not provoke. For he who, being unrefined, is yet quite natural in speech and behaviour, is not vulgar in a bad sense, but he who pretends to a refinement which he has not and whose pretence does not fit him is essentially and offensively vulgar.

It is not affectation itself, however, which is always contemptible, seeing that when well-studied and well-fitted and used with proper reserve it may be artistic and imposing having become so natural as to be no longer affectation. In that case there must be a pretty strong individuality beneath it to assimilate the artificial dress which, is judiciously put on; it is the weak affectation which being ill-proportioned, overdone, bad art, is despicable. Social intercourse could not go on smoothly, if at all, were everybody to leave off dissembling what he is and pretending to be what he is not, saying what he does not think and thinking what he does not say; it is necessary to use the polite arts of saying something without meaning it, of meaning something without saying it, and of saying something which means not what is said. To go about to denounce violently the hypocrisy of the scribe and the pharisee would certainly not be good manners. Everybody, again, must often affect sympathy, interest, belief which he does not feel proportionately to its show, not merely out of consideration for the feelings of others but in order to do well by them when he would do well for them. Moreover, out of necessary regard to the good opinion of others he must himself keep up appearances in order to maintain his own self-respect; by living in a tub, like Diogenes, he might

exhibit immense self-esteem but would hardly preserve much self-respect. The Roman Emperor Augustus stands out pre-eminent among rulers in two respects: he was eminent as a sagacious ruler and as an accomplished dissembler; and it is most certain that he would not have been the great ruler he was had he not been the great dissembler he was. Everywhere it is seen that the clever charlatan who affects a grave air of authority and speaks dogmatically imposes on vulgar credulity and that he who would succeed with the crowd must not despise the art of looking wise to the crowd; for what it craves is imposing assurance, not the setting forth of reasons which it does not understand and, not understanding, suspects as signs of weak conviction or as attempts to deceive. He will on the whole prosper better with his fellows in active life by means of his lower rather than his higher qualities, or at all events will need their help to make his good qualities tell effectively.

However, the gain by affectation which is good art is not without prejudice; like everything else in a world of concordant antagonisms it has its compensations. No one can pretend habitually to be what he is not without becoming in some measure that which he pretends to be. So far as he becomes something better it is well with him. But he is seldom then perfectly natural, genuinely sincere, a sound whole; he lacks complete veracity of thought, feeling and doing, a thorough integrity of mental being, and is innocently capable of insidious and nowise calculable self-deception: a streak of falsity runs through his character which makes him in spite of himself more or less a lie and may give him an ugly fall at an inopportune moment. Though he may do well for himself in his day and generation, still as falsehood is not barren it is doubtful whether he does so well for his seed after him. Moreover he is not so stable always as he looks when he looks strong; in all he says and does he has to give a more or less divided regard to his real self and to his artificial self; and it is striking, almost pathetic, sometimes to see in converse with him how a rude

stroke of veracity, whether in the form of question or answer or of brutal incident, such as fail not to reveal the strength of a whole and sound character, may crack the mask of his art and confound him, yea, produce visibly an instant and positive collapse and shrinkage of his whole visage and attitude. A weaker person who without strength of wit and character is full of affectation cannot properly be trusted at all; he knows not himself what he is, and no one can depend upon what he will be at any moment.

# CHAPTER V

# ETHICAL THEORY AND ACTION

## I

### CONSCIENCE

An innate tribunal—Difficulties of application in the concrete—No absolute conscience, but manifold relative consciences—Conscience the voice of the social kind—The physical basis of conscience—Conscience in savages—Inchoate and rudimental conscience—Late evolution and quick dissolution of conscience—Moral defacement and denudation—Continuity and unity of body and spirit—The brain-weak neurotic—Moral and motor apprehensions—Lessons of materialism.

NOTHING has been more clear to men since the dawn of consciousness in them than that there is in every human breast an august tribunal to judge and give sentence concerning right and wrong, and that a good conscience is a comfort and a merit, a bad conscience a burden and a blame, to its possessor. Conscience is the postulated prerogative of the human species, the direct instreaming into it of a ray of divine inspiration, the sacred light to light it on the way of holiness. Can the wrong-doer be happy, however secret his prosperous sin, when he carries within his breast an accusing monitor, incorruptible and inexorable, which will not leave off tormenting him with its reproachful stings? As to the well-doer he possesses in an approving conscience a priceless stay which, raising him above the ills of life and the fear of death, bestows the perfect bliss of a peaceful mind.

It is a pretty story in the abstract, but it needs large qualification in the concrete. Moral principle is a fine abstraction, a pure sublimate of virtue, the difficulty of which lies in the particular application. The sinner who has some conscience often bears up well against its reproaches, being not seriously hurt, not even disquieted, by its stings; they are not sharp enough to hinder him from doing what he likes to do, and with a little valiant perseverance in ill-doing they soon cease to vex him. Coward before him who defies it, tyrant over him who fears it, conscience torments those most who sin least and are tenderly sensitive to its rebukes, not stinging the hardened sinner at all. Nay, it is liable not only to be silenced when it ought to accuse but to be suborned to approve the wrong-doing. The conscience of the habitual criminal is not hurt in the least by the crime which he does unless he blunder badly in doing it, but it is sharply pricked by treachery to or from a fellow criminal whom he ought as a citizen to denounce; his thief-honour being vilely dishonoured by such a breach of the moral code which is the vital bond that holds criminal society together. In like manner, though the moral sense of the servants' hall excuses or approves or condones many deceptions, dishonesties, petty thefts downstairs, it revolts indignantly against the baseness of the traitor whose conscience impels him to make them known upstairs. What more fierce than the scorn and more violent than the abuse poured on the member of a trades-union whose sound moral feeling rebels against the iniquities sanctioned by its collective conscience, albeit that conscience be essentially antisocial, if not antihuman? Every sect, party, profession, trade, creed, corporation develops its special conscience which recoils not from but placidly approves customs and practices in it that grossly violate true moral principle. Not that the individual member does that knowingly; on the contrary, he is commonly so imbued with the collective conscience that, unaware of his thraldom, he obeys it without feeling his own disgrace.

There is no such thing on earth as an abstract conscience

of constant quantity and quality, there are manifold particular consciences exhibiting all degrees of strength and differences of quality; no simple and uncompounded sense, elemental and constant, but moral feeling or sentiment which is the complex and variable effluence of differing mental structures. A transcendental conscience of divine origin and nature, authoritative judge of right and wrong, has been enthroned in the hearts of men with the laudable aim of inspiring one another to do well and not to do ill; it works therefore on the ideal man with mathematical precision and certainty in the unencumbered region of abstractions, the inevitable difficulties appearing only when the question of the special application to the concrete man in the particular circumstances arises. Herein elaborate metaphysical disputations yield no help; occupied with abstract right and wrong, without definition of what right is and what wrong is in the concrete, they are mostly suspended in air, void and formless.

A wide and impartial survey of the origin and growth of conscience in the human race, of its numerous varieties in different persons and places, and of its different workings in different circumstances shows that it is practically the voice of the surrounding kind speaking in the individual, the best conscience therefore the voice of the best moral sentiment of the highest races. Though the individual may approve his own conduct and applaud himself, he is not quite at ease, not wholly self-content, if he believes that his fellows with whom he is in social communion think ill of him; and though he be uneasy and not well pleased with himself, he is still immensely comforted if he feel that his society thinks well of him, even if it be to think him what he is not. So greatly indeed does he relish the praise of its members that his conscience may constrain him to give his life for it as a social duty and glory, notwithstanding that its applause cannot reach him when he is dead and that they may be of the poorest quality. Therefore it always has been, and still is, the case that the moral sense of one age or place or people approves that which is an offence to another age or place or

people. A sure sense of right and wrong in the abstract, conscience must needs have, an absolute infallibility being postulated in the very definition of it, but in the domain of real things its sense of right and wrong fluctuates, is not constant, makes convenient accommodations. Moses, the meekest man on earth and chosen servant of God, rebuked two Israelites whom he found contending with one another, and tried to reconcile them by saying, "Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?" Yet a little while before he had slain and secretly buried an Egyptian whom he saw strike an Israelite.

Realizing what conscience actually is in the concrete, the conception of its physical basis in nerve-structure, so long flouted by moralists as materialistic blasphemy and still loftily evaded by them as beneath the dignity of philosophical notice, is rendered easy. That basis is of course the exquisitely delicate pattern of fine cerebral reflexes which subserve the highest human feeling, reason and conduct—reflex function at its highest plane of cerebral evolution. For conscience or moral sense implies, not sensibility only, but also, as every discriminate sensation does, fit motor apprehensive reaction, ideal or real, in exact adaptation to the impression—that is, fine and fit cerebral reflexes; not sense or feeling only separate from thought, but the highest and most subtle reason imbued with the finest feeling or the most refined feeling permeated by the most subtile reason. No one could feel fitly moral in the particular circumstances any more than he could discriminate a musical note or the quality of an odour, or the shade of a colour, without the fit motor reaction, overt as movement or implicit in the acquired motor intuition; he functions righteously there and then by virtue of the proper representative reflex, and could not so function at all if he did not possess it. Obviously, too, the quantity and quality of such reflexes organized by inheritance and culture in the individual brain must answer exactly in number and refinement to the number and qualities of the impressions made by the social environ-

ment. The higher in civilization a society is the more *civil* it is in every sense; the more perfect its polity the more do *politeness* and *policy* reign in its structure and manners.

As the conscience of the upright man is the bloom or flower of his good social stock, it is naturally absent in the lowest specimens of the race in whom the animal nature constitutes the whole being, the human nature in its true social or moral sense being almost or entirely wanting. Roaming savages, naked or nearly so in body and mind, destitute of social organization, living only on enough to keep up animal life, have not the mental qualities of the social man in them; indeed, they need not, and are better without, qualities which would be a detriment or destruction to them; all they have at best is a dull, weak feeling of fellowship with the members of the scattered bands or tribes to which they loosely belong. The weak and vague consentience betokens the weak and loose co-operation. To endow them with a sense of right and wrong in any true sense is obstinately to ignore facts and to be the willing dupe of words; for the poor, weak, inchoate conscience they may have is no conscience of right and wrong as a moral principle, nor is it the faintest feeling of any right or wrong in relation to the human kind, not even to a neighbouring tribe, no glimmering sense of humanity; it is no more than a purely tribal feeling, a conscience possibly that something which is truly right is wrong, or something which is hideously wrong is right. A conscience which thus belies its nature by condemning the right and blessing the wrong is no better than the negation of conscience; it is a conscience in the abstract which can exist only on condition of stubbornly shunning realities and remaining nominal. The postulate of a stern and just monitor in every human breast, savage and civilized, to approve and condemn might necessitate the inference that there are no fixed principles of right and wrong; that morality, like other organic growth, is in a gradual flux; for if this infallible judge acknowledge no constant principle, but enjoin in one place and people what it

condemns in another place and people—as it doubtless rightly does—the conclusion follows that what is wrong some time and somewhere is right at another time and elsewhere.

That is what is presumably meant when the talk is of the primitive and uninstructed conscience of the savage. Uninstructed certainly, but not therefore a conscience in being, any more than an unconstructed house is a house in being, for the instruction enters into and constitutes the structure and quality of the conscience. Let its dim dawn be the faint adumbration of that which is eventually to develop into clear and distinct being, the inchoate rudiment of something destined to grow from age to age of the human travail into full social inflorescence, still the admission does not justify the transfer of the blossom to the bud and the investment of this with its brilliant qualities. As well think to find the fragrance and beauty of the full-blown rose in the not yet transformed leaves of the incipient bud. Pre-essential to the flowering of every mental stock is the long and gradual building up in mental structure; it is when the fathers have eaten no sour grapes that the children's teeth are not set on edge.

As conscience was not implanted ready-made in man from his beginning on earth, and is not a constant quantity or quality, but was the slow and painful acquisition of development through past ages, the supreme conquest of culture, so its more perfect development is an ideal to aspire to and endeavour after in the years to come. With the more zeal and fuller assurance, too, because the experience of men as they rise in height of being teaches them plainly that it is the necessary condition of social well-being and its perfecting the necessary condition of the best social development. That they are yet in the thick of the struggle and far from final victory is shown by the different sorts of existing societies and the different modes of government in the world, and by the steadfast endeavours which every progressive society makes by means of new laws and changes of old laws to mend and amend its structure. That conscience at its

best, being a late, is still only a precarious possession is shown by its quick and easy downfall under the sudden stress of a great catastrophe in every civilized community, and by its swift effacement then in individuals and peoples; so complete the devastation indeed that the whole delicate fabric of moral culture seems temporarily dissolved and clean swept away. Amazed and aghast at such brutal explosions of the natural man when they befall from time to time, for no other reason than the fond wish that such things should not be, and a stubborn unwillingness therefore to believe that they are, men cry out that they are monstrous, unnatural, inhuman, incredible, and hasten either to draw a veil over them or to put a falsely fair face on them, or to ignore and forget them, in any case to say little about them. Meanwhile they are not incredible, since they happen, nor unnatural, since they own natural law, nor inhuman, since they are human doings, nor devilish, since they are divinely ordained; they are simply the natural consequences of the frailty and delicacy of the late-acquired, most finely organized, least stable cerebral reflexes.

A moral philosophy heedful of its foundations must needs some day give just heed to the facts of moral defacement and denudation and consider the bearings of them on its theories. In the mental disorder of madness and drunkenness the coarseness, the brutality, the violence of word and deed, the passion grossly shown, are not new created; they mark pre-existent material inflamed and laid bare. The highest cerebral reflexes subserving the social inhibitions being paralyzed, and their ruling functions of reason and moral control suspended, the fundamental instincts and passions of the coarser nature are exposed. There is neither scruple nor shame to say and do that which is a gross breach of good manners, and, perhaps, an offence against morality; the arrogant person is rudely insolent, the coarse-bred brutal, the envious malignant, the sensual bestial, the vain ridiculously vauntful, and the unbridled tongue tells jubilantly the secrets of self and others. For the same reason it is that

the brain-decay of senility, effacing the finest fibrils of social feeling, tends to expose the coarser and more fixed qualities of natural character. In both cases mind-function is reduced to a lower power by the physical devastation.

Starting from the theory of the fall of man from an original state of perfect happiness, when conscience was pure and supreme, into a brute-like being degraded by the lust of an animal nature, who nevertheless aspires to regain the purity and bliss he dimly dreams to have lost long since, the notion of two separate natures, a spiritual and a material nature, opposed radically to one another, was conceived and insisted on. The persistently inculcated aim then was to subdue and suppress a lower nature which was continually warring against the higher nature. But these are not really two such separate natures; there is one nature having two poles, nevertheless with continuity and unity of being, and so far from its higher functions being separate from and independent of its lower functions, the simple truth is that they could not have ever been nor could continue to be without the lower any more than the flower could be without the root. St. Paul rightly then declared that the material was first, and afterwards that which was spiritual, but he went to a wrong extreme when he would have had the spiritual entirely divested of the lusts of the flesh; he himself could never have been the vehement and vigorous spiritual apostle he was, after his miraculous moral transformation from sinner to saint, had he not preserved and profited by the passion and vigour of Saul the persecutor. The appetites and lusts of the flesh, albeit styled low and animal, are really more necessary, being fundamental to human existence, than the so-called good and spiritual qualities; for while man lives very well as an animal without moral qualities, he could not live as a moral being without his animal qualities. As he struggles with his physical surroundings in order to grow in knowledge and power, so he struggles with his native instincts and passions in order to grow by their assimilation and transformation to a higher social and moral nature;

which in the result is not a self drained of them, but a self made higher by their gradual sublimation. To think to make a St. Augustine without the strong sensual nature of the unsanctified Augustine, or a St. Paul without the passionate nature of Paul, would be as ridiculous as to try to distil an essence without the crude substance to extract it from. The more brute within the man, so long as it is fitly moralized, the more powerful is the moral man. In the desire and striving of the human race to reach a higher and better nature is no obscure reminiscence of a former greatness and goodness lost long since, there is the yearning impulse to grow more and more to a perfection in time to come.

It is the brain-weak neurotic, who, lacking animal nature, yet deeming himself superficially spiritual because of his masculine deficiency and his over-sensitive infirmity, is fundamentally unsound. Lacking full manly structure and vigour, he lacks also breadth, vigour and proportion of thought, is incapable of just discernment, good practical sense and sound judgment; engrossed in an acute sensibility and narrow insight, he is self-endeared, self-magnetized, self-magnified, and interprets the world in terms of such self. Moreover, he is morally ill-tuned without being aware of it, for by reason of his constitutional bias and the self-hypnotization which it engenders, he cultivates a wilful blindness to evidence which pleases him not, eagerly embraces evidence which suits him, deforms to his liking facts which he dislikes, glories in an intense and fanatical self-sufficiency with its attendant delirium of delight. Such is the real nature and intrinsic value of the superfine and over-tender conscience, which is apt to bewail misery and to shun the miserable, of the convulsive ecstasy too of the narrow genius which is insensible to everything that ministers not directly to its self-indulgent development. In the end the emasculate body in its degree must needs evolve a mind proportionately lacking in masculinity, and the spirit eviscerated of its fleshly passions breed degeneracy, if it breed at all.

When the upsurgings of the brute within the man overthrow his balance of being and make him a pitiful spectacle of disorder, the explanation is that the currents of inflamed energy cannot traverse the plane of the supreme cerebral reflexes along their extremely delicate and complex tracks of reason and moral feeling, because these, if they have been properly developed, are now paralyzed and impotent to conduct. Being functionless, their apprehensions are necessarily effaced; the man loses his moral memories not otherwise than as he loses the nicest grasps or apprehensions of his hand when it is benumbed or partially paralyzed; or as fine tones of sound and the finest articulations of speech are lost when the cerebral reflexes subserving the most subtile feelings and motor apprehensions of words are erazed by disease; or as clear and distinct visions of objects is blurred by impairment of the fine reflexes subserving the exact motor apprehensions of their images. Mark well the slavering infant, the slavering idiot, and the slavering dotard, how they resemble one another in expressionless face of inapprehension: the infant has not yet acquired by practice the exquisitely delicate mechanism which the idiot is congenitally destitute of and the old man has lost by the natural decay of age. As it would not be right to say that a man's spiritual nature is lost and his bodily nature left when he cannot grasp or speak or see precisely and firmly, it cannot be right to speak so of him when the finest reflexes of his mental organization are paralyzed and he cannot apprehend morally: a one and whole nature has been impaired in its highest, most delicate, and least stable developments.

Did timid minds, shocked by the word materialism, really know what the word means, and what they mean when they lightly use it, they might perhaps learn and apply many useful lessons of conduct. As the note of progress is to gain a future evolution, not to regain a lost evolution, it is in materialism, understood in its best sense, that the means and hope of advancement may be found really to lie. If

man does not obtain perfection through the improvement of his bodily nature he certainly will not obtain it at all in this world; therefore to refine, purify and develop the material being in obedience to natural laws of cause and effect, instead of trying to despise and degrade it continually as the enemy of an indwelling spiritual entity, is the aim of a rational morality concerning itself modestly with real conduct, not inflating itself with empty abstractions. So inspired practically, men might, for instance, learn to suspect the iniquity of begetting new life when so lamed or maimed mentally as to be only half, and that the lower half, of themselves. For it is a sober, and might well be a solemn, lesson of materialism that as surely as bodies gravitate to the earth so surely do unwholesome moods of mind and states of body as well as native lameness and meanness of moral nature tend to breed infirmity, vice, and madness in offspring. The ancient philosopher who, when importuned with the foolish talk of a simpleton, exclaimed, "Verily, thy father was drunk when he begat thee," spoke what might well have been true, even if it chanced not to be true in that particular instance. Yet to think of the monstrous inconsistency between the exalted notion which men cherish of the immortal value of every human life and the heedless self-indulgence with which they go about to launch it into everlasting being! A merry spectacle to the cynic, but a rather tragic spectacle to the enthusiast who counts human life a serious thing. The quintessential abstract of the individual as he is in mind and body at the procreative moment, maimed or whole, sound or unsound, in good or bad mood, discord or harmony, is launched into new immortal being, not with the least design or forethought of the momentous import of the function, not even with any heed or care whether its purpose is fulfilled or not, but as a mere incident in the oft-recurring sport of lust. Thus man, whose prerogative is reason, takes no thought whatever to provide for the production of sound life, physical and moral, yet takes all the pains in the world nowadays to nurse and preserve the diseased life which he

recklessly produces; and thus in blind servitude to an overpowering instinct to perpetuate life on earth he heedlessly generates the beings who are to people eternity. He does well then to exalt love as divine; thereby he silences conscience, should it perchance whisper a censure, by shifting responsibility from himself to the divine purpose which his lust fulfils.

## II

### MORALITY

Self-interest the basic motive of conduct—The ten commandments inductions of experience—Elimination or assimilation of morbid social elements?—Sorrow and sympathy—Outbursts of the brute in the man—Admiration of the immoral hero—Adoration of the moral hero—Confucius's enunciation of the moral law—Retribution the rule of practical morality—Social approvals and disapprovals—Conscience bred by law—The ideal and the real—Structural virtue not self-conscious—The inheritance of a good organization—The value of a good example—Virtue a prudent wisdom—Conquest of culture and its rules of intrasocial origin—Different estimates of virtue—Rectifications of laws—Arbitrary rights of the State—Relativity of morality—Passions essential factors in social development—Scientific study of good and evil.

As conscience is no absolute and infallible guide in the manifold, complex and changing circumstances of life, but diversely qualified in divers situations and persons, it results that the moral aim of the individual everywhere is to find out the just mean between his personal rights and the duty-claims of the society to which he belongs—to reconcile individuality with solidarity, egoism with altruism. Self-love being the basis of every being, without which indeed it could not be, self-interest is the fundamental motive of its passions and conduct. A hard saying when crudely stated, yet not to be gainsaid, though its harshness be hidden under fine and smooth words signifying the refined and abstract developments of self love. Strike the particular person, be he never so saintly, aptly to the quick, the stroke perhaps only a social slight to his special vanity, and the root-passion fails

not to show itself. He may aspire and strive to love his neighbour as himself, but he has then a keen and quick intuition that his nearest neighbour is himself, and that a wise self-esteem is necessary to his own self-respect and to his love of others. Let him think to swallow up self-love in a complete altruism, yet a tender self is the very soul of his keen altruism. And well it is that it is so, since if it were not so human progress might come to an early stop.

The more clearly this fundamental motive is owned in the communion and commerce of individuals and peoples, the more sure and safe is the footing on which they deal with one another; if it be ignored or obscured by vague phrases, general terms of goodwill, amiable sentiments and loose understandings, the more certain is the risk of disappointments, misunderstandings, recriminations and quarrels. Besides, the persistent cultivation of a voluntary ignorance of it is the nursery of many organized hypocrisies of thought and conduct. Now to know the fundamental qualities of human nature there is no need to speculate largely and abstractly, it suffices to recall and ponder the commandments, legal enactments, and moral maxims which have been necessarily framed, because found actually necessary, to restrain and rule the natural impulses of self-interest. "Thou shalt not" is the prohibitive formula of most of the ten commandments, which do but utter the simplest moral rules of self-denial essential to the existence of society; while the numerous and various laws of every civilized country and the successive amendments of them attest the continued necessity of curbing the selfish propensities of the individual by guarding specially against the ingenuities of bad men apt to devise with increase of knowledge new and subtler breaches of them. Though the technicalities and elaborate formulas of legal phraseology in a simple contract between man and man seem tedious and superfluous, yet experience has proved them to be indispensable to prevent the subtle and insidious workings of self-interest. Seeing then that these moral commandments and legal enactments

were not pre-devised and pre-ordained formulas to prevent possible, but inductions of experience to correct actual wrongs, they furnish incontestable proof of the basic motives of human conduct and of the experimental construction of morality.

The procession of human things goes steadily on its fated course and, despite all the altruistic goodwill in it, cannot stay its march to suit the weak and wretched who fall out by the way. If brother stayed always to help up and stand by fallen brother, loving him as himself, progress might be brought to a standstill: that would be to cancel the impulse of its motion and to wreck the human venture for the sake of the impotent. The best he can do for himself and his kind is to use well his strength for all it is worth, and to succour the weaklings by placing them in hospital, or asylum, or refuge of some sort, where they may be cared for outside the current of life which they cannot breast. For when all is said in pity or in excuse, the weak and wretched are usually from one cause or another impracticables, even when not very abjects who cannot be helped to help themselves, and, being such, are necessarily a hindrance or a hurt to the social organization, whose right and interest it is to isolate or eliminate hostile elements, as a sound bodily organism sequestrates or eliminates its morbid elements. True charity to the species consists in the self-love which expels from its working system the ailing and useless element, not in vitiating and lowering the constitution and function of the whole by absorbing weakness and disease into it; mind-stuff in its course of social evolution doing in more refined ways very much what the leading stork of the southwards-migrating flock does when it spikes with its bill the weakling unable to continue its flight.

A strange society in the end it would be which eliminated self-interest, abolishing it not only as theoretical but as practical motive; which, for example, deliberately and consistently incorporated into its structure the scrofulous, the tuberculous, the epileptic, the insane, the criminal; nay,

perhaps, in wild flight of humane enthusiasm, recommended or enforced regular interbreeding with savages in order to raise them by lowering itself. Could the human kind in its struggle upwards gain by that process of quixotic righteousness? Though the brotherhood of men be a lofty ideal to be cherished on earth and in time, and realized after place and time are not, the pious project of striving to attain it by intermarriage of its highest and lowest specimens is not yet approved, nor is the grand atonement likely soon to be accomplished.

In all compassion there is in the giver, despite his conscious repudiation of the feeling, a secret, unavowed tinge of contempt, in all benevolent help a tacit note of superiority or patronage, which is or ought to be wounding to the self-respect of him who needs and receives it. Though the subtile feeling be consciously rejected, it is latent and has silently infected words; for the word compassion is not now strictly synonymous with sympathy, although its original meaning was literally the same, but is imbued with a note of superiority. Why is sorrow lessened by a companionship of misfortune and misery? Not so much because one is then sorry for one's neighbour's sufferings as because one's own self-love is less hurt by seeing him on the same compassion-needing plane of humiliation. Commiseration is natural in a common misery. He and I may be naturally sorry for one another's sad situation when we are sore afflicted, but neither has the latent pride of a superiority entitling him to compassionate the other. Very different it is when the condoler can say practically to the sufferer, "I am sorry at heart for you, and would gladly comfort and help you if I could. But what would you have? I have my work to do and my pleasure to enjoy, and cannot afford to spend my time and strength in staying by you and doing for you. Besides, it would not help you effectually yet would ruin me if I did, seeing that you would probably not now be in need of help were you capable of being helped effectually."

The deep affliction which a strong nature feels shrinks with instinctive reserve from proffered words of sympathy not only as humiliating, but because it feels too well its own aloofness and the inevitable hollowness of sympathy, however genuine the show of it. The spoken words are heard but do not signify, sound so far off that they carry no meaning across the deep gulf between sorrower and sympathizer, seem almost to mock the unutterable feeling, and therefore aggravate rather than alleviate it. Never was sadder illustration of that truth presented than by the memorable scene of sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane, when the meek and gentle Jesus bearing the sinload of the human race, His soul heavy and exceeding sorrowful, on the very verge of the ordained expiation by a lingering death on the cross, brought His disciples to a lonely place to watch with Him during His sore agony while He prayed that, if it were possible, the bitter cup might pass from Him, but if not, that He might have the resignation to drink it. Three times He went a little way apart to make His agonized supplication, and three times He returned to find His tired disciples fast asleep, who soon after, when He was seized and led captive away, all forsook Him and fled. Whosoever thinks to comfort himself in deepest sorrow or in the hour of death with the sympathy of pitying friends, let him bethink himself of that mournful scene and resolve to do his suffering in silence and alone.

Self being basic, always divulges and asserts itself in the last resort when the individual comes into violent encounter with the elemental facts of nature, physical or human. Then all the latest conquests of social culture, all the vestures of shams, hypocrisies, conventions, reserves, formalisms, are rudely stripped off; the restraints patiently woven in the interests of the species rent to pieces by the supreme selfishness of the individual. Thence, too, the hideous exhibitions of human ferocity in crises of great panic, of dire distress and famine, when the fundamental instincts burst out with brutal violence; instances gladly ignored or

soon forgotten, or with dim suffusion veiled by a human nature aspiring to reach higher being, and happily sustained in its strivings by occasional spectacles of devoted self-sacrifice and heroism in the worst scenes of reckless selfishness.

The strange thing to see is how persistently men adore a supreme incarnation of selfishness in the person of the great conqueror who, in pursuit of his ambitious ends, unscrupulously tramples on truth, right, justice, disdaining every moral principle which stands in the way of his insatiable lust of power, and wasting human lives as indifferently as nature itself does. Amply justified, too, he is of his monstrous egotism, since he knows well that what he selfishly seeks as glory will be deemed glorious by his kind and secure for him an everlasting fame in their admiration. What matters a theoretical moral reprobation when he is sure of the actual approbation of their living worship from age to age? Besides, he can feel or persuade himself that he is an elemental force of nature and, like nature, rightly conscienceless, even if he do not go so far as to think himself half-divine, and the inspirations of his ambition the voice of the god in him. In the exaltation of him as a hero public judgment without doubt shows a deeper instinctive wisdom than it is explicitly conscious of; for if the mighty work done by him be in the divine purpose, as it needs must be, and the energy to do it be divinely given, as it cannot fail to be in a world divinely governed, the inevitable conclusion is that the man was divine in that wherein he excelled. As the Egyptian philosopher, Psammon, according to Plutarch, said to Alexander, "All men are governed by God, because all that which excels and rules in any species whatever is always divine." It is a just logic, therefore, which erects statues and monuments to the glory of famous conquerors despite their bad morals, and notwithstanding that they might not be so good, not even really so brave personally, as the obscure martyr who patiently suffered torture and death for

conscience' sake, and is as clean forgotten as if he had never been born.

Nevertheless, another and presumably nobler type of great man, of quite opposite heroic kind, has enthusiastically proclaimed a lofty moral ideal to mankind, and been immensely adored in consequence; not, perhaps, during his life yet after his death, since it is the human habit to despise when living and admire when dead those who have done most for its intellectual and moral progress. Such admiration is plain proof of altruistic impulse and aspiration in the race. Conqueror and saint then are both rightly admired; the former because, acting the real man that has been and still is, he does that which is right in present practice; the latter because, proclaiming the ideal man that is to be, he forefeels and foretells a more moral practice to come. That ideal aim of course is to make all men members of one family by perfecting a universal brotherhood; to develop such a consentience or sympathy with the kind as that everybody shall feel another's hurt to be his hurt, and his good to be another's good; to absorb and extinguish individual egoism in the spatious selfishness of humanity, not otherwise than as personal selfishness expands into the larger family selfishness. For as a good parent's best joy is to make sacrifices for his child, parental self-love being best pleased by pleasing it, all that is needed for the perfection of altruism is such a deep sense of unity and amity between men as will make everybody feel in relation to everybody else as the parent feels in relation to the child. Then all people on earth may act from self-love, because it will be the self-love of all, as it is of a few now, to do good to others, and would be a hurt to it not so to do, even though the help given might be more hurtful than helpful in the long run.

Although such altruistic transformation of egoism be the expected consummation of a perfectly constituted social unit in a perfect social medium, it is certain that for any one now to endeavour to make the whole human race his family is to grasp so widely as to embrace nothing palpable. The

consequence is that he who tries and thinks to do so is apt to deceive himself with forced and false sentiment, which is at bottom for the most part keen egoism masquerading as humanitarianism, and to delight in the debauch of delirious feeling, being himself the while perhaps nowise unselfish in the relations of his daily life. Another instance this of the frequent irony of nature—that those who would do best for the species are far from being always the best specimens of it; persons to be praised, therefore, not for what they are, but as symbols of its best aspirations.

Confucius pronounced the moral law to consist in not doing to another that which you would not have another do to you; that, he said, was the only necessary law, for it was the foundation and principle of all morality. Unlike the Christian precept teaching men to bless those who curse and to do good to those who do evil, and even inviting the smiter of one cheek to smite the other also, he taught that it was no duty to return good for evil, benefits for injuries; for if men acted so, he asked, how could they recompense benefits? The right thing to do was to repay hatred and wrongdoing by strict equity, well-doing by doing well. If I bestow the same benefit on one who does me a great wrong as I do on one who does me a great benefit, I do an injustice, for I violate the very principle of justice on which the security of a society rests.

A rule of retribution in the conduct of life is the only practical moral rule; it is the moral rule which always has been and necessarily is practised in every state, Christian or Pagan. No civic body could subsist in health for a day which did not expressly punish wrongdoing by laws framed purposively to check it; nor could a family even hold well together which acted always on the principle of rendering good for evil. The ideal might suit well if the wrongdoers would begin well by putting it in strict practice, but so long as they flourish the consistent application of it could not fail to foster wrongdoing and eventually to exterminate welldoers.

In order to impart substance to reflections on morality, it is incumbent to bring them down from abstract heights and to consider its actual working forces in the doings of social life. There the motive persistently instilled into every member from his cradle onwards is to be well thought and spoken of by it, by doing that which it approves, its praise being a recompense, its dispraise a shame. That it is wrong to do it wrong; that a good act is its own reward; that it is more blessed to give than to receive; that the truest happiness consists in making others happy; that the recollection of a life spent in well-doing will be a solace and support in the last dark hours of it; that such a well-spent life obtains the esteem of all men, and leaves a sweet memory after it; —these and similar moral maxims, like rules of polite behaviour, have been diligently instilled and extolled as fitted to make men good social beings.

Society's method of stimulating the pride, flattering the self-esteem, enkindling the sympathy, and enlisting the co-operation of the individual to do its service is all the more effective, seeing that it has and uses the power to supplement its praises and dispraises by the penalties which it inflicts on conduct which it disapproves. Self-interest is thus engaged to go along with self-esteem to serve it. Moreover, the undoubted effect of a law and of the steady infliction of punishment for a breach of it is not only to instil a fear of offending, but by degrees to breed a conscience in respect of the particular offence. A rebel is unwise, too, even in his own interest, albeit his revolt may sometimes be in the true interest of the society which knows it not. Sore situate is the wise man in an ignorant and foolish society who is under the sad necessity, if he will earn its approval, of praising and doing that which he feels and sees to be wrong; he must be either a fool among fools of his time in order to be wise for himself in it, or knave enough to exploit fools for his profit, or martyr for his inopportune wisdom.

Notwithstanding the actual prevalence of immorality in practice there is a strenuous human struggle to atone for

the evil by persistent laudation of morality in theory. Let men cheat, lie, spoil, defraud, oppress, kill one another, they still fail not to extol honesty, truth, equity, kindness and humanity; and the greatest scoundrel does not think ill, will even speak well, of the good man whose throat he would willingly cut for his gain, if he was sure he could do it secretly and safely. Because it is praised and neglected, virtue is not a useless sham, not the mere homage of hypocrisy paid by vice; its ideal implies a real to be transformed and the impulse to transform it. The individual then does quite naturally to hold to both his ideal and real, keeping up a belief of continuity and unity between them, despite the remoteness of their extremes, without heeding the reproach that he has two different rules of life, the one as fair seeming for outward show, the other for inward use. Though he toil after the unattainable he still has the joy of present pursuit and future hope, and may obtain unlooked for good in the process. How much worse might the worst hypocrite not soon be were he to cease to keep up the show of virtue? Foolish as futile are the writhing endeavours which man is continually making to turn himself inside out and to get rid of one aspect of him: he will always have two faces, and might as well look for expiration without inspiration, systole without diastole, flexion without extension in his bodily economy, as expect virtue without vice in his social economy.

Little good in practice comes of the elaborate expositions and formal preachings of morality; they are futile for the most part, except in so much as they serve to keep alive the ideal. Virtue is no complex thing, it is simple and plain enough, so that everybody who has the root of it in him can see and follow it without laboured rules of instruction. Those who need to proclaim and praise rules of righteousness continually show thereby that they have not the root of right-doing in them, that they lack the essential principle in their mental structure: if they do it for their own edification, it is proof that morality is not yet made in them, is only in

process of painful making; if they do it for the edification of others, they are prone to deceive themselves by the love of preaching openly what they do not practise privately, since nothing is more tempting than to compound for weak practice by flaming precept and ostentatious show. To talk largely of loving the good is to talk loosely and at large; the sole proof of such love is to live it, good life not trite talk. That men do habitually celebrate the precepts and neglect the practice of virtue is without doubt because they are not yet constitutionally moral; they have made but little way on their slow and tedious progress to that thorough structural moralization when moral impulse, being instinctive, will do righteousness automatically.

Virtue again is made harder work than it need be by the abstract and absolute way in which it is preached as an ever-fixed ideal of constant value which everybody should, and could if he would, attain to; which is absurd. Here as elsewhere, it is needful to descend from generalities and phrases to concrete facts and a direct study of them. The individual is not a metaphysical constant, uncaused or self-caused, but a physical variable; just a special organic mechanism which has been fashioned definitely by rule of natural law to be what it is exactly and no other organism exactly is. To be so perfect therefore as to perform perfectly virtuous function he needs the sound basis of a good organization, which he must get by happy inheritance from a sound stock; such organization in that case implying not only a sound moral basis, but also a good understanding to discern the true reasonableness of right-doing. On that foundation of good natural capacity may then be reared by good habits of exercise the superstructure of an intelligent and virtuous character. How teach general maxims of virtue to the congenitally deficient being who has not in him the moral sensibility to feel them nor the understanding to comprehend their far-reaching utility to himself and the community; or even to the great majority of persons who, although of average intelligence, yet use general terms

without vital sense of their meaning and cannot see beyond the first link in a logical chain. Considering calmly how few are they who can realize the universal and inexorable concatenation of things, it is abundantly evident how necessary to moral stability and progress the inventions of Heaven and Hell have been as reward of well-doing and punishment of evil-doing, and how indispensable the direct pressure of penal law on the individual still is to effect a vital realization of acts and their consequences and to develop a conscience in relation to them.

Far more effective than any abstract doctrine is the concrete lesson of a good example which appeals to sense and the multitude can grasp. To extol the moral instance, to persuade them that they can imitate it, and so to incite them to earnest emulation, that is the way to get most good out of them. There was nothing essentially new in the moral principles proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth, which, had they stood alone, might not have had the immense influence they have had on mankind, notwithstanding their promises of eternal joy and threats of eternal pain; it was the pitiful and pathetic story of His meek and lowly life, and of His cruel death on the cross as an expiation for the sins of the whole human race, appealing forcibly to heart and mind, which helped to fix in the reverence of mankind all that He said and did during His brief career. Those, therefore, who reject the legends of the story, and deny the attributes of the Godhead, still gladly revere the signal and sublime example of social atonement.

The result of preaching an abstract virtue has been to refer it to an abstract conscience, and to divorce it from a practical commerce with things; for which reason the lesson of it has been much in the air. Besides, to connect it, being so majestical, with the common and rather mean realities of men and things, was deemed such a wrong to its dignity as to be denounced as base utilitarianism. Yet it is evident enough that to sacrifice a present desire to a future good is often only common prudence, the obvious wisdom of a

rational selfishness. Who but a fool would knowingly wail a week "to gain a minute's bliss," or "sell eternity to get a toy"? Yet how many the fools who daily perpetrate that folly! In the mean interest of his personal well-being the member of a social community, whose gains and losses, sorrows and joys, necessarily come to him through others, must practice self-restraint and self-denial, must bear and forbear, doing for another that which he would have another do for him, and not doing to another that which he would not have another do to him. That is not self-sacrifice, it is good arithmetic, seeing that by virtue of the social solidarity he gains a fuller life for himself in subduing the impulses of rude self-assertion to the fine restraints of altruism. It is also good economy, for the wisely virtuous person lays up for future use treasure which the foolishly vicious wastes prodigally. To exalt virtue, then, so high that nobody can attain to it, and to preach duty as if it were a painful self-sacrifice, is to make the lofty lesson of virtue unreal and the duty of it hard and sad, whereas a lowlier and wiser sermon would demonstrate true self-interest to be at one with the interest of the community.

Without doubt, confusion of thought and obscurity of language might often be prevented whenever virtue is dilated on, were an exact definition given of that which then and there is meant by the general name, and thereupon the definition were rigorously substituted for the word in the subsequent reasoning. It is not to be believed at the present day that full-formed virtue descended on men as a perfect gift from heaven; it has plainly been a painful acquisition of culture, made slowly and gradually through innumerable years, and is now an organic nature in them incorporating potentially at its best their best reason and feeling. No mortal, whatever the source or value of his inspiration, ever did or could foresee and deliberately premeditate the edifice of the social organization; its principles are inductions of vital experience which now instruct and guide the individual member of it. "Art thou He that should come,

or do we look for another?" might be described as the express question of a silent travail of development awakened to a lively expectation of immediate birth. Where, then, ought rational inquiry to seek for the real motives and rules of virtuous conduct? Definitely within the social organism; not in any divine right outside it, but in the divine right springing vitally within itself. When its rational basis in realities is thus clearly understood, virtue will be seen to grow slowly in living touch with men and things, and to bear fruit accordingly in good works; then also will the vindicated rights of the understanding be reconciled with the rights of conscience and supreme reason.

If such view of things involve the acknowledgment that virtue or morality must change in time and place according to the level of social development, that is only to acknowledge that which has been. There have been as many fashions of virtue as of beauty, and no one has ever loved virtue in the abstract, any more than he has loved beauty in the abstract. The virtue which is loved is that which in the existing social atmosphere pleases and is idealized as an inspiration. Chastity is no virtue where unchastity is no vice; to prefer loss of life to loss of chastity is therefore a local heroism. When virtue meant valour, it was because valour was the true virtue of a barbarous people; if it now mean meekness and self-renunciation, that is because these are esteemed the proper virtues of a complex and refined civilization. It is the living social spirit of a people which informs their moral character: what had the religions of the ancient Greeks and Romans, calculated as the tales of their gods were to sanction every vice, to do with implanting and nourishing the real virtues which distinguished them? The strange thing is that people are so hot to despise and persecute one another because of their differences of opinion, notwithstanding that doctrines and customs which are natural to and good for one people at one stage of its being would be positively bad for another people, or even for the same people at a different level of its civilization. Yet not

really so strange as it seems superficially, seeing that the hatreds, enmities and strifes of peoples have been ordained factors in the process of human development through the ages: alike in the courses of the stars, in the order of the seasons, in the events of the world, and in the feelings and doings of men is the will of destiny accomplished.

Rules of morality drawn from experience and meeting the practical needs of social communities have living force and reality, because, being rectifiable, they are continually rectified in accordance with the development of a progressive society. As increase of knowledge produces increase of power, being a progressive increase of special sensibility to and answering methodical action on nature; and as self-interest is strong and persistent to use power for its profit, new laws and amendments of old laws are continually called for to check abuses which would surely luxuriate if not restrained by fear or force. The best code of laws in the world cannot be final, since new cases will occur requiring special adaptations of old principles in a progressive society: a just use of *casuistry*, in its original sense of the discrimination of new cases, one might say, had not the word now got an ill meaning. Progressive specializations of prevention and penalty therefore are devised to meet progressive specializations of cunning and corruption, all too apt to breed secretly and spread stealthily, and thus morally to develop fresh consciences; for no community can continue in a sound state where an accompanying moral invigoration does not go with an increase of knowledge and the power for evil as well as good which such increase confers. Here then it is seen how the cunning and crime of bad men, ever intent to evade or infringe good laws, serve to fulfil the work of human development; being the exciting causes of new laws to check special evils, they are the ordained means to build up the complex social structure. The clever scoundrel is verily an ally of morality, without any virtue on his part; by using his intellect to cheat his neighbour he excites his neighbour's hostility to fraud, and by using his intellect to prevent

his neighbour from cheating him he helps his neighbour's morality.

In all the circumstances of real life, impartially and clearly viewed, similar evidence of the relative nature of morality is manifest. There is certainly no abstract justice in a half-witted citizen born in one house inheriting privilege and power which another person born in the next house never obtains, however great his merits; yet such superiority and inferiority of position have been found necessary by experience to the organization and development of society; the abstract injustice, though it eventually become demoralizing and immoral, being preferable to the strife and anarchy which might otherwise ensue. If two persons wish to go through the same narrow gate at the same time, one of them must give way or they must fight for precedence; the State therefore, to prevent disorder, ordains that one shall have an artificial precedence until the time come when, a perfect politeness prevailing in a perfect polity, everybody shall be endued with such an innate civility of nature as instantly to yield to another a courteous preference which he is glad to offer and the other to refuse. It is obvious that a State may for its own order's sake rightly enact and enforce a less just, if not an unjust law, when it has not the wisdom or power to enact and enforce one which would be more just: not being able to make right might, it does right in the interests of the commonwealth to make might right. That may be right for it which would be wrong for the individual to do; for while he may not wrong another because that would hurt the State to which he belongs and which he must serve, the State may do wrong to him because its welfare is the supreme law and it cannot concern itself with minute particulars. Moreover, that which would be wrong if done by the individual for himself may be right if done by him for the State. The special gods invented and adored in times past by different peoples were not mere idle fabrics of fancy, they symbolized the several modes of national vital growth; therefore in their name were solemnly proclaimed

laws and ceremonies the need and value of which were instinctively felt, though it was impossible to discern the true social origin and sanction of them. Now as the god might do as he pleased to the man, he being its creature, and the revolt of the man was an impious offence to the god, who had the right to his adoration and praise in any case, so it is now with the state and the individual, although happily in less arbitrary and absolute fashion.

Morality being relative, not absolute, will not in any case bear much stretching beyond human relations. When the bird eats the caterpillar, does the caterpillar suffer wrong? To the bird it would seem absurdly wrong for the caterpillar to think that it was wronged by being swallowed. For a child to eat a lamb is as natural and right as for a wolf to eat a child; therefore the wolf may think the child wrong, as the child may think the lamb wrong, to protest against the iniquity of being eaten. The unlucky mortal who is killed by a stroke of lightning at the most critical moment of his life, perhaps just when he was on the point of successfully accomplishing the great work for which all his previous life was a patient and laborious preparation, suffers no wrong because morality has no application to non-human things. Forasmuch as he was not present when the foundations of the world were laid, nor had fashioned the sinews of leviathan and could not loosen the bands of Orion nor guide Arcturus with his sons, Job was taught emphatically out of the whirlwind that he had no right to complain of his unexampled and unmerited afflictions, or to charge with injustice the power which was experimenting upon him to the uttermost just to confute a mocking Satan's doubts. Morality again is notoriously planed down to the thinnest layer when it is a question between the civilized people which covets and the uncivilized people which own what is coveted. Not that the stronger nation then devours the weaker out of naked and openly declared greed; putting a fair seeming on gross fact, it does it for the latter's good, as the bird doubtless devours the caterpillar for the

caterpillar's good, aspiring to spread the blessings of civilization and to hasten the good time of organic development towards which the whole creation moves, when men shall no more hurt and destroy—when the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and the young child thrust its hand unharmed into the cockatrice's den.

Candid reflection must needs allow that men are not properly grateful to the passions and vices of their lower nature for the good which they get from them; else why, while needing and using them in the progressive building of their social fabric, continually accuse and condemn them? Whatever the ideal future has in store for the race, the pure moral law did not prevail in the making of the past and present, for the vices of individuals and peoples were necessary factors in the construction of the virtues which have been evolved by them. Still, too, for the most part they take great pains to pursue that which they style unworthy or wrong, while praising and neglecting that which they call worthy or right. Multiplicity and variety of wants, with corresponding variety of reciprocal services in gratifying them through the manifold processes of industry, barter, and the like, are the means of developing a complex social organization, which never could have been thus formed without the existence, nor could continue to exist without the continuance, of such passions as pride, ambition, avarice, emulation, envy, to actuate and sustain it.

Good and evil, right and wrong, and their intermediates have their natural causes, functions and consequences, which are not outside the scope of scientific inquiry, and ought, therefore, to be studied, not as abstractions but as concrete processes. The criminal is not inscrutable nor inexplicable, any more than a chemical compound, though the inquiry be more difficult; the sinner equally with the saint is a product of cause and effect in a fixed order of things; the fall of an individual or a kingdom as natural a consequence as the fall of a leaf or a thunderbolt. Were things diligently traced in their consequences, it would not

be so easy as it seems to estimate the moral value of any act; for it would then often be seen that an act which was good in its immediate was bad in its later effects, and perhaps good later on, and that an act which was bad in its immediate effects went, in like manner, through alternations of bad and good workings. Whatever be man's right rule in the world, nature certainly does not forbear to do evil that good may come; it uses the fit means for the end without troubling about any other justification. Why anywise call those means bad which fulfil an end more than equal in goodness to their badness? Or why not condemn good means when they fulfil ultimately a bad end? Because it is not the criterion of utility, it will be said, but the moral state of the individual actor which constitutes the essence of right or wrong doing in human affairs, and he is endowed with a conscience qualified instantly and infallibly to censure the wrong and approve the right. If that be so, it has evidently been ordained by the course of human events that the monitor should keep much silence.

## III

### PATRIOTISM

Patriotism and morality—The religion of patriotism—Narrow and bigoted patriotism—Humanity before patriotism—A growing humanization.

Reflections on the good and evil which co-exist in the spirit of patriotism teach the same lesson as to the mixed and mutable constitution of morality. How could patriotism ever exist without the passions which an ideal morality is bound to reprobate? The patriot who claims the world for his country and mankind for his brethren is no patriot at all; if he yearns to embrace the whole human race, his love must be so much stretched out and attenuated as to lose its patriotic substance. Love of his own country necessarily

implies preference of it, and, if need be, hostility to other countries which hinder its expansion or uphold conflicting interests; and the respective self-conservative instincts of two national bodies must needs resent and resist the merging of their individualities into a common blend. Hence the bitter enmity shown by a nation to those citizens in it who are not entirely of it, who, professing a universal love of mankind, would postpone its special interests to the larger interests of humanity. Notoriously it was not so much because of his religion that the early Christian was persecuted by the Roman emperors—of that they might be contemptuously tolerant as a foolish superstition—it was rather because he was deemed an enemy of his country,[1] professing doctrines which if carried into effect would entail nothing less than the dissolution of the civil organization. So also is it in a measure with the hostility provoked by the extreme socialist of the present day, in whom the world discerns not one really consumed by a burning love of his kind, but one whose keen self-love masquerades gloriously in that guise, and whose wild theories involve the impracticable folly of treating men abstractly, as if they had the same appetites to enjoy, the same measures of joy, the same desires to be, the same capacities to do.

The bond which binds men together in unity and amity, whatever it be named, is essentially religion, and the highest religion that which unites them in bonds of highest truth and justice. It is not called so when it holds a nation in unity, because, the word having been consecrated to an abstract use of its own, its concrete meaning is lost sight of. The cardinal tenets of religion in Christendom are God, immortality and freewill, and as these words have not a natural but a supernatural significance, the notion of religion has been abstracted from natural things. Whether the vital bond of a nation be called religion or not, it is certain that to weaken or destroy it is to go to work to dissolve the unity of the nation; for

[1] Hostis patriæ, inimicus deorum et hominum, hostis humani generis.

which reason patriotism and perfect morality cannot go along together at the present stage of human development. Is there any Christian nation which dreams of practising the lofty moral principles which it religiously professes, or could keep whole and sound for a year, if it went on to act as well as talk them? It does not, for the very good reason that they are impracticable. The logic of facts requires that the religion of patriotism be stronger than the religion of humanity, because it is a pre-essential step in the long and lingering process of humanization; to dissolve its close and strong bond in the nations in order to substitute a wide and loose bond of humanity would not make for progress; on the contrary, it would be the undoing of what has been slowly and painfully done through the travail of the ages, and the probable scattering of mankind in confusion and anarchy. The fervent cosmopolitan who preaches to his country the duty of strict righteousness on every occasion is an impracticable idealist, who would do incalculable harm were he not summarily repudiated as a negligible quantity when the real interests of his country are at stake; even at his best he overvalues his own righteousness, for he reflects not how, unawares, he may all the while be gratifying a disguised self-love keenly pleased to think itself the special friend and ally of righteousness. If he asks in sorrowing wonder, as he is prone to do, why the distinguished warrior who has won a great victory and done great slaughter is eminently honoured and liberally rewarded, while the civilian who has made a great discovery which has benefited the whole human race obtains no such honour and reward, he might bethink himself that the former has served well the vital interests of the nation, which is real and present, while the latter has served only the interests of humanity, which is ideal and always what is to be.

If patriotism be essential to the formation and well-being of a nation, it is none the less hurtful to it when it is narrow, bigoted and unintelligent. The good patriot is not he who, blinded by national self-love to the merits of foreigners and to the faults of his own countrymen, vulgarly extols what is

national just because it is national, deeming no higher praise possible than to say of some quality, if it be English, that it is truly English, if French, that it is French, if German, that it is German, and despises what is foreign simply because it is different, but he who endeavours to enrich his own country by importing into it from abroad the good which he finds there. There is no narrow patriotism in art and science, which belong to the human race and ought to be universally assimilated and admired; there will be no patriotism in commerce when nations are wise enough to perceive the benefits to all of its entire freedom; there can be no patriotism in morality when moral principles attain to universal and rigorous application; notwithstanding that at the present time each nation would, if it could, have its special patriotic use of the sun, of the air, of the sky, as it has of the soil—nay, even of God Himself as "our God." The higher the intellectual and moral culture of a people, the wider and more sympathetic will its mental outlook be, and the weaker its hatred or dislike of other peoples who are unlike. The lower in mental level the citizens of a country, the more narrow, fierce and bigoted is their patriotism: savage tribes hate and fight one another at sight simply because they have different customs, or different dialects, or different self-inflicted deformities of features, just as the two most virulent factions of the middle ages in Italy did because they wore differently coloured ribbons; and nations which have risen much above barbarism are not only blind to the merits of other peoples and the faults of their own people, but are passionately proud of their vulgar stupidity as a strong patriotic virtue. Meanwhile, as such national self-conceit is essentially as ugly and offensive as individual self-conceit, and no less contemptible a mark of bad breeding, it may be expected to dwindle and die as nations grow in the height, breadth and refinement of feeling which they aspire to and expect.

Montesquieu said that if he knew something which would be useful to his country but hurtful to Europe and the

human race he should think it a crime to make it known; he would, that is to say, prefer the good of mankind to the interests of his country. A charming philanthropic sentiment, no doubt; yet it is possible that one so situate as he imagined, not being Providence, might do better to reveal what he knew, not only for his country's good, but for the good of the human race. As the individual is but the tiniest ripple on a boundless main of being, he may well do more good in the end by doing the good within his reach to his continuing country for the short time he continues in it, than by thinking to take the whole human race into his purview and protection; content to leave it to the universal plan which includes him and them in its eternal order to care for the right distribution of the sum of good and evil in the separate national developments which are the steps of its cosmic process. Had Montesquieu known something which was useful to Europe and the human race, but detrimental to his own country, would he have deemed it right to conceal it? He would have shown clearly how selfish a thing patriotism is if he had concealed it, though he might have been denounced as antipatriotic, if not untenderly treated as a traitor to his country, had he made it known.

A development of mankind slowly and irregularly, still on the whole positively, towards concord and unity, notwithstanding national separations with their jealousies, rivalries, antipathies and enmities, seems to be foretokened by a fundamental community of spirit and aim in those which survive well and seem likely to survive in the struggle of life. It looks indeed as if, in the constitution of human nature, its molecules had been prefigured to moral issues and fate had thus given to human growth a moral trend. In all civilized peoples there is manifest the same growing feeling of humanity; they look forward, however dimly and distantly, to the same sort of ideal future, and they are going through similar social ameliorations. One family of human beings living peacefully on earth in brotherhood and happy

unity is the blessed issue which imagination fired by the enthusiasm of humanity foresees the whole creation to be groaning in travail for; yet to sober sight the vision may not be undimmed by mists of apprehension lest with increase of civilization the seeds of corruption may increase also, and constellations of intellect and morality be destined to rise and set in the future as similar constellations have risen and set in the past.

## IV

### WAR AND PEACE

Condemnation of murder and glorification of war—The inter-human struggle for existence—The law of organic construction through organic destruction—Natural inconsistency between theory and practice—Self-valuation and nature's valuation—Cessation of war and transformation of human creature—Is war a benefit or a bane?

It is plain proof how much overestimated a thing mortality is and at the same time how limited and relative a thing morality is, that men solemnly denounce the private killing of one another as murder, and jubilantly glorify the wholesale slaughter of themselves by thousands in war. Justly too, from the scientific if not from the humanitarian standpoint, seeing that the killing is actuated by the self-conservative instinct in both cases; the social organization impelled to maintain its well-being in the one case by forbidding private murder, which, if allowed, would endanger its existence; the national organization, in the other case, impelled to maintain its being by exterminating hostile neighbours, the pressure of whose hostility meanwhile has helped to weld and keep up its unity. In both cases the right hygienic rule is observed.

Although other species of animals war not with their kind in order to devour them, it is characteristic of man's supremacy that he has always done so, and, notwithstanding fervent professions of brotherhood, continues to do so, doing

it, too, under the positive sanction, if not in the name, of a religion which theoretically condemns it. Why is that? Because he, being the only branch of the animal kingdom which is growing and developing—the channel through which alone evolutional energy now takes effect, other species having been stopped in development by his predominance on earth—he is brought into mortal competition with his kind in the struggle of life. His own species is the only species of living creature that can seriously compete and contend with him for superiority; therefore, in accordance with the natural law of the survival of the fittest, the strongest tribes and nations have preyed on the weaker and grown thereby, not otherwise than as the stronger species of animals have prospered by preying on the weaker species in the struggle for existence. Inspired by nature's elemental force of *becoming*—its *conatus progrediendi*—he is urged and sustained by it yet to *become* on earth. Naturally then, when one people has subdued or nearly exterminated another people, it glorifies itself mightily, much as a cat does when it has killed a rat and lays it proudly at its mistress's feet or as the eager boy exults triumphantly when he has stoned a squirrel to death, or as the enthusiastic sportsman in Africa glorifies his heroic exploit when, himself usually in safe hiding, he has sent explosive bullets into a herd of browsing elephants.

It is plainly false to say that mankind have ever heartily desired peace on earth. They have often loudly said so, no doubt, but their true spirit is shown rather by what they have done than by what they have said. Infants, being heirs to the ages of human tyranny and selfishness on earth, exhibit in their constitutions the historical instinct of the race when they fight in the cradle and endeavour to destroy life as soon as they are out of it. History is in the main a monotonously hideous record, and pre-history without doubt a long oblivion, of successions of wars and slaughters, of improvements in the means and weapons of warfare, of the glorification of those who have successfully made war.

Through the succession of the ages, in the revolution of things which is christened evolution, peoples have sprung into being, grown great, then declined, and finally perished in conformity with the law of organic construction by means of organic destruction. In the same breath in which prayer is made to Heaven for peace on earth it is made also for victories over enemies in battle, and with the same voice with which men loudly deplore war they loudly extol the triumphant victor and victory. Does any other event in the history of a people produce half such madly exultant excitement and frantic jubilation as the news of a great victory? The consecrated church bells ring triumphant peals, the sacred spires are decorated with flaunting flags, archbishops and bishops, without misgivings, hasten to give devout thanks to Almighty God, although the church is the place, and its ordained ministers the persons, specially consecrated to celebrate the gospel of peace on earth and the brotherhood of mankind. All which, though it seem oddly incongruous, is the natural and necessary effect of the belief which works actually in practice; it is the faith proven by works.

To be amazed and aghast at the spectacle of monstrous inconsistency between profession and practice is to exhibit shallow thought and idle wonder. When was it ever ordained that men should be consistent? They have not been so hitherto on earth, and it is clear that for an incalculably long time to come they must, unless they leave off the aspiration to rise to higher being, while taking care also to live successfully the present being, continue at the same time to pray for, and prey upon, one another. What matters it to the universe, which is itself an equilibrium of antagonisms, whether human nature is consistent or inconsistent, so long as by its consistencies and inconsistencies the cosmic work is done and the will of destiny accomplished?

When one thinks of the wonderful succession of developmental processes through which a human being goes from the moment of his conception as a speck of quasi-homogeneous protoplasm to his full maturity of growth, the long series of

regularly succeeding states of evolution from the simple and general substance to the ever more and more complex and special structure, and of the exquisitely fine and intricate unions of different structures and organs into the complete organic mechanism; much more when one thinks of the long and tedious steps of organic development on earth through past ages up to the perfect formation of the human body, of which steps its embryonic processes furnish a sort of abridged sketch;—it seems natural to a being so long prepared, so patiently perfected, so wonderfully made, to esteem himself mightily and to conceive high notions of his dignity and destiny. Is it credible that he should pass away like the summer's rose or the winter's snow?

Yet were he to consider curiously how little it takes to kill him—a minutely mean bacterium, the stab of a penknife, the scratch of a cat's claw or of a rusty nail being enough—what a small thing is enough to console or afflict him, and what trivialities suffice to amuse and occupy his life, nay, how he is driven everywhere to invent and pursue all sorts of frivolous amusements to dispel the weariness and distract from thought of the vanity of it, he might justly perhaps suspect an overvaluation of himself. The value of a life is not its self-valuation, it is the value of the function which it performs while it is in being. A quite other estimate of human value in the universe is shown practically by man himself when deep throes move him and great issues are at stake; for as nature holds individual life very cheap, so he, being nature, then voices its elemental spirit in the contempt which he shows for human life. When he goes to war therefore, and magnifies himself, because, like David, he has slain his tens of thousands, he naturally troubles himself as little about their fate in the eternity after death, as about their nothingness in the eternity before they were born.

For the present the perpetual peace among men is not likely to be realized on earth outside the churchyard or the cemetery; so long at any rate as man continues to be the

actual being which he is, and not an ideal something which, whatever else it might be, would not be man. When cats take to feeding and nursing mice, instead of killing and feeding on them, and kites brood over chickens, as Mandeville said, they will furnish pretty spectacles of animal piety, but they will no longer be cats and kites, and the existing order of nature will have undergone a marvellous transformation into something new and passing strange. Not otherwise must it be with human beings when, ceasing at last to make war any more they beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Meanwhile they are strangely divided in opinion as to whether war is the curse it seems or really a blessing in disguise. The doubt is but an instance of the eternal puzzle which perplexes them; for while they would always have evil to be good in the making, yet they would always, if they could, get rid of the evil which is working the good. On the one hand are those who condemn war utterly as immoral and hurtful, and foresee a time to come when the human race shall progress smoothly on ethical paths of peace; on the other hand are those who see in war and in the heroisms, self-devotion and sacrifices which it involves a purifier of nations from the corruptions which peace and prosperity engender—an unrighteous way of going the way of righteousness. Viewing the facts in reason's light, it is impossible not to see in its prevalence and continuance among mankind plain proof of its necessity: it has been because it was inevitable and right it should be, since it has been the indispensable condition of the progress of organic matter in human form to loftier heights of being. That the wars which have been on earth were sad cosmic blunders which ought not to have been is just the transcendent conceit of human megalomania. The simple truth is that the development of higher life is at the cost of lower life, however the crude fact be embellished in the highest organic sphere by talk and show of gallantry, chivalry, heroism, devotion and the like ornaments of conduct; for it is plain that the

victories, heroisms and glories of war on the one side can only exist at the cost of the defeats, deaths and shames of the other side.

Still the question remains whether war must continue to be a necessary condition of progress among peoples who have reached a pretty equal level of respectable moral being. Can they raise or even maintain their moral stature without war? Or is the inevitable effect of accumulated organic matter, simple or complex, to breed in itself corruptions which, if not discharged critically in some violent way, initiate and promote general degeneration? That is the problem which, despite optimistic assurance, experience alone can solve, and the event will in no case fail to solve. Meanwhile, in the present condition of the most civilized peoples there is certainly some excuse for the pessimist who may think that, savage, brutal and cruel as men were in the past, they are baser, meaner and more secretly corrupt now —that the savage who openly scalped his enemy in war was a less ignoble animal than the unscrupulous financier who with subtle fraud ruins confiding thousands.

# CHAPTER VI

# RELIGION—PHILOSOPHY—SCIENCE

## I

### RELIGION

Vitality of religion—Its root in the feeling of cosmic unity—Religion and religious systems—Survival of the fittest—The elemental feeling in art, poetry, philosophy—Every religion a fitting vesture—Hebrew personification of the Divinity—Mental duality in relation to religion and reason—Unjustifiable religious persecution—Religious persecution sometimes justifiable—Hostility of religions to knowledge—The follies of men the wisdom of the world—Knowledge and the lust of life—Sublimity and impracticability of the Christian ideal—Self-idolatry of the secluded sage—The conclusion.

CONSIDERING the witticisms, epigrams, sarcasms, satires and cogent arguments which have been discharged against religion, the wonder is that it is still alive, and the conclusion natural that it somehow possesses a stronger element of vitality than the reason which its theological vestures and dogmas often grossly and grotesquely outrage. Religion, like life, has continued to live notwithstanding the conclusive demonstrations of reason that it was not worth living. What then is its strong vital element?

Obviously its vitality lies fundamentally in the relation of finite man to the infinite whole of which he is and knows

so infinitesimal a portion, in his absolute dependence on, and his consequent attitude of humility towards, the mysterious immensity around him which, being unfathomable, is the natural home of fear, faith and fancy. Religion is not morality simply, it is morality infused with elemental feeling and suffused with awe. Beneath knowledge which makes human limitation plainer the higher it rises, there lies the deeper fact of feeling, the fundamental testimony of reality for man, who could never know, if he did not feel, that he lived: he feels indeed in his inmost more than he can know, something beneath his moment of being working in and through it in an infinite flux of things from everlasting to everlasting—from an unknown past without beginning to an unknown future without end. In the deep instinct or intuition of this communion of being with the primordial and transcendental lie the source and force of the religious feeling which he translates into the terms of his own thoughts and imaginations.

It is obvious that religious feeling is one thing and that religions or religious systems are quite another thing. Two unities imply twofold human relations: the unity of the cosmic system which includes man's relation to the all and translates itself in mystic feeling; and the unity of the social system which includes his relations to his fellows, these having their special forms of moral expression in different societies to meet different needs and conditions of time and place. In vain has each society in turn strenuously striven to sanctify and eternize its own forms as the best, if not as exclusively good. Forms and fashions being perishable, knowledge-fashioned vestures only, change as it changes, whereas the feeling, being absolute, lives through their death and springs up afresh despite all the assaults made on it. If one thing is proved plainly by the history of the human race it is that a form of religion good for one age and people would be bad for another age and people; wherefore a revolt against the established religion, though it be no more unwarrantable than a revolt against a particular fashion

of dress, may be an inopportune and rash attack on the unity of the social system.

The notable thing is that each creed is passionately urgent to identify religion with itself, hooking the absolute and eternal cosmic energy on to its special car, and deems the rejection of its fashion of thinking a denial of the inspiring feeling: like other living things, it cannot choose but obey the instinct of self-conservation while it is alive. However, weak religion, like weak life, must needs die when it comes into conflict with stronger life, and die that the stronger religion may live; in conformity with the law of survival in the struggle for existence, effete religions give place to fitter survivals, just as simple industries which meet not the wants of an advancing civilization are succeeded and supplanted by more complex industries. The height, form, and beauty of the magnificent cedar of Lebanon necessitate the deaths of innumerable branches which had not the fortune or the force to reach the light and thus to grow to be evident part in the grace and towering grandeur of its wide-spreading verdure, howbeit they did their little work for it in their brief life-seasons.

The elemental feeling which seeks and gets exposition in the doctrines and ceremonies of a religion finds utterance also in other forms of human activity. It is the quickening spirit of poetry, of art, of music, of mystical and ecstatic transport, yea even of science comprehended and felt in its largest sense; for all these attest the essential communion between mind and nature, felt yet not fully communicable, ineffable—so to speak transcendental—a transporting thrill of mystical unity of being, nowise a definite conception; a melody of feeling in fact never perfectly interpreted by the finest creations of art, whose best excellence is not finitely to realize but infinitely to excite it. Boundless desire, infinite aspiration, the promise evermore of an ever to be which never is, that is the principle of the ideal; and such indefinite terms as transcendentalism, illumination, divine ecstasy, ineffable transport, absorption into the infinite and

the like, though they have no definite meaning, are straining efforts vainly to communicate the incommunicable. In such raptures too is sometimes a kind of divine madness when the over-strained mind breaks down under its burden, the wreckage being then plain proof that the function of the finite is nowise to apprehend the infinite but allwise to be merged into it.

Admirable as science is so far as its little grasp can reach, there is just ground for impatience of pretensions to denounce offhand as worthless all that cannot be included within its precise categories. Man lives to feel as well as to know, feels before he knows, always feels more deeply than he knows, and will feel probably after he knows, seeing that his instincts are likely to outlast his knowledge; if it is a good thing to know, it is a good thing also to feel and a wise thing to give feeling a fit and beautiful form. That is what every particular life might well strive to do in the conduct of itself; for a well-proportioned and well-graced life intoned with fine feeling is a good work of art, which few, if any, lives advisedly try to be.

The custom of religions having been to translate and shape transcendental feeling into relative forms of thought and, perishable superstitions thus created, to pronounce them absolute and immutable, each religion made its God according to its own sacred patterns, fitted his edicts to its own moral measure, constructed a fabric of supernatural events after its own fashion of thought. Even the sublime Deity of Moses reflects in the main the qualities of his own character. And forasmuch as men are prone to believe most where they understand least, there was no hindrance to abject belief in superstitious fables, however monstrous, and in miracles directly contradicting reason. Notoriously nothing has ever been too absurd for the faith of a creed to embrace. A strange thing truly to reflect on, yet not so strange as it looks at first sight. For the form was not the reality, it was the then selected symbol of the living force beneath the changing vestures woven for it on

the roaring loom of time in the succession of the ages. Besides, it is most certain that men always have been, and still are, capable of beliefs which are only half-beliefs,—sometimes not even so much as that—in the creeds which they profess.

Assuredly the great creative Power beneath phenomena—the *natura naturans* beneath the *natura naturata*—has never been fashioned in a form of such personal grandeur, so calculated to inspire human awe, so consoling to hope, so strengthening to belief, so encouraging to endeavour, and extolled in such sublime language as by the Hebrew Psalmist and Prophets; and it is simply incredible that it ever can be again personified in so awful and majestic a form, yet all the while so intimately concerned and in such special and direct vital relation with man and his doings. It was truly a legitimate boast that no people has a God so nigh to us as our God. That chapter of human development is presumably closed for ever. Even were the Jewish God accounted but a magnificent creation of Jewish egotism, the illusion of a glorious optimism, the illusion must be owned to have worked mightily to promote human progress to its present height in Christendom; and if it fade and vanish at last, as other vestures of divinity have done, one knows not where an equal force to inspire human doings on earth is ever to come from. Yet sober reason calmly reflecting on the contrast between the impassioned feeling of the Psalmist and the cool wisdom of Solomon can apprehend that it may pass away, for while the former expresses transcendental feeling in the sublime language of inspired passion, the latter sets things forth clearly in the dry light of inspired reason; and it may be that human reason when emancipated from the gross lust of life and thus adequately disillusioned, will arrive at the same conclusion as that in which the wisest of men summed up the value of human things. Certainly it will need an extraordinary faculty of hope or of amiable self-deception to believe that any natural enthusiasm of humanity, self-engendered, can do for mankind

what the supernatural invocations of David and Isaiah have done.

It is strange to think how constant in human history has been the contradiction between reason and religions, and how servilely reason has been compelled to succumb to faith. As the fruit of the tree of knowledge was the bane of happiness and increase of knowledge increase of sorrow, it was ordained that knowledge should linger, lest perhaps otherwise the lust to live might weaken in men and they cease to aspire and strive. For a religion to demand belief of a fable or formula belying reason, as it always claims the right to do, seems on the face of it to undermine the foundations of understanding and to annul reason. Is it possible for any one to assimilate such positive contradiction into real unity of thought? If he think to do so by calling the contradiction a contradiction of the understanding only and postulating a superior reason which transcends and reconciles the contrarieties, is that really to do anything but make an impossible breach of nature between understanding and reason and to dupe himself with words? On the whole it seems more probable that in so doing he is really a dual being mentally, so fashioned artificially by training as to function contradictorily in the two faces of him, lacking basic sincerity and unity of nature.

All the more probable is this explanation, seeing that experience in such case often shows the moral conduct to be inconsistent with the lofty profession, and the faults or vices of character to be rather augmented than amended by the demoralization of such self-duplication. How indeed can a perfect moral integrity exist without a complete mental integrity? By its separate artificial culture the religious part of the duplicate being luxuriates in a weak overgrowth unchecked by the wholesome associations and sound restraints of the dissociated rational self whose enthralled forces it uses to support and maintain itself; the result being that if the man has a hard heart it is made more hard, if he be prone to guile he is made more guileful,

if he is self-righteous he grows more pharisaical, if he needs a good motive or excuse for a bad deed he is singularly ingenious in finding one. All this, too, without being distinctly conscious of his inconsistency, because, being a dual creature, he is actually a living and, so to speak, consistent inconsistency and functions as he has been fashioned. It is not the triumph of reason in the assimilation of contradictories and an accompanying exaltation of mind which he exhibits, it is the subjugation of reason and mutilation of mind to the service of faith with its accompanying delirious delight of feeling. Meanwhile the time is not yet come, if it ever be to come, when reason shall dominate belief.

No wonder then that the hideous annals of religion are replete with horrible stories of oppression, persecution, cruelty, bloodshed: that in the name of religion deeds of devastation and torture were done which were the grossest outrage on religion. Nowadays it is almost an axiom that religion is divorced from its true spirit and loses the very essence of morality when it is made an engine of persecution; forgetting that men are men first and creed-holders afterwards, it then treats them in contempt of humanity, in the sole self-interest of a dominant creed struggling to maintain its supremacy and preferring that before the interests of the society which it sacrifices to its lust of life and rule. Nothing is so essentially anti-religious, it is said, as a persecuting religion. Yet when a stronger people thrusts its special creed on a weaker people to whom it is utterly repugnant, being unassimilable by them, and among whom, being incompatible with their civil structure, it causes inevitable resistance and, if resistance be unsuccessful, political disintegration—and then with pious perseverance in due course summons the armaments and artillery of superior power to crush the resistance which it provokes—it is just as truly a persecuting religion as if it had used direct violence in the first instance to force its intrusion and support its pernicious work. A bacterium noxious to an organism can be as destructive as open violence. The zealous missionary may deceive

himself with the belief that he is doing divine work by enforcing the only true creed, which is always his own creed, on the benighted barbarian, crammed though it be with incredibilities that choke his own faith, even after he has subtilized fables into allegories and miracles into mysteries or metaphors; but that is a gross and complacent self-deception to which he is too apt to cultivate a stubborn blindness. The true character of a religion, like that of an individual, is revealed truly by its works, not by its professions; and if these works have been the spoliation and destruction of the people which it has invaded, it will be judged finally and justly by them. What wonder then at the currency now in Eastern countries of the saying which is the induction of experience,—First the Missionary with his Bible, then the Consul with his ledger, after that the General with his artillery.

Though it be admitted that the violent imposition of the religion of one people on another people is a wrongful persecution, it does not therefore follow that the State has no right whatever to persecute active disbelief and denunciation of its established religion. Would any State have been what it is had it not thus persecuted? When religion is a living force and vitally bound up with the unity of the State, reckless and open attacks on it may do much mischief by dissolving the ties of civil unity and thus disintegrating the national life. It is another matter, and matters not, when there is no vital religion of the State, only a nominal or conventional religion, divorced actually from the principle of national unity; it is not then moved to persecute, because its vitality is waning, and it lives on as a sort of excrescence on the body politic, loosely tied rather than organically united to it.

All religions, high and low, have been naturally and bitterly hostile to knowledge because its progress was inevitably hostile to their systems; while they were sectarian it was bound to admit no separations in nature. They, on the other hand, could not choose but cling to their forms and tenets as

sacred, by necessary law of self-conservation, and therefore stubbornly resist new truths, disown reason, arrogate infallibility, persecute heresy. How, otherwise, could a constant something, such as the special system of religion was postulated to be, maintain itself in an inconstant flux of things? So, indeed, it does commonly for a long time after its tenets and ceremonies shock sober reason and are oppressive, for it is upheld by the self-interest of its priests and the consent of the multitude. Such consent of the many, however, is notoriously of no worth, seeing that they have neither the leisure, nor the inclination, nor the instruction, nor the understanding to form a rational judgment for themselves; in the matter of a creed or doctrine they eagerly crowd and rush together like a flock of sheep after the leading bell-wether, not because they know why they thus run, but because of some passion or prejudice which their leader cunningly plays on, or of some antic or gesture of his which piques and pleases them, or, most of all, because of some clever nickname by the apt use of which at the right juncture he takes captive and leads in triumph their minds; for it is incredible how great is the mesmerizing power of a neat phrase fitly devised and opportunely applied. Yet the mass and momentum of their blind support in sustaining and maintaining a doctrine or custom and in crushing rational dissent is a ponderous and irresistible conservative force. One person here and there out of ten thousand persons may perchance doubt, disbelieve, question, resist the current of opinion, but what is he among so many? The voice of wisdom crying unregarded in the street, and with no language but a cry since there is no one who heeds and understands it.

Although it seems natural to wish that men would all strive for a better understanding, and sincerely use the understanding they have to see themselves steadily and as a whole, when they might leave off howling together in union, if not in unison, under the sway of the present passion or belief, inflamed the more by the collective noise and the

infection of sympathy, and howling against him who will not join in the blatant chorus, yet as they have never done so it was clearly right that they did not so. The apparent foolishness of men has been the wisdom of the world: if each sheep had always gone its own separate way on the occasion of a startling incident no flock of sheep could have existed; self-sufficing individualism would have precluded any growth of social spirit. So unfailing are the compensations of nature that men are ordained to believe and act together passionately in foolish as well as in wise ways; sympathy and synergy in going wrong and howling applause of their ill-doing being the necessary counterpart and compensation of their feeling and acting together in going right and of loud laud of their well-doing. Without doubt the absurd fables they have believed in different ages and places concerning the creation of the world and themselves have been necessary crutches of belief in their day, to be discarded as irrational in due course as minds reached a riper growth of reason: they have put faith in useful untruths through the travails and transitions of their development and been justified of their irrationality. The trite saying that the truth, like the fashion, of one age is the laughing-stock of a succeeding age is oft quoted with a sort of pride as a triumphant tribute to human progress, albeit that, considered well, it implies that knowledge cannot rest at a stay, that truth is only provisional and transitive, that human achievements are but small steps in the great cosmic procession of things; which is not so flattering to human conceit. Perhaps of all fond hopes which humanity has cherished the largest and vainest is the colossal hope it has conceived of itself.

As man lives before he knows, and lives not to know, but knows in order to live, life counts for much more than knowledge; so long as its strong lust lasts, knowledge will be glad to increase and will find good reasons to think life worth living. But if it come to pass in the process of things that knowledge grows too penetrative, analytical and critical while the lust of life wanes, then life will not seem so good and

pleasant a thing and the love of it will weaken. For the race, as for the individual, life cannot fail to be a poor and dreary business when it loses its illusions. It is the animal force in the man, his organic vigour, which supplies the motive power of life—its *conatus progrediendi*—and the motive to live; therefore the happiest person is not he who knows and thinks most but he who lives most. After Adam and Eve had plucked and eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, there was ample time for them, before their expulsion, to have plucked and eaten the fruit of the tree of life, had they been so minded. But they made no such attempt, either because they were sunk in the inert apathy of despair, or perhaps because, profiting by the knowledge which they had unhappily gained, they forebore to inflict the penalty of eternal life on their posterity. So, likewise, when Divinity took human form in Nazareth of Galilee, mortality was the expressly and mercifully prescribed condition. Ascribing immense value to human life as an end in a world to come, and little or no value to it in this world except as a means, religion is vitally concerned to hold man to a continuance of being and progress; whereas knowledge as it grows reveals more and more clearly that he is not the mighty concern in the universe which he has fancied, insinuates from time to time doubts whether life is worth living, conceives suspicions of its immortal destiny, and even hints that it is no great matter whether he goes on living or not, since it foresees an almost calculable time when he will cease to live on earth. Meanwhile, as lusty life subjugates reason to its service in this world and spiritualizes itself in expectations of a life of everlasting felicity in another world, it supplies an effective present motive to continue.

Although it be true that Christianity introduced no new principle of morality into the world, it is undeniable that it raised the principles of social morality to a higher spiritual level, subliming the best social feeling and thought into a finer moral feeling and thinking. Moreover, it attached to its moral ideal the captivating expectation of a future life

and the tremendous motives of eternal happiness and eternal torment as a means of actuating, directing and ruling human doings. Thence the good work which it has done to further the progress of morality among men. But not without the inevitable offsets; for its proclaimed moral ideal was impracticable, seeing that the realization of it would have been the subversion of civil government and the dissolution of society. It was the burning faith of a set of people who, believing that the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom of Heaven was close at hand, expected soon to reign in eternal glory, and cared nothing for the temporal interests of the commonwealth. To make it the vital faith of people who believe no such thing, but seek their welfare by the civil organization of a State in this life, is necessarily to produce gross inconsistency between profession and practice and to make men hypocrites in spite of themselves. Therefore the advent of Christianity helped to precipitate the dissolution of the Roman Empire, in the decay of which mighty structure it found a favourable soil for its growth and disintegrating work; therefore also the establishing, settling and strengthening of it was the cause of a long succession of wars, persecutions and slaughters such as have hardly been exceeded, perhaps never equalled, in an equal period of human history. Comparing Nature's processes of work, in which the function of a microbe, whether styled noxious or innocuous, is just as divine as that of a saint, one may see a parallel process of events when the microbe finds its fit soil in the weak tissue—for if it light on sound and strong tissue it does no harm, being successfully resisted by the vital energy—generates fast its poisonous products in the sympathetic medium of decay, and so promotes actively the degeneration and destruction of declining life. As, moreover, the final triumph of Christianity owed much to the myths and fables bound up with its moral doctrines and long accepted literally as essential part of the creed, we have again a notable illustration how natural and necessary to human progress in their appointed day and work have

been error, evil, folly, hypocrisy and their like; no less necessary, indeed, than truth, virtue, sincerity and goodness. It would surely go ill with the constitution of virtue without the vices indispensable to its construction and maintenance.

The sage who, despising the wrangle of warring creeds, aspires to rise above them all and live aloof in the serene contemplation of truth, goodness and beauty, might not do amiss to bethink him whether he too is not at bottom almost as much idolater as any of their votaries. Peradventure more self-idolater, seeing that the truth in which he rests placidly sure is just that which he thinks truth, the goodness he approves that which he thinks good, the beauty he extols that which he thinks beautiful. Is he not then as abstract and self-centred a being as the saint or mystic who devotes himself to a similar life of empty contemplation? As he is an organ, he ought to be a function, of the social organism, which he can only fruitfully be in, for and by it, not in, for and by himself; his duty being to perfect it, perfecting himself in the process, which is, in fact, to perfect himself, perfecting it in the process. In order to do that he must be acted on by the constant influences of the social medium, silent and express, and react fitly on it—must have its supports and restraints, lest, like a proliferating cell in the bodily organism which gives rise to a tumour, he expand into a riotous growth; therefore it is that the superior person who nourishes himself on his own thoughts in seclusion, without having ever nourished his thoughts well in working contact and converse with his kind, runs great risk of making a poor and empty business of it at the best. He is not unlikely to people his imagination with shadows not substantial things of thought, phantasies of one fashion or another, and to become either hypochondriac or megalomaniac or self-inflated mystic. After all is said, the dreariest and most blighting exile is to be exiled on the island of self. Let the would-be-wise recluse, then, recognizing that sound intellectual and moral texture can

only be formed by reactions to the actions of other minds in vital communion with them, possess his soul in patience and meditate quietly amidst the noise and turmoil of the tumultuous crowd. For as man is not born to comprehend the universe, still less to govern it, but has to live and work in it among his kind, such as his kind in time and place is where fate has chanced to put him, he may school himself to live a fool's life outwardly among fools, pleasing himself to cherish inwardly a fervent ideal of humanity and to make sacrifices for it, like the soldier who is proud of his scars, and glories to die for his cause even when it is a bad cause.

The conclusion of the whole matter regarding religion is that man is thrilled by the profound feeling of a communion of being with the primary elementary power, an ineffable feeling of cosmic unity; that such feeling, under whatever transient name and vesture, impels the process of humanization on earth, and that when it ceases to inspire him he will cease to strive and progress. Nor is such cessation inconceivable or in the least incredible. History records plainly enough that the energy of progress has often died out in past peoples; that it has not been mankind in the mass which has risen uniformly, but only a section of it which has progressed here or there, now or then; and that it has always shown as distinct a tendency to go back rapidly as to go forwards slowly. Moreover, as increasing knowledge reveals more and more clearly how small and transient an affair in the cosmic course human life and function on its little planet is, so it fails to point clearly to any perfect fulfilment. For as the single mortal is inspired to live and strive in hope by his illusions, finding life dreary, bitter, barren and worthless when they are dead, so may it be at last with the race of mortals: it too may lose its illusions as it begins to die, and die when they are dead.

## II

### PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy essentially a simple matter—The true and the good inseparable—The exposition of truth—Vagueness of metaphysical thought and language—The vitality of metaphysics—The philosopher not self-sufficing—Clear and distinct ideas—Lost thoughts rediscovered—The mystery of life—Conduct the end or purpose of life.

PHILOSOPHY, though a word bulking large in human speech, is essentially a simple thing. For what else is it but to like to know? Just to do on a grand theatre and in more special and complex fashion that which everybody does on a mean theatre and in a simple and plain way—namely, to observe causes and effects in the workings of nature, and principles and actions in the doings of human nature, and thereafter to act with good sense in relation to them. One says of a person who, perceiving events, whether foul or fair, to be the necessary effects of their causes in a natural order of things, accepts them with quiet stoicism, neither fretting nor grieving, that he is a philosopher, all the more so if he oppose reason to custom when custom is foolish and oppressive; and one may justly say the same also of the wayfaring man who, though he have small learning, recognizes natural law in his daily work and endures stoically what he cannot cure in his daily lot. To clothe common things with fine words is not to make them fine: it were well indeed to speak fine words only of fine things and not to speak words which mean no things. In many a humble life there is a latent fund of dumb philosophy and quiet fortitude more genuine than the ostentatious expositions of the philosopher who extols grandiloquently the stoicism which endures sternly, is not afflicted by griefs nor vexed by injuries, disdains envies and ambitions, is serene amidst calumnies and calamities, and so on in easy and empty laudations of the abstract. For in the end philosophy is not

learnt from elaborate expositions of volatilized principles; it is learnt silently by sincere observation, firm hold and steadfast endurance of things as they are in the concrete. The better the philosophy too the more clear and simple are its principles, which do but sum up the lessons and meet the wants of experience. To teach men to know systematically in order to do, to foresee in order to provide, to frame for themselves ordered experience in the comprehensible portion of the unknown vast process of things of which they and their knowledge are but a small part, that is the aim of wisdom, whether it be styled philosophy or science or common sense.

Enquiry into things may be said to have two spheres of function—the one to find out the true, the other to find out the good in them. Yet at bottom the true and the good are not separable but one, the true being what is good and the good what is true; they appeal to the different facets of one self, which, if well instructed and well intoned, fails not to judge and feel morally the right action. False apprehension of things is bad and the cause of ensuing badness, and bad morality is falsity and the cause of ensuing falsity of thought. No violation of natural, intellectual and moral law by any one in an organized society but is inevitably followed by wrong to himself or others who then make atonement for him. The curse of all evil, whether of thought or doing, is not merely that it is bad in itself, but that it is endless in its bad consequences, as the blessing of all right thinking and doing is also its endlessness; though the one sinner who destroyeth much good is happily mortal, the evil which he does is immortal. The two functions of philosophy, then, which look separate are included in its one function to search out the truth everywhere—that is, to be the true interpreter of nature in all its aspects, which in the end is to lay a sound and solid basis of physical and social well-being, and so to promote that healthiness which is essentially holiness of life in the individual and in the society.

It is not enough to find out a truth; the next thing to do, having found it, is to express it clearly—to discover and use, if possible, the one best way of doing that; for while there can be only one perfect way of doing everything, there are many ways of doing it imperfectly. Simplicity and lucidity of expression imply truth thought out in its essence and relations, not clear and distinct ideas only but right order and proportion in the conception, disposition and exposition of them, which is beauty. When a supposed truth, being at bottom good sense in a special language, cannot be so expressed as to be understood by a person of ordinary intelligence and fit education who understands the language, it is because it has not been adequately thought down to clear and distinct simplicity.

That is the inherent fault of much so-called metaphysical philosophy; it is thought in the void, unthought out, shadowy and undefined, not mutually understood by the persons who dispute about it, perhaps only half understood by the person who puts it forward. None the less is it vastly pleasing to him and those who think that they can think with him; the mental performance is like a difficult and skilful athletic exploit, the objective value of which he is apt to think equal to the subjective delight he has in doing it; whereas the truth is that the rapture is worth no more than the rapture of a dream or a delirium, which is notoriously sometimes ineffable. This kind of philosophy shares also with delirium the features of ever-shifting premises and ever-active motion without progress; so different in that respect from the slow, steady and gradual gains of positive science which, being patient processes of adaptive mental growth, presuppose close observation, well-weighed comparisons, methodical calculations, exact measurements, strict verifications, and, once settled, are an organic possession, the fundamental principles of which every new-comer does not think he has the right to question and determine.

The remarkable vitality of metaphysics despite its barrenness cannot, any more than the singular joy of it, be

claimed as proof of its worth: first, because being occupied with subtilties of nature which positive science has not yet explored systematically, and cannot possibly explore until its means of investigation are improved and the pre-essential steps firmly laid, its unknown domain is the natural home of and affords infinite scope for inexhaustible and unverifiable speculations—such as have notably preceded all the sciences before they were definitely constituted; secondly, because the erections of such unsubstantial fabrics of speculation is a wonderfully pleasing exercise of the imagination uninformed and unruled by positive knowledge; thirdly, because of the organized means to keep it alive by special professorial chairs in the Universities, and by special magazines in which its disciples contentedly criticise, praise and comment on one another in their special tongue; and, lastly, because those who make a professional study of it have not been without honour and profit, it being the habit of the vulgar mind to admire and revere what it cannot understand. Incapable of thinking for themselves the multitude notably crave to be ruled by authority, tradition, custom, words and phrases; and the eminent examples of the schoolmen, whose obsolete ingenuities of mental athleticism still provoke admiration of their intellectual powers, prove plainly how effectively that may be done and how pleased the performers may be to do it.

Pretty in the abstract is the profession of the philosopher to see things as they are, to uphold the natural against the artificial, to oppose reason to custom, to set up conscience against opinion, judgment against error, to be resolutely self-sufficing; yet when all is said the sober truth is that no mortal is or can be either self-sufficing or infallible. Private judgment must necessarily confront and compare with the general reason. A minority of one may be fanatic or lunatic, a person lost to all sense of proportion and of the right relations of things, and neither is a safe guide to follow. Moreover, the philosopher who sees clearly into, around, and ahead of things, having to live in unphilosophical

surroundings, will find it make more for his comfort in practice to consent with unwisdom than to dissent from it. He must be of the world while he is in it, else the world hates and receives him not. If his principles are too rigid and his conscience too tender to make intelligent observation and appreciation of the natural forces of ignorance, error, passion and folly in the world, and then, as he would with physical force, rationally to reckon and deal with them, but impel him to act as if they were not, because he thinks they ought not to be, then he had best keep out of practical affairs and shut himself up in his closet where he can have things ideally his own way; for assuredly it is not good sense to resent and ignore the most powerful human forces because they run counter to his abstract theories of things and he does not like them. No doubt, as any one might attend a market not to buy and sell or do other business but to look on only, and find amusing interest in watching the various shifting scenes of the drama, so it may be pleasing and instructive for one not engaged in its turmoil and strife to watch the drama of human life, albeit he cannot observe it to any instructive purpose unless he has previously lived actively in it; he must then, too, take good heed to abstain strictly from all active concern in it, standing aloof indifferently and watching, as he watches the market, quite objectively, otherwise his feeling will not fail to infect his contemplation, to trouble his serenity, to deflect his judgment from the straight line of truth.

To increase the number of ideas, to form clear and distinct ideas, and to associate or, as it were, articulate them in their just connections, that is mental growth: it is the silent and systematic formation of a perfecting mental organization. The dazing multiplicity and confusion of things in the surrounding world are owing to the want of such clear and duly ordered ideas; for by correct analysis, exact collation of analyses, and the reduction of the results to general principles, the complexities and confusion of things are gradually thought into simplicity and order. Obviously the analysis

ought to be sound and thorough within the special compass of the individual mind, whether this hold much or little; if unsound and inadequate, it is not useful but pernicious; for it is then the cause of obscure and not clearly distinguished ideas, of the loose and equivocal application of such ideas, yea, of the employment of one idea for another which is not only not equivalent but of positively different value, and thus eventually of infinite obscurity and confusion of thought. No wonder then that the work of good analysis necessarily proceeds slowly, considering how crass is the ignorance of the many, how insensible they are even to the problems to be solved, how abject their servility of thought, how disturbing the vitiations of feeling, and how urgent the impulses to rash and unsound conclusions in the few who can think. The problem being nothing less than the gradually progressive adjustment of the whole organism of mankind to its environment it cannot possibly have a quick solution.

It is a pleasing fancy, though it is fancy only, that a true thought, once acquired, is not lost; that though it may be lost for a time, it will be found some day by a curious searcher into forgotten recesses, duly put into circulation, and its owner glorified. Because that notably happens now and then, the conclusion is that it happens always and that no such thought remains undiscovered and uncredited. But it is surely an erroneous conclusion, for nature wastes products prodigally, nowise makes much of the individual's performance, has ample store of similarly fashioned organizations to repeat the performance. Thousands of thoughts pass into oblivion and have done so ever since thought began. The wisest thought launched unseasonably, when men are too busy to mind it or too ignorant to understand it, passes like an unlucky seed fallen on unsuitable soil. That the thought is not lost for ever is not because it was lost and is found again, but because it is rediscovered in the course of the mental development of the race, being re-thought by somebody at a time when it takes its fit organic place therein, or affirmed with such demonstrative

evidence that it cannot be ignored, but lays hold of men's minds and compels them to think it; for then, like the fitly sown seed which grows successively into stem, branches and flowers, the new principle grows naturally into its sequences of mental developments by organic law. That is the reason why minds of large capacity and wide outlook, reflecting on many subjects with insight into their connections, indicating their obscure relations, and diffusing far-reaching luminous ideas, do not gain the fame which a narrower mind does which makes a single clear and definite discovery, drives it into the understanding of the people, and gets it aptly labelled. For it is wonderful how much a lucky phrase may do to perpetuate a mortal fame.

The problem of life may, as the wont is to say, remain for ever insoluble; all the more certainly too if there be no really rational problem to solve. Still, a prudent reflection will note that hitherto in the history of human knowledge it has always been ignorance, not knowledge, which has shown itself most confident. Creeds have never been wanting in assurance, however much they may have been wanting in sense. The more a man sees and knows, the more he perceives that there is for him to see and know, and the more modest is his estimate of the value of that which he knows; whereas the less he sees and knows, the more sure he is of what he sees and knows, and that what he cannot know no one will ever know. Those who magnify mightily the grand mystery of human life, exalting it transcendently to abase themselves abjectly, are, after all, only self-idolaters in guise of humility; for where would be the transcendent mystery to be astonied at if they had not the prodigious conceit of themselves as beings of supernatural concern, and of the life belonging to them as something of such mighty moment as to require a special explanation and destiny? Where is the great mystery in the life of the road-side weed or worm, or in that of the meanest microbe, the condensed and subtile physics and chemics of whose vital constitution are so easily resolved into virulent chemical toxines

that express its life-function. It is the mystery of man's own life, not of the mean life of the monad, which specially strikes his imagination ; for he cannot abide the thought that his species, like weeds and microbes, are destined only to come and go in the eternal flux of things. Therefore his wailing cry is, " O, remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men for nought " ?

The awestruck wonder so often expressed at the Whence, What and Whither is not really a wonder concerning his own origin, nature and destiny on earth. That has always been plain enough to him : out of the dust was he made, dust he is, and to dust he returns. It is a wonder as to the Whence, What, and Whither of created things, with which he has nothing properly to do and concerning which he cannot think, and can only speak in unmeaning terms. He may, it is true, utter magniloquent exclamations about the immensities, eternities and infinities, beginnings and ends, and find consolation therein because such turgid verbosities, although indefinite, afford the ease of ample discharge to turmoil of feeling. To speak of the beginning or end of the universe is to make a term of relation, which has meaning as such, a term of non-relation ; which is absurd. Those who occupy themselves with such high-reaching speculations are no better employed than were the four learned men in the kingdom of Quintessence, called Entelechy, whom Pantagruel found hard at work for four livelong days disputing on three high and most difficult propositions : the first being concerning a he-ass's shadow ; the second, concerning the smoke of a lantern ; the third, of a goat's hair, whether it was wool or no ; and who did not think it a bit strange that two contradictions in mode, form, figure and time should be true. Why indeed should they be troubled if, having reached the pinnacle of philosophy, they christen the contradictions of reason *antinomies* of thought or, being theologically inspired, call them *mysteries* of religion, and thereafter in each case pronounce the word a solution of supreme reason ?

When all is said the function of life is conduct—to *do* well among the persons and things one is in touch with, learning from philosophy to do consciously and deliberately on a higher plane of being that which every creature does unconsciously or automatically on a lower plane. Wisdom is good sense; and good sense consists in observing nature, physical and human, learning its lessons, and obeying them in practice. These lessons are just the lessons which were enjoined on men of old when they were adjured to learn the Commandments of the Lord and to observe His statutes to do them; for these statutes are written in the laws of nature and interpreted by discerning men who get understanding by observing them. However they be named, whether laws of nature or divine statutes, man's sole and whole duty is to find them out and to conform to them; so will he do best to promote the progressive humanization of nature—in fact, to naturalize self and to humanize nature. He may conveniently divide this large work into several branches and to each branch give a big name, classifying the grand aims of philosophy under such headings as (*a*) the Nature and limits of knowledge, (*b*) Cosmology, (*c*) Ethico-religious, (*d*) Consciousness; all which at bottom come down to the wise learning of his relations to men and things and his fit adjustment to them.

## III

### SCIENCE

The little that can be known—The pioneer of science—The specializations of science—Need of a scientific synthesis—Organic unity of science—The scientific method of observation and experiment—The reform of scientific nomenclature—The questioning spirit of science.

As growing science steadily widens and deepens the domain of the known it reveals more clearly the immensity of the unknown and the small fraction of it which can ever be known. The toiling climber painfully mounts step after

step to find other steps above him, perceiving always the higher he ascends yet higher ascent to be made. As a man must have some intelligence to know that he is ignorant, so the more intelligent he is the more sure he is of the limit of his knowledge and of the unlimit of his ignorance.

The first discoverer in a province of knowledge may be likened to the adventurous explorer making his tedious way with much toil and sweat through an unknown country by rough paths which he laboriously makes for himself; after him follow others who, using the track which he made, widen, straighten and improve it, or, knowing now where they are to go, make new and more direct paths, so that his work is absorbed and transformed and he himself perhaps forgotten; at last in the fulness of time straight well-planned roads traverse the completely surveyed country. It is then a simple and easy matter to travel quickly where the struggling pioneer, now perhaps only a silent memory, made his painful way formerly. As Bacon said, when the Sphinx, its riddle solved, is killed, an ass can carry its body easily. The pathos of it, too, is that the labouring pioneer sometimes foresees clearly and points clearly where the great road must go when it shall some day be made, but is ignored as a dreamer or scorned as a theorist who did not understand what he meant by those who, following after and entering into the fruits of his labour, are busy doing methodically what he presaged and attempted.

As with the scattered researches of early travellers in unknown lands so it is in a measure with the many and minute specializations of scientific research at the present day. Each separate section is so exclusively engrossed in its own study, so full and proud of its doings, that it recks not how its work stands in relation to the works of other sections and to the whole field of knowledge, nor considers how co-ordination of parts and unity of result may be brought about. If it did consider well it is certain that each section might vastly enrich and simplify its own knowledge by the instruction which it would receive from other sciences, and

help much likewise to enrich and simplify them by the instruction which in turn it would yield them. Meanwhile, as things are, the many specializations of science and of the various sciences are like so many persons speaking so many mutually unintelligible languages, a very Tower of Babel, predestined perhaps to end like it; all the more so as each science has its special nomenclature which it uses to stamp its products, whereby it does not fail to happen sometimes that the same article of thought, being differently named by different sciences, is not recognized to be the same.

There is apparent need now of a superior scientific or philosophic society, a select council of wise men conversant with all the sciences yet engulfed in none, an organ of scientific synthesis, to understand, interpret, co-ordinate and blend their different knowledges—in fact, to make them wisdom. Until that be done, although knowledge grow, wisdom will linger. For knowledge and wisdom are not one and the same thing either in the individual or in the race: there may be much knowledge with little wisdom and much wisdom with little knowledge. As it is bad education to stuff the mind with matters which, not understood and assimilated, do not really inform it and are not therefore instruction, so it is scientific unwisdom to make absolute divisions and distinctions in nature and, forthwith labelling them specially, to deem them settled and permanent. Nevertheless that is an error perpetually done and a danger to be perpetually guarded against. Though growing science steadily lessens ignorance, yet the constant tendency of each branch of science is to impose new ignorances of its own by means of its fixed categories and formulas; unmindful that a well-instructed science, like a well-instructed mind, rests not at a stay in divisions of knowledge and in the worship of any idols. The pity of it is, however, that men are so captivated or hypnotized by names imposed by authority and sanctioned by tradition that they consider not well what or whether they signify, but go on mechanically from generation to generation to busy themselves with

their separate and settled provinces of knowledge, without realizing how far the divisions are artificial and the names arbitrary.

Is there no remedy, then? There is none yet visible. The strange irony of the situation in England is that the highest scientific Society is entirely occupied with the prosecution of minute researches, doing nothing whatever to co-ordinate results, yet calls by the name of "Philosophical Transactions" the huge volumes in which it accumulates the scattered gleanings of labourers who, if they were all congregated in one room, would hardly understand a word of each other's language. Heaped up aggregations of co-existences which never combine, and honours to the individual who brings a new stone to each separate heap—to the man who, diligently occupied in studying the constitution of a star, supplies a minute fact from his province, to the patient inquirer into a complex chemical formula who makes his happy contribution, to the enthusiastic investigator of the anatomy of a flea who jubilantly adds his discovery. Meanwhile, as the combining of ideas is indispensable to the growth of individual thought, and as every new principle evolved from their interaction simplifies thought by classifying multitudinous details according to their essential relations, so the union of the sciences in organic interrelations and the discovery of common principles tends surely to advance and immensely simplify scientific knowledge. It is the spirit of true philosophy, the still and steady understanding behind and looking through the eye, which ought to rule and direct progress in every branch of science, not the shallow and monkey-like spirit of eager curiosity, the restless, inattentive, uninstructed eye which characterizes a sort of monkey-mind in science; else the bereaved science is likely only to limp and trail mechanically until it is immobile, not only then unprogressive itself, but an obstacle to progress. Of the individual it may be truly said that he who occupies his whole life in the minute researches of a single science will turn out but a poor scientist in the end.

The rule of right scientific inquiry which its followers are wont to magnify mightily, as if it were something new, special, invaluable, and wonderfully arduous, is just the rule of common sense in daily life which everybody follows to find out what he wants to know or how to do what he wants to do. It is to observe and try before he concludes, to look before he leaps; which is to observe facts, to change conditions experimentally and watch what happens, to form a conclusion or induction accordingly, and then to verify it by trying whether it invariably fits the facts—to prove or demonstrate by proving or testing it. If the conclusion be right, it will not be contradicted by any fresh instance, there can be no *instantia contradictoria;* it will be a sound generalization, or, in other words, a correct general statement or description of the things and their ways, nowise, as many persons are apt to imagine, an executive law of nature compelling them so to be and go. And just as experiment is observation under a definite change of conditions in order to see what then happens and form an induction accordingly, so practical invention is the deductive application of the inductions obtained by observation and experiment to deliberately arranged materials and conditions: a wonderful machine being just the working of laws of nature imprisoned under precontrived conditions of structure.

Now to make a sensible experiment, whether in simple or in complex things, it is not enough only to shuffle at random the facts to be observed, in the hope or expectation that they will take a fit order of some kind and reward the inquirer with a discovery; nothing good is likely to come of such haphazard trying, be it never so plodding, patient, and conscientious; it is necessary to put duly instructed mind into the work, to have the intelligent thought suited to frame the intelligent question or pregnant query (the *prudens questio* on which Bacon insisted), to conceive the sensible guess or directing hypothesis necessary to give definite aim and method to the inquiry. Such clever guess or provisional hypothesis may of course turn out to be right or

wrong; the essential thing is to abandon the wrong guess which fits not the facts or they contradict, and then to make and try experimentally a better guess. The qualities required in the investigator are the competent intelligence to conceive the idea—the idea in the mind being correlate of the law in nature and the idea in nature the correlate of law in mind—and the patient and persevering industry carefully to prove it; qualities which all too seldom go along together in the same mind.[1] Though a large and well-instructed imagination sometimes lights on a true theory by a happy conjecture or brilliant intuition from the basis of a few facts, it is not right to proclaim the theory as a general law or principle until it has been tested and verified by adequate observation and experiment. For the intuition of divination has personal value only, which may be much or *nil* according to the mental capacity of the diviner; to be accepted absolutely without proof or against proof it must belong to the theological domain and have the guarantee of divine authority; and in that miraculous case there is still always to be taken into account the inherent and inevitable fallacy springing from the fact that the inspired person is the only witness to the divine source and unadulterated transmission of the inspiration which he claims and proclaims.

The customary cautions and injunctions given to the scientific inquirer, good so far as they go, do not perhaps go far enough. The knowledge has not to be acquired only, it has to be expressed; and therein lies a grave difficulty. For the new knowledge must be expounded in the known language of the science, else it would be quite unintelligible; and that language may be not only inadequate to express it, but positively misleading because of its settled meanings and associations. Thus it falls out sometimes that the nomenclature of a science is a bar to its progress, and needs to be supplemented where it is wanting and rectified where

[1] "Even the experimental method itself," says Buffon, "has been more fertile of error than of truth, for though it be indeed the surest, yet it is no surer than the hand of him who uses it."

it is amiss, to give freedom of growth; otherwise it is liable to dominate and enthral men's minds, who are prone then to seek council of it, not of things. Too often in the history of science a special name, sanctified by authority and usage, has been accounted a fact or principle when there was no true fact or principle beneath it, only perhaps a misprised fact or unsound inference. How can the old name be used rightly in the exposition of new knowledge? Used in its wonted sense, it renders right apprehension of the new truth impossible; imbued with the new meaning, this meaning has to be made intelligible to minds prepossessed with the old meaning and not yet possessed of the new ideas which it is desired to signify. On the other hand, if a new name be invented, it is either not understood at all, and is forthwith spurned or ignored, or so much meaning as glimmers in it runs the risk of being rejected as inconsistent with the truth which the old name is held to mean and guarantee.

Thus it is that it is impossible to dissociate a science from its nomenclature. It is indispensable to make a science of the nomenclature by rational reform of it as the science progresses; which clearly ought to be a methodical, not a mere haphazard, business. As every special science and every section thereof requires its own names to denote its special facts, and as names are separate in the different sciences, though the facts denoted by them are not separate but universally bound together, least and greatest, there is evident need of a philosophic body to frame and settle a progressive nomenclature in conformity with the progressive revelations of new truths.

The right spirit of scientific inquiry is not a spirit of finality, not a "God spake these words and said," it is rather an ever-questioning, almost ever-doubting, spirit, an implied and eternal "Why?" It not only forbears to accept a conclusion as true until it has been verified thoroughly, but then receives it not as absolute and necessarily binding for ever, but keeps in reserve the silent question, Why is

this truth? Therein its method is just the opposite of that which prevailed in prescientific days, especially of the theological method which postulated the supernatural infusion of authoritative and immutable truth into a transcendentally illumined mind. Not preconception, but patiently progressive adaptation to external nature by persistent interrogation of and response to it; that is the true note of science, the moving spirit of its perpetual becoming, the vital principle of growing mind in a world of inexhaustible inquiry.

# CHAPTER VII

# NATURE—MIND—REASON

## I.

### NATURE AND MIND

The becoming of things—Structural organization of mind—Discords in the universal concord—Lucky and unlucky events—Providential circumstances—The study of mind as a part of nature—Nature and free will—The opinion of free will a useful illusion—Mind the supreme organic harmony—Organic sympathy and repulsion—Interaction of body and mind—The unity of mind and nature.

Of the world of sense Plato said truly that it is not *being* but constant *becoming*, which was the original meaning of the Greek word we now translate *Nature* and think of as evolution. It has taken mankind more than two thousand years to rediscover in more exact form and to demonstrate in detail a principle which was perceived in general then. In like manner it has taken them as long a time to discover the persistence of matter through its multitudinous transformations and the principle of the conservation of energy which Democritus distinctly enunciated in general terms. The delicate balance having now proved to sense that which was previously a conception of the understanding only, modern science claims the whole honour of the discovery, in conformity with its canon that the discoverer is not the speculative genius who first intuitively sees and dimly

conceives the truth, but the patient demonstrator who later on proves it and drives it into the vulgar understanding.

Aristotle tells us that Leucippus and his disciples were wont to compare the atoms of matter to the letters of the alphabet, seeing that with the same letters may be formed an infinite number of combinations producing quite different results—tragedy, comedy, history—all depending on the way in which the letters are arranged and used. Now these combinations of a few letters into many words and of many words into many sentences, and the various structure of sentences according to the rules of grammar, considered well, teach a pregnant lesson concerning the structure and function of the mental organization of the human brain. For these outward combinations and arrangements of images and sounds appealing to eye and ear are represented inwardly and invisibly in its special structure, being contained in the innermost, and only by virtue of such representation appeal intelligently to it; their grammar imports the grammar of its structure. To the brain not thus fitly instructed—*i.e.*, in-structured—they are meaningless. Every letter, whether seen or heard, implies its special, fine and definite motor reaction to the special impression on sense, the formation of its fit cerebral reflex. If I hear not an accustomed noise, though it be loud enough to distress an unaccustomed ear, it is because, not attending—not making the requisite nervous tension or polarization of molecules—I do not react mentally to it, do not *listen*, do not respond so as to grasp or apprehend its waves; and as all such fine and exact reflexes with their innumerable combinations are structurally registered in the mental organization, it is plain how inconceivably delicate, intricate and complex that structure must be, and how far from exhaustion its possible combinations may be. Peradventure there is yet a large reserve of undeveloped mentality in mankind to draw on for realization in time to come. In the order of nature mind is not something detached, proceeding not from it, independent of its laws, intervening and acting from without; it is itself nature in

process of becoming, originating in and informed by it, the nature-made means of organic progress in obedience to fixed laws of cause and effect.

In the perpetual flux of nature, constant in all its seeming inconstancy, nothing is spontaneous, nothing casual, everything causal, nothing out of order, nothing wrong; whatever is, good or bad, comes to pass by necessary sequence which, when perceived and admired, we call law and order, but when not so perceived we ignorantly call accident and disorder, or perhaps view with awestruck reverence as sublime mystery and inscrutable wisdom. Very strange it would be if the narrow and shallow portion of nature which can alone be reflected or represented in human thought and feeling did not present many seeming accidents and anomalies, chances and disorders, gaps and exceptions, seeing how infinitesimal a fraction of the whole it is and how superficial the knowledge of the little that is knowable. As accidents necessarily decrease in number with the increase of knowledge, and would disappear entirely were knowledge of their hidden causes and conditions perfect, so horrors, cruelty, pain, ugliness, vice, crime, disease and death are quite as natural factors of the vast whole as their opposites; just the essential constituents of that grand harmony which, as Milton says of the music of the spheres, though mortal ears cannot hear it, the ears of God hear with delight. How can a feeble fraction of mortal mind in process of becoming by tedious steps of discursive travail of reason expect to feel delight in the transcendental music which delights the universal and intuitive mind? Were it not too gross even to hear it, there would be no more delight in it than a centipede or a savage feels in hearing a *sonata* of Beethoven.

As the universe exists for the individual mortal only in so far as he thinks and feels it, events which befall within the little circle of which he is centre he may sometimes from his standpoint rightly call accidents or chances, luck, unluck, and the like. If two impulses out of the infinite and eternal, after inscrutable wanderings there, enter into

and traverse the very finite and temporary world-sphere of human relations, and eventually through incalculable refractions, reflections, transformations and circuitous windings of energies meet at a critical moment in some fatal conjunction of events which overwhelms a hapless mortal, he has certainly the right to accuse his evil chance or fortune and to speak of an unlucky accident. Their origin was inscrutable, their manifold tracks and sequences incalculable and uncontrollable, their conjuncture in the particular catastrophe at the particular moment unforeseeable and irresistible. Alas for his evil fortune which was to be is all that can be said. At a given moment he was struck down because he chanced to be at a particular spot where nobody through all eternity might ever chance to be again at an exactly similar juncture; it was an event predestined from everlasting, unshunnable as death, brought to pass inexorably at its inevitable moment. Although it be true that a continuous chain unites all beings and things, whereby everything acts on everything, no particle of matter nor fact being isolated, yet such words as fortune, luck, chance, accident, have their rights of usage and right uses within the circle of human relations, their existence being indeed proof of their present necessity.

Even the phrase "Man of Destiny" is not unlawful when we think of the innumerable unknown antecedents which, meeting in him from the ends of creation, have conspired to produce the special capacity, and of the happy coincidence of the special capacity with the fit circumstances; for always the time and the man must coexist, else the man will be abortive. Did ever a true man of destiny, then, really feel personal responsibility for what he was and did? He may believe more at heart in his fortunate star than in his own foresight and devices, and certainly, when he reflects quietly on his doings, frankly confess to have owed more to the unpremeditated impulses of his unconscious self than to his conscious premeditations.

Here it may be noted by the way how impiously, when they would speak piously, people are wont to speak of Provi-

dence. The event is providential when the person chances on the happy occasion which, aptly seized, leads him to unforeseen success, even when that occasion be the death of some one else, and it is a providential escape when some one is rescued marvellously in a shipwreck in which all on board save himself perish in the sea; but there is no such talk of Providence when the unlucky chance of a malignant disease or a blundering accident dooms a person to a painful death and so opens the profitable way to his successor. That is no doubt because the special concern of Providence is supposed to be for man's welfare and progress, nowise equally for his bad fare and destruction on earth; which is impious absurdity. For there is equal Providence in the death of him who dies miserably and in the life of him who survives merrily, in the murderer's cruelty and the victim's pain, in the treachery of Judas Iscariot and the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Then, again, when some one has succeeded in a hazardous adventure which, given his faulty knowledge of causes and conditions, seemed more likely to fail, he speaks of having tempted Providence, as if Providence did not foresee and predestinate any better than himself, or could be tempted specially to do him an ill or a good turn. All which comes of conceiving Providence as a magnified personality ruling the world in the interests of the human species, subject to like passions with it, and capable of being moved by like appeals.

If all things are inexorably bound together in a mysterious universe and a leaf fall not to the ground without sending a thrill through it, nor a molecule move without the sympathy of a solar system, it is surely time to purge a vision dimmed with traditional prejudice, and, looking facts fairly and squarely in the face, to begin to see that the human mind is, and is to be studied as, a part of nature subject to its laws of cause and effect. And in that case clearly to acknowledge and realize that not only the lower functions of mind, its passions and instincts, but all its highest functions, moral and spiritual—reason, will, and conscience—are included in the

natural process. Two hitherto stubbornly stifled truths must needs then leap to light: first, that the study of mind ought to be prosecuted patiently by the objective method of scientific inquiry used in all the other sciences, the hope to know its true nature and function by the purely subjective method of introspection being given up as exhausted, if not as barren; secondly, that any theory of the glorious freedom of the will and of the dazzling sublimity of the moral sense must be brought into strict accord with the conclusion of their inclusion within the domain of natural law. The main moral of which will be, that if a sane person cannot reason well nor feel righteously he may seek the fundamental reason of his defect in the unreason and unrighteousness of his ancestral stock, and justly accuse its bad strain.

When the ancients described Nature under the person of Pan (the All of Things), they could hardly have anticipated a time when mind was to be reckoned no part of nature and its absolutely separate study extolled as supreme philosophy. A free power in nature, such as its function in will has been proclaimed to be, is difficult enough to conceive anyhow; all the more so as it is then a power acting in and through nature, yet free to fulfil laws above or contrary to nature. That a mortal who is brought unasked into a life which he would never have sought to enter had he been given a choice, and thrust out of it arbitrarily at any moment without his consent and commonly against his will, can act with perfect freedom for the short time that he is alive, is too large a demand to make on the credulity of any faith which falls short of the highest metaphysical or religious flight. When all is said, common sense cannot but perceive and own that it is the self which determines the will, not the will which determines the self, and that the self is not uncaused and unconditioned, but implies in its constitution potential energy which has been stored and modes of exercise which have been graven in it from human beginnings on earth. Whence then its illusion of freewill, if it be an illusion? From the obvious fact that consciousness illumines only the immediate

self-determination, not the remote causes and conditions which determine the self; it witnesses to the feeling of power in the actualization of potential energy, but takes no account of the far-reaching line of antecedents by which the power has been acquired and stored in the individual structure.

It will be said, however, that to believe that men have acted always under an illusion is quite incredible. Why incredible, when the indisputable fact is that they mostly act under illusions, and that the great movements of their procession on earth have been determined not by reason but by passion and illusion? The very lust of life to live in spite of the daily disillusionment of experience and the final disillusion of death inspires the continuance of illusion. Now the opinion of freewill has clearly been a demonstrably useful agent in the natural order of things to promote human progress. In a vast and incomprehensible environment where man had to reckon with uncontrollable force and unforeseen chances and accidents, it supplied him with a measure of assurance owing to belief in his power, an incentive to strive owing to hope of his end, and a bravery of self-assertion owing to his conceit of independence, all which the loss of the illusion might paralyze.

Every living organism, though having unity, is still a plurality, and the human organism the most complex plurality of all; for the whole is composed of innumerable minute cells and colonies of cells of divers kind having their own lives in their fit intrabodily media. Not a cell is born or dies but in vital sympathy with the whole, for the whole works in each part and each part in the whole: the nerve cells cannot say to the epithelial cell, "Thou art not my brother," the less lawfully so since they proceed in original birth from the same embryonic layer. Therefore, when a unit in the vital organization is hurt, the mental organization is necessarily touched by the jar, such sympathy being the very spirit of the vital tie, and when mind thus feels ever so low a discordant note it cannot choose but react, in however small a degree, on the rest of the constituent elements. As

a bodily disorder tends to produce sad thought, so a sad thought tends to produce bodily disorder—it may, perchance, be the very same sort of bodily disorder producible by an organic poison—albeit a physical hurt from deranged mental function is less easy to picture in mind than a direct chemical hurt. Mind, in fact, represents the unison or harmony resulting from the inconceivably complex interplays of the infinitely numerous and various forces of the bodily units; wherefore the ancient Greeks had good reason for making Apollo the god of medicine as well as of music, and his son Esculapius the healer of a disordered bodily harmony.

What happens in the body when the discord of a disordered part is felt? Either such helpful sympathy from the surrounding elements of the sound whole through the vital medium in which it is situate as strengthens it to right itself —for that is how disease is best cured—or, if the disorder be past remedy, and there is no longer a possible sympathy, then a wholesome repulsion instead works steadily to isolate it in or extrude it from the organization in which its presence is a hurt. It is an unlucky circumstance when, as happens sometimes, the requisite isolation or expulsion cannot be effected without such secondary damage to the organism as eventually proves fatal to it; then the healing power of nature striving to put things right in the organism succumbs to a fatally opposing obstacle in its mechanism. Anyhow, the primary care of the organism is for itself; for the unit it cares only so far as this performs its proper function in it: in the self-preservation of the collective organism, as in the civil body, reasons of State override the interests of the individual.

Let the conception of the organic relations of mind and body be as positive as possible, it still remains more difficult to imagine how mind acts on organic unit to animate or depress it than to picture the action of organic unit on mind. The obvious reason is because the habit is to speak and think of the mind as an abstract entity, instead of speaking and thinking of a mental organization vitally

connected with the rest of the organism of which it is part, thus making a separate kingdom of mind, and that a kingdom of supernature. But as mind is not an abstract unity functioning always as a whole, but as diverse in constitution as the divers organs of the body represented in it, its different parts can and do act almost separately and in various combinations when the rest of it is nearly or quite at rest. The consequence is that just as the healthy organic tissues around a disordered part stimulate or inhibit its energies, so in the mental organization of the brain a disordered representative centre is subject to the elevating or depressing influences of its fellows of the confederate structure. When mind then animates a diseased organ so as to help it to get well or depresses it so as to deepen its disorder, this is the presumable sequence of events: the several stimulated parts of the whole mental confederation act on the faulty organ's special cerebral representation, which thereupon itself reacts on the special bodily organ directly, while they also act directly on their several represented organs or parts of the body either to stimulate helpfully or depress hurtfully. Thus it is that the diseased part itself and its cerebral representative are both influenced immediately by surrounding structure of strong or weak vitality, sympathetic or antipathetic. The sick man who, although sick nigh unto death, believes and asserts that he will recover, is prompted by a strong vital inspiration the aspiration of which is a prophecy, whereas the sick man who, dejected and abject, feels sure that he will die, albeit he does not appear to be then doomed, utters a secret despair which perhaps forebodes death: the animation is the exponent in feeling of a sturdy and tenacious vitality, the dejection the exponent of a weak and slack vitality.

Viewing the organization of mind then from a natural standpoint as the latest and highest becoming of nature through man, derived from it and merging again into it, the positive facts of its birth, growth, development, decline and death are natural and intelligible, and the laws of their

succession proper subjects of scientific inquiry. How could such sequence of events be otherwise than natural and necessary if mind contain in its constitution and represent in function the supreme harmony of all the bodily parts and organs raised to their higher power? If, however, the body be only the passing tenement of a portion of the universal mind temporarily so imprisoned and conditioned in time and place, to be set free when the bodily habitation perishes, the necessary inference is that the disembodied mind then loses its mortal individuality and is merged into the universal mind. For how can the special music continue when its special instrument is destroyed? And what concern in that case to the individual is a non-individual immortality?

## II

### REASON

Implicit prior to conscious reason—No division in nature between reason and instinct—Complex reason like complex reflex action and instinct an organized acquisition—Equivalent ideas interchangeable in reasoning, like equivalent parts in machinery—Difficulties of substitution of mental equivalences—Men commonly reason from accepted premisses, without testing the reason of them—Irrationality of men and bees compared—The ideal and the real man—Animal tendencies and angelic aspirations—Reason a limitation and constructive process, and its limitation a boon—Universal reason a nonsense in words—The heart and the head: feeling and reason—Special feelings not original and elemental but derived and secondary: bespeak precedent culture of reason.

THE reason which man vaunts and magnifies so mightily just because it is his pre-eminent faculty is, as before said, at bottom only the conscious acquisition of that which, in singularly special and perfect forms, is instinct in many of the lower animals—to wit, the doing of the fit thought and deed in the circumstances; a doing necessarily more and more complex as they are more special and complex. If he perform the simple act well once and on the next

occasion modify it to suit a change in the circumstances, learning thus to do it with the requisite nice apprehensions and adaptations, mental and motor, and thereafter on every subsequent occasion habitually, and instantly actuates the right motor intuition and action, that is essential reason. For it is a strange thing, as many do, to behold labouring reason in the perfecting endeavours and to find it clean gone when it is instinct in the perfect product. If he make no such fit adjustment to changed circumstances but obstinately use the old act to do what it is unfitted to do, he is an awkward bungler, for he profits not by experience. Now the reason in no case determines the organization, it is the organization which is prior to the conscious reason; the reason is implicit in the structural ratio or proportion of parts, and the mind thinks it in consequence, displaying in function that which is incorporate in structure. As the purposive function of a locomotive at rest could not be revived if the fit parts and nicely proportioned adjustments of its ingenious (rational) mechanism did not continue in being then, so the suspended function of inactive mind could not be revived if the reason were not present, implicit and unconscious, in the structure. The reason is invisible organization, the organization visible reason. Man makes not his progress through the ages designedly step by step on a preconceived rational plan; it is the stream of things which, in so far as he discerns purpose in its natural course, reveals itself in him as reason; the purpose is not in external nature, it is in his nature, and the reason is his mind's being.

A labour fit to have driven Hercules to despair, who might have found the cleansing of the Augean stable an easy task in comparison, will be to cleanse the human mind of the metaphysical prejudices and falsities with which it has been stuffed so as to enable it to see facts simply as they are and in their natural order. The theory of a separate spiritual entity, indwelling but not in continuity and unity with the body, independent of it in origin, nature and destiny, and for

the most part in internecine war with it, has ascribed to mind qualities as original and special which are actually derivative, and having thereupon converted the consequents into self-sufficient antecedent entities, has led to the formation and constant use of a special language to describe their operations; the ultimate result being to divorce mental from bodily functions, to divide by denominations things not divisible, often to disguise out of recognition the same thing under different names. Thus the reason which is instinct in organic structure—the so-called instinct made into an entity —has been quite separated from the conscious reason which is also instinct in it and, when completely acquired or organized, is manifestly seen to be so.

In every acquired reflex act which fulfils a definite end there is as essential reason as there is in the drawing of a logical conclusion; a syllogism being a corresponding reflex act at a higher cerebral remove. A boy who diligently learns to play cricket or any other game of skill develops reason step by step in his mental structure just in proportion as he gradually acquires by practice exact attentions to and accurate judgments of speed, time, distance, direction, force, and perfects the proper movements of eye, limbs and body, to meet the nice discriminations which he makes; for he is all the while organizing the proper cerebral reflexes of his nerve centres and tracts in such right ratios or proportionate relations—in such forms of structural synthesis, that is—as shall exactly and intuitively meet and fulfil the desired ends. A metaphysical cricket-teacher who, admonishing his pupil that he was a rational being, and ought not therefore to learn experimentally and tediously, like a horse or a dog, should go about to expound to him with mathematical precision all the play of forces at work in the game, and bid him then go forth and play it by rules of reason, would soon find out that the reason must be patiently learnt and gradually embodied in mental structure before it can be used in mental function.

Men no more learnt the rudiments of reason by conscious premeditation than they learnt to build a modern battleship

by distinct preconception of the principles and deliberate pre-ordainment of the details of its complex structure; they learnt to build it through a succession of tentative and gradually progressive endeavours, trying this and adapting that, doing and undoing, proceeding from simple fittings and adjustments step by step to more complex combinations, until in their mental organization was effected a series of structural syntheses as complex and special as its principles of structure. Had the predesigning consciousness of all the best mathematicians and engineers in the world been applied for the first time to a canoe in order by observation of its structure and function to design the plan of a modern battleship, all the intermediate forms of structural evolution being left out, they would have been utterly incompetent to do it. The reason of the complex mechanism had to be organized in mental structure before it could be consciously conceived and definitely embodied, and never could have been so conceived and embodied had it not been so infixed structurally. In the gradual growth of the requisite intelligence each succeeding gain of knowledge was a gain of power, and power so gained craved and gained in turn further knowledge.

If the capacities and cultures of two minds were exactly equal the idea beneath the name would have the same clear and distinct form, the same contents, and the same value in each mind; then the ideas, being equivalent, might rightly be substituted for one another in every process of reasoning in which the name was used, and every possibility of dispute thus obviated—the Red Indian's idea of God, for example, be the interchangeable equivalent of the civilized European's idea; the substitution being a substitution of exact equivalents, the logical calculation could not fail to be done with the precision and certainty of a geometrical demonstration or an arithmetical calculating machine. When two skilful billiard-players are equally capable of the exact judgments and nice movements necessary to perform with equal success the most difficult strokes of the game,

it is evident that in that respect the skill of one would be an exactly equivalent substitute for the skill of the other; and in like manner when two minds working on the same syllogism reach the same plain conclusion by natural necessity, their respective functions are exactly equivalent and would be physiologically interchangeable. The indispensable physiological basis of all reasoning being an organic process of the finest and most subtile physics, it might be likened crudely to the gross machinery of complex engines made after the same precise pattern, in which, corresponding parts being interchangeable, every part can be fitly replaced out of a store of exactly similar patterns. Such a substitution of similars is what is done now in the construction of complex engines, though it has taken men a long time to discover and use the simple method of uniform manufacture and the economy of it. It will take them a long time too, probably, to conceive the notion that there can be any similarity between the ratio or incorporate reason of an ingenious machine and the ratio or reason of their minds, notwithstanding that such machine, which does the intelligent work of ten or a hundred men steadily and regularly, without hurry and without worry, without shirking and without blundering, without envy, hatred, or any other of the passions which disturb human activity, signifies fundamentally structuralized reason. By putting such a machine at the service of the individual he is furnished with a goodly heritage of implicit reason which he could not alone acquire for himself were he to live for a hundred or perhaps a thousand years.[1]

Obviously it is a vastly more difficult business to make

[1] Of the machine which produces intelligent results we may say that it works mechanically, and of the insect which does its intelligent work that it acts instinctively, just because in either case the mind in the mechanism is perfect for its purpose and functions unconsciously. When man produces the same or a similar effect by tentative steps and imperfectly, we properly perceive will in the process; we might perhaps also justly perceive will-in-the-making by due composition of feeling and reason.

the substitution of equivalences in reasoning which it is comparatively easy to make by standardization of machinery, and for two principal reasons: first, because of the numerous and exquisitely delicate differences of quality of material, and of the exceeding complexity of structure in the mental fabric, no two minds being ever exactly alike and having therefore the component ideas exactly interchangeable; secondly, because of differences in the quality and force of feeling by which the intellectual machinery is propelled in function, no two persons ever having exactly the same quality and strength of feeling. It is in mathematical reasoning only, where men have to do with definitions and abstractions, not concrete things, that they contrive to get something like the same mental machinery in action and reach inevitably the same conclusions; when they endeavour to do so in real life they are compelled likewise to make abstractions and to deal with ideal feelings, ideal understandings, ideal wills, ideal beings—in fact, to construct an ideal psychology, and, doing the work differently, to arrive at different and often incompatible conclusions.

Man in the abstract may be called rational because as such he is an ideal representing the abstract notion of humanity, that which hope-born faith would have him be; but man in the concrete is for the most part very irrational. To say that he is even potentially rational is almost to speak too well of him individually. Nature's concern is not to make the individual rational, it does not suffer him to live long enough to become so; its apparent trend being to make the species rational some day, and its certain operation to ensure the continuance of it meanwhile by subjecting reason to passion. The individual notoriously owes his opinions to tradition, custom, convention, creed, law, education. If these are rational (and they are often absurdly irrational), it is not because he has reasoned them, or sees the reason of them, but because of the reason silently implicit in them; wherefore when facts conflict with or contradict them he is usually unable to change them so as

to suit the facts which, impatient of contradiction, he then blindly ignores or irrationally rejects, notwithstanding that he might profit immensely by making the required change. He has got his set mental reflexes which cannot respond to and apprehend the unfitting facts, and his so structured mind, from the mere instinct of self-conservation, passionately and stubbornly repels the assault on its structure which the new ideas would be. All the reason he practises is to reason more or less correctly from these fixed premisses, not otherwise than as the monomaniac in a measure does; they are prejudices or prejudgments by which, if they are false, he misjudges facts; his reason cannot correct them any more than the monomaniac can correct the premiss of his fixed delusion. Such and no more is the value of reason in the great majority of persons: they accept blindly an opinion and use it more or less logically, without knowing how they got it or what it is worth. Well then might Seneca say that every time he went forth among men he came back less human; though he might still have gone on to reflect that their irrationality served the cause of their progress, acting as a great conservative force to maintain the stability and unity of the special social community. When all is said, it is indisputable that states have hitherto been most stably founded on the ignorance of the multitude.

Could men view themselves impartially from outside as they actually are, they would behold a spectacle as pitiful and ridiculous as that of a honey-bee stupidly and violently beating itself to death against a pane of glass when there is close by an open door or window through which it might easily fly, had it the sense to try, and through which, perhaps, a blundering bumble-bee or bluebottle fly, recking not what it does in its tumultuous and adventurous flights, does chance to escape. Irrational prejudice, obstinate and persistent to get into the air of free thought by its own impossible way, is just as stupid as the bee and as impotent to mend its ways unless accident or assistance comes to its aid. It is but a shallow wonder that the bee thus beats

itself senseless, for the truer wonder would be if it did not; the engrossing instinct of its nature, the *ratio* of its whole special structure, is to strive automatically for the light and freedom which it sees directly before it; and how can it, thus specially fashioned from of old, having no larger reason, no other *ratio* of structure, know and realize the invisible glass—a quite recent invention of the human process—to be an impassable wall of separation? Its very virtue becomes its defect; for did it behave as the bumble-bee or the fly, it most certainly never could have attained to, nor still maintain, the complex social life of the hive. Is the man who strives painfully and pathetically to get into the air of free thought by way of some fixed creed which he believes to transcend reason, yearning thus to reconcile its dogmas with the principles of reason and truths of science, any more rational than the bee? In both cases fixed organic tracts function as they needs must: in the bee absolutely and excusably, since there is nothing available in its structure to acquaint it with a better way; in the man relatively and inexcusably, seeing that his mental structure contains unused tracts which, if reclaimed for use and duly cultured, would teach him how to check and correct his wrong ways, and he might perceive, were he to look intelligently around him, to be in good use elsewhere.[1]

Wonderful is the contrast between the ideal and the actual man, the being who is now and ever has been and the perfect being who is to be some day somewhere. On the one hand, a sublime creature, noble in reason, splendid in form, straining always to hold himself erect and look heavenwards, lofty in imagination, divine in love, the

[1] Seeing how clever such insects as bees and ants are within the environment to which they have made such admirable adjustments, it seems strange at first sight how destitute of intelligence they are outside their fixed instincts. But why strange? Being in a state of stable equilibrium with their surroundings, they have no new wants, are not tormented with the restless desire to be more than they are, feel not the nisus of organic process which has now been usurped into quite another line of development.

paragon of animals, and although bound to earth by his lower nature, yearning ever to break the humiliating tie and soar to divine heights of spiritual being—such is the ideal man; on the other hand, an animal among animals, and the only animal that is wicked for the pure pleasure of being wicked, not only without profit but often with positive hurt to himself; who ruthlessly uses, slaughters, eats, and exterminates other animals, not necessarily from any need he has of them but for the mere lust and sport of killing; unlike other species, scruples not, yea, joys exultantly, to war with and slay his own kind; drinks not because he is thirsty, but to intoxicate and brutalize himself; stupefies or excites himself with drugs which he diligently discovers and manufactures for the purpose; gorges himself with varieties of food, not for the sake of appeasing hunger but for the pleasure of gluttony; gratifies sexual lust immoderately, and inflames it artificially with the sole aim of further lustful gratification, to the frequent ruination of his health; wilfully frustrates the reproductive purpose in order to have the sensual pleasure without the burden of production; magnifies reason, yet uses it with persistent ingenuity to make himself sensually more brutal than any brute and spiritually to stultify himself in a pious self-annulment—such is the concrete man. As is the height of idealization, so is the depth of possible degradation.

The natural inclination is to think that reason, being a noble endowment, must always do noble work. But that is nowise so: ingenuity in ill-doing is just as much a function of reason as ingenuity in well-doing; it is not from reason, which illumines indifferently the paths of progress and regress, that the motive impulse to go upwards or downwards springs. Were it so derived, the contrast between the ideal and the real man could hardly be what it has always been and still is. Small thought is needed to show that if virtue is human so also is vice, and larger thought plainly shows that both have their rights of being, the one growing as the

other grows, and the evil being the inseparable counterpoise of the good.

The two different and almost opposite types of human thought—whether called spiritualism and materialism, Platonism and Aristotelianism, or whatever other names are given them—which have always coexisted under one garb or another since man began to reflect on himself, represent the two sides of human tendency, and they will continue to exist so long as he is an animal who yearns and strives to be an angel. If angelic aspirations wane in him, he will sink downwards towards the animal level; if the animal nature wanes in him, he will wax more spiritual, albeit his place in a material world may then be somewhat out of keeping with its low conditions. Perhaps reason will do its best work here, as elsewhere, by teaching him the modest lesson to keep in the mean: not to try to oust the animal, which would be futile, nor to lose and forget the spiritual, which would be brutal, but, like the planet in its orbit, to keep the just poise of sane function between the pulls of opposite forces.

Because men have found out many inventions by which they have steadily increased their knowledge of and power over nature, to their immense satisfaction and comfort, they can never sufficiently praise and admire their own reason; they laud it as magnificent, which it cannot fail to be seeing that it is their magnification of it which makes it magnificent. Nevertheless, this noble reason-endowed creature who contemplates in awestruck admiration the starry heavens and is transported in ecstasy at the grandeur of his own moral sense, and whose words, if not his thoughts, stretch out to eternities and immensities, may at any unforeseen moment be so absorbed in a petty misery as to be able to contemplate nothing else. So much is he at the mercy of accident that he cannot tell what he will feel, think or do the next hour or day. If he know that he has an immortal soul, he may well, like Plotinus, thank God that it is not tied to an immortal body. Withal, the very happiest part of life he owes to his

feeble foresight; for if he could always foresee that which will befall him he might soon lose his desire to go forwards. Reason might indeed do him an ill service were it as perfect as he would fain have it be: its better function is rather to consolidate what lies near than to foresee far, to effect construction rather than to impel growth. Though it teach him to accept the event with resignation and equanimity, seeing that in the inexorable order of things that which must come will come, and things without remedy ought to be without regard, yet such equanimity and indifference before the event would not be calculated to promote progress in life. Therefore he is moved by springs beneath reason, being made to feel that things can be mended by him, and thereafter to strive earnestly within his sphere for what he thinks true, what pleases him as beautiful, what profits him as good.

As knowledge is but a narrow chink of light between two dark infinities, between the eternal before and the eternal after, the infinitesimal minute and the infinite great, and only penetrates a little way into that which it illumines, reason may justly learn its modest limits and abate its signal pride. Being purely relative, just a human means of conscious adaptation to so much of the medium as relation is possible with, it is a meaningless word when stretched to reach beyond these relations. If I forego what I cannot possibly know, I must also forego to use the finite means by which I think to know that which I cannot know, and not absurdly think to project it into the infinite and eternal. To talk of infinite reason, in any human sense of the word, is a ridiculous contradiction in terms—*contradictio in adjectivo*—no better than it would be to speak of a boundless boundary.

The obscure intimations of feeling which seem limitless, are they of more cosmic value than knowledge? Is it right to forego feeling, as it is to forego reason, concerning the infinite and unknowable? Being loth to do it, men feel and conclude that to be a reason why they should not do it, albeit that aversion may really be an invalidation rather

than a justification of the conclusion, being nothing else but the illusion of human egotism. To a soberly reflecting mind it is not quite evident how the unknowable can be any more proper concern of human imagination than of human knowledge, or how imagination without knowledge to back it can fail to be fanciful and futile. Moreover, a fact which ought to be well weighed when vaunting the priceless worth of feeling is this: that the feeling of any thinking person at the present level of human culture is not primitive and elemental, but secondary and derivative; it being actually grounded in and emanation of such knowledge and doing as have been consolidated in his mental structure, and varying according to the quantity and quality of such structure. Had man never learnt painfully and slowly through the ages to know as he knows, he could not feel as he feels now, either socially or morally.

That being so, it may be said that the feeling thus emanating from improved knowledge has all the more value because of its development from an enlightened basis, however superficial, narrow and faint the enlightenment. The spiritualist naturally lays hold of it and presents it as irrefragable evidence of his personal relations with a supernatural power, the evidence of faith transcending reason and needing no justification by it: he makes confident appeal to the heart against the head, caring not to inquire how much the head has done in the structure of the heart's feeling. Granting that the feeling can thus transcend in value infinitely that from which it is derived, it nowise certainly follows that the spiritualist, who has absorbed from his cradle onwards a special sort of theological creed and received a quite inadequate training in knowledge of real things, and who must perforce therefore leave out half the data, has the right to claim his specialized feeling as final.

Before admitting such claim proper notes should be taken of these facts: first, that many minds of greater powers than he possesses, and more adequately trained all round, have not had this specialized feeling, for it is not the universal instinct

which, because he has it, he declares it to be; secondly, that those who are lauded and admired most for the pre-eminent possession of it are not always men of sound judgment, nor indeed admired most by those who possess most knowledge of them in the intimate relations of actual life, being prone to be shifty and amazingly self-deceptive: the real very different from the ideal person, though it would be unpardonable bad taste to proclaim and prove it in the particular case; lastly, that feeling in the general and abstract is but a name, not a reality, the reality being always the particular feeling, which is never quite the same, and never more ecstatic than when it is drug-produced. What the extreme spiritualist does is to induce and indulge the rapture of a debauch without being aware of it, and, like the opium taker, to take glad refuge in such transport when confronted with facts which hurt his special sensibility and he cannot assimilate. To indulge feeling in disregard of reason is always a pleasure, and such keen and exclusive spiritual self-indulgence is the natural proclivity of a mental structure which has been built up egoistically by his forefathers or himself; built up, be it understood, not necessarily by crude selfishness in the relations of life, but by a process of incontinent indulgence of narrow sentiment and a constant marshalling of thought in its service, whereby it comes to pass that the most ardent philanthropist is apt to be the most extreme egoist.

# CHAPTER VIII

# HABIT—INTONATION—EXPERIENCE—TRUTH

## I

### HABIT

Habit the growth of a nature—The incorporation of function in structure—The formation of a fit nervous reflex—Its large part in mental structure—Habit of belief and renunciation of reason—Mind divisable and able to act in parts—Different minds are different organs—The destruction of a mind by destruction of its habits of belief.

How trite the usual talk of the force of habit, yet how shallow for the most part the thought of what habit means! Prompt enough to call it second nature, people are equally prompt to shirk or shun the necessary conclusion that its mental effects signify definitely formed tracts of physical organization. Familiar with the word, they are content to say that habit does this or that without ever probing that which lies beneath it.

Notable in the formation of habit are, first, the disposition to do and the power to do more easily an act which has been done before; secondly, the gradual growth of ease and power by practice, until at last after many repetitions the act is done automatically, perhaps unconsciously—done in fact so naturally that it is instinct and a second nature. The process is not the mere putting on of a habit as a dress is

put on and can be put off; it signifies a structural modification of mind—a special mode of its *in-formation*—it growing to the mode of its exercise by incorporating growing function in structure. It is the same process at work now by virtue of which in the remote past the habits of prehistoric ancestors have become the instinctive and reflex faculties of to-day.

A special habit of function could never be acquired but by the special organization of a nerve-track which is its necessary physical agency: such track effaced, there is an end of the function. That is the vital truth expressed in common language when it properly speaks of "growing into a habit." Meanwhile men are content to "grow" in mind so long as they are not challenged to think and say clearly and definitely what they mean by such growth. Fundamentally it is the gradual formation of fit nervous reflexes in a process of mental structuralization, such reflexes increasing in number and in speciality and complexity with mental growth; nowise the function of a ready-made and detached metaphysical entity stirred up from time to time to perceive, record and remember what is going on in the particular brain.

Cut out of the individual mind all that which it owes to habit—habit of thinking, feeling, and doing—and how much, nay, rather how little, would be left? So enormous would the shrinkage be that it would be robbed of the very mechanism of its being; a poor and helpless remainder only being left, the bare foundations of a lost mental superstructure. Every mind being a social unit, fashioned in the mould of its special social organization, is substantially a manufactured fabric answering to the traditions, customs, modes of feeling and doing of the social body in and by which it lives. Therefore it is that between the mind of an Andaman islander and that of a cultivated European there is as much structural difference as between a mud-hut and a mansion, and therefore it is that the impassioned philanthropist, who is consumed with a burning zeal to unite all

people in one human family, warily forbears to advocate the union in marriage of the civilized inhabitants of Christendom with the Christianized inhabitants of the Andaman Isles. He clearly perceives an extreme incongruity of mental structure forbidding the brotherhood in this life on earth and postponing it to an ideal future life elsewhere.

It seems incredible, until the facts are considered well, what an incongruity, nay, what a monstrosity, habit may make of even fairly developed minds. A calm survey of the beliefs and doings of mankind, so far as their records reach, shows clearly that there is nothing however self-contradictory or contrary to reason, however puerile and personally burdensome, however monstrous and terrifying, which has not been believed sometime somewhere; nay, more, that nothing has been believed more fervently as an article of faith than that which was incredible as a matter of reason. Wonderful, too, and not a little instructive is it, to watch the mental attitude of those who, shocked at the absurdities which their forefathers believed and adored, or which savages now believe and adore, placidly believe and adore equal or greater absurdities. How is it that a being claiming reason as his supreme prerogative and aspiring to be pre-eminently rational has consistently been, and still is, so preposterously irrational? It is not owing to ignorance only, although ignorance has no doubt been a powerful factor, forasmuch as men have always believed, and still believe, flagrant contradictions of reason in subject-matters of which they were not, or at all events had not the right to be, ignorant. Eminent thinkers in theology have notoriously been quite childish thinkers in science, even when they have not, as some have done, deliberately formulated and practised the principle of systematically derationalizing themselves in order to believe piously that which was rationally incredible; and it is equally notorious that eminent thinkers in science have been quite childish in their thoughts about theology. So likewise it is in other departments of thought—in poetry, politics, law, medicine, and in the various callings of life; a

person of conspicuous excellence in one subject may be weak and puerile in another.

Viewing the facts fairly and frankly, it would hardly be untrue to say that man is the essentially irrational animal, since without reason there can be no unreason; for while the lower animal's instinct is for the most part implicitly rational, he, having conscious reason, which it is his noble prerogative to develop, indolently or wilfully abdicates it, and is content to think and act in direct defiance of it. An odd spectacle to behold, whether saddening when there is a Heraclitus to weep at it, or amusing when there is a Democritus to laugh at it.

The truth, of course, is that mind, having extension in time and space, and being subject to natural laws of cause and effect, can act much in compartments, and that it is possible to keep a separate order or class of ideas as a reserved ground not to be intruded on by reason at all, or at all events by a whole and sound reason; the consequence of which is that an understanding strong and rational in its own department can believe in other domains of thought, or in some private reserve of faith, that which contradicts the general principles of observation and reason on which positive knowledge rests. Therein is an illustration of the fixed formation of mental structure by habit of exercise, a right habit being sound reason, a wrong habit unsound reason, in process of organization. A similar process of effective mental dissociation is frequently exhibited in mental pathology; and although the mental result is then called morbid, yet it is only an extreme instance of a mode of mental ill-working which is common enough in less marked degree. The moral of the whole matter is that it is not legitimate to cite the instance of a person who achieves this feat of mental dissociation and partial disunity, sound though his judgment be in some sphere of thought where it has been fitly trained and matured by practice, as authoritative in other spheres of thought where it has not been duly developed. As well cite a deformity of body—which might after all suit certain

special work—as evidence of perfect formation and function, seeing that a mind, like a body, may contract good or bad habits of function. The wiser thing to do would be to see and note an instance of the law of mental dissociation and the natural consequence of its working in a want of mental integrity.

A positive study of concrete minds shows plainly that the several minds are the several organs or instruments, fit or unfit, in the various spheres of thought and action : so many diverse mechanisms of thought, feeling and doing fashioned by habits of function in the different situations and relations of life. Thrown off their settled lines of function, special minds are sometimes almost as helpless as a locomotive thrown off the rails. Now, as it is required of a tool that it be fitted to perform its special function, its excellence being to do that perfectly, and it would be absurd to employ a razor to cut wood, so it is with concrete minds: it would be as absurd to employ one mind fit to do its own work to do another's work for which it was unfit as to employ a razor to cut wood. Every special instrument can be used well only to do its special work. Consider, on the one hand, the artificially and patiently fashioned mind of a Jesuit priest, which, set apart from its early dawn to follow a set vocation, is subjected exclusively to a special class of impressions in a special mental atmosphere and systematically moulded to function in relation to them ; on the other hand, consider the mind of an ordinary Chinaman as it has been long fashioned from generation to generation by the traditions, training, customs and laws of his country ; comparing then the two steadily formed beings, it is evident that though they belong to the same zoological species, and differ little in general bodily organization, yet that they differ so widely in mind as hardly to be of the same mental kind. Each mind has been framed fitly to do its proper work in its own sphere, but would function badly if set to do the other's work of thinking, feeling and doing in its sphere. Notoriously there is no deeper gulf between minds than that which

separates Christian and Moslem, intermarriage between whom is a terrible shock to sentiment, the strange irony of the fact being that the principle which ought to bind them together most closely in brotherly union as members of one human family—to wit, religion, is that which actually divides them most completely.

Racial differences, again, which signify only certain unimportant differences of manufacture, are a tremendous hindrance, well nigh insuperable, to community of thought and feeling, even where common interests exist to dictate union and make antagonism little better than madness. Because you think and feel and speak not as I do, therefore you are an alien and we are natural enemies; my duty therefore is to distrust, hate and, if need be, fight and kill you because you are different, such is the patriotic cry of instinctive enmity. As ants and bees, notwithstanding the wonderful altruism shown in their social solidarity, exhibit a similar limitation of moral feeling when they savagely attack an alien intruder from another community, we may justly conclude such spirit of hostility to be the natural and necessary condition of separate social unions in the ascending scale of evolution.

As racial differences of mental nature represent different modes of mental organization through a series of incalculable generations, witnessing to different habits of function embodied finally in different structures, one might justly say of habit, which makes a second nature in the individual, that it made also the first nature, and even perhaps expect that, as it gradually improves, it will perfect a rational and moral nature of the human species. Realizing what it means and does, it is at all events easy to understand how puerile and pernicious a practice it is to attempt to force the habits of one level of civilization on people who are on a lower level, especially on those who are on a level of barbarism. However, as the thing is persistently and pertinaciously done by the higher people moved by a holy impulse to confer the blessings of their civilization and religion, albeit at the cost

of the destruction of the lower peoples, we may conclude that the disintegration of the social structure inevitably produced and the demoralization of the people by the disorganization of the cerebral reflexes constituting their mental fabric and serving their needs, are the ordained means by which nature degrades and finally eliminates the weaker races of men and promotes the survival and growth of the stronger races. And although the lower peoples may not feel happy to serve only as organic steps to build up a higher people, yet there is no help for it, they must suffer and die that the race may live and be strong.

## II

### MENTAL INTONATION

Associations of sense and sentiment—Revival of associations in memory—Transforming effects of custom—Formation of special cerebral patterns of structure—Effects of exclusive education—Adaptations to social medium—Organic hardenings of mental differences—Exemplification of nervous fashioning—Consolidated thought develops its appropriate effluence of feeling—Exemplification of that law—Analogy between association and dissociation of ideas and movements.

It may help to illustrate, and thereby facilitate, understanding of, the silent, steady and effectual process of fashioning individual minds to a fixed pattern by means of habit, to consider briefly the effects of association of ideas in mental structuralisation; not only, that is to say, in binding them together into complexes, but also in developing the fit tone or, so to speak, the essence of feeling of the special compositions. *Edification* is the word one might use rather than structuralization had it not, like so many more words, now lost vital meaning by familiarity of use and abstraction from realities. For the right edification of a mind does not mean only the building it after the best plan which its native capacities admit of, but the building of it in the best harmony of proportions and grace of structure which that plan admits of—the good intonation of the good mental fabric.

Were a mother to smear her breasts with assafœtida, so that the child at its first sucking and ever afterwards associated the disgusting smell with her milk, her smiles, her fondlings, her caresses, there would probably be no more pleasing odour in the world to it as long as it lived. Not as a mere sensation of smell, but as a vague expansive excitation of blended sense and sentiment imbued with the silent memories of a mother's care and love. Then even in old age a whiff of the once familiar scent would revive mixed memories of hardly distinguishable sensation and perception that seemed lost in oblivion, and strike a tone of feeling suffusing and surprising with a pleasing sadness the world-weary old man.

Bring the aged and disillusioned cynic, soured and seared in the sore strife of life, into the ivyclad village church, where as a little child he learnt to kneel by his mother's knee and felt the silken rustle of her dress, and let him hear the music of the sacred chaunt or hymn which he was wont to hear then, and he cannot choose but be thrilled with a tender solemnity of feeling, diffuse and sweetly sad, such as no other experience in life could ever give him. What he was then when thrilled with the vague enchantment of hope, what he is now after life's hardening experience and harsh disillusionments; the present and the past in mixture and contrast of solemn feeling—these sound the hidden chords of memory and strike the note of a strange and bitter-sweet melancholy.

The deep-reaching effects of wont or custom to change, almost transform, a nature, though acknowledged in the general, hardly obtain due appreciation in the particular; not in respect of the particular mental whole only, but also of the several particulars which enter into its construction and texture. Circumstances cannot transubstantiate a nature, it is true; but their manifold varieties, being adapted to develop one or another of the several facets of a mind, count for much in the formal development of it. To assume, as is sometimes tacitly done, that everybody who is not

manifestly deficient mentally comes into the world endowed with faculties which put it in his power voluntarily to be, when he chooses, what he is when he is at his best and circumstances are propitious, that is the very climax of optimistic fatuity. Take the best-endowed infant of the most civilized parents in Christendom, and place it from its birth in a tribe of Red Indians or lower savages to be reared exclusively by them, the product would be a Red Indian or the like in modes of thought, feeling and conduct; for the child would easily lose by want of use any superficial and loose-fixed aptitudes to the conquests of culture which it might have inherited, and revert to the deeper, more fixed and stable qualities of the human animal. In like manner if a child be born and bred among the savages of civilization —a nowise negligible quantity in any country—it witnesses necessarily to its bad birth and training; not that it reverts to the comparatively crude simplicities of Indian savagery, for it probably exhibits worse, because degenerate, qualities representing the corruptions of what was innately better in it; and inasmuch as these depravations are brutally instigated by the fundamental animal instincts, they then present a rather hideous human spectacle. Nay, the very qualities of mind perchance present in such a child, which might in propitious surroundings have grown to a lofty height of honourable distinction, are then ambitiously perverted to the bad use of excelling in vice and of pride in the performance; so that an eminence is reached as criminal which might in other conditions have been heroic.

Because the child's mind is nearly a blank, and because it has a strong initiative instinct, there is no limit to its young credulity; such being the effects of early and systematic special training that it may be taught to think and believe just what is wished. It is a matter only of exciting to function and by repetition fixing in structure the cerebral reflexes of a selected pattern of mind. When the cerebral area has been diligently filled with such organized reflexes, any conflicting or opposing reflex having been studiously excluded, then a

product is brought about which functions according to its structure and cannot function otherwise. Therefore, there is not the least reason to be surprised when a mind instructed or constructed carefully and wholly on one system of thinking and feeling cannot think and feel on a different system —when a mind, for instance, built on lines of theological dogmas and so preoccupied with a set structure is quite insensible to the principles and method of scientific knowledge, and with the best will in the world only debases when it would embrace them. The earnest aim of the most logical Christian sect is advisedly and sedulously to preoccupy the ground by building up betimes a special religious structure of mind, before reason's time of development, so as to prevent reason from ever getting root there and developing fully; whence the unswerving claim to conduct the entire education of its children in its sectarian system of belief, and the solemn prohibition against adult reason meddling with the reserved area of mind sacredly devoted to matters of faith. Thus it is that the Roman Catholic type of mind is assiduously constructed and thereafter persistently nourished by ordinances of prayer, meditation, and ceremonial observances carefully devised and adapted to animate and sustain the ordained functions of thinking and feeling: to believe nothing which is contrary to reason except in matters of faith, where it is necessary to believe blindly and servilely however contrary to reason the required belief, that is the fundamental principle of its construction. The number of Roman Catholics in the world at the present day affords ample proof how successful the process of mental manufacture continues to be.

As the individual is built up and held together as a social being by the special social environment in which he is bred and grows to maturity and in communion with which he lives, which is in, through, and around him—an organ, good or bad, of it essentially—the associations of feelings and ideas are naturally pleasing to him which signify the ease, maintenance and growth of his social nature, and, as naturally, strange and opposing experiences are unpleasing and repug-

nant because they clash with the order of his mental structure and cause unease. He thinks them bad or foolish or inferior, though they may be better and wiser than those which he has grown to in his own social medium, and it repugns him to conform to them. If, peradventure, he adapt himself thoroughly to them, then he grows to be like those who live in them; not much otherwise than as when the head of the Hydra polype is cut off the cut end becomes a foot if allowed to attach itself to a rock, a head when it is left to float freely in the water.

Such a great transformation, however, is possible only in organic matter at an early and low stage of being when it is mobile, pliant and plastic; in the developmental complexities of human nature differences harden by degrees and get fixed structurally, and primal structureless plasticity is limited. It is notorious that racial and even national distinctions, themselves the immemorial products of organic manufacture, divide peoples more than the moral cement of a common humanity unites them, and of course divides them the more the less moral they are. Religious creeds, too, which are likewise manufactured articles, not only separate men into different mental kinds on earth, but have the amazing pretension to separate them through eternity; each creed being the expression of the deep feeling of sectarian unity is necessarily the strongest bar to human unity; which is a tolerably conclusive argument that religions must die before religion can be. Moreover, as not one in ten thousand persons of a community ever thinks of the real meaning of what he thinks, feels and does, but mechanically receives and expresses that which the social system grafts in and engraves on him, performing automatically, while perceiving not, the reason which may be implied in it—and that so necessarily that he believes it all to be in the order of nature and cannot conceive it otherwise—therefore to think, feel and do as he is thus inspired seems natural, to do differently monstrous and unnatural. All which works well for the peace and stability of the social economy; for if everybody went about curiously

and closely to reflect on his position in it and to examine critically why he should be content to occupy it, instead of tame acquiescence there might be an ugly upheaval and dislocation of social order.

Here a brief stay may fitly be made for the purpose of apprehending clearly and formulating distinctly that which is a constant law of mental development. It is this: that the effects of associations of ideas and movements nowise end with the mere concatenation of them whereby one idea or movement calls another into concomitant or sequent action; on the contrary, that every consolidated system of thought develops its appropriate effluence of feeling. When a definite system of ideas has been formed and practised in relation to a class of objects, conditions and relations of life, and so firmly organized as to be subconscious, a special tone or flavour of feeling is generated which is a sensible emanation when they are unconscious—an emotional spirit or essence of them, so to speak—and, being attended with an intuitive judgment in relation to their objects, resents ideas at variance with them as an instantly repugnant jar to feeling as well as thought. To say that the illumination of feeling imparts the sublime intuition, as is the religious wont, is to err by overlooking the composition of thought which has gone before the feeling. Such composition of thought and effluence of feeling being nowise a conscious process, but belonging to the organic process of subconscious formation in the brain, it naturally results that the metaphysical moralist is quite at sea when he tries to probe into the depths of mind and find out the beginnings and base of the moral sentiment.

Moral sensibility is not a matter of mere feeling any more than is sensibility to good manners; its formation implies an antecedent organization of refined apprehensions, whence the variety of social sentiments rising in scale up to moral sense The instinctive repugnance to filth which a sound sanitary sense feels was not infixed as a ready-made sense, it has been gradually and partially acquired, and is still in process of acquisition, by the organization in cerebral structure of

systematic apprehensions and reflections—by improved knowledge in despite almost of natural instinct. Compelled at last, after long and stubborn resistance, to admit the existence of unconscious mental processes, psychology does nothing more meanwhile with organized thought than drop it into the void of the unconscious mind, not minding any more what happens to it there; it may be expected, perhaps, in the fulness of time, to perceive and own that while thought is invisible extension cerebral organization is visible thought. Be that as it may, the association of ideas in definite classes of thought which goes on from the very foundations of mind in sense, upwards in ascending scale to the highest mental inflorescence, certainly is not a mere ligation of ideas, it is such a fusion or union of them as develops the appropriate mental intuition and fit flavour of feeling.

Take another and simple illustration of the physiological process: when the old hunter, as it jogs quietly with its rider along the lane, instantly pricks up its ears on hearing the distant cry of the hounds in pursuit of the fox, quivering all over with excitement and eager to start off at a gallop, it shows a memory like that of the aged cynic who, thrilled with ancient feeling, bows low his head to the superstition which he reverenced in his childhood. The horse might show similar restlessness which is suddenly startled by a strange cry heard close at hand, or meets a tame bear for the first time on the highway; but it would not then be thrilled with the special feeling derived from experience incorporate as silent memory and now revived by the special stimulus.

The enunciation of the doctrine of the association of ideas was undoubtedly a distinct advance in psychology when it was first made, seeing that it brought speculation down from the clouds nearer to the realities of things, and so gave form and body to it. But it did not bring it down to contact with the basic facts. Much was made to rest on association of ideas, but it was not explained on what such association itself rested—*that* was left unsupported, the

process of association being converted into a sort of metaphysical principle which thereafter did duty as agent. Seeking the analogy and lesson of the association of ideas in the mode of association of movements and the ensuing structural nervous organization, as we may rightly do, the process is seen to be one of gradual nervous organization progressing in speciality and complexity from the simple and general; for which reason it comes to pass that just as the fit experiment or disease severing the connecting nerve-tracks of two movements destroys the association of them, thus erazing the memory of their co-operation, so may a similar fit experiment or disease sever the association-track of two ideas and thus eraze their memory. Having been dismembered, so to speak, they cannot, unless re-membered or recollected by repair of damaged track or substitution of a collateral track, take their place in mental function as remembrance or recollection. The individual is as impotent to think them together as he is impotent to join in action the two severed movements. In abolished movement as in abolished mind there is essentially the same loss of memory, albeit on a lower physiological plane. Man being fundamentally an organic mechanism, mentally as well as physically, though the mental mechanism undoubtedly implies a yet inscrutably fine and complex physics, his mind is sound when its mechanism is sound, lame when it is lamed, lost when it is destroyed. Moreover, its mechanism may be well or ill constructed, and intoned with good or bad quality of feeling.

## III

### EXPERIENCE

Experience must be vital to be instruction—The inexperience of youth and the experience of age—The hurtful provokes attention and inquiry—The historian without practical experience of men—Beliefs and scientific theories which are not based on experience—The fool and the wise man—Failure in an evil environment not blameworthy—The quenching of enthusiasm by experience—The solid wisdom of proverbs—A systematic exposition of proverbs—Experience the basis of sound psychology.

THAT experience is the best teacher is a truism enshrined in the sayings of all peoples. It is, to be sure, the only efficient teacher, for it is a notable rarity for any one to profit by the experience which has not been self-made—to make his own in fact that which has gone to make another. Now to speak so is only to say in other words that the experience must be taken to heart, made a vital part of the mental structure, not known only by the head but felt by the heart; the thing so vitally apprehended and fitly reacted so as to become a definite cerebral reflex, an organic plank in the mental structure, so to speak, a solid instruction. So formed, the instructed reflex or notion then responds by the fit grasp of instant apprehension on the proper occasion; if not so formed, the appealing would-be-instruction appeals in vain, passes unregarded, elicits no real apprehension, because there is no fit structure within to respond to its stimulus. To think a thought vitally without experience is no more feasible than to do an act well which has not been done before; the thought must be living, life in mind, not merely float in it as a vague phantom; in feat of thought as in feat of action learning comes by doing. Then itself an organic possession, it is the nucleus and means of further instruction; though it seem to be unrelated, isolated, useless, it never is so, for soon or late, shooting out or receiving impulses, it gets

its fit connections and may irradiate a whole province of knowledge.

If youth could take up the wisdom of age where age leaves it off, without having to go through the tedious experience needed to acquire and structuralize it in its own mental organization, the progress of humanity in its tedious travail upwards might doubtless be much faster and the unknown end sooner reached. But that would mean a full inheritance of acquired faculty which nature has denied to mortals. Though in respect of such skilful feat as the art of sucking, and at a later period of life the singular art of procreation, it has endowed them with the aptly instructed instincts, its present will manifestly being that they should not fail to maintain and continue the species, its rule is that other wisdom should not be so inherited; either because it would not have wisdom increase too fast among men for fear that they might not then be beguiled by their illusions gladly to go on striving, or because it would be wrong to stereotype much of that which, though one generation counts it wisdom, a succeeding generation discovers to be unwisdom. In proportioning, as it has done, the sequent seasons of youth and age in a human life, it has no doubt done best to secure the gradual process of the species in the right mean; for as the qualities of youth and age, although both necessary for such progress, are so different and incompatible that they could not coexist in the same person at the same time, their respective periods are thereby so distributed and proportioned as to obtain the full benefit of both in the life-work.

The wisdom of the race is the slowly gained product of its pains and toils: because men have suffered they have striven actively and purposively to avoid suffering. To shun what is hurtful is the obvious motive of self-preservation; for as that which hurts is pain or evil it necessarily provokes attention, inquiry, and active efforts to elude it, whereas that which is not hurtful, being pleasant and placidly accepted, provokes no such close inquiry and active endeavours. It is to unease, discontents, pains, conflicts therefore that

the impulses and actions issuing in the sciences, arts, and industries are fundamentally due, and these gradually evolved. Nature has goaded rather than enticed men to progress, forcing them to bethink and bestir themselves to find out what hurts and what helps them and to make profitable use of their knowledge. And as it is in physical so it is in social nature. The good qualities of the species, were they uniform and universal, would leave society in a perpetual content, peace and repose; there would be no need to guard against or counteract them, nothing to do but quietly enjoy or endure them; but the bad qualities, causing a constant unrest and ferment, necessitate unceasing efforts to prevent and thwart them, whence the inventions of manifold commandments, codes of law, conventions, prescriptions, customs, and the like. Because that which hurts provokes keen attention, it comes to pass too that wrongs are remembered and benefits forgotten, and that while gratitude is rare and transient, resentment is apt to be frequent and lasting. To feel gratitude for that which, being naturally and quickly absorbed into the growth of self, becomes its being and seems its own, requires such retrospective reflection and effort as a narrow soul is incapable of; whereas that which offends and hurts the self, hindering or lessening its being, is immediately resented, and the more keenly the narrower the egoism.

How shadowy and empty is the knowledge of human nature which is got by only reading about it! There is hardly anything in the world more fanciful and false than the grave judgments passed on men and things by the historians and the philosophers of the closet who meditate abstractly on them at their ease, having themselves had little or no active commerce with and experience of real men by mixing and competing with them in affairs and thus learning how they actually feel, think and act; for which reason it is quite natural that no two of them ever agree. The philosophical result in such case is an elaborate tissue of barren abstractions and speculative generalities which yield no real instruction; the historical result, a theoretical exposi-

tion of motives and conduct which is no better than the fanciful fabric of inadequately informed and prejudiced imagination: products which, like painted fruits, only look beautiful.

Wonderful it is to watch the austere and solemn pedantry with which this type of historian criticizes and blames the benighted ancient or the primeval savage because he did not apply the rules of modern parliamentary procedure to the government of his country or his tribe, or gravely censures the statesman who in dealing practically with men and things reckons with and manages them as they are really, not as they ideally should be. Ludicrous again is it to see how the great actor in great events, who perhaps did not see far beyond his nose, or acted from the meanest motive, or was influenced by such a medley of obscure motives that he could not himself tell what his efficient motive was, is pictured as having discerned clearly, devised deliberately, and steadily prosecuted with farseeing aim and consistent endeavour some definite plan of action to accomplish that which he did achieve; the sober truth being that if the man had not been wiser unconsciously than he could consciously explain, or perhaps more foolish or knavish than he could rationally excuse, he would never have fulfilled his great mission. History being for the most part, as it has been truly said, little more than fiction, in which while names, dates, places and events are real, the rest is imagination and should be read as such, it is not so truly informing as the well conceived drama or novel in which, though everything is confessedly fictitious, the instructed imagination of the great author knows how to lie truthfully.

As it is with historical so it is with scientific theories which are not based on and proved by observation and experiment; they are then vague, hollow, speculative, uninformed by the reality with which a close and firm hold on facts can alone imbue them, and ought at best to be used only as provisional hypotheses or directive guesses. Whereas speculation is always cheap and easy, neither coming from

nor working on the heart, the lessons of experience are not to be bought cheaply at any stall—they must be wrung at much cost from the heart and the head. Every vital belief imports feeling as well as thought, being no mere pictured conception but a welded product; when clear and sound, it is right thought imbued with right feeling. Persons often think and say they believe when they really believe not at all, or only believe half-heartedly, or just imagine that they believe; therefore they are content to rest in conventions, vague generalities, lifeless phrases, insincerities and hypocrisies of thought and speech, taking them seriously without minding so to test them by experience as to find out what they really mean.

A constant tendency of habitually accepted truths or opinions is to harden and at last to become so rigid that they lose their living quality or power, after which they are repeated by rote without thought of their vital meaning; for which reason they need to be put into other language or translated into action in order to become matters of experience and have their meaning freshly perceived. Thence it frequently falls out that a person himself thinks and is thought to express a new thought when he only vivifies an old thought by putting it into new language or demonstrates its working in a particular case. The novelty of the form startles the custom-dulled mind into a vital apprehension of the substance.

As the present is a natural development of the past, and the future in due course proceeds from it by natural development, so present knowledge is the product of past experience, being vitally rooted in it, and grows to new knowledge by continuity of organic process. The fool all his life long is he who, profiting not by experience, since it cannot take vital hold of him, and blind to the inexorable sequence of things, always looks for the causes of his failures and follies everywhere but in himself. Is he perchance fortunate? His self-love ascribes his good luck to his merits. Is he unfortunate? He ascribes his misfortune to bad luck, not to

his demerits. For the life of him he cannot see the past nor foresee the future in the present. Therefore when he fails he is full of excuses which are accusations, of explanations which are condemnations, and has not the least suspicion that it is because he is a fool that he needs them, and that he is a fool to use them. Always it is some unlucky circumstance, be it ever so trivial or incidental, but for which the misfortune would not have happened, when all the while the very circumstance which he accuses was owing to his own slovenly attention, indolent carelessness, impatient temper, or loose and straggling application. Just the contrary is it with the wise man who, if he be not formed by his faults and failures, at all events observes, studies, and uses them for self-formation. Thus it is that while wisdom can teach folly nothing folly may teach wisdom much.

Is the cause of failure then always in the individual? That would be true no doubt in most cases if it were his duty always to get on well with his kind and to succeed in whatsoever surroundings he might chance to be placed. Yet to fail in bad times and in a corrupt environment might from a purely ethical standpoint be a praise rather than a blame to him. The good seed which by ill chance is wafted on to barren ground, what can it do but fail to grow well? There are times and circumstances when what the world wants is not the good man who is meek, modest, and tenderly scrupulous, but the strong man who is coarse, bold, and fiercely unscrupulous; for it is not yet grown so moral as to be able to do without devil's work in it: in a garden overgrown with rank and noxious weeds, it would be ridiculous ruth to spare the weeds and to sow good seeds; the right thing to do is ruthlessly and thoroughly to extirpate the weeds, as the good gardener diligently does. After all is said, it is not the person of tender moral feeling, commonly reckoned an amiable impracticable, but the person of coarser fibre, the approved man of the world, who succeeds in its practical life and is crowned by it.

Experience in its capacity of stern master implacably

moulds the individual to the approved social pattern and rigorously crushes his vagrant enthusiasms and impulses. It would not go well with the world if the conduct of it were in the hands of the young vaunting in their youthful zeal and serenely sure that they were rightly inspired and inflamed; but it is a little sad perhaps to see how surely prosaic experience quenches the ardent fire, the naive and generous enthusiasms, the frank sincerity and expansive confidence, the brilliant hopes and buoyant audacity of youth, and sternly enforces a quite unheroic accommodation to the mean interests and intrigues, the reserves and reticences, the deceits and calculated prudences, the common-place maxims and conventions, and the polite hypocrisies of social life; so that the grown man, fitly moulded and shaped, at last looks back in amazement, perhaps with tingling ears or blush of shame, at the frank simplicities and enthusiasms of his immaturity. Nevertheless his follies may have proceeded from his virtues: he acted foolishly because he naively believed that the true and good were not ideals only but real. The smiling and kindly contemptuous indulgence shown by old age to the enthusiasms and follies of youth is the indulgence shown to inexperience and illusionment by the experience and disillusionment of life; it is like the half-contemptuous, half-admiring indulgence which Sancho Panza, embodying the proverbial wisdom of homely experience, showed to the idealistic and chivalrous extravagances of Don Quixote. Were any one to preserve the qualities of youth through manhood—immaturity in maturity, that is to say—he would certainly be no success, probably a flagrant failure, though he might then console himself by thinking that it was nobler to soar on the fine wings of enthusiasm than to creep on the base feet of calculation.

He who could quietly assimilate the wisdom contained in the pregnant axioms, adages, maxims and proverbs which concisely sum the essence of human experience, without having to make it his own vitally by living it himself, might be a wonderful philosopher before he began to live actively

among men, or without ever leaving his closet to live among them. The pity of it is that he realizes the truth of the proverb only by application after he has made the experience, when he can use it to instruct him not how to act but rather how to endure. But the proverb is not therefore profitless: in the first place, its terse and pregnant sentence, well-tempered and sharp-pointed, penetrates easily and illumines into clear understanding that which previously was lurking obscure and undefined in his mind; in the second place, it comforts and helps him by revealing to him that he is not alone and exceptional, whether in ill fortune, in which it is an abatement of sorrow by soothing self-love to have fellow-sufferers, or in good fortune, in which it may temper his pride to have fellow-sharers, but in common case with his kind; and, thirdly, being short and pithy, it sticks in and is easily recalled to mind. Not one in ten thousand persons can pursue a line of reasoning link after link from the premiss to the concatenated end and draw the logical conclusion; whereas the right proverb in which this is done and registered involves no labour of sequent thinking, but is ready at hand for use on the required occasion. After all, it is not wisdom any more than moral truth which is wanting in the world; ample store of it is laid up in compact maxims available for use when needed; what is wanted is the apt knowledge and application of it at the right juncture, and therein the sage proverb or adage is helpful.

Here may be made another reflection: as the proverb represents the concentrated experience of the race, so the words by which it is expressed represent the definite cerebral structure which has been gradually acquired by the human brain through the ages to embody and utter it. That which is expressed outwardly in function of wisdom has its physical counterpart in that which is contained inwardly in structure. Therefore it is that the human brain notably possesses special convolutions which are absent in the highest animal brains, and defective or absent sometimes in the lowest specimens of the human brain; they are the incarnations of its

experience through the ages. In vain would the simplest proverb be spoken to the wisest creature of the simian species, because it has not the requisite structure within to receive and respond to it, and in vain is wisdom spoken to the natural fool who is similarly destitute.

One may wonder that it has never occurred to some curious psychologist, leaving his abstractions and generalities, carefully to ponder the proverbs of all nations and to set forth the wisdom of them in a learned and systematic way; for he might then produce a body of philosophy and morals which, springing from the experience and meeting the actual wants and instincts of human nature, imbued too with the modes of their repression, regulation, guidance and gratification in the course of social development, would probably be of more value than most of the disquisitions and speculations, philosophical and ethical, with which the world has been and still is laboriously deluged. All the more surely too if he took exact account of the various kinds and degrees of crime and of the special laws enacted to check and punish them, considering well what faulty mental states they denoted and what were the means thought necessary to correct them.

If it be thought incredible that many learned men possessed of great mental powers should still be diligently employed all their lives in barren speculations, neglecting the basic facts of experience, it will not be amiss to call to mind how much ingenuity, what keen subtlety and great power of reasoning, and what learned labour men of such exceptional intellectual powers as St. Thomas Aquinas, Dun Scotus and other great schoolmen once bestowed on barren discussions, which were useful only in so far as they served as means of intellectual exercise and skill, and it would be thought waste of time and mind to dispute about now. As is amply proved by the history of every science, want of experience of things about which they speculated eager and actively has notoriously never yet hindered men from speculation and from a delirious delight in their gymnastic exercises.

## IV

### Truth

What is truth? The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—Truths perish as well as prevail—Wisdom and folly reciprocally necessary—Free development of thought—Feeling more fundamental than reason—Truth beneficial to society in the long run—Efficacy of the lie—Comparison of truth and light—Innate love of truth—The relativity of truth.

If it was a "jesting Pilate," as Bacon says, who asked What is truth? he asked a wiser question in jest than philosophy has yet answered in earnest, and if, as Bacon adds, he would not wait for an answer, it was perhaps because he might be waiting still had he lived to wait so long.

The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that is what the witness in a Court of Justice is solemnly sworn to speak. Yet how straight and swift a dissolution of society would ensue were the injunction obeyed strictly in human intercourse. So special and formidable is the obligation to speak the whole truth that it is reserved for Courts of Justice and requires the solemn belief and invocation of supernatural oversight to help without at all ensuring its fulfilment. It was a pretty conceit therefore on his part who translated the maxim *in vino veritas* thus —that a man must be drunk to be mad enough to speak the truth.

A soothing adage declares that truth is great and will prevail, that once known it does not perish. It is a saying which need not be questioned if only it be understood that when the thing prevails not it thereby proves itself not to be truth. The sober truth is that truth often fails to prevail and that known truths are not seldom lost. As the persons who really understand and can defend them are few, they

are in precarious case when left to the protection of the many who embrace them by prescription and corrupt them by their embraces. Moreover, error and prejudice have their habit of stubborn survival; though regularly destroyed in the course of progress, they fail not regularly to revive, albeit in somewhat different guise and new garbs; for the expansions and specializations of the fields of knowledge inevitably multiply the occasions of their recurrence in new places and circumstances. As long indeed as men are prone to believe that which they desire or fear, which they will do while desire and fear last, so long will they be liable to believe wrongly; for belief does not signify the white light of pure intellect untinctured by feeling—the *lumen siccum* of Heraclitus or 'dry light' of Bacon—it implies feeling fulfilling itself well or ill in thought and deed through the fit intellectual means or mechanism. All sorts of feeling and beliefs have their rights of existence in human nature just as all sorts of colours and forms in organic nature. Hitherto in human story folly has run a pretty equal race with wisdom; though the one has had chief sway at one time or place, yet the wisdom of to-day has been the folly of to-morrow and in the end neither has gained a sure and lasting supremacy of dominion anywhere.

Wisdom and folly might no doubt do without one another if only they could exist independently, which they manifestly cannot do. A world of entire wisdom would be sure to be wrecked by its own prevailing and unopposed force; as surely indeed as the existing universe would be wrecked by the sole and exclusive action of the one force of attraction. Indeed, the wise man has perhaps more need of the fool than the fool has of the wise man; for while the way of progress has been opened by the insight of the discerning person who has defied or used the prejudices and passions of the crowd, their unreflecting force having needed his illumination, his discernment has still needed their blind force to make and keep open the path. To know will avail little without the power to act: the hundred eyes of Argus to see need to be

supplemented by the hundred hands of Briareus to do. The attitude of the vulgar mind towards a new truth is always much the same—hate and distrust of it at first as something strange, suspicious, without precedent, dangerous; to be followed in due course by blind and perhaps abject adoration of that which it has accepted without understanding and admired the more the less it was understood, faith being wilfully glad sometimes to find wisdom in the folly of the understanding.

A genuine thinker has to think as though he were almost alone in the world; not by authority or fashion, nor thinking what others think of what he thinks, but by quiet mental digestion of the material which he has diligently and intelligently gathered. Nay, to think best, he had best not recollect that he is in company with himself; for if he think of himself as thinking, and let not the thing speak spontaneously in his think, he runs great risk of spoiling his thought. Liberty of thought is no less necessary than strength of thought, for what good is strength employed in the service of tyranny? And what greater tyranny is there than that of vulgar opinion, which is all the more effective the more ignorant the slave is of his thrall? Let a man go the way of his nature if he have aught in him worth developing, even though the mob howl in protest or the heavens fall. If he thinks amiss and goes wrong, nature charges itself with the due rectifications and compensations.

Though reason be so noble and vaunted a faculty, it is still not the moving force of mind. Not to bow before authority nor to accept a principle except so far as it is established by reason, that is a fine-sounding maxim of proud self-reliance, which, however, overrates the rôle and value of reason in human affairs. A general faculty of reason is an abstraction, not a real thing; there are as many particular reasons as there are particular minds and particular exercises of mind in the different domains of thought and situations of life; and always the whole and strong reason is a rarity of nature. Besides, the brave maxim has this fundamental

flaw: it does not justify men in going on living. Neither does it account for nor justify falling in love, as people do, wisely or foolishly, by secret attraction, perhaps at first sight by overpowering elective affinity, and then propagating their kind on earth without the least thought why, or the least regard to consequences. Reason only devises the means, nowise supplies the motor principle of living and loving. In the composition of a strong character which, true to itself, goes resolutely the way of its natural development is contained more than a high and comprehensive reason.

Although habitual and excellent use is made of the lie in all grades of its development, yet it is properly condemned in principle because, if useful for the moment, it is deemed hurtful in the long run; whereas truth, if hurtful at the time, is beneficial in the long run. The pity of it is that the run is so long; for so it often comes to pass that the individual who suffered martyrdom in the cause of truth has been dead a hundred years before the world perceives that he was an atonement for it and ought to be adored. Truth's great triumph now concerns him not who, being not now, cannot heed it, whereas his triumph through the lie when he was in being would have concerned and served him much.

It is not to be denied that men overrate the power of truth in the general and underrate the power of the lie in the particular, being wont to talk as if the former was a constant, beneficent and all-potent force, the latter an occasional maleficent and transient force; for they would fain have the lie to be pure devil's work and sterile. A lie breeds opinion, as Bacon says; opinion actuates doing, and doing makes history; and human history, individual and national, would surely have been far other than what it is had the lie not wrought so largely as it has done. Besides, truth is not, as its loud laud assumes, a constant something; it is a variable product; it is invariable only as an abstraction, differing actually in the concrete in different times and places, for

different individuals, and for the same individual at different seasons; wherefore to estimate it practically recourse must be had to a common standard based on the general experience of mankind at its best. The rule which the best collective organization of humanity prescribes and practices as the right rule of development, that is the living truth for it. Yet to apply such high truth to the loose organization of a tribe of primitive savages who need a much lower truth would be a colossal untruth.

The likening of truth to light is a trite comparison: truth is intellectual and moral light. When it shines brightly the groping mortal sees his way, avoids wrong turns, runs not against obstacles nor falls into a ditch; which is to say that he thinks clearly, avoids errors of thought, shuns impracticable paths, is not entangled in the snares of words, yields not to the seductions of bias—in fact, keeps clear of the common and potent causes of bad reasoning. Withal, the light of truth, like physical light, is not good only by dispelling darkness and illumining the road, but, like sunlight, it is positively beneficial to health. For as the light of the sun is directly hostile to miasmata, bacteria, and like secret and pestilent enemies of the body and directly quickens its energies, so mental light contributes positively to health and wealth of mind, not only by killing superstitions, false prejudices, and the like mental poisons, but by positively healthful influence on the whole intellectual and moral life which it animates and exalts. As there are notoriously persons and classes of persons who love darkness because their deeds are evil, so likewise there are persons and classes of persons who shun intellectual light because the concealing darkness serves to protect and nurture their prejudices and the profitable mysteries of their crafts. Not that all who shun intellectual light do so wilfully because their intents are deliberately evil; some do it instinctively and self-protectively because their weak mental vision cannot bear its rays; others out of pure indolence of a sluggish

nature averse to exert itself actively; some again cannot overcome a sensitive and selfish dislike to have their minds disquieted by doubt; others of set purpose refuse to think beyond the ruts of convention, because they conscientiously persuade themselves that the authoritative upholding of certain false beliefs by them is for the good of the people at their present stage of development. All which hindrances to the rapid diffusion of truth, sad as they might seem, are yet conservative helps that serve well to maintain the stability of society which always rests most firmly on a solid basis of ignorance.

No one can have a full, fixed, constant love of truth if the liking of it be not thoroughly ingrained in his nature. When such liking is instinct in him he cannot ever be indifferent to truth, cannot choose but pursue it for his own comfort, is uneasy if he is not on its trail. On the other hand, when the intrinsic affinity is not in him he is indifferent whether he is on the right path or not, is not disquieted by doubt, has no painful self-questionings, nay, joyously pursues a wrong path. Men then blame the immoral function when they ought rather to bewail the ill-fashioned machinery; for the lack of the liking for truth is the effect and exponent of a structural inability to assimilate it.

After all is said it comes to this, that truth is only a term of human relation, absolute truth a pure abstraction: there is nothing absolutely true, or if there be, a limited and relative being cannot know it. That beyond all which he can know, little or much, there is an infinitely great and infinitesimally small which he cannot know is as plain and simple a truth as that he cannot fly to Sirius nor creep into a molecule, and needs no more wondering comment. Knowledge being the product of the fixed and definite interactions of the self with the surrounding not-self grows in specialty and complexity as they grow more special and complex; it is therefore always capable of gradual improvement and increase, never a finality. To suppose that any under-

standing can ever comprehend the universe is to make the ridiculous supposition that a part can comprehend the whole; it is to suppose that a local and limited mental organization can adapt itself exactly and perfectly to the infinitely numerous and various facets, mighty and minute, of the cosmos, whereas the very condition of any and all knowledge is that it is a severance from the whole, and at the best the severance of an infinitesimal fraction only.

# CHAPTER IX

## EDUCATION—MENTAL CULTURE—CHARACTER

### I

#### EDUCATION

Mental mechanism constructed by education—The innate forces of individual character—The beginnings of ills to be stopped—The mischief done by parental partiality—Educational effects of custom—The evils of early over-cramming—Uniform scholastic methods—The use of special studies to correct special faults—Wry minds sometimes must grow awry—Psychological ignorance and ignoring of organic structure and function—Unconscious education by the environment—Education in knowledge of physical nature—Education in relation to body politic and social—The practical instruction of reason—The danger of little knowledge—Man not rational but potentially rational—Over-estimation of the value of education—Good use of such over-estimation.

How ancient the conviction of the uses of education to perfect human nature, yet how partial, inconstant, and inconsistent the various changing systems framed and employed for the purpose, and how diverse the products! Moulding themselves sedulously after so many different patterns into so many organic machines to repeat automatically that which they have been carefully constructed or instructed to feel, think, and do, men are yet surprised that they agree not wholly in nature, are not of one heart and mind, feel and think and act so differently. Having done that, too, from time immemorial, and thereby built different racial

structures of mind, they naively wonder at the strong and apparently ineradicable racial sympathies and antipathies which separate them. It were as wise a wonder that each special type of machine performs its own functions and not those of machines constructed on quite different models to perform different functions. Yet as there can at last be but one perfect type of human development, the perfecting of the race by means of education will be done only when all people on earth adopt the same system which they agree to be the best, and then agree to apply steadily and uniformly from generation to generation and from age to age to the final effacement of racial characteristics of mind.

The stronger the native forces of individual character and capacity the greater is the need of education to rule and direct them well in a complex society, for being bound to spend themselves somehow in work, they must run otherwise to bad issues: the large force poured as feeling into the tracks of the mental organization will discharge itself along such as are available. The great criminal in a civilized society represents power gone amiss which another education and training might sometimes have guided to a respectable eminence; for which reason the greater the sinner the greater the saint when, baser converted into better nature, sinner turns saint. Strong feeling is a force of excellent social use in a state when it is not unruly and turbulent, but is wisely subdued and ruled to right channels of working. For the rest, too, the state, like a becalmed yacht, is in a poor way when it has not force of feeling to fill its sails.

If there are manifest defects of the mental organization which no education can rectify, just as there are irremediable defects of the bodily structure—variously crooked minds, as there are variously crooked bodies—it is no less manifest that there are mental faults which may be mended by suitable training, if only their beginnings be discerned keenly and the proper means steadily applied to counteract them in the germ. To

counteract happily in the germ is oftentimes quite to cancel mischief. What a host of ills in every province of life would be prevented were men to give just heed to watch and stop their beginnings when it imports most and is most easy to check them! That is wherein the wise man differs mainly from the fool everywhere and in all things; foreseeing effects in their causes, when they are preventable, he prevents them; whereas the fool only feels, without even then recognizing, causes in their effects, when the unforeseen mischief is done and there is no remedy. It is during the first years of life then that the arrest of bad beginnings by fit mental training must be done if it is to be done well, seeing that what is done well or ill then gives a life-lasting bent to organic growth; a wrong bent growing gradually to a deformity which can never be put straight afterwards. To reform a nature which has been maturely formed, it would be necessary to unmake and re-form it from the outset, if not actually to regenerate it.

The pity of it is that what is done in early education is seldom done with discernment, foresight, and steadfast execution. The task falls naturally and is left almost wholly to women who, biassed by baby-love in general and by maternal love in particular, and for the most part habitually irrational themselves, employ no wisely steady discipline of thought and feeling, often indeed infect the child by bad example and an unsound moral atmosphere, and at a later stage accuse and perhaps assault the schoolmaster or schoolmistress who tries by mild chastisement to eradicate the faults which they have nurtured. Most parents are notably so fond and proud of their children just because they are theirs that they give no heed to the beginnings of faults of character, nay, fatuously admire and foster them—most fatuously perhaps the worse they are—when they see in the faulty trail a likeness to one of themselves, as if that were then an ornament or a merit which is a pitiful obliquity. Poor dear! it is so like its father or mother, says the admiring parent who, delighted with the self-flattering

likeness, blames not, perhaps applauds, the fault; parental self-love, embracing the child as part of the self, thus pleases and exalts itself in a seeming altruism. The consequence is that, foreseeing not the effect in the cause, but waiting stupidly until they are confronted with the calamitous event, they are dismayed by the irreparable ruin at twenty-five, the beginnings of which they might easily have eradicated at five years of age.

To realize truly what custom can do to make a nature would help to the understanding how much education may do to make or mar a character. What indeed at bottom is education but a systematic formation of custom or habit? Imitation and reflex action make special doing, doing makes habit, and habit becomes second nature; for habit, if we consider it well, does not mean the construction of modes of conduct only, it means also the construction of modes of feeling and thought. The conditions of every life and the mental atmosphere pertaining to them are a continual training and edification of thought and feeling, consciously or unconsciously done. Put a clever surgeon and a clever butcher into one another's place, and the surgeon would be painfully revolted by the butcher's work, while the butcher might faint clean away to see the surgeon operate. Custom or feeling has made indifferent to the one that which horrifies the other. The victorious general, again, who has surveyed calmly the bloody horrors of the battlefield may swoon at the sight of a simple surgical operation or of a *post-mortem* examination. Yet in face of innumerable such instances of human beings thus plastically fashioned to feel and think and do specially and differently, the custom is to speak and act in regard to education as if it did no more than fill the understanding with materials and teach rules of thought to use them. It were well if it always did well so much as that. Too often, far from being the means of instructing and developing the mental faculties by instilling positive ideas, it is no more than a vile art of teaching words.

If a boy for the first ten years of his life were to learn

little more than to feel and think rightly on a few subjects, undergoing steadily the while a well-ordered and well-toned discipline in a good moral atmosphere, but learnt that little well, he would certainly turn out better instructed in the end than if crammed with the superficial smatterings and technical terms of many subjects; for such shallow, fragmentary, and scattered *ingesta* can never yield vital nourishment and become knowledge. To instruct vitally, indeed, one subject of study suited to exact and enforce close attention and clear thinking, which brooked no loose application nor confusion of thought, might serve best as a solid foundation of good training. It being certainly more hurtful to teach a child too little than too much, the right aim should be so to lay down in its mental structure the basic lines of right reasoning and feeling as to fashion the well-tempered instrument of thought which, being the same for all provinces of knowledge, will not fail, once perfectly formed, to be applied easily and quickly to all new material to grasp, sift, and classify it —that is to say, in other words, so to stimulate and train the understanding by a fit instruction as to enable it, when duly applied, at once to apprehend the subject firmly and to reason of it rightly. After all, it is not the multiplicity of subjects in the environment which confounds logical apprehension, incomprehensible though its infinity be, but the want of the well-constructed logical instrument to deal definitely with them within the compass of apprehension. The powerful intellect works well in whatever province of thought it is properly used: in such rarities of nature as Alexander and Cæsar great thoughts go along with great deeds. To stuff the young mind with a mass of matter which it cannot digest and assimilate is not only to produce unease, disorder, and confusion in it, but it is to hinder and hurt, perhaps fatally blast, its tender shoots of development, and thus to render full rational growth impossible afterwards. For to every mind there appertains its fitly rational instruction, which is right proportion and disposition in the building of it, just as its fitly rational construction to every

building of brick or stone—in both cases right rules may or may not be followed in the *edification*. It is a pity perhaps that an over- or ill-loaded mind cannot, like a stomach, eject the mixed crudities of unfit food in the face of the administrator.

As mental natures differ and each nature has its particular facets, it is plainly not ideal wisdom to force the same impressions in the same form and measure on all minds, just as if all had the same qualities and the same capacities to rceeive and assimilate the same contents. Yet as schools are organized on a large scale to teach many pupils they cannot chose but apply a uniform system to all; they cannot study minutely the specialities of individual character and modify the system of culture to suit every variation; for which reason their effect is to mould individuals to a common set pattern, to form a kind of type or species, rather than to develop fully a particular nature. In the long run more is probably gained in the general than is lost in the particular by such enforced uniformity, since the chief aim is to make good citizens of the country; and the effect of a common association, discipline, and tone of thought and feeling is to manufacture the required product; not otherwise than as in the training of a pack of hounds the rule is to mould the individual to suppress its particular tendencies and subordinate them to do its coordinate work in the unison of the hunt. The world likes not to be troubled with many and marked individualities; it prefers to have the sharp angles of individuality worn down in the process of making the man, as can be done at an early stage with comparative ease. But it is none the less certain that individual development is sometimes grievously maimed by the want of discrimination and the rigid application of the same rule to all alike in school-training, and nowise a quite unfounded fear that the fine special properties of a mind are sometimes rudely hurt or crushed thereby. Nor is it certain that the type of citizen thus persistently formed is necessarily the best.

One might conceive an ideal state of things in which by help of a perfect individual psychology the special faults of a particular mind were advisedly corrected by studies and exercises specially adapted to correct them, just as special bodily deformities are sometimes successfully counteracted by specially suited exercises. A volatile and fickle mind could not well make a close study of mathematics without losing some of its levity and gaining application, coherence and gravity; and the early learning by heart of a little simple and touching poetry might perhaps insensibly infuse a tone of tender feeling into the stolid and unemotional mind. Notable in the few minds which undergo real intellectual development is one of two different leading tendencies—either a tendency of sense as well as intellect to react quickly to resemblances, and consequently to make hasty generalizations both of perception and inference, or a tendency to react to differences, and therefore to stay so much in particulars as not to rise to a general conception; both tendencies necessary in proper balance to the best intellectual development, but either prone to go wrong in excess. What could be more beneficial in either case than to note the special fault and to use the special means of exercise by studies adapted to correct it? Other instances might be given of natural differences, intellectual and moral, where a knowledge of individual psychology and rules of instruction based thereon might help to perfect the formation of a mind—that is to say, its in-formation. No doubt the proper aid is sometimes given now in a partial, uncertain, haphazard, quasi-instinctive way; but it cannot be systematic and thorough until psychology ceases to concern itself with words and generalities only, and betakes itself seriously and sincerely to the study of concrete organic beings as products of development by natural laws, to be investigated and expounded scientifically like other natural products.

Here, however, as elsewhere it is well to forego the pleasing temptation to carry the general principle into its extreme effects. If the purpose of nature were to produce and

perfect individual minds—which it manifestly is not—it would doubtless be a good thing sedulously to watch, foster, and develop the faculties of every mind all round, and to temper them to a just balance of functions. But the course of things being what it is, such persistent endeavour would sometimes prove disastrous. Many minds, so treated, would be injured not benefited thereby; they would lose their special bent along which alone they could develop, without gaining any complementary advantage. Forcibly to prevent a wry mind from growing awry might sometimes be to prevent any growth of it. On the whole it might be wiser not to undertake to rectify nature's misfits, but to let the wry mind go its wry way, and to trust to other minds to make the necessary compensations in the universal plan. If the purpose of an increasing reason through the ages is discernible in that unknown plan, as the belief is, its perfect development in time to come may perhaps be expected; but it is no less plain that such progress has been slow, gradual, irregular, by tentative essays through innumerable generations, and that no individual life is long enough to permit the perfecting of reason within its short span—that it is the development of the race not of the individual which nature is aiming at; aiming at, too, in floundering fashion through all the stumbles and blunders and grotesque absurdities of human thought, not otherwise than as in its course of organic development through all the various and often grotesque forms of animal structure.

The generations of mankind from their first beginnings have existed only for the sake of the generations which succeeded them, and the generations which exist now exist only for the generations which will succeed them. Nature is building up an immense complex human edifice of some sort, and generations after generations of mortals are used up in the process, just as generations after generations of leaves are used in building up the edifice of a great tree. All that the individual has to do is to help to fulfil the unknown purpose by fulfilling his nature, to find out what

he is fit to do and to do it, leaving to other minds to do that which his mind is not competent to do.

That so much has been written about education and with so little profit is not strange when we reflect that the writers have not only had no conception that mind is an organization, but have for the most part been devoid of the least knowledge of what a living organism is. They have laid down the rules and undertaken the work of cultivating and directing the development of the highest, most delicate and complex organic structure in the world without caring to know what is the nature, mode of growth, and manner of function of the simplest organism—what in fact organic life means—and above all what is the essential physiological constitution of every human mind.

Education begins so soon and goes on so continuously and imperceptibly from the cradle onwards that people seldom realize how much a child has already learnt before its systematic instruction is begun. Like its simian next-of-kin, the human baby, by virtue of its complex nervous structure, is a signally imitative creature, responding promptly to what it feels and perceives around it; action and reaction go on continually between it and its surroundings, every sensible impression made on it being followed by reflex movement which, fitly formed by degrees in structure, goes to constitute a mental organization. Smiles and frowns and other facial expressions, gestures, words, tones, manners, habits are instinctively copied and contracted by it from the persons who attend on it; they are models which it is continually studying and copying without knowing it, the instruction of them gliding insensibly with stealthy motion into sense and getting incorporated in structure. The mental atmosphere, so to speak, penetrates and permeates subtilely below the level of sense. Thus a silent formation of mental structure goes on, not in gradual addition of material only, but in such ordering or disposition of it as makes mental tone of feeling: a tuning of the parts intoning the whole fitly to fine or unfitly to coarse sentiment, to harmony or dissonance. The

dumb lesson of example is learnt before words are learnt and more intimately than they are ever learnt. To teach the true, the beautiful, and the good by precept, and to expose the child meanwhile to the instruction of the false, the ugly, and the bad by example, is pretty sure to root the bad in its nature and to root it so firmly as to be ineradicable. If the tone of feeling be spoilt before the child is fifteen years old it will not be made good by fifty more years of life; for once a mental structure is set, its tune cannot be altered. Might it not be truly said, then, that the important education is that which is not consciously given?

Neglect of the silent education of the surrounding medium, physical and mental, is nowise the entire evil of the system of rearing children. Not content with leaving to chance the models set around the child to copy while it is learning unconsciously, the custom is to inculcate precepts of conscious instruction which are often either quite unintelligible, mere meaningless words, or, so far as they are intelligible, directly contradict what it observes in daily experience and sometimes contradict one another—precepts which, being the positive negation, involve the paralysis of reason. It is taught on the same day, and almost in the same breath, by the same teacher to prize and develop reason as the invaluable human attribute and to discard it as valueless in the highest concerns of thought and feeling; a disowning procedure which obviously cannot be as beneficial or harmless to its immature mind as to the mature mind which is able to discern in gross fables the symbolizations of subtile spiritual truths, or which has so persistently and successfully suspended reason in regard to certain special reserves of thought as to have produced the natural pathological consequence—namely, a partial paralysis of it. Well might a much enduring teacher protest sometimes that the human material was not delivered to him for instruction in its virgin state, undefaced by inscriptions which it was impossible ever to efface.

Education has of course the twofold function of fitting the learner well for converse with physical and with human

nature; converse not of intellect only, but of feeling also. For assuredly it will make everybody a more complete being not only to know the laws of physical nature, but to attain to that feeling of oneness with nature, that intimate sympathy or communion of being which the poet and artist feel, but the specializations of science tend rather to obscure or destroy. As regards knowledge only, it is plainly impossible to teach the several sciences and unwise to teach chaotic smatterings of them, seeing that full knowledge of one science will occupy the labour of a lifetime. By engrafting the principles of observation and reasoning pertaining to all sciences and involved in one well taught science, and so to fashion truly the fit intellectual instrument and teach the right use of it, that is the education which others should give to the individual; the acquisition of special knowledge for which it has fitly furnished him is the education which he will afterwards give himself and by the elective affinity of his nature, if he has capacity, choose rightly for himself, and if he has not capacity, no education can give him.

The second purpose of education being to fit him to live well with his kind, its character will be determined by the traditions, customs, public opinion, laws, conventions and moral code of his country. The aim and method pursued therefore are so to shape the child's mind from its earliest years as that it shall grow and function in conformity with the surrounding habit of thought, feeling and doing—to form the proper mental structure of the citizen. There being no common and universally approved rule of formation for all mankind, the different social moulds, according as they differ in different peoples and place, turn out different types of mind having different sentiments and modes of thought—a Chinese type in China, a Japanese type in Japan, a French type in France, an English type in England. There are not even universal moral principles, for there is no single immorality, whether theft, unchastity, adultery, murder or any other breach of abstract morality, which has not been, or is not now, sanctioned somewhere; while the good principles

held in common are so fast hooked on to the special theological tenets of the particular people, being declared to depend vitally on them for their sanction and authority—albeit they actually are the natural and necessary conditions of being and growth implicit in any decent social organization—that the education based on them is calculated not to enlighten and strengthen but to darken and weaken reason. Morality cannot be taught as a universal science to be studied by scientific methods, just because it is tied to different theological doctrines, all which are confessedly anti-scientific in method and some of them proudly anti-rational. The natural and necessary product of such teaching is a mental structure which is not wholly rational but inconsistent and unstable, lacking integrity and unity, which cannot choose therefore but be ill-reasoning, inconsistent and insincere in function. What wonder then that men hold different beliefs in different countries respecting the same facts, and that fools are the majority in every country? The just wonder is perhaps that they turn out on the whole as rational as they do, when so much pains is taken to make them structurally irrational.

The truth, of course, is that the necessary vital converse with men and things in the real conduct of life necessitates and enforces a practical instruction of reason; whatever fanciful theories a man may cultivate in his closet, he perforce puts them aside and uses quite other theories in the market. And herein it appears how immensely men are beholden to the capitalized experience which they have inherited from their forefathers, who have transmitted to them a hard-won fund of solid reason in the traditions, customs, laws and codes which they for the most part blindly follow and fortunately need not test. For if the custom or tradition be fossilized the multitude are too dull and slow of understanding to perceive it; rational enough perhaps to reason fairly from the accepted data, not one in ten thousand is rational enough to test the reason of the data and determine whether they are true or false. Therefore it is that, apart from the wisdom which

they have inherited and use unconsciously, the multitude are habitually and placidly irrational. Necessarily and fortunately too: necessarily, because being wholly occupied in the struggle for the bare necessaries of life, like so many living automata, they have neither the leisure nor the opportunity to investigate the foundations of their beliefs; fortunately, seeing that if everybody thought deeply and freely about things the stability of the social system might be much imperilled, unless everybody thought alike and perfectly. Which after all does not seem likely to happen, when one reflects, for example, how the sectarian enmities and jealousies of Christians professing one faith and having one hope of salvation disturb national peace and prevent a rational system of general education.

It is a misfortune when the little knowledge which is a dangerous thing is largely prevalent; for it is seldom that such little knowledge leads to larger knowledge. One may hope to teach understanding to a quite ignorant person, because, his mind not being pre-occupied, its soil is free to receive good seed, and expect to come to an understanding with a well-learned man, because he has a mind so instructed as to know the need and be capable of further comprehension; but the complacent stupidity of the person with a little knowledge and a large self-conceit is impenetrable and impregnable. Of the fool who is conscious of his ignorance there is some hope; there is none whatever of the ignorant Philistine who is imprisoned in his own fatuous conceit of knowledge.

Though one people can never sufficiently marvel at the absurdity of a creed which another people holds sacred, and one person never cease to wonder at the gross irrationality of another's belief, yet there is a general consent in the interest of human dignity to describe man as a rational being—at all events, at his present height of development in civilized countries. In which assumption there seems no small assurance when one considers what sort of literature is most read, what sort of book it is which counts its sale by tens of

thousand of copies, what sort of nourishment it supplies to rational thinking, and what sort of mind it must be which finds suitable nourishment therein. What is to be said too of the bitter divisions and furious disputes about many questions of politics and religion which would vanish were the disputants capable of looking into the things instead of being governed by names? Consider, again, how eagerly the people rush to adopt some foolish fashion of dress or behaviour, be it never so irksome and ridiculous, and how persistently they disquiet and distress, perhaps ruin, themselves out of the silly desire to possess things which do not add one whit to their real comfort, nay, actually cause them much anxiety and discomfort, and that only because other persons have them. And lastly—not to continue an enumeration of follies which would be endless—what of the spectacles of innumerable congregations all over the earth which assemble reverently to listen to and piously profess dogmas of faith that most of them do not understand, and most of those who do understand them only imagine they believe, or believe not at all; dogmas, moreover, which sometimes blankly contradict and excommunicate one another! Calmly and impartially perpending these things, it seems hardly legitimate to style man rational; it would be more correct to describe him as potentially rational; not otherwise than as he is potentially a talking animal, but will not talk unless he diligently learns to make the potential actual. Though it be the wished-for and long-expected work of a perfect system of education to develop this rational potentiality in him to the full, yet a foreboding apprehension, not perhaps wholly fantastic, might suggest a suspicion either that a cooling sun will have ceased to sustain life on earth before that happens, or that, when it happens, mankind may voluntarily put a continent stop to their continuance on earth.

There is reason to think that optimistic enthusiasm expects too much from systems of education. Prone always to believe in magic, the tendency now is to believe in the magic of education to effect wonderful transformations of

natures. Wave but its magic wand, and straightway thorns shall produce grapes and thistles bring forth figs. Yet education can have no such magical effect; it may direct in a measure the paths of development of the forces of a nature, but it will not implant them; and if it try to direct them out of measure it will hurt, not help, individual development.

How much it can do and what it cannot do to change a nature it is not easy to say. On the one hand, it is thought to act only superficially, leaving the character fundamentally unaltered; on the other hand, it is supposed capable of eradicating the worst faults of a character and practically regenerating it. Certainly, the success of the educational methods by which a perfect Jesuit priest is sedulously and steadily fashioned with the definitely pursued aim of producing a particular type of man is remarkably instructive. Here, however, one sees only the outward and visible man as he appears to the world in the steady performance of the fixed functions for which he was patiently and specially fashioned; it would be rash to conclude therefrom the elimination of secretly working envies, jealousies and other passions, and to infer the deep and intimate change of a nature which was born with bad tendencies. Just as a man may perform quietly and regularly the duties of his office in daily business without notable show of an evil disposition, yet have many vices in his private life and be hardly tolerable there, so the monk in his monastery may exhibit all the faults of his real nature within that narrow compass, while performing his regular offices decently, and prove himself a man outwardly disciplined but not inwardly transformed. He has been manufactured into a special-functioning machine which works automatically in its sphere of operation, but his education has not ousted his particular nature, any more than the education of a bear which is taught to dance ousts its nature or makes it anything more than a dancing bear. The secrets of monastery and convent are not revealed publicly, but he

whose opportunities have given him glimpses into the inner life of such institutions knows well that all the ordinary passions of human nature seethe there, and all the more meanly and acridly because of their narrow range.

A surer way than any Jesuitical or other devised system of education to ingraft good feeling as well as right thought into a character may perhaps eventually be found when men learn how to breed it into a nature; when, going farther back than the individual, they discover the causes of congenital goodness of quality in the sincerity, veracity, good feeling, and well-doing of the ancestral stock, and of badness of quality in its falsities, hypocrisies, base feeling, and ill-doing. And herein one may perhaps descry a justification of the hope of those who expect that by transplanting the child of debased parents in a civilized state into a sound moral atmosphere, and subjecting it steadily to a good discipline of thought and conduct, it will grow into a sound citizen, unless hopelessly ill-constituted; for, bad as it may be bred, it must needs still inherit in its nature some social traces of precedent generations of civilized development, which may be supposed to represent a latent moral germ in it capable of being solicited to growth in favourable surroundings.

To question whether education can increase the natural moral and intellectual stature of a person any more than it can increase his bodily stature, is not mere wanton scepticism. Without doubt the circumstances of life in which fortune has placed him may give a good or bad direction of growth to his native qualities, and so make him a good or bad citizen; but it is always quite possible to be a good citizen and yet a bad man, or the better man although the worse citizen. If one who has in him a fair store of the bad qualities of the criminal rises to eminence in his trade or profession, having prudently and sedulously suppressed the gross expressions of them and craftily used their forces in secret and subtle ways to promote his career, he has only refined their distributions, not eradicated them,

from his nature; they may have been the very means by which he was able, in the struggle of competition, to beat another who, having a finer and more tender moral nature, could not stoop to use, and could not have used well had he so stooped, the self-seeking means and base arts which achieved eminence. Before the bar of a final and perfectly just judgment it may be a question whether the criminal or the judge was really the more moral or the more immoral man; wherefore it is sometimes a pretty spectacle of nature's irony when the outraged virtue of the judge rails at the vicious criminal whose sentence he pronounces. Excusably so, too, no doubt from his standpoint as an eminent citizen, seeing that he has used well his talents to promote the weal of his particular social system in promoting his own weal, whereas the criminal has used his talents anti-socially, although his state-ordained education ought to have taught him better.

It is a part of the inveterate optimism of human nature permeated with its present sap of development, and looking forward to an ultimate perfecting of the race, to believe that its eminent social products witness to moral merit, and thereafter, ignoring faults or putting a fair face on misdoings, to use their instances to excite the vanity of men in the interests of its morality. Therefore also it is inclined to overestimate the value of education, its hope and belief being that men, persuaded that they can be, will incite themselves to be, that which it would have them be.

## II

### MENTAL CULTURE

Self-education—The pleasures of sense and intellect—Knowledge and pleasure—Native bias of character—Self-love—The development of knowledge by human converse—Special mental facets and special developments—The tyranny of organization—Mental exercise an invigoration of vitality—The conditions of good mental health—Interactions between body and mind—The lessons of moral degeneracy—The theatre as means of mental culture—A means of amusement—Effects of occupation on individual nature—Freedom from social trammels impossible—If only the individual had two lives!—Danger of leaving off the routine of a lifelong occupation—Increase of human specialisms.

WHEN a person has done with learning directly from others, he has still to teach himself, which he can in no case fail to do well or ill. The misfortune is that he has to commence this self-education just at the critical age when, full of self-confidence yet devoid of experience, he enters actively on the complicated business of life, and is bound therefore to make the mistakes which will be his later instruction. Soon or late, anyhow, he will need to form some definite notion of what he would be, and pursue his aim more or less definitely. At the outset he will do well to discriminate between real aims which are practicable and ideal aims which are impracticable, and to rule his practice accordingly, otherwise he may be a trouble to himself and a trouble to others. Naturally, too, he will be of good comfort if he then go on to persuade himself that he has made the best of himself.

Notwithstanding the perpetual protestations they make that true happiness lies not in the pleasures of sense, men are indefatigable in their persistent efforts to find their pleasures there. It is pretty to say, as Plutarch said, and others have said in like strain, that high birth is an excellent thing, but only the virtue of ancestors; glory admirable

yet inconstant, oft got without deserving and deserved without being got; beauty a precious possession, but soon faded; health more precious still, yet easily lost; vigour enviable, but surely sapped by age; that good qualities of mind alone are superior and imperishable, reason and knowledge being the greatest good which a man can possess and the true solace of life whatever and wherever it may be. All which sounds mighty fine, yet is subject to two considerable reservations: first, that glory, beauty, health, and the like are good things in life while they last, and life itself does not last long; secondly, that the best qualities of mind are developed only by much labour and pains, and are then likewise precarious and perishable. Instead of being the sure consolations of age treading the aching steps of its decline, which they are promised to be, their failures are often the sore affliction of it. At any moment it needs only the smallest conceivable mishap in the very subtile and complex process of nutrition to paralyze the power of mind and plunge its radiant activity into a dismal despair; such an infinitesimal and invisible mischance as a molecule gone astray in metabolism suffices to undermine vigour, virtue, intellect, and to bow the strongest will in abject prostration: the best and the worst in man alike at the mercy of the meanest accident.

That being so really, the ideal maxims of a pedantic philosophy sound somewhat barren, and it is hard to contest, easy to endorse, the lusty recommendation of the wise Preacher who had given his mind to learn understanding, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth," for the Preacher, having tried many ways of pleasures and pursuit, discovered at last, as every one not infatuated with the lust of life must needs do, that knowledge and wisdom equally with pleasure and folly are vanity. It might indeed be a nowise illegitimate interpretation of his words that although knowledge be an excellent thing, a more excellent wisdom would be to do without it.

Good as the counsels of wisdom are, they require always, to be effective, a good recipient capacity. To some natures it is as futile to preach good counsel as it would be to address sound-waves to the eye or light-waves to the ear. As every mortal represents in his structure far-back-reaching lines of ancestors joined in marriage from generation to generation, his mental organization being the incorporation of multitudinous silent memories, his basic modes of feeling and action are the expression and exponent of the consolidated experiences of the stock: he owes an inevitable bias of mental constitution to the mode of his being's formation through the past. No education therefore can make one species of mind produce the same fruit as a different species, no reasoning make that which is a truth to the one a necessary truth to the other. And not only is the particular person thus fundamentally fashioned, his character being ancestral predestination, but his special bias may be determined by the merest chance at a supremely critical moment—that is to say, by some trivial circumstance, or transient passion, or accidental infirmity, or unlucky jar, on the occasion of his own generation. As his life is at the mercy of the molecule gone astray in metabolism so his mind is at the mercy of the least twist or jar given to the minute, fine, plastic substance with its many millions of contained molecules which the microscopic germ is; or if not that, yet to some accidental impression from the thousands of maternal influences, mental and bodily, to which it is constantly subject during gestation. Though his noble head strike the stars in its human pride, his fate lies in the humble atoms. Let him spend his life in studious and strenuous struggle against a native bias of character, in the end he will probably spend it ineffectively and unhappily. Nor will the sober retrospects of age then avail much to console him; on the contrary, they are more likely to afflict him with bitter recollections of what has been and exasperating conceits of what might have been. If a man know well himself and his forefathers, he may perceive plainly perchance

that he owes the dominant strain of his nature to a grandfather whom he never saw—since his bones have long crumbled to dust—yet whose latent spirit in him dictates in the main that which he says and does.

No bias of nature can work well, though it be strong and of good quality, if it altogether lack sense of proportion. As self-love estimates things in reference to self, doing that unconsciously, doing it indeed surely when it is consciously sure that it does not, it must necessarily, when too pronounced, see them out of proportion and out of tune, because it magnifies itself out of proportion and out of tune; for which reason it is then irritated and mortified by any hindrance to itself as if that were a personal offence, is sensible only of the circumstance and of personal calculations respecting it, revolts impetuously against the check to its own expansion. The function of a larger and less self-regarding intellect is to look more widely and deeply, to perceive events in relation to their causes, to apprehend their relations all round to self and other selves, and to set them in due proportion both in sequence and co-existence—to strive in fact to make the logical order of thought and feeling reflect justly the physical order of nature. Therefore it is that a strong self-love unaccompanied by a strong understanding, possessing not possessed by it, is prejudicial; it is a thick veil which hides personal defects and forbids the light of instruction to enter the mind; and it tends to such overgrowth and disproportion of mental structure as sometimes ends in positive insanity, the chief note of which is an overweening estimate of self and an utter lack of sense of proportion. An excellent corrective always is the possession of a sense of humour; for such sense implies not only a duly proportionate view of self in relation to other things and selves, but also in relation to the whole of which it and they are so insignificant a part.

Wholesome communion with the kind in thinking, feeling and doing is almost indispensable to prevent the growth of mental deformity. The communication of knowledge is

indeed, like mercy, twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who receives. So far from there being loss or sacrifice in giving, there is positive gain of mental culture to the giver; a silent clearing, condensation, and definition of it taking place in the process. Knowledge which cannot be reflected or, so to speak, reverberated by another mind, is apt to be cloudy, diffuse, undefined, and pretty sure to be overprized by its owner in proportion to its vagueness and want of simple precision; whereas the more clearly and exactly it is so reflected the more substantial and vital a possession it is. Therefore it is that to teach well is to learn well, instruction of others good self-instruction. Intelligent conversation about a particular subject with another person who has thought about it not only helps the embryonic thought to leap suddenly into full form and light, but to clothe itself definitely in simple and lucid words, not loosely in diffuse and lifeless verbiage. At all events the wise use of sound human intercourse in giving and receiving, in argument and counter argument, in interplay of sympathy and satire, will prevent any one from expounding in diffuse expatiations or elaborate artificialities of language a commonplace platitude of thought and imagining it a novel discovery which he has made.

To say of any one that he is a rough diamond is still to imply that he is a diamond which, if properly cut and polished, will perhaps shine brilliantly, and thus acquire its proper social value. But as the cutting of the diamond must be done with skill and discretion, otherwise an extraordinary stone may be made very ordinary, so the mind should receive its fit culture. For there are all sorts and qualities of mind: minds which would be irretrievably damaged by too much and a too set mode of instruction, which obtain by elective affinity their own best instruction, needing only a wise general guidance and full opportunity; minds too of average capacity which can come to nothing without systematic and sedulous instruction; minds again of such low native capacity as to be incapable of any

real instruction; and, lastly, minds having their special facets which ought to be specially developed by their fit culture, if the best is to be made of them.

As the eye sees only and the ear hears only that which it has the capacity to see or hear, so every mind will see just so much as it has been moulded and fashioned to see, and be blind to that which lies outside its principles of structure and fixed tracks of function: because another mind sees something clearly is no sufficient reason why it should see it; without the fit receptive structure behind sense it is futile to endeavour to impart the special instruction. The fit mental organization will obtain large instruction from a few facts; the unfit will not be informed by any number of facts. In whatsoever conditions of life a person is placed, he moves only in the orbit of his nature, be it large or small, can in no case go out of it: an inexorable tyranny of organization compels an inevitable obedience. He may be so constituted as that he will go on to the end of life believing a lie which is proved to be a lie by the most conclusive arguments in the world, or will himself go on lying his whole life long without motive, without aim, as a mere natural exercise of his mental energy. Withal it is no indwelling abstract self, self-determined and unconditioned in time and place, but the particular mass of flesh, blood, bone, and nerve, product and process of natural law, which settles his special manner of thinking, feeling, and doing. Nor again is it in the main what actually befalls him in the changes and chances of life, but how he feels and thinks of events and circumstances that makes his pleasure and his pain, his profit and his gain. Sinner or saint, rich or poor, sage or silly, high or low in station, he can function only in the special basic modes or forms of his own mind and be happy or wretched, wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious accordingly.

If a person has no relish or a particular study, nor any pleasure in it, he had better not prosecute it as his life-work, for he is not likely to labour in it to good profit. The special taste points to and may wisely direct the special

study; the pleasure of its pursuit and of the instruction which it imparts is then the pleasure of the growth of life in mind, which mental growth is. The fullest development of individuality consistent with human solidarity, that is the right aim to attain, and, attained, the best product. For any one to let his faculties waste unused is not only wilfully or negligently to abridge his capacity of life, but perhaps to forego his best life; a life which, not being at the mercy of opinion and circumstances, might do much to ensure a sober happiness, making him a citizen of every country and companion of the great men of every age, but, being the complete development of his intellectual and moral being, is positively healthful bodily. For such exercises as intelligent observation and study of things, right reflection on them, the formation and practice of definite wills, hopes, joys, affections and the like are as proper exercises of mind as varieties of bodily exercise, and, being so, wholesome not to mind only but to the whole organism whose health and growth they animate, sustain, and promote. He who, confronted by a sudden calamity or the prospect of a life of painful endurance, braces himself resolutely to fight bravely and steadily, not only acquires a certain serenity of mind and pride of fortitude, but positively strengthens his whole organic vitality. Happy is the man, however, on whom nature has bestowed such a well-balanced composition of faculties and equable temper of mind as intrinsically qualify him to perform all its exercises quietly without the wasting wear of anxieties, worries, regrets, apprehensions; for his mind is then like a machine which wastes no force in working.

As the simple conditions of good bodily health are proper exercise, plain food, pure air, so the conditions of good mental health are regular exercise, right mental nourishment, and a sound moral atmosphere. And the conditions of a strong, well-composed and healthy mind is a strong, well-organized and healthy body adapted and apt to seek the most pleasure with the least pain. Was there ever more gratuitous folly in the world than the perverse ingenuity of the ascetic

fanatic who wilfully macerated his body and mutilated his mind on set purpose to destroy in himself everything which naturally gave him pleasure and to obtain the most pain he could? This he did in order to sublime a lofty strain of spiritual feeling and to let into himself rays of transcendental vision, out of the fatuous conceit of an irreconcilable enmity between body and mind; therein acting not unlike a foolish boy might act who, when his kite was flying aloft, should cut the string which seemed to hold it back, in order that it might soar still higher. What he actually achieved was a pernicious weakening of bodily health and therewith a psycholepsy or mental convulsion, the delirious delight of which he joyed in as an ecstatic spiritual rapture; a semi-morbid state neither healthy nor therefore truly holy. The ascetic who, like St. Jerome, fled to the desert to mortify himself there was tormented with dreams and visions of lubricity which would never have tormented any sane citizen going about his active business and spending his energies healthily in the work of their natural functions. To understand and rightly interpret such aberrant beings a knowledge of physiology and mental pathology is indispensable; all discussions about their spiritualisms, without such knowledge, are little better than empty and fanciful disquisitions in the air, shows without substance.

A thoroughly sound mind being the supreme harmony of all the functions of a thoroughly well-constituted and sound body, a knowledge of the physiology of the bodily organism is an obvious necessity to the serious student of psychology; for it is not possible to him, lacking that, to realize how many, subtile, rapid and incessant are the minute activities of its multitudinous incorporate organisms, and how natural constant and active the essential interactions between its different parts and between body and mind. Not such general knowledge only, that is to say, as that grief depresses and joy quickens the circulation of the blood, that bad passion disorders and good humour aids digestion, that fear quenches and rage fires the bodily energies, and the converse

effects of bodily states on the elevation and depression of the animal spirits—facts which have been familiar ever since observation began—but the exactest conceptions possible of the infinitely subtile and complex physio-chemical processes of tissue-building and tissue-waste whereby all the processes of nutrition, secretion and other functional activities are a continuous flux of vitalization and growth on the one hand and of devitalization and disintegration on the other hand; the products of devitalization and disintegration here being perhaps the materials of vitalization and growth elsewhere, not otherwise than as the bad passions of individuals minister to social growth. The thyroid gland, having no external secretion, was long thought to be functionless; it is only lately that its destruction has been shown to produce a steady cretinous degeneration of body and mind; and it always has been known, without the patent lesson of it being learnt, that the removal of other special organs was in the result a definite mutilation of mind as well as body. Instead of wondering then that the incalculable combinations and decompositions of the infinitesimal processes of bodily functions affect the mind and are in turn affected by it, the real wonder would be if the interaction was not constant and essential.

Another wonder might fairly be whether elaborate rules of mental culture are ever of much use, or at all events ever nearly so useful as they are thought to be. For the most part they are the explicit need of him who has them not implicit in his nature. Well indeed would it be if the rules were always agreed and never the means of mental deformity. More effective lessons might perhaps be learnt and taught through a steady and systematic study of the several modes and courses of mental degeneration; for by showing plainly the wrong roads to be avoided on pain of inevitable calamity the right roads might then be taken from a natural selfishness. That would be a lesson which could not well remain abstract, it would have a vital hold on conduct. That vice is wicked and virtue righteous is no doubt an excellent

general maxim to inculcate right doing, but so general as for the most part to touch nobody very sensibly and thus become a vital motive of conduct. What is wanted is not only a plain demonstration of the growth and degenerative course of a particular vice, fault, or bad passion in its working on individual character and on the social medium, but also an exposition of the mode of vitiation of a family stock whereby the vice or fault has been or may be introduced into it, and the mode of purification by which it can be expelled from it. For that purpose it would not be necessary to go to the gaol, or the lunatic asylum, or the workhouse only for examples; the lives of eminent persons, sincerely examined and honestly expounded, might sometimes supply pregnant and instructive material. What is still wanted indeed is that which Bacon noted and frequently insisted on as a lamentable deficiency in his day—namely, an *individual psychology*.

Perhaps the theatre might be made a more valuable means of such instruction than it is if it were to fulfil its ideal function of instructing by pleasing and pleasing by instructing, as all good art should do, instead of for the most part pandering to what is bad, debasing in order to please and pleasing by debasing, as bad art does. Hatred of wrong, disgust of vice, sympathy with virtue, pity for suffering, approbation of good deeds, admiration of heroism in ordinary life, and like noble sentiments are worthy feelings to be excited by dramatic presentation of the fit spectacles. But are such feelings really roused nowadays or did they ever last after the play was over? Does any one come away from a play truly edified? Was ever a Tartuffe made one whit different by seeing the part of Tartuffe admirably played? To make faults and vices odious by presenting vivid examples of them in ridiculous light and situation would be an excellent instruction if people were really affected morally by the picture, seriously edified by the moral, not merely amused by the spectacle. Certainly as there is nothing that a man dislikes more than to be made con-

temptibly ridiculous—he had rather perhaps cut a heroic figure in being hanged than a ridiculous figure in being canonized—so there is nothing he enjoys more than to see some one else made ridiculous on the stage; he fails not then to apply the lesson of instruction to his neighbour and is pleased to laugh at another's expense. Had Tartuffe been among the audience when Tartuffe was well played on the stage he would probably have been the most pleased person there; and were an accomplished Pharisee so minded he might doubtless preach the best sermon against hypocrisy.

The truth of course is that people go to the theatre to be amused, and that its chief purpose is to interest and amuse them. The play is a performance in which the actors have their several entrances and exits, each playing his part well or ill; and when it is over the spectator leaves as unconcerned and indifferent as if he had attended at a puppet-show when, the play over, the puppets are packed away in their box. Meanwhile he has been more innocently employed in the life-show than if he had been engaged in idle gossip and slander, or in ruining his health in debauchery. As for the meretricious arts, elaborate dresses, splendid upholstery, gorgeous scenery, ear-splitting declamation, passion torn to rags, writhing gestures, uncouth contortions and grimaces by which the popular actor attracts his audience to the ignoble representation of a noble drama, they have their fit reward in the applause of those whom they fitly please.

Few lives really lend themselves to a full mental culture. Every profession, trade, or special appointment, being a sort of limitation, tends in a measure to cramp or deform the particular mind; for it necessitates a definite range and special class of ideas and adjustments, large or small, which, becoming fixed and rigid, hinders a free and whole intellectual expansion and development. Then, indeed, a full mental freedom and fine culture are hardly more possible than a full freedom and fine culture of conduct. The man may be an excellent social machine or organ to perform a special function, but he is a specialization of humanity, not a whole

and complete human being. The more devoted he is to his work and the more wholly he is absorbed in it the less is he worth outside it. The close-clipped beech or thorn helps to make an excellent hedge, but it is then a poor specimen of what a free-growing beech or thorn can be. However, as the farmer wants close-clipped bushes, not full-grown trees, for his hedges, so society wants the artificial not the natural man.

To be ideally free it would be necessary for a man to be free to think and speak as he can about every subject, and to live as he likes in the world without conciliating the good-will or averting the ill-will of others whose opinions and acts he could then regard or disregard with indifference. But that is a sort of Olympian aloofness which it is not given to mortal to attain to on earth, and it is no small peril to aspire after. The sober fact is that no one can think truly and fruitfully about men and things unless he has imbibed their modes of feeling and doing by the actual experience of working among them in the struggle of life; so only can he know them really and speak real truth of them. If his feelings have not been thus vitally moved and his practical understanding developed, his expatiations will have little more body in them than the expatiations of a eunuch concerning lechery. The chastity of the monastery and the convent may sometimes be of superfine quality, but it is a fair question whether it is ever worth the pains taken to preserve it.

Could a man live a life of successful work among men and things in the world, and at the end of it begin a new life of detachment and contemplation in the same world, using therein all the stored capital of his former experience, he might be fit for the freedom of a full development as an ideal philosopher, being then in excellent case to profit by his past life. But nature has willed otherwise; it has not risked the disillusionment and exposure which the formation of such an instrument of perfect reason might be, for it plainly would not go well with mankind were reason always to dominate feeling; the lust of knowing might end by killing the lust of living.

A reflecting person, considering that he has not two lives to live and the wearisome monotony of doing the same thing over and over again his whole life long, might conclude to give up an uncongenial employment and to live himself out naturally and freely. Why pass the whole of his one life in an irksome bondage? Happily or unhappily for him it is usually his necessity not his will which constrains consent; he has given hostages to society in the shapes of wife and children which render it impossible for him to throw off the yoke of his daily routine of labour. Herein appears a good reason of the observation made by Bacon—namely, that the great works of the world have been mostly done by childless or unmarried men. The function of those who marry and beget children is to continue the kind who shall do the world's ordinary work, among whom from time to time may haply be bred one whose only posterity will be the extra-ordinary work which he does.

Another consideration to be gravely weighed by one who, when he can afford to be himself, is minded to relinquish an uncongenial employment which has become the habit of his life, is whether he is now any longer a self capable of other employment; whether, in fact, he has not grown to such a fixed mechanism of feeling, thinking and doing, such a settled form or deformity of mental structure, that he cannot function out of his fashion, cannot be another self. His only pleasure then may be to perform his only function, and if he rashly leave that off he runs the risk of life-weariness and melancholy madness. Labour being the surest and safest means of occupying his mind and diverting his thoughts from the vanity of things, which advancing age fails not to make more plain day after day, ought not then to be lightly relinquished. So it comes to pass that the poor unit is constrained, despite himself, to go on working in his wonted way until he collapses at his desk or drops down in his counting-house; he is used to the last by his social community and his end so fulfilled.

Viewing matters soberly and sincerely in reason's light,

it is a fair question whether it would be well for all persons to have a complete mental culture, seeing that it might unfit them for the several specialized functions which they are required to perform in the economy of the human hive. For the present, at all events, there must be scavengers, button-makers, coal-miners, weavers, clerks, and other human specializations, multiplying and becoming more minute as society grows more special and complex; and so keen is the increasing competition in an increasing population that it tends more and more to exact the whole service of the individual in his special department of work. What will the end be? The period of highest intellectual ability known in the history of the race was notably in ancient Greece, where the mean and rough work of life was done by slaves whose duties did not include mental culture; that was the province and privilege of the superior class who, freed from low material cares, had nothing else to do but promote their own mental development.

## III

### CHARACTER

Character the basis of conduct—Conscious suppression of character futile—Diversities of racial character—Constitutional vitality and character—Moral and vital energy—The revelation of character—Subconscious mental currents—Character and circumstances—Formation of character by action—Intellect and moral feeling dissociated—Vices proceeding from virtues—The prospects of human society—How to know self.

As good health is true wealth of body and mind, and no painful labour of philosophy can give the happiness which it gives easily, so a sound, well-built and well-tempered character is the foundation of a good conduct of life: there is no surer basis of well-being and well-doing. A steadfast substratum beneath consciousness, constant in silent working, evincing, though not fully expressing, itself in imagina-

tion, thought, will and conduct, the strong character is always in silent reserve beneath overt display, felt instinctively by others behind any mode of conscious utterance which the individual shows or they perceive. Not an act probably but reveals character had we but eyes to read it; yea, a single act will sometimes do that as surely as the history of a life would do, if only the intelligent eye be there to interpret it. The revealing light may not come from any extraordinary circumstance; for it is not in great things only when he is roused to exceptional efforts that its qualities are shown, but in the petty things of daily life, albeit a great crisis of danger or adversity, pressing on the deep springs of a nature, tests well its foundations, whether they be weak or strong, regular or irregular, unstable or steadfast, and perchance elicits latent and unsuspected force. By stringing the bow tight its strength is discovered, the force of reaction tried and measured by action.

Persistent and steady endeavours to hide or change character by habitually checking or suppressing its manifestations may succeed in a measure or for a while, but the constrained force is pretty sure to burst the bounds at some moment and at once to undo all that solicitous pains have patiently done to mask it. Though haste be then made to reduce it to settled rules of expression, yet it is sure, if it have force in it, to break out again at some time or other. Confucius spoke truly when he said, "Tell me your past and I will tell you your future;" for the foundation of character changes not, and therefore a right induction from the past is the best prediction of the future.

The fundamental distinction of characters being manifestly as true of races as of individuals, it is a pity that the fact is not more frankly acknowledged and the proper inferences drawn from it. Diversities of racial characters cannot be welded in the same educational mould; as they have their distinctive modes of feeling and thinking they must have their suitable educations. It is notorious that they differ so much in different peoples as almost to constitute a difference

of mental kind, or at all events such a difference of degree as disqualifies them for interbreeding at all, or if they interbreed from generating good offspring. Nor is the barrenness or the degenerate product of such unions because of the incompatibility of the germs at all wonderful seeing how great is the mental antipathy. People of one type of mind notoriously dislike the type of another people; the unlikeness is repugnant to them and they can scarce abide it; at best they look down on it as something inferior, and at worst deem it sufficient provocation for them to fly at one another's throats on the least occasion of quarrel. So it comes to pass that instead of mankind marching peacefully onwards towards unity by conciliation of differences, they have hitherto progressed thitherwards by destructive warfare in which the strong have subjugated or extirpated the weak. Were the prediction of the human future to be based entirely on induction from the human past, the outlook would not be bright. But it is not so based exclusively; for time and the principle of evolution bring into play factors for the operation of which the brevity of individual and even national life afford but little scope.

Diderot made it a reproach to physicians of his day that they paid no attention to moral sentiments in their dealings with sick persons. He might, were he living now, still reproach them that they pay little or no attention to the mental signification of bodily movements and the mental symptoms of bodily diseases. They perceive well enough that when a man is very ill he loses his natural gait, carriage, gestures, and the firm forms of his bodily acts, but they do not take exact notice how in regressive course he loses traits of character—his gait and carriage of mind, so to speak—and recovers them progressively as he recovers. In all illness the factor which makes most for recovery is character; abject prostration of mind denotes prostration of vital force; the sick man who is sure he will not die and is resolutely minded to get well often recovers, because the confidence and determination are the exponent of his character—that is to

say, not the cause but the concomitant effect of a strong constitutional vitality. Vitality weak nigh unto extinction cannot feel the desire and force necessary to inspire the belief or hope of recovery; imagination cannot therefore figure it. Herein would be nothing to wonder at were it not for the stubborn habit of violently divorcing mental character from bodily nature and regarding them as belonging to separate regions of being. Every mood is at bottom the mental translation of a bodily state as every mind is the translation of a body: a man is fervently in love because he silently lusts; if he has no lust, his love is only a platonic semblance or an imaginative diversion.

When any one is said to fail in life because his character is indolent, apathetic, wanting in moral energy and will, the failure is ascribed to moral causes and blame imputed to him, whereas the truth may be that his constitution lacks the requisite vital energy which he cannot infuse into himself by merely wishing it. How can he will by wishing to will, if he cannot vitally wish? If a weak heart and languid circulation send not a strong enough blood-stream to the brain to maintain and sustain its energy, the moralist will in vain preach steady energy to it; for it is then the heart not the head which ought to be taxed with indolence and admonished with vigour. Such brain is perhaps capable only of being temporarily stimulated to an average level of vitality of thought and feeling when it is specially excited by good wine or good news, which is a nowise infrequent reason for an unwise recourse to some alcoholic stimulant; unwise because the immediate and helpful effect is transient, and the dose of stimulant must be repeated and increased, the consequence being exhaustion and lassitude. Natures are many and diversely constituted: some in which no desire they are capable of feeling is strong enough to inspire steadfast resolution and action; some again which, habitually indolent and inert, can be kindled by temporary enthusiasm or passion to occasional great efforts by which, when repeated from time to time, they keep themselves fairly forwards in

the race; and others so happily constituted as to have the steady supply of a good stream of vital energy whereby, without anxious strain, they can maintain a good and even speed and enjoy it. The moral is the natural exponent of the physical energy acting through its appropriate organic mechanism.

It is not by its thoughts but by its feelings or feeling-infused thoughts and by its imagination, which denote the fated inclinations of a nature, that a character is truly revealed. In the order of mental development, whether in the race or in the individual, feeling is prior to and deeper than reflection; its expressions in cries, exclamations, gestures go before words. Therefore when an event strikes the mind suddenly and affects it deeply, first impulses are the most natural and genuine, second thoughts more artificial and prudent. Still it is not by observing and divining a person's thoughts and feelings, so far as they can be discerned and judged, still less by hearing what he says they are, but by observing and pondering what he does that the truest revelation of a character is obtained; for the history of a life is the infallible demonstration of a character, and this is nowise always in accord with what the possessor of it declares or even believes it to be. He may be deceived himself in what he thinks, shows, and says; the course of nature's life of which his life is a nature-made part can nowise deceive.

The individual being a nature-made instrument or organ, he no more makes himself essentially than the special instrument makes itself, at best only modifies himself through the directions given to his development; the native forces of character work deeply, silently, constantly as undercurrents below the level of consciousness. Of high imagination itself, which is rooted in the depths of character, being the flower of mental growth, it is plainly true that it has no more knowledge or control of the mode of formation of its products, of the processes of their gestation, and of their conscious birth in due season than, in bodily reproduction of

the kind, the female has of the conception of the embryo, of its manner of growth in the womb, and of its maturity at the due time of birth. He who has not imagination ingraft in his nature can never acquire it deliberately by any labour of thought though he take all the pains in the world; it is the one faculty which never can be acquired and is therefore most admired. Now a fine and noble imagination is not only the supreme blossom of mind, it is the highest function of nature working through man in its process of humanization; it differs not in degree only but even in kind from the low-working astute imagination that never rises above the deliberate calculations of self-interest in the affairs of daily life, yet is very serviceable to its possessor there; it is the spontaneous grace or gift of a nature, made for the man not by him, a gift from the gods—"the spirit of the holy gods" in him, so to speak,—coming when it listeth and knowing not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.

Though the character be made essentially for the individual not by him, yet as each character has several facets, and as the circumstances of life, being infinitely various, may be fitted to solicit and elicit the special development of one or other of them or of a special combination of them, a great deal can be done by training and culture to direct, guide, and promote its lines of growth: if its vital nature cannot be suppressed or radically changed, its mode of expansion may be partially determined by the conditions in which it has to live and thrive, for grow it will into good or bad structure. Though well-based itself, unpropitious circumstances may still hinder it from growing into a well-built structure; though ill-based, propitious circumstances may help to build up a fair, if not always very stable, structure. That is a fact which gives scope and hope to educational efforts. But a fact which ought to be taken account of also in any scheme of education is that there are some characters of such narrow and intense bias that they cannot adjust themselves anywise to circumstances

repugnant to them, they must meet with fitting circumstances or have circumstances fitted to them, if they are to thrive at all; so strong being their natural bent or twist that to try to straighten them forcibly would be to break them, and to oppose their drift wholly would be to prevent any growth and use of them.

Another fact to be borne in mind is that the formation of a character, so far as it can be done effectively, cannot be done in seclusion and by reflection; it must be done by action among men in affairs, by doing not by thinking only. The politician who has made a modest fortune in some kind of business or profession, or been otherwise diligently trained in real affairs, is pretty sure to show a practical sagacity and a solidity of judgment which the professor who has perorated to a class of students, or the literary man who has lived by his pen, will be destitute of. The one will have a real apprehension of things gained by observation and experience, while the other will deal abstractly with notions; for it is no more possible to acquire a practical sense and judgment of things by mere thinking than to cure disease by merely reading about it, or to learn to swim without going into the water. Perhaps there is no more mischievously impractical being in the world than the pedant who believes himself practical. Even the average-minded member of a privileged class which has enjoyed the function of ruling shows an hereditary sense of proportion, a balance of judgment, a steadiness and quiet stoicism of feeling—a fundamental rationality, that is—which are hopelessly wanting in the conduct of the impatient theorist and doctrinaire. To speculate and theorize about men and things without having lived and worked among them in active converse and conflict, is much like theorizing about physical phenomena without using observation and experiment in scientific research; it is to do without the observations and experiments indispensable to acquire, test and verify real knowledge and to govern sensible practice.

Though intellect and conscience are great qualities,

yet they fail many times to go together in the same character; and it is pretty certain that, as the world has gone and still goes, more good has been done sometimes by great intellect with little conscience than would ever have been done in the circumstances by much conscience with small intellect. Especially is this true of work done in complex co-operation by parties of men, where the tender scruples of a cloistered virtue must needs incapacitate its possessor for fruitful practical work. The over-sensitive theorist who cries out against the iniquity of measures which are ideally reprehensible would, were he listened to, wreck a social system, pleased probably the while to gratify, under the guise of superfine virtue, the keen sensitiveness of the disproportionate self-esteem which is the natural morbid product of a life chiefly spent in seclusion and meditation. For the life of him he cannot stretch his view to see in the succession of things how good develops out of evil and evil develops out of good, and would wreck the good to prevent the evil. What right has he to claim that his tender moral sense is superior to the practical sense of the strong man who, seeing things as they are in themselves and seeing them as a whole, is able to act with, and on, men usefully? Has the world gone wrong always hitherto because at every great juncture in its history it must certainly have gone differently had he or his like been there to determine its course?

Every character has its inborn and its contracted vices, the latter naturally thriving best when grafted on the congenial stock of the former. The paradoxical thing is that acquired vices sometimes proceed logically from inborn virtues. An amiable nature pleased always to please cannot, in face of the actual experiences of life, choose but lose thorough veracity and become more or less insincere; an open, frank, and generous nature is driven by the pains of experience to become reserved, suspicious, even cynical perhaps, for cynicism may be the shield and mask of sensibility. As the social body pitilessly subordinates the

individual member to its larger interests, aiming to produce a perfect citizen, not an ideal moral man, it recognizes that perfect sincerity between man and man would be incompatible with its holding together in organic union; therefore it enjoins as rules of polite behaviour and tokens of good breeding conditions of being which necessitate a mental mutilation or deformation of the individual inconsistent with entire sincerity of speech and conduct. So it comes to pass at last that an old and complex society is prone to become so artificial and conventional a structure, and so much out of touch with basic realities, as gradually to disintegrate. Always too, then, the characters of its members answer to its character; the more artificial and frail it is, the more weak and artificial they are. It is by no means possible to have a majority, not even an adequate leaven, of noble characters in a rotten social structure; the sane minority can then do no more than cry out unheeded, Cassandra-like, powerless against the overwhelming trend of things. Meanwhile, though societies do not last or propagate themselves continually, it is evident that the natural underlying the social man, such as he was before the acquisitions of culture and shows himself to be now when stript of them, does continue very much what he was in the beginning and perhaps ever shall be.

Socrates, adopting the Delphic maxim, enjoined on man as the aim of wisdom and moral excellence, "Know thyself." But how? No man will do that by looking into himself, even if he live in a closet and occupy his life in a continual self-examination; he would be likely in that case to be the person in all the world most ignorant of himself. Fruitful reflection needs ample and proper food for reflection, for reflection cannot feed on itself; and that food is to be obtained only through a good knowledge of the not-self, human and physical. He must know himself in nature—know something of the constitution of the physical world and of the physical constitution of his own being, else his self-knowledge will leave a large part of self unknown.

He should know also other selves in order to know himself, and know them as he can only adequately know them by work among them, for he will see reflected in them what he cannot see in himself by introspection. Social life is, as it were, life-reflection of self in others and of others in self; in which interaction lies perhaps the very origin and principle of conscious life, conscious and self-conscious. As the mental constitution of a present self contains quintessentially many selves which have been (many millions, perhaps, if we count five hundred years back), this capacity of knowing others and himself—that is, of his reflecting them and being reflected by them—will depend on the quality and quantity of these quintessences and their reciprocal action. Evidently, then, to know self by prying into self will not carry any one very far in self-knowledge; a more modest and hopeful way of discerning the main lines of his character will be by observation of, and reflection on, his doings in nature—what they have been and by what natural laws they became what they were.

# CHAPTER X

## FRIENDSHIP—LOVE—DESIRE—GRIEF—JOY

### I

#### FRIENDSHIP

The value of friendship—Friendship a limitation—The good uses of a friend—Unions of cliques, clubs, associations—Material and spiritual views of friendship—The ruptures of friends—Common interests in friendship—Perfect friendship an ideal.

MAN being a social unit living in, by, and through a social medium cannot stand alone; having need of others, he joins with them in feeling and doing. It is his weakness when he thinks to be self-sufficing and his strength when he profits by union which make him crave for and enjoy friendship. Thence the eloquent praises in which its joys have time out of mind been celebrated: his friend one to whom, as to a second self, he confides grief and so halves its weight, communicates joy and so doubles its delight, from whom in weakness he obtains support, in strength sympathy, who praises and pushes him when he cannot decently praise and push himself, rejoices with him in prosperity, condoles with him in adversity, inspires hope and energy into despondence, is the timely admonitor to temper with prudence the ardour of elation. To have such a friend is, as it were, to double self for action and to double its pleasure in action. How help being prejudiced in favour of one who is so helpful?

That being so, friendship must be owned to be a proof of self-insufficiency and in itself a limitation. Being, too, a sort of self-flattery of a double self, it tends necessarily in proportion to its strength to blind a man to the faults of a friend and to the merits of other perhaps really more worthy persons who are not his friends. If friendship halve a sorrow, it will also halve a fault. The biographer of a dear friend, emulating the arch-flatterer self, is prone to write as elaborate a tissue of fiction as the autobiographer commonly does. Renan professed that he was sometimes tempted to say to himself that friendship was a theft done to society and that it would disappear in a higher human world; but he might have consoled himself for the sin of it by reflecting that any one who tried to take a wide human embrace would embrace nothing but a sentimental shadow, and that the friend of all mankind would have no friend but himself. Limitation is necessary to real friendship as to real love; the man of many wives must needs spread out his love very thin. If I halve my grief or double my joy by loving a friend who is pleased to reflect what pleases me and is pained by what pains me, I do not by loving ten friends increase my joy tenfold in making them sharers of it, nor lessen my grief in proportion as to be well nigh rid of it; nor could I in the end afford a friendship which obliged me to take on myself a tenfold burden of grief or a tenfold joy.

In his "Essay on Friendship" Bacon enumerates and lays stress on the good uses of a friend, who may promote a man's rise in the world by saying or doing for him many things which he cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do for himself; allegations of merit and supplications for advancement being "things that are graceful in a friend's mouth which are blushing in a man's own." Certainly if self-interest be not the foundation of friendship, it is wise self-interest to make a friend and not to make an enemy. "If he have not a friend he may quit the stage," Bacon says; to which one may add, that if he have an enemy he will

need, in order to quit himself well on the stage, constantly to look behind to guard his rear as well as to look before to see his way.

As the union of two friends is a junction of forces to promote a single interest, so the larger union of several friends into cliques, clubs, sects, societies, associations and the like is a still more powerful means to further individual interests. The self-interest of the society is engaged to push the interests of its members, every one profiting by the common exertions and in turn exerting himself to help every other member, whose merits he is bound to esteem above those of an outsider. Thereby of necessity judgment is vitiated and partizanship engaged to do injustice. All the more so when, as fails not frequently to happen in such a communion, the moral atmosphere becomes vitiated by the conditions and necessities of the work—the insincerities that are deceptions, the agreements that are intrigues, the co-operations that are conspiracies. In such unions the mutual love which in some measure binds two friends independently of mere self-interest vanishes, whereas the interested motives, which are almost dormant between two real friends, luxuriate and predominate. The result is that a spirit of the society is engendered, a spirit of the hive so to speak, which is a vitiated emanation of the consolidated interests, and perhaps would not commend itself to the frank moral sense of any individual member. Congregations of beings breed through contagion of sympathy an overpowering motive of feeling and conduct which not a single individual member would conceive or honestly approve separately. If all friendship, then, despite its blessings and advantages, is still infected with a radical bane, the strong and sincere man might nurse a casual wish to be superior to it and to stand alone. But if he would do that he must be very strong, strong enough to bear the loss he must necessarily suffer by doing without sympathy of feeling, contributory thought in thinking, and co-operation in doing.

Bacon's opinions about friendship have been criticized as those of a shrewd man of the world who was concerned only to point out the good uses of it in furtherance of worldly interests, without any appreciation of its nobler spiritual aspect. No doubt that is the main purport of his essay, the truth of which, however, is not vitiated thereby; for if psychological analysis go deep enough to the root of things, it fails not to show that social feeling, however divine it might be, is based largely on thought which is not divine, and cannot be clean divided from it. Many a feeling which seems to be instinctive liking or repugnance is really the effluence and expression of long-forgotten thoughts which, having undergone solution of their forms, have been precipitated and consolidated into unconscious mental structure.

If friendship have its primal root in self-interest, there is nothing to wonder at in the bitter and pessimistic sayings concerning its hollowness when adversity strains or breaks it; sayings which, after all is said, are no fewer in number nor weaker in authority than the praises of its felicity. Men have always extolled its grandeur and always bewailed its frailty. When half the double self is hurt and no longer a help but a hindrance, the other half is often selfish enough, by instinct of self-preservation, to shrink or get away from it. Should the halves then unhappily become enemies, pursuing contrary instead of common interests, then the cynical maxim to treat a friend always as though he may some day be an enemy is abundantly justified. A cynicism revolting to fine sentiment, no doubt; still not to be dismissed as wholly false by those who calmly reflect that the most cynical sayings are not mere inventions of caustic wit, but inductions based on practical experience of concrete human nature.

The friendship of two women, it has been cynically said, is but a plot against a third woman, the result being that when she disappears from the scene they fall out. That is an extravagant statement, yet it is not altogether baseless, seeing that the friendship of two persons is sometimes

founded not so much on mutual esteem as on dislike or hatred of a common rival or enemy. A fellow-feeling of hostility helps to make men wondrous kind. It would be difficult for friendship to subsist between two persons who had no common interest, or at all events whose interests constantly clashed. The ruptures of friends, no less infrequent than their knittings, are notoriously caused by hurts which the one does, or is thought to do, to the self-love or self-interest of the other. Everybody is prone to be a greater lover of himself than of anybody else, and self-love wants a friend to please and not to hurt it.

The conclusion of the matter then seems to be that perfect friendship is an ideal which it is good to believe in and aim at, but not good to think realizable in practice, and that when two persons are fast friends neither loves the real but the ideal other, which love the shock of reality is liable at any moment to shatter. It is not possible for anybody to be perfectly satisfied with any other body, for the best friend can never be quite perfect; and as nobody ought to be perfectly satisfied with himself, so he has not the right to require anybody else to be perfectly satisfied with him.

## II

### LOVE

Its strength and subtilty—Infra-sensible undulations of energy—Love an overwhelming physical attraction—The harmony of reciprocal love—Beauty and ugliness—Love rooted in the productive energy of nature—Love-marriages and marriages of interest—The self-sacrifice and selfishness of lovers—The transcendental rapture of love—A delirious transport of egoism—Its eternal illusion.

If it be good to fall in love, it might oftentimes be still better not. But there is practically no choice, because nature has not left it in man's power to abstain. The one passion concerning which he has not become wiser through the ages of his long travail on earth is the love-passion. It triumphs

over other passions, is stronger than ambition, stronger than hatred, stronger than the fear of death, counts for more than all other pleasures. It cannot be concealed where it exists, cannot be feigned where it is not, speaks most subtily by mute eloquence of attitude, gesture, eye, which is more penetrating and appealing than any spoken language. Let two persons meet in a room between whom love is just springing up or just beginning to wane, and the embarrassing tale is told instantly by a subtile and sure impression which goes before words and is more sincere than words. One might even ask one's self whether inter-communication is not by more rapid and subtile undulations of the cosmic ether than the senses can take account of; the mood of mind, whether accordant or ever so little discordant, exciting an exquisitely fine thrill in the permeating ether of the one brain which is flashed instantly to the other and received by it.

If a strong man may have a peculiar idiosyncrasy whereby he turns pale, shudders, and faints because of the unsuspected presence of a cat in the room, when he sees it not, nor hears it, nor touches it, nor, so far as he knows, smells it, there is nothing to wonder at in the instant transmission of a thrill of love or anger by undulations imperceptible by sense. To conceive the *minimum perceptibile* to be the limit of inter-active influence between matter and matter is a most rash and absurd conceit.[1] As there are invisible rays of light which penetrate the human body and inaudible vibrations of sound which nevertheless strike on it, and unperceived smells which affect it, and possible influences from the unknown which act secretly on it, so there is a surrounding mental atmosphere which is the effluence of the mode of thought and feeling of the people of the country, time and place to

[1] After all, the several special senses, albeit excellent for their purposes, are only rather coarse means of dealing with coarse practical surroundings, being insensible to the intimate subtilties of things, Although by their special developments his special senses have raised man to his pre-eminence, it is a question whether through their specializations he has not lost more general and subtile susceptibilities which exist in some of the lower animals.

whom the individual belongs. Is there not something present in the mental atmosphere of a great city which is absent in that of a quiet village? The patient, silent brooding of superior thought which issues eventually in a great discovery or invention, or other mental creation, signifies perhaps continual emanations of outgoing undulations seeking fit recipients in objects and their relations and a continual re-inspiration by assimilation of the ingoing impressions from them, whereby the thought is gradually matured and in due time brought forth. For thought, like life, is product of the subtile interrelation, and is unconscious in its actual travail of production, conscious only when it is produced. Thinking on matters after this fashion, it is not difficult to conceive that intimate and silent relations subsist sub-consciously between the individual and his social medium.

At bottom love is a most intimate physical attraction between two persons translating itself into concordant thrills of feeling, whereby they strain to merge into one another's being and to give origin to a new being. Therefore it is sometimes a sudden stroke and surprise, independent of observation and reflection, love at first sight, an overwhelming elective affinity, just the capture of an enrapture, a fascination, ecstasy or enchantment, a possession or obsession—anything you will, which is not deliberate and voluntary, but impulsive and quasi-convulsive. The last thing necessary for a man to know in order to fall in love with her is a woman's qualities; for the passion fails not completely and absurdly to transform her into something rare and delectable, endowing her with all the qualities it desires and seeing no quality which it desires not to see. Cupid being a blind infant, behaves like a blind and unreasoning infant. What can be more unworthy of a rational being endowed with the power of looking before and after than to be thrilled to the inmost and instantly transported out of himself by the glance, or the tone of voice, or the touch—nay, the slight brush of her dress will suffice—of another being less rational than himself, and so

foolishly fascinated as to translate every quality of her into terms of his mad ecstasy? A short-lived madness for the most part, it is true, since when passion is spent he is demagnetized or dehypnotized and comes to himself. Still, never quite to the old self, since he absorbed into his being for a while another self which has made a change in it that he cannot ever quite unlearn.

When love is traced down from its fine spiritual flowering to its root in lust, the direct physical attraction is grossly manifest; for there is then a denudation of the refinements of feeling, the decent draperies of reserve, the delicate graces of behaviour which clothe its brutal nakedness and exalt its human dignity—of all those specialized developments which have been put on through the ages and are now structuralized in the highest nerve-reflexes of the civilized brain. In that coarse case the violent unease of mere sensual passion presses to the ease of a gratification. Now when love is not reciprocal, it is no better than lust on the one side and unlovely tolerance on the other side: the response to the kiss of love is not merely to kiss back again, it is to blend two kisses in unison and draw two beings into mutual self-abandonment; the finest affinities and sympathies of feeling and the nicest responsive expressions, striking each to each in mutual harmony, being necessary to the perfect marriage of minds and bodies. The endless rhapsodies of poets about love are nothing else but lame attempts to represent in words and rhythms the dumb melody of that inaudible music. The varieties of music and dancing, again, what do they represent fundamentally but mimic love when they represent not mimic war? La Bruyère makes the observation, which had been made before in a Greek epigram, that if an ugly woman is loved she will be loved most thoroughly, either because of a weakness in her lover, or because of secret and invincible charms in her. He might have added, because of the salve to his self-love who, having identified the woman with himself, rejects any hurt to it her defects might seem to be; which is the

reason, doubtless, why the libertine who marries his mistress is notoriously prone to praise her virtues.

But why should it be weakness to love an ugly woman? There is often character—a style and distinction, so to speak—in ugliness which there is not in beauty, and in any case ugliness does not necessarily descend to the feet. No doubt beauty of face is immediately attractive, but such beauty may notoriously accompany dulness of feeling, awkward and ungraceful gait, rhythmless movements, and stolidity of thought; a regular fashion of features go along with a mere mechanical fashion of feeling, thinking and doing which is fatal to the full fruition of love and soon satiates or disgusts; whereas irregularity of features may sparkle with mind and be accompanied by animation of feeling and movements. True love is not kindled and sustained by the shallow attraction of a pretty or handsome face, it signifies the deep constitutional attraction of the mutually polarized elements, mental and bodily, of the whole beings; and for that reason an ugly woman may be loved passionately by a man, not because of a weakness in him, but because of subtile constitutional affinities and sympathies which meet in full harmonious fruition. Love of a mindless face can at best be only a mindless love, and love which includes not mind is but a step above lust.

The attraction of love, albeit fundamentally physical, bespeaks a deeper-lying, more subtile and mysterious force than ordinary physical attraction. Having its root in the productive energy of organic life manifest consciously in the spirit of man, it marks the strain or aspiration of that higher becoming of things which we designate evolution. Think on all the bravery of its manifold displays of form, of colour, of sound, of odour, by which it proclaims and reveals itself in nature—all so many hymns of praise to the creative sun—on the sweet scents, bright hues and varieties of innumerable flowers; on the many rapturous lays and brilliant plumages of birds in spring; on the reiterated love stories which mortals, generation after generation, never weary to

tell and hear; on the rhapsodies and raptures of words, tones and rhythms, poetical and musical, which they delight in; on the religious pomp and ceremonial with which they consecrate, the ornaments and apparel with which they bedeck, and the feasting with which they celebrate the nuptial union; all these witness to the deep throb and joy of the productive power in its highest organic domain. When in spring the young man's thoughts turn instinctively to thoughts of love, and the bird puts a gayer plumage on, and the frog's coaxing croak is heard near the pond, and the field-mice squeal love in the hedgerows, they also testify of it. No marvel, then, that the love-passion has proved itself so overpowering in human history and oftentimes turned the course of it. The profound passion of organic nature proclaiming its pulse of life, its *conatus progrediendi*, in the mind of man, it is not a motion to be frustrated by any selfish rules of reason which might, nay, would logically oftentimes, rule it out of being.

A question emerging here is whether the productive strain acts to produce, not increase of quantity only, but superiority of quality also when circumstances are favourable to its best operation. If that be so, as it needs must be, then there is reason for the opinion which many persons hold implicitly, and some maintain explicitly, that when two persons are passionately in love they belong to one another by an elective affinity which is a sort of divine right entitling them to scorn the counsels of reason and violate the edicts of society. Silently or expressly, to the rights of the heart are conceded greater value than to the precepts of the head. Marriages of pure love, being dictated by nature, ought then to favour good generation and the improvement of the species. The frequent misfortune in that case is that passion is soon spent and disillusion breeds discontent, and that as either married the ideal of the other and find themselves deceived in the real, while the bond holds fast, the harmonious conditions of good generation are no longer present. On the whole there is reason to believe that prudent marriages of

interest turn out as well as love-marriages, though the interests of the future kind seem to be sacrificed by them to individual or family interests; for if the children have not quite such good chances of generation as when the parents combine passionately by elective affinity, they obtain better breeding and education when adequate parental means supply the favourable conditions of life in a mental atmosphere free from domestic worries, sordid anxieties, mean and ugly surroundings.

As man is not naturally prone to self-sacrifice it is all the more wonderful to see what a transformation of him love works instantly. He is then positively imbued with a craving to make a sacrifice of himself, even perhaps the heroic sacrifice of his life, for the beloved being, albeit the sacrifice is then really to the passion in which himself is absorbed. Not only is the passion thus sometimes stronger than love of life, but it is capable of the more prosaic but scarcely less hard victory over ordinary self-love and vanity, since the infatuated lover is the more pleased the greater the fool he makes himself, and suffers gladly the ill usage of the woman he hopes to win by his devotion and the derision of outsiders who watch his folly. Transported out of his rational self into an ecstasy which summons and musters to its support all the faculties of his mind, he exhibits an exalted and exaggerated egoism which is utterly conscienceless, superior to circumstances, heedless of past and future, entirely absorbed in the present, disregardful of the interests of others, regardful only of the means to gratify its present craving—nay, sublimely contemns also time and space: no language but hyperbole will serve to utter its inflated raptures; these it eternizes in terms of infinite duration which still fail to express adequately their intensity, while the space of the whole wide world is not enough to compass their immensity. Time is never too long for lovers' meetings, who tire not of being together because they are always flattering one another silently or expressly, nor interspace ever too small since they can never

get sufficiently near one another. It is the only case, as some writer has observed, in which two persons talking of nothing but themselves can bear to be long together without weariness.

All this because the nervous molecules of two brains thrill intensely in unison! But of course that is not quite all. Beneath the physical attraction lies the productive force of nature, immortal and irresistible, inspiring and firing the mortal to fulfil it, translating him out of self and as it were transcendentally absorbing him into itself for the nonce. Thus, like the ecstatic saint ravished from self in a spiritual transport, he thinks to see or at all events to feel supernaturally something which is not in the phenomena of nature, triumphantly disdaining or ignoring that which is plainly visible and sensible in them.

After all is said, the delirious transport is a simple transport of egoism. Though it render the individual capable of any self-sacrifice, it is really not self but for self that he sacrifices; he has made his beloved a part of himself, and his adoration of her is an exhibition of supreme self-love, a stupendous self-idolatry. Therefore he cannot bear the hurt to his self-love which any suspicion of her fidelity is, but often in that case torments his ingenuity to find out evidence and excuses for disbelieving what he too well suspects, constraining himself to believe her though he knows she lies. When she deceives and deserts him for another, it is not his love for her which is hurt, since she may be doing better for herself, and he ought therefore to be pleased; it is his self-love which is keenly offended, for if she deceive and desert another for him he is proud and glad. Love is not so much blind naturally as it is wilfully blind, obstinately bandaging its eyes so as not to see that which it does not wish to see, but keen enough to see what it wants. Naturally, like every other living thing, by the law of self-conservation it seeks what pleases, shuns what hurts it; therefore it is eager to feed and maintain itself, craving to reassure itself, when shaken, by seizing on every circum-

stance suited to uphold a belief against conviction, and resenting any unwelcome fact which would make it not be.

All which goes to show how extremely absurd the love-passion would be were man really the nobly rational and finely spiritual being which he is ever prone to picture himself. Through the succession of untold ages, and despite the innumerable and incalculable calamities which have fallen out by its agency, it has continued to beguile him, so that young life to-day is just as foolishly bewitched by it as if the experience of the race had never been made. Nature takes good care to inspire in the organic portion of it which his nature is the eternal and invincible illusion which the passion is, notwithstanding that it lives in him only so long as it is desire and that disillusion follows fulfilment. In the insect world there are notably creatures which, like flowers, live to love once only and then die; born at sunrise, the ephemeral insect performs its single act of procreation, and, the purpose of its brief life done, dies of old age at sunset. Not essentially otherwise is it with man, if we rectify our notions of space and time. On him have been imposed, it is true, the longer labours of a longer and larger life, in which grossly in fact and ideally in art, poetry, music, and other graces of life, he can give elaborate expressions to the productive passion of nature in him; yet in the end it comes to this, that his longer life is but a process of gradual disenchantment ending in an inevitable dissolution. Howbeit here one cannot help making the reflection that nature has been kinder to the insect than to the man; for instead of placing the illusion and joy in the youth of life, and then prolonging life through a period of laborious activity and anxiety in maturity, and of weakness, weariness, and sorrow in the decline of age, it has given the caterpillar all the gluttonous pleasure of nourishment at the beginning of life, and bestowed on the butterfly the supreme passion and joy of love at the end of it.

## III

### DESIRE—HOPE

Desire insatiable—Its boundlessness—Multiplications of desires and their gratifications—Present enjoyments spoilt by desire—The vital basis of desire and hope—The love-passion and its glamour—The ideal and the real—The *rôle* of feeling in belief—Ultrafidianism and supra-rational reason—Men believe as they feel—Reality of pleasure—The cultivation of illusions—Consecrated lies—Idealization of the real.

How many times, and by how many mortals, has the trite wisdom of the Spanish proverb been uttered—to wit, that nothing satisfies a man except that which he has not! The law of human things is in desire to pant for enjoyment, and in satiety to languish for desire. Every fresh thinker coming on the scene makes that discovery for himself in turn, and having made it proclaims it bravely as if it had never been said before. The new-budding poet weaves the eternal refrain into the strained elaborations of a sonnet or wails it in a tuneful lyric, sure then that he has found a precious stone and set it so artistically that it can never be either excelled or equalled. Some day, perhaps, the trite truth will be taken for granted and allowed then to stand in its naked simplicity.

Implicit in desire is a vague sense of eternity and infinity which there is not in any function of the understanding; for while intellect is relative and finite desire is boundless. That is because desire is effect and expression of the fundamental *conatus* or *nisus* of organic life which, reaching back to an infinite past and stretching forwards to an infinite future, is instilled with silent memory and prophetic fore-feeling; therefore always aspiring, never satisfied, a perpetually urgent impulse to be, an ever-to-be-better to-morrow. It is the source and sustenance of that formless longing which the imaginations of men, labouring to shape in form and misforming, have translated into so many and diverse myths of the supernatural.

It results from the nature of desire that it is ardent and urgent so long as, vitality being strong, the red blood of lusty life pulses in it. Then it is instant to sprout and shoot in special desires and to prompt endeavours to gratify them, notwithstanding that the desires are oftentimes neither natural nor necessary, but essentially artificial and not worthy the pains their gratifications cost. To forbid something or to let one person enjoy what another has not in a society of human beings suffices to provoke instant desire to have it. It was not so much, perhaps, because Eve wished to be wise as because it was forbidden that she plucked and ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Were adultery not a forbidden sin it might lose a spice of its attraction; like scanty clothing artfully designed to suggest what it conceals, the prohibition fires desire; and without doubt the curiosity to try an unknown experience, just to sip the forbidden cup to know how it tastes, has counted for much in many a trespass of the kind. The wonder, perhaps, is that murder is not sometimes done—it is nowise certain that it is never done—out of a curiosity to obtain the intense and special experience.

The interrelations and interactions of men in the communion and commerce of society must needs breed new desires while the organic impulse to grow and ascend in being continues; and the endeavours and means used to satisfy them constitute the progress of civilization. Even desires seemingly mean and unworthy in themselves have their good uses, seeing that at the lowest they yield interest, occupation, and distraction from the ennui of life where nobler wants are wanting. So it is that in a civilized society old age is rendered less wearisome than in a simpler and more primitive society with its few desires and interests, the extinction of which leaves the individual stranded in apathy and despair; and so it is that the native New Zealander of to-day, having more distractions, does not, as his grandfather was wont to do, kill himself because of a single great sorrow.

Another natural effect of the nature of desire is that it is not satisfied by fruition. How, indeed, can it be seeing that it is the longing by which the organic *nisus* expresses itself? Whether that which it obtains be worth much or little, it still craves; by lending enchantment to what it woos, as its manner is, it feels illusion in what it wins, and so presses forward through the present to a better fulfilment. If the present were not always sacrificed to the future, it would be strange how little men ever really live in the present. They are always expecting—indeed, for the most part idly waiting for what will come next: one after another of the customary things of daily routine—dinner, bed, breakfast, to-morrow, next week, next month, next year, and so on in monotonous sequence day after day and year after year; spend life, as Seneca said, in preparing to live, and are surprised at last by the day which has no to-morrow. All the while they thus waste and would hasten life by getting through the time they complain bitterly of the shortness of life. No doubt many a maker of this reflection has solemnly said to himself, What folly is this! Henceforth I am resolved to live in the present and make the most of it, yet a minute afterwards has found himself brooding over the past, or musing of the future, or poisoning the present with regrets for the past and frets for the future.

As desire is the basis of hope, life without hope is pretty much organic life without desire, life with no smile on its face, life so low as to be only still life scarce living or worth living. Hope in mind and spring in nature own the same fundamental origin, gloom in old age and bareness in winter the same fundamental conditions; for as in spring all organic nature notably thrills with hope and productive pulsing, so hope and productive impulse are the predominant passion of man's spring-time. So unspeakably sad is life without hope that it might well be a daily prayer, "Give us this day our daily hope." How grey a gloom steals gradually over life as desire and hope wane naturally in the decay of age, and how dark is the enveloping cloud of woe when, owing to a collapse

of nervous vitality, there is a fall into the dismal abyss of a profound melancholy madness! What is then the natural ending of things? Either gradual death by process of increasing decay in the one case, or in the other case abrupt death by suicide perhaps, which is then also a quite natural event, although full-throbbing life hasten to denounce the deed as unnatural and call the doer mad. Infuse into the weak structure a full current of organic energy, and immediately the restored vital elasticity expresses itself in the renewal of desire and hope, in a revival of the lust to live inspiring the will to live; this, too, temporarily sometimes even in the decaying structures of age, as is most remarkable in the extraordinary mental ignition of senile mania, and permanently perhaps in the revived energy of the morbidly depressed brain of melancholia.

Nothing in mental pathology is more striking than the instant transition witnessed sometimes from an abject state of impotent apathy, or from a terrific panic of despairing yet indescribable anguish, suicide-urging or even suicide-compelling, to bright spirits, brisk and busy action, cheerful interest in life, and eager desire to live; the sudden transformation marking a restoration of nervous energy so subtile and swift that we know not yet how it takes place, though it no doubt marks an instant molecular change. Without such physical change the fortifying precepts of philosophy and the consoling assurances of religion would be alike utterly impotent to infuse the least ray of hope; with it they are mostly superfluous, since it is there without them. Desire and precept speak different and mutually unintelligible languages, the one being the expression of the individual's present *feeling*, the other the exposition of the wise *thought* of others, or of the self when it was perhaps quite another self; therefore it is that thought cannot speak of that which it does not feel. Neither for religion nor for philosophy is it difficult to subdue desire when decline or satiety has quenched its fire.

Whosoever will have a clear notion of the enchantment

which desire of an object lends to it cannot do better than ponder the love-passion and its effects. The prescriptive language of love-poetry is extravagant hyperbole, than which, viewed in reason's light, nothing could be more ridiculous. Ruby lips, teeth of pearl, golden tresses, eyes that outshine the stars, a breath whose sweetness the violet would gladly steal, cheeks that outblush the roses and make the lilies pale with envy, such and such-like are the poetical absurdities in which the delirious rapture extols and embellishes its object, straining vainly to express in words the boundless and inexpressible in desire. The extreme ecstasy is but an instance of a common performance—to wit, the perpetual creation and persistent pursuit of illusions which fade as soon as grasped. Always to grasp at, yet never to grasp, the ideal, that is nature's spur to progress and the play of its wonted irony.

That is one way of viewing things. But another and better way, it may be said, is to look on the ideal of desire as the true real, the seeming real being only the passing show or symbol, or at all events as something quite as real in human things as the so-called real. In that case the illusion fades naturally because it is only phenomenal, a passing fashion of the ideal, temporal and belonging to things temporal, whereas the real lives and lasts in the continuing ideal, which is divine, belongs to the eternal, and is known not to the understanding but spiritually discerned. For it is through the ideal that man is in communion with and rests upon the primal and eternal force, unknown and unknowable, from which the mighty stream of being runs through its multitudinous channels; feeling and faith are its sure witnesses; and it is by striving consciously for absorption, more or less perfect, into it, whatever it be named, by merging the conscious part into the unconscious whole, that the wise man obtains a tranquil resting-place of thought and feeling amidst the anxieties and griefs, the doings and sufferings, the agitations and apprehensions, the regrets and the remorses, the failures and errors, the incalculable changes

and chances of this mortal life. He who finds no such haven of repose for his troubled soul must bid good-bye to happiness when the common illusions of life cease to be realities for him; he who finds it gains a peace of mind in the negation of living while he is still alive, attaining to a more and more complete absorption of self into the infinite whole in proportion to the success of his process of mental suicide. As separation from nature through the rise of self-consciousness was the source of living woe, so restoration to nature through the abolition of self-consciousness is the happy issue of life.

Psychologists for the most part have hardly appreciated the important factor which feeling is in human judgments and beliefs; having treated them too much as if they were purely intellectual affairs, to be acquired by rules of abstract reason and held on purely rational grounds, they have not examined closely how vitally desire enters into the formation and force of individual beliefs. Yet simple observation of concrete persons and things shows plainly that every belief is fortified or weakened, cleared or clouded, even formed or destroyed by desire. The true consoler of one sunk in the depths of a great sorrow is not he who proves to the sufferer by unanswerable arguments that it is remediable and will pass, but he who by apt sympathy infuses a solace and support which strengthen the sorrowing mind to find the argument of its own remedy. It is the desire or feeling in belief, proceeding from the special constitution of the individual mind, not any abstract pure reason, which is the force that gives it strength and compels assent. When the feeling preponderates over reason in it, the belief may be strong yet wrong; when the reason is infused with weak feeling only, the belief may be weak but right. Who believes so fiercely as the fanatic who believes what is plain folly? His desires concentrate the energies of his whole nature into a few special tracts of mind. Do not numbers of persons believe earnestly that which is clean contrary to reason without being a whit shaken in their belief or bating one jot

of it because of the plainest demonstration of its irrationality, nay, believe it the more fiercely the more irrational it is proved to be? It is a marvellous comfort to them, and at the same time a sort of self-sanction of their faith, to lament with Sir Thomas Browne that there are not impossibilities enough in religion, and, like him, they rejoice to believe a thing not only above but contrary to reason. Constituted as they are, it is the instinct of their mental self-conservation to which rationality would be destructive.

This attitude of mind, which he called ultrafidianism, did not altogether commend itself to Coleridge, who tried to save the situation and uphold the credit of reason by distinguishing between reason and understanding as faculties different not in degree but in kind, and ascribing to reason an inward and spiritual beholding of absolute truths above sense, having their evidence in themselves. Therefore to believe a thing true because it was impossible, according to Tertullian's maxim, was not to contradict reason, which might actually approve the belief, it was only to contradict the understanding whose highest functions are relative and comparatively uncertain. But was there not perchance some bias of desire in that distinction prompting and postulating an absolute difference of faculties by names which had no existence in things?[1] Is the tremendous postulate of this absolute and God-like reason which is a negation of natural reason quite uninspired by the desire and untinctured by the pride of human egoism exalting its mortal and expecting its immortal destiny? And the absolute truths revealed by it to the individual being, are they not at bottom truths to his liking, truths which he, constituted as he is mentally, would have be truths of supreme reason?

Of sages, saints and savages, it is in the end true that they believe very much as they feel, believing sincerely only when they feel the belief—have the force of feeling in it

[1] Here, as always, Pascal was more logical; he felt and taught that it was necessary to stifle reason—to do that which "vous fera croire et vous abêtira."

which makes it living—not when they merely think it or think they believe it. Therefore it is that they are not logical in their beliefs, but can fervently believe that which is contrary to reason, the more ardently the more intensely personal the belief is, and are not shaken in their conviction that black is white by the plainest demonstration of reason; for they feel an implicit reason in their faith transcending explicit reason. If it be not true to them, what matters it how true it be? The structures of belief are nowise spontaneous growths of an hour, they have been built into the individual nature by inheritance, tradition, education, custom, law, and other powerful and constantly acting influences of the social environment, and they vary infinitely according to the particular constitution and character. How can the emasculate mind which lacks a whole province and kind of feeling, the mental answering to the bodily deprivation, possibly admire and approve masculine thought, feeling and conduct? Life so inspired must needs be repugnant to it. And like-inspired art, too, since the business of good art is to represent that in things which by abstraction of the best in their qualities makes the ideal; wherefore the emasculate art critic cannot choose but be repelled by the over-masculinity of Michael Angelo. Fate favours mortals in very different measures, bestowing on some superior endowments whereby they can like and assimilate variously and widely, and on others inferior endowments whereby they are limited to special likings and assimilations; but perhaps the unkindest gift which it bestows on any one is the gift of a strict and tender conscience along with a penetrating, critical and logical intellect; for while the former is perpetually afflicted by the wrong doings, the latter is perpetually offended by the irrationalities, it encounters.

Pleasures are bewailed as illusions because they continue not at a stay, and after enjoyment leave behind them desire, their brevity and the satiety they produce alike disappointing expectation. But where is the illusion? The pleasure was real while it lasted; and it is only because insatiable

desire craves for more than the real can ever give, nothing less than an unrealizable ideal, and bounded enjoyment necessarily falls short of unbounded anticipation, that men are not content to enjoy the present for what it is worth. What an exacting madness! Is love an illusion while it lasts because they cannot always be in love? The eternal law of nature is transition, a constant flux not a constancy of things: why not then wisely accommodate the phases of a changing self to the changing phases of things? Instead of grieving that life is short and joy so transient, or dreaming ideally of eternal life and endless joy, the wiser mind may lengthen life by putting into it as many illusions as possible and enjoying them to the utmost while they last—even perhaps, if so minded, by deliberately fostering the illusion in order to increase the pleasure of it, regardless of the eventual disillusion to be quietly expected and philosophically endured.

The unfailing hindrance to the systematic cultivation of illusions and the multiplication of pleasures thereby is that everybody is prone to take himself and his doings too seriously; although he plainly sees change and decay and disappearance in all around, he cannot reconcile himself to his own change, decay and disappearance. He would be an end in himself, not a mere passing show in a cycle of things without end. He wants to be quite happy and quite rational, angel and at the same time animal, which is absurd; whereas he might be happy if he were sensual and irrational, or at any rate sentimental and irrational, even though sadly sentimental, since in such sadness there often lurks a secret note of pleasure. Reason certainly will not make him happy, for it is not reason but feeling which speaks that language. But he may be very happy irrationally. Consider the many and various marks of distinction which he can create for himself, then value mightily and strive for passionately—the ribbons, the garters, the crosses, the stars, the medals, the titles, the orders, and the like: these are of small worth in themselves, being just as

ridiculous and childish bedizenments as those with which a naked savage ornaments or disfigures himself, and at best of local and quite arbitrary value only; a Chinese statesman might be no prouder to wear the English Order of the Garter than an English statesman to wear the Yellow Jacket or Peacock Feather of China; yet they are manifestly most useful to incite and urge individual vanity and ambition to serve the purposes of the special body-politic which confers them, and to glorify and gladden those who seek and gain them. Although money is notoriously a most powerful incentive to endeavour, yet it does not so easily conquer the love of life as vanity does; for how eagerly will men venture their lives for a ribbon or a cross? It is politic wisdom then to create many social values in life, because thereby the people, being solicited by many ambitions and occupied in eager strivings, are distracted from realities and made happy. He who soberly considers what enthusiasm, devotion, self-sacrifice and reckless contempt of death Napoleon evoked in multitudes of men by the passionate desire to gain a cross of honour which he devised, may well cease to wonder at his colossal indifference to the value of human life and his cynical contempt for it when it was not his own.[1]

As the social body flatters the vanity and fires the ambitions and emulations in many ways to make them serve it, so it idealizes, and embellishes, and in the end quite falsifies the lives of men who have served it. Although lies in general are to be deprecated as hurtful, yet there are "consecrated lies" which are deemed laudable. The story of the life and death of a person of great eminence seldom, if ever, fails to bubble or boil over with flaming praise of his noble character, his great talents, and his splendid virtues, all which are celebrated as the implied cause of his glorious service and the explanation of the eminence which he achieved; whereas the real

[1] See Chateaubriand's *Mémoires de l'Outre Tombe* for a graphic description of the mean and abject cowardice shown by Napoleon when he was conducted through the hostile mobs of certain towns on his way to banishment in the island of Elba.

truth perhaps was that he was mainly, if not quite, destitute of the virtues ascribed to him, and would never have climbed to the position he held and done the service he did but for the possession of other qualities nowise so laudable. The just comment on his life is sometimes that which is made quietly in private by those who knew him well. "So that acute, pertinacious, selfish and intriguing fellow is dead." As the world has hitherto been and still is constituted, it must be confessed that honours, titles, dignities and the like have not been always titles of real honour; in an ideal state governed by true principles of justice they would sometimes be titles of shame, because the rewards of unworthy arts. But to idealize the man, however mean in some respects he was, is to uphold fine social principles, and to incite love and practice of them. Therefore the lie is consecrated.

As they cannot realize the ideal, men no doubt do well to idealize the real; so they stimulate one another to aspire and strive after something higher than is. To feign and believe themselves to be what they are not is not the hypocritical anomaly in human things which many persons, viewing matters superficially, vex and distress themselves to think it; on the contrary, it is the proper order of things, being the natural means and steps of a progressive development. Human life is nature's art, good or bad, and human art in turn is the beautification of nature and development of its art.

## IV

### GRIEF—SUFFERING

Grief increased by imagination—The transport of a grief—Outward show of grief—Physiological limits of grief and pain—Pain an evil in itself, not merely in opinion—The sure cure of grief—The permanent effects of grief—The unity of the physical and moral nature—The good use of suffering.

A TRITE reflection, though it seldom abate an anxiety, is how vastly the tribulations, vexations and pains of life would be lessened did men not magnify present troubles

and fret themselves with the imaginations of troubles which never come. As the poet says:—

> "Fear is more pain than is the pain we fear,
> Disarming human souls of native might,
> While each conceit an ugly figure wears
> Which were not evil, well viewed in reason's light."

Therein man pays the price of his pre-eminence over the lower animals, which suffer less in the present and are not tormented with anxieties about the future: it is his prerogative to think, and his penalty to suffer the pains of thinking and the necessary increase of sorrow which increase of thinking is. To be happy, or at all events not to be unhappy, he must abdicate his prerogative; whether it be by not using his God-like and most sovereign reason for what it is worth, but staying in placid ignorance, or by absolutely renouncing it in favour of a reason-spurning faith when its exercise would be too disquieting.

The show of grief is often greater than the grief itself. He who is wholly absorbed in a passion of sorrow cannot see and speak it; its violence transports and, so to speak, hypnotizes; when its ecstasy abates and it is beginning to pass, then it can be looked at and talked about, it is no longer engrossing and unspeakable. Now, as every ecstasy implies a state of divorce from the natural associations and successions of ideas, a self-absorption forgetful of the past and heedless of the future, there is haply less suffering than there appears to be in a transport of grief or fright, just because of the rapture out of self and the consequent insensibility to everything else. The hysterical woman who rends the air with shrieks and appals the spectator with her bodily writhings does not suffer much; indeed, the performance of her grief often yields her a degree of secret gratification. Furthermore, there is always this alleviation of real pain of mind—that it inevitably decreases when it does not increase. Let it be never so tragic, it has its unfailing remedy; time is the sure and prosaic consoler. Though the cause of grief remain the same, yet the in-

dividual changes, and in a little while is no longer the self who was afflicted; its pang then is the remembrance of what another self suffered.

Sobs, shrieks, cries, wails, and weeping are nowise proportional signs of suffering; they are rather the explosive vents and ease of it, issues rather than measures of it, and therefore a relief which is almost a luxury when it is indulged excessively. As there is no greater ease than that which the natural reflex discharge is to an internal commotion, bodily or mental, so there ensues a tendency, be it ever so subtle, to prolong the outward display of sorrow as an indulgence; a tendency most evident in weakness—therefore in women, children, and sick persons. Invalids are naturally prone to self-pity; it is a sign of their demoralization by nervous weakness and a cause of further demoralization, for the physically undermined will is then in a bad case. Still less is the outward display of grief proportional sign of inward pain when there is a side-glance of self-conscious regard to the effective modes of its expression and the sympathy of onlookers; a nowise exceptional event, seeing that it is characteristic of nervous prostration, whether merely functional or due to serious disease, not only to give way to moaning self-pity, but purposely to exaggerate and even simulate symptoms in order to produce an adequately pitiful impression. So infused is it with, and dependent on, its social medium that it craves its sympathy and support when sinking in the infirmity of sickness and the dissolution of dying.

The pain of a grief, like the irritation of sense by a stimulus, has its measure; neither below its minimum nor above its maximum is it felt. Within the limits, too, of its measure it has its time-limit, this being short if it be violent, long if it be slight. Whether it be great or small depends not wholly on its external cause but in part on the person's nervous constitution; the less pain of weakness equals the greater pain of strength, so to speak, because it represents equal suffering by reason of the native strength

of vital resistance being weaker. In the last extremity pain is limited by the limits of the natural resisting power of the nervous fabric; for when the cruellest tortures that human ingenuity could devise and inflict on the human body, by exhausting all the possible varieties thereof which its structure could lend itself to, exceeded the fixed limit of endurance, either they caused a local destruction of sensibility or the victim swooned and no longer suffered. The cleverest torturer was he who could elicit all the notes of agony possible within that physiological limit. Perhaps he, too, failed to be as cruel as he would fain have been, pleasing himself with the imagination of causing greater pains than his victim actually felt. Thus happily and only has the inhumanity of man to man through the ages been haply baffled.

When the philosopher tells me gravely that it is not the things-in-themselves but the opinions I have of them which afflict me, and that I ought therefore to change my opinions of them, he bids me practice a pretty sort of self-dupery. What the thing is in itself concerns me not who am concerned only with what it is to me, it being only to me so far as I feel and think it; what it is in itself is the concern of the universe at large and of the transcendental philosopher in his closet who knows its secrets. No doubt my opinion may change, nay, will inevitably change with the changing seasons and phases of me and my changing circumstances, and I may come to think good what I once thought bad, but it is then a changed "I" or *ego* who holds it, not my past *ego*, and it is still the thing I think which afflicts me. So likewise when the Stoic bids me defy pain as no evil in itself but an evil in my opinion only, though I obey him and defy it, I still have the painful feeling and opinion of it, and am little eased by the verbal negation. Could his injunction and my assent make another "me" of me then and there, things would be different, and all might go merrily as marriage bells. When all is said, a fanatical enthusiasm like that which transported the early

Christian martyr, even the young and tender maiden, to suffer gladly the most atrocious torture, would do more to render me insensible than all his stern counsels of fortitude, seeing that its ecstasy would be a dismemberment of mind and a suspension of its sensibilities, whereas his resolutions of reason would be rather a compact keeping together of its structure and functions.

In the end the surest cure of grief is neither the pious resignation of the saint nor the stern stoicism of the philosopher; it is the simple quasi-physical expulsion of it by another grief or by a new joy. Though it be hard to endure a toothache patiently, yet nobody would feel a toothache who was racked with the worst torture of a cancer. A new love after a short time consoles and compensates the sorrow-stricken young widow who, precipitated suddenly from the height of bliss into the depths of despair, seemed and sincerely felt heart-broken at the time. Neither in thought, nor in feeling, nor in action is it possible for two separate tracts of mind to be in full activity at the same time; only when one subsides can the other perform fully.

The cessation of a woe is nowise the complete cancelling of it, for after it is past and gone things are not exactly as if it had never been. Physiology and physics are not one and the same thing, albeit there could be no physiology without physics. When a finger is thrust into the sea and withdrawn, the hole is instantly filled up as if it had never been, though it has no doubt made its cosmic record; but a past grief does not so vanish—it leaves its scar behind it, which, like the scar on the child's finger growing as the body grows, continues as the mind grows. Besides, as the grief-scar witnesses to the grief-fever which has been, so it witnesses also perhaps to lasting effects on character; like the disease which, once recovered from, protects the body against its recurrence, it modifies the mental constitution and protects against a similar and equal grief-fever. If it confer not a complete immunity, the second fever will not have the violence of the first, while recurrences, making habit, so

enure the mind to it at last that it is borne almost unconsciously. Incongruous as such a statement seems concerning mind as a spiritual entity, it is nowise so when applied to mind as a most delicate and complex mental organization, to be studied fruitfully by the light of conceptions drawn from the study of physiological organization.

Much foolish surprise has been expressed concerning the action of the moral on the physical and of the physical on the moral nature. As though they ever had acted, ever did act, or ever could act independently! Every moral sensibility and energy implies its special physical structure, both when the moral affects the physical and when it is manifestly affected by it; without the requisite mental organization in nervous structure there could be no proper mind to act morally, any more than mind could act outwardly without the requisite nervous and muscular structure. What a singular conception, if conception it be, that of a loftily-detached mind imbued with noble feeling and fraught with sublime moral energy, self-determined and self-sufficing, owing no obedience to natural laws, disdaining any bodily means of sustenance, growth, and utterance! When protracted moral depression initiates and gradually induces bodily disease, as it certainly may do, it does so because there is native constitutional weakness; the low moral level reflects a low level of nervous vitality, and the consequences are a failure of the proper supply of nervous energy to animate the nutrition and function of the bodily tissues, and a concomitant moral weakness. Always the most helpful physician in sickness is he who can treat the body through the mind as well as the mind through the body. No doubt the moral fibre may be strengthened by exercise, just as a muscle may be likewise strengthened, but only within the set limits, quantitative and qualitative, of its native structure; and it is undeniable that there are constitutions which, though their general functions are fairly good, yet lack the latent reserve of moral energy which a luckier lineage might have endowed them with. The effect of a

moral shock, then, is not to be measured by the quantity and quality of the external impression; it represents the internal commotion produced, which will be greater or less according to the strength of the vital resistance to dissolution, such resistance revealing itself in the strength and quality of the moral nature. How strange and foolish to be so passionately and needlessly moved by so trivial a mishap, one is tempted to say sometimes when watching the tragedy of a tumult in a teacup, whereas the marvel and miracle would be if the person so constituted then and there were not so violently affected. To be the pattern of all patience implies a stability of intimate nervous structure which cannot ever be acquired either by wishing or praying for it, albeit that as structure grows to function much may be done by consistent and steady discipline.

As life is a sort of conflict with external nature in which self-maintenance and growth are the conquest, and as moral progress is the growth of life in mind, it is evidently good to be taught by suffering how to go the right way and not astray. To have life without suffering is inconceivable; it would be to have no appetite and therefore no relish for life. The first thing the new-born infant does is to cry, and the next thing to try instinctively to ease the unease of hunger; and the first thing which the conscious mind does is to try to abate some unease of life and so ease its growth. If hunger were not felt, which is inchoate pain, where would be the care for food, which is pleasure? If men did not relish food, what would they care for the sport of killing? If they had no lust, where would be the delight of love? If they were never tired, how could they enjoy rest? If they never suffered because of ignorance, what motive would they have to wish to know? Even the blessing of health is not known until health is lost. Compassion, sympathy, benevolence, and the like humane feelings would be unreal, if not impossible, to one who was incapable of suffering like passion, for to feel a kindred grief is to weep for one's self in the kin by weeping for the kin in one's self. While the way of

descent, then, is broad and easy, the way of ascent of life is hard and narrow, being victory through tribulation, growth in virtue through patience and long-suffering, perfection through suffering. Every pain is pregnant with its proper instruction, every virtue perhaps sown in pain. A tearless life would be no better than the life of a well-fed mollusc in its sheltering shell; therefore the righteous man is taught to joy in sorrow and sing his pæan of praise to pain.

## V

### JOY—LAUGHTER

Joy denotes vital energy—Constitutional weakness of vitality—The expression of vitality in feeling and thought—The physical basis of mind—Reception and response of mental undulations—Futile discussions about the *summum bonum*—The varieties of laughter—Subtile emanation of character.

Psychologists have been wonderfully persistent to put the cart before the horse, making that a cause which was really effect. Spinoza defines gaiety as a disposition of mind which sustains and augments our powers to act, as it certainly does, sadness a state of mind which inhibits and lessens our forces, which is true also. But whence the energy which reveals itself consciously in the joy? And whence the lack of energy which shows itself in sadness or dejection? Gladness is the effect not the cause of buoyant vital force, and sadness the effect of low vital force. The frisking lamb, the playful kitten, the jumping dog owe their joy to no abstract disposition of mind but to the overflowing force of bounding life in them. Elevation or depression of spirits bespeaks active or sluggish nervous energies, and good humour of disposition signifies the happy composition as well as activity of them. To separate the spirit from the matter is an invention of metaphysical philosophy, not an induction of experience; for the word spirit was used, and may perhaps again be used some day, to denote the extremest subtile

matter—in fact, the essence or active principle of the substance, as it does still when used in the plural as *spirits* (*e.g.*, spirits of wine); and the now disused, though once much used, terms *contraction and dilation of spirits* witness likewise to its physical origin. The best sign in serious sickness is undoubtedly the dawn of hope: why? Because hope is then possible, its upspringing being a pulse of the reviving life-throb and signifying the reaction of the vital force against the oppression of disease. Howbeit it is not hope which creates the energy, but energy which creates the hope. To infuse joy and hope from without when there was no vital reserve force within to respond would be to elicit what is not implicit or potential; which is absurd. As well try

> "To enforce the painful impotent to smile,
> To move wild laughter in the throat of death."

A sluggish vitality may of course be due to occasional causes arising out of passing states of health, but it is not seldom temperamental or constitutional and therefore lasting. The poet makes one of his characters finely say—

> "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us."

But it might just as truly be said that the gods are also unjust, for they make the innocent child bear the sad burden of the parent's sins. There is no more effective a constitutional cause of a low nervous vitality than the inherited infection of syphilis, for it is a loathsome poisoning of the very springs of life. Even the new-born babe in that case is born foully infected, and perhaps dies puny, wasted, wizened, whining, reacting in wailing pain to every impression made on it. And if it die not young in consequence of its polluted vitality, it may still throughout life expiate its father's sin by a low nervous energy which, hardly ever rising to the level of a brisk feeling of pleasure in life and a joyous outlook on it, saps the vigour, elasticity, and enthusiasm of character. Mental philosophy, when it is less abstract and more wise, will take better note of such facts than it has hitherto done.

It is as futile as it is foolish to expect one person to feel and think life in the same modes as another. Weak nervous vitality cannot choose but evince itself in a tendency to indolence, apathy, melancholy, and pessimism. If a piece of good news or a glass of good wine temporarily excite in it the desire and augments the power to act, the reason is essentially the same; they both act as stimuli to excite and elicit physically the latent energy of the nervous element, and the quickened feeling and force are the transitory result. But neither good news nor good wine will call these out if the energy be not there in reserve. The joy of glad tidings lies in the brain, like the jest's prosperity in the ear of him who hears it; it is no more use to tell them to one who is prostrate in abject melancholia than it would be to tell them to a dying man; though he hears quite well what is spoken, the words to him are mere empty sounds which mock his state.

If it be alleged that wine is a chemical stimulus which acts demonstrably on the nervous element, whereas good news acts purely mentally, then the not impertinent question may be put, "Why not tell the news to a man stone-deaf, or at any rate deaf mentally (as he may be) to words which he hears perfectly, and expect him to rejoice at it"? Of course it would be useless to do so, for the plain physical reason, in the first case, that the message of vocal vibrations, though they impinge on, cannot affect and traverse, the delicate nerve-fibrils of his obstructed ear; and in the second case, for the strictly parallel reason that, though received and transmitted by these fibrils, they strike inert on auditory centres in the brain which have been so damaged as no longer to be able to receive and interpret the message. In vain will the finest or strongest vibrations strike on nerve-terminals as insensitive and impenetrable to them as a block of coal to undulations of light or, one might add, a block of human stupidity to fine thought and feeling. When the hearer has not the intelligence to understand what is intelligently spoken—that is to say, has not the fitly organized

cerebral pattern of structure to receive and respond—he is stone-deaf mentally, though he hear well enough with his ear. That is what all men are to a novelty of thought or feeling until the fit cerebral reason or ratio of structure has been gradually organized in them: they are deaf mentally, not because they have lost their hearing but because they have not learnt to hear.

If it be said, as it often is said, that the undulations of nerve-currents through the various organized forms or patterns in the brain are only the material means or instruments by which a non-physical mind behind them acts and is acted on, the answer may be made that if it never act otherwise than through them and is never acted on otherwise than through them, it is all one from a scientific point of view whether it is there or what in itself it is there. The simple question is whether mind is in and part of nature or not. If it be, then it is subject to natural laws and is itself a subject of scientific enquiry; if not, it is outside the domain of such enquiry, supernatural, a mysterious something to be discerned only, if discernible, in a mysterious spiritual fashion.

Scientifically we know well that definite forms of nervous complexes, simple and complex, are organized in every thinking brain, that from them proceed definitely formulated motions, which, when they emerge into consciousness, are notions, and that these motions, whether it be by visual, auditory, or some yet intangible mode of access, are received, and, as it were reverberated, by the like-fashioned forms or patterns of another brain tuned sympathetically. The working agent is no abstract mind, it is a bodily organ quivering throughout in the finest and most intense vibrations, which may be supposed to radiate the most subtle undulations through the pervading universal ether; most of them will be lost in space, so far as we know; many will impinge on objects which, being indifferent or antipathetic, will stop or refract them; some, however, may impinge on the elastic ether permeating and conditioned by

similar forms of cerebral structure thus tuned exactly to respond sympathetically to them. Then the receiver understands and renders back what is sent, and the sender, by virtue of being thus reflected and understood, understands the better himself. Without the mutual harmony of structure and function the intelligent words and gestures of one person would produce no more intelligent effect on another person than they would if addressed to an ostrich or an owl, nor his finest moral feelings any more response in kind than if wasted on an Australian savage or an ourang-outang. Are these unperceived undulations always dissipated and entirely lost in space? Or, are they perchance, as fancy has fondly feigned, sometimes received and rendered back by subtile aerial spirits, inhabitants of the empyrean?

Descending from abstract notions to concrete beings, it is easy to see that joy or happiness is entirely relative to the person, and to understand why discussion about Hedonism and the *summum bonum* for the most part are empty talk. The joy of men in social communion must depend on the respective qualities of their minds and the stimuli they respond to in the infinitely various aspects of things; so much so that what is one man's pleasure will be another man's pain. Can there be a greater affliction to any mind, lofty or low, than to be placed in an environment which is completely unsympathetic or actually discordant? The higher mind no doubt thinks it the duty of the lower mind to rise to its level and to be pleased with the mental atmosphere which pleases it, and is quite ready to lay down its authoritative standard of perfection, but the higher mind is nowise free from the bias of egoism and is sure to pronounce best that which it likes best. It might perhaps be the worst thing that could happen to the human kind for all its members to be of one liking and one mind, seeing that mind might then be stifled in such an atmosphere of uniformity.

Considering what a sure expression of joy or gaiety laughter universally is, the wonder is that no one has yet

set diligently to work to observe and study the varieties of laughter among men and to find out exactly what each variety signifies mentally. Were these rightly discriminated and understood, they could hardly fail to reveal what they partly express—namely individual character, or at any rate individual tone of character. A difficult and tedious study, no doubt, since no two persons laugh exactly alike, and a person may be known by his laugh as surely as by his face, yet not more difficult, after all, than the patient and painstaking study of physiognomies and their meanings, which will be made some day. Meanwhile it is quite easy to recognize certain broad types or kinds of laughter. The spontaneous hearty laughter of sincere feeling is very different from the affected and constrained laughter of insincerity, and one justly suspects the humanity or sanity of a person who cannot laugh. Moreover, there are laughs which betoken peculiar constitutions of mind and character: laughs that are mechanical, being risible contorsions rather than true laughs, nervous spasms expressing nothing, and expressed when there is nothing to laugh at or perhaps something not to laugh at; laughs that are signs of neurotic instability when they have not been acquired and are unconsciously performed, sure signs of guile when they are affected and consciously used, untrustworthy anyhow as laughter. Another quasi-pathological laugh is the abortive and incoherent laugh of the person of insane temperament, which is laughter pulled up abruptly half-way by a sudden facial seriousness, or which affects only a part of the features while the rest are unmoved. Then there are several notable varieties of genuine laughter—the shrill crow, the jerky cachinnation, the long-drawn whoop, the bow-wow, and others, all which without doubt have their special mental meanings. The best laughter, being the graceful expression of a fine harmony of nature, will be musical, as graceful movement is the dumb music of the body. Some day perhaps the physicists who deal with the infinitesimal will make known the exact measures and combinations of the

subtilized motions which constitute the tones and qualities of the different laughs, if they do not perhaps construct a machine capable of reproducing all the varieties of human laughter.

Notable it is how exasperating and painful the discordant jar of a particular laugh can be, as bad as the rasping of any file; so thoroughly antipathic and piercingly grating as almost to provoke and excuse an assault on the performer. Whether the so-called telepathists be right or wrong in their speculative theory that the thoughts and feelings of one mind can be conveyed to another even distant mind, and arouse sympathetic thoughts and feelings in it without any intervention of organs of sense, it is certain that the character of one person may instantly affect another person, either sympathically or antipathically, by first sight, or first sound, or first smell, if not by an effusion too subtile to be perceptible by any special sense. It is not of course the formal apprehensions of thought but the delicate and subtile tones of feeling emanating from character which thus penetrate and thrill to the inmost. As there are invisible rays of light which penetrate bodies impenetrable to visible light, so may there be infra-conscious vibrations which affect the mind. The blind man who cannot see an object before him is yet capable of a certain facial perception of it when he comes near it.

# CHAPTER XI

## I

## Organic Variation and Heredity

### 1. *Organic Variation*

Organism and medium—Organic variation—Evolution and involution—Variation and external stimulus—Law of organic development—Organic modifiability—Mental variations—Vicissitudes of families and variations—Persistence of organic qualities—Family names and family characters—Bodily and mental variations—Aptitude to variations.

It is misleading to look on the organism and its environment as at unconditional war with one another, for thereby their essential interrelations of being are overlooked. No organism could exist without the coexistence of its medium; though in conflict it is at the same time in communion with it, living in and by it. What surroundings exist for any organism, bodily or mental, but those which, translated into its experience, it apprehends and assimilates—in fact lives? Self-made so far is everybody's external world, the self being what it is by virtue of so much of the environing whole as it is in relation with and assimilates—that is, takes and makes into itself. Therefore the world is not precisely the same for any two persons, because no two persons are fashioned exactly alike, albeit it is on the whole the same for all mankind, because, all having the same kind of senses and the same general structure, they feel and think it much alike.

To speak of an organism adapting itself to its environment by means of occasional and perchance suitable among many abortive variations is also apt to mislead. Fundamentally the adaptive variation is as much effect as cause; to use language implying spontaneity and purpose in it is to ascribe to it that which belongs only to conscious experience. At the same time, though not spontaneous and purposive, the organic variation cannot be fortuitous; it is a vital product signifying, as all life does, definite form with its definite natural causes and laws of being. The particular variation, abortive or productive, is necessarily determined not by the organism only, nor again by the external impression only, but by their co-operation according to immanent laws and forms of organic development, the actuation and rule of which, derived from its parental structure, are implicit in its substance. As in physical nature so here, there is action and fit reaction, only the reaction of the patient substance is less seeming-passive, more active and seemingly self-active, more circuitous and complex than in ordinary physical matter, and of course much more self-active in a complex organism than in a speck of protoplasm reacting to its simpler conditions.

How get out of living organic matter by any process of so-called evolution that which has not been somehow put into it potentially by some antecedent process of what might be called involution? How evolve in gross and visible display that which has not been involved by process of infinitely minute and invisible concentration? develop that actually which has not been enveloped potentially? As the chemical compound implies its definite chemical elements and laws of combination, so must an organic variation imply its special fixed definite antecedents and laws of being, in no case be a capricious, indefinite, fortuitous becoming of things; for as there are types or forms of chemical combination, and the elements combine not otherwise, so may there be organic types or forms determined by the properties and relations of the organic factors, not to be formed otherwise whatever the

conditions of the environment chance to be. So formed, if outer conditions suit, they will survive and grow; if not, they will wither and die, or at all events remain abortive.

When the occurring variation grows by so-called natural selection (external nature selecting it), or by natural election (it electing what suits it in external nature), it does so by growing to the conditions of its environment, as it is the nature of all living matter to do; and forasmuch as such growth implies a precedent function of interrelation between it and the suitable external conditions, and as the exercise of function involves formation of structure, the natural effect is the increased function of the added structure and further increase of growth so long as the conditions remain favourable. It is hard to conceive how the variation can either occur in the first instance or increase afterwards without the co-operation of the fit external stimuli.

To speak of an organism as a product of evolution, and thereupon to count the statement an explanation, is obvious nonsense. Evolution being nowise an agent, only a general name denoting a process of evolving or becoming, the statement amounts to this—that the organism is the product of a process of becoming. The exact law of such organic development was formulated by von Baer as a progress from the simple and general to the complex and special; and it may be questioned whether real knowledge has not been hindered rather than promoted by the substitution of the word evolution for the word development, and the enunciation of the law as a change from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous by progressive differentiations and integrations. The big words are taxable with a tendency to make the would-be thinker stay content in their imposing vagueness without finding out what they mean, or if he discern a meaning in them, to be so pleased with the discovery as to suppose that everything has been said which can or need be said. Besides, to call any organic matter homogeneous is hardly legitimate when substances that seem homogeneous, probably only because one cannot look into them, develop

very differently, and when the minutest speck of seemingly structureless protoplasm is confessedly an aggregation of a multitude of very active molecular mechanisms below the *minimum visible* either of aided or unaided eye.

Were an organism in such perfect adjustment to its environment that there was a constant equilibrium it would be fixed in structure and function, settled in the even activity of quiet automatic function, passion and action in exact equipoise. The fewer and more simple its constituent factors and the closer their facets to one another, the more stable will it be; whereas a complex organism with the many nice-fitted facets of its manifold constituents must needs be in a less stable equilibrium, more susceptible to, and more moved intimately by, changes in its more complex external conditions. Being then disturbed by internal unrest when stimulated from without, because of the complex correlations of its numerous and diverse parts, it seeks its ease or pleasure in external activity not in repose, which at its human best is in varieties of doing and in many inventions. As the external stimulus or impression, be it never so simple in itself, produces subtile, wide-reaching and complicated effects through long, intricate and circuitous chains of causes and effects, the resultant functional motion or structural variation, which seems casual, is not a translation of the external impression into any simple term of action, but the culminating effect and formal outcome of the manifold excitations of the latent qualities and their correlations in the complex organic whole. Thus, perhaps, it is that the greater the complexity of internal structure and energies the less is the external modifiability of form by conditions of the environment, and that any variations are most apt to occur in the brain of the human organism just because the human brain, which now is the most complex organic substance in the world, is plastic and has usurped the force and path of organic development on earth. In it, therefore, or in its ethereal quintessence in the reproductive germ, must be sought the principal ground of productive variations.

If an organic variation, by virtue of its proceeding from a definite organic structure, represent a condensed involution of its elements and parts, containing in its essence silent memories of them, it is easy to understand that it will be capable of definite evolution only in definite relation to its surroundings. In that respect it might be likened to the ovum, the developments of which, repeating in brief sketches the prolonged stages of organic development on earth—being a sort of abridged summary of genealogical evolution—could not take place were it not indued potentially with their various forms and kinds of substance. That every organic unit of a vital whole contains implicitly a quintessence of the whole is perhaps an extravagant speculation, but it is certain that no such unit can be fully comprehended without a knowledge of the chemistry and physics of the whole to which it is vitally bound.

In this relation it might be helpful to consider the instance of a concrete mental variation and what it implies. When in a small, narrow, and comparatively isolated society of persons subject year after year to the same round of external impressions and following the same monotonous routine of life, one of them conforms not to the settled manner of feeling, thinking and doing, but feels, thinks and acts in a novel way, he is a variation, a new start, good or bad; an eccentric moving out of the common orbit, who may turn out well or ill; a sort of alien from his kind, who, if too aberrant, may be taxed with mental alienation. He is pretty sure, indeed, whatever his merit or demerit, to be looked at askance with suspicion or dislike by the staid members of his community, perhaps despised as a social outcast or pitied as half mad. How came the tendency to variation in him? Whence did he get his novel impulse to leave the common roadway? Immediately, no doubt, from his ancestral stock in which was latent somehow a tendency to variation, prompt to disclose itself on the least external occasion, perhaps revealing itself when no sufficient external cause was apparent. But then arises the further question, How came

the tendency in the stock? Whence its aptitude to change? In the generative succession of organisms is notable not only a law of reproduction whereby the offspring exhibits features and qualities like those of its parents, but a law of production whereby it exhibits different features and qualities; so that every organic stock contains in itself the factors of organic variations, and one stock, of course, in different measure from another. We may be sure, too, in the case of a particular variation that the law of conservation of matter and energy has ruled in its formation as everywhere else in nature; in no case was it created out of nothing or in contempt of natural law. Now, if it be true, as previously argued, that a pre-essential condition of unfolding is a folding-in, there must in this case have been such a process of involution in the past history of the stock, some former assimilation in its structure of a variation of medium and adaptive reaction thereto which is now instinct in it, either to lie there dormant or to develop openly at the fit juncture of circumstances.

It is not difficult to conceive how such involution may happen in the many changes and vicissitudes of families and circumstances. Suppose a family which has lived in and grown to the circumstances of a superior social position, and enjoyed the privileges of high birth and station, to sink low in the social scale so that its members gain modest livelihoods in humble ways, and to remain at that level for several generations, would it then have so completely assimilated itself to its mean and monotonous surroundings as to be in complete physical and mental sympathy with them? Probably not. A secret unrest in the nature of the stock even after centuries might declare itself in reserve of character, in instinctive repugnances, in rebellious impulses, in tendencies to variation not shown by family stocks incorporating no higher past in their natures; a deep, sombre self-esteem derived from silent memories of past social esteem resent present social superiorities; and from time to time through generations an individual might be born who, being a remarkable reversion, had the latent aristocratic

instincts so strong in him as to be utterly out of tune with his present surroundings. Not easily effaced, indeed, is a fixed bent of organic structure; the tame beaver kept in domestic captivity never forgets its building instincts, but at the proper building season shows them in unrest and uneasy distress prompting it to escape; the Jewish millionaire has sometimes a keen pleasure, secret or sensible, in gaining a pound or a shilling in some petty bargain; and there are persons who, although losing a hundred pounds with comparative indifference, yet fret and fume beyond measure at the loss of a sixpence, and that because their forefathers parsimoniously laboured to save sixpences.

Consider again the opposite case of a hitherto low-born family which is raised abruptly in the social scale; it is notorious that generations must pass before the vulgar instincts are wholly bred out of it. The tradesman's spirit fails not to show itself with silent persistence or sporadically in the noble family which has clean forgotten or tried hard to forget its distant tradesman-ancestor; for the commercial tincture not only blends with and modifies other qualities, thus producing variations which relish of it, but sometimes comes out distinctly in its own crude nature, inspiring a particular quality or even a general tone of character which is a startling reversion. It seems surprising then that a well-born man can have and exhibit a meanness of nature so unbefitting his station, but the surprise vanishes when one recollects the thick drop of trade-blood in his veins.

An unexplored field of research which might perhaps yield some curious results, if duly garnered, is the study of family names in relation to family characters. On the one hand, note might be taken of the names which mark the original trades, occupations, or services of the progenitors to whom the name was first given, and close inquiry made whether in every person of the same name, whatever his present social position, there was not detectable some trace of the mental habits of the original occupation. On the other hand, note might be taken of the names of common

persons in humble stations which, now corrupted in spelling, mark a superior ancestry, in order to find out whether the traces of finer mental habits and bodily carriage did not still linger in those bearing them.

Evidently in the changing circumstances of families from generation to generation there are the occasions of internal differences which lead to differences of external action even in surroundings apparently the same; and these variations in their turn are developmental or degenerative according to the external conditions in which the fortune of life places them. And as the organism puts forth a variation in its mental domain not otherwise than as it does in its lower organic domains, an understanding of the import of a mental variation may help to throw light on the import of a purely bodily variation—at all events may serve to show that there is more in it than a simple and fortuitous outcome of circumstances—that it is in fact essentially a bud with immanent laws of development at whatever part of the stock it bursts out.

To compass in imagination and picture there vividly, were that possible, all the varieties of animal shape and structure on earth would be to excite curious reflections on the processes of organic variation that have gone on through the ages to issue in such manifold and often strange-looking products. What a number of odd animal forms of different species, and of odd structures in different organisms to perform the same function? Consider, for example, one function—that of reproduction, and the singular mechanisms of its performance to be seen throughout the animal kingdom: the extraordinary contortions and peculiar formations of structure in some creatures, just as though nature had sometimes gone about in the most roundabout ways imaginable—indeed, ways unimaginable were they not actually visible—fantastically to fashion the oddest, most ugly, and even clumsy mechanisms for the purpose. Certainly the means by which, in spite of the obstacles presented by the form of their rigid structures, the strangely twisted, contorted,

convoluted, and otherwise deformed bodies of some of the lower creatures unite the plasms of their reproductive germs to propagate their kind do not naturally suggest the forethought and intelligent execution of definite purpose, or prompt a rapturous admiration of the marvellous fitness of every animal organ for its purpose; they rather betoken the blind and slow flow of organic plasm propelled from behind through numberless channels which it forms for itself according to the obstacles it meets with and the favourable conditions it profits by in its inevitable course of conflict and communion with its environment. Like water trickling slowly downhill through a thousand irregular channels, or perhaps more like the slow stream of a glacier, the mighty stream of being follows the lines of least resistance and most favour; whence the manifold and sometimes singular products which, though they may be ascribed to survivals of the fittest by so-called natural selection, are calculated to run counter to human notions of fitness of things.

That "nature does nothing superfluously and in the use of means does not play the prodigal" is a saying of Kant's which is strangely inconsistent with facts. Nature's prodigal waste of material is notorious, constant, and reckless, and the multitude of tardy and tentative essays made by it before an organic end is reached incalculable in number. That it always then makes an organ perfect for its purpose is again utterly untrue, as it is untrue also that it never makes that which is fit for no purpose. How often is a face otherwise handsome spoilt by one bad feature, a long body badly furnished with short legs, a mind ruined by disproportion of its parts, a man killed by a useless organic appendage! The human eye has been the frequent cause of admiring ecstasies, yet it has defects of structure which a competent optician would avoid in making the perfect instrument for its purpose. The variety, delicacy, and complexity of the human organism and the amazing harmony of its complicated functions justly excite admiration—wonder, indeed, that it ever holds together so long as it does; yet they

furnish so many and easy occasions of defects and disorders that an organism without some natural defect is a singular rarity of nature, and that diseases are such common incidents of life as to be as natural as good health. To the objection that such a view of things proceeds only from the low standpoint of human conception of design, which is just as relative as any other human function, mental or bodily, the legitimate answer is that if human reason, being so limited, has no right to censure the constitution of things it has equally no right to pronounce them perfect; impotent to judge in the one case, reason is impotent in the other also. The truth perhaps is that the organic matter of the human brain in its mental functions has attained to a more complete and intelligent adaptation to its environment in some respects than is exhibited by many examples of its constructive work in the animal kingdom, which it therefore perceives to be sometimes awkward and bungling.

## 2. *Heredity*

Reproduction and production of qualities—Reversion to ancestral forms—Vice and virtue bred into or out of a stock—Shakespeare's composition of parental elements—The reproductive act—The affective element in heredity—Male elements in female, and female in male nature—Seasonal development of hereditary qualities—Fundamental type and its variations—Stable and unstable mental compositions—Various aspects and inconsistencies of character—Non-inheritance of genius—Unknown laws of heredity—Insanity and heredity—Special talents in imbecile or insane persons—Fundamental law of human development.

THAT a man inherits mental as he does bodily qualities like those of his father or mother is obvious; it is obvious too that he displays qualities which they had not in the same form. There is production as well as reproduction, descent of character with modification, the process involving either an increase or decrease of like qualities, or an apparent neutralization or cancelling of qualities, or the production of

new qualities which, though new, are still products of old qualities. Certain stable forms or patterns of the mental organization—mental compositions or configurations, so to speak—presumably pass without change in the transmission, while other mental forms of structure, being less stable in constitution, undergo decomposition in the vicissitudes of descent to enter into new forms and thus to originate variations or inventions. With mental forms in fact as with such forms of bodily movement as attitude, gait, gesture, handwriting, facial expression, some are distinctly parental in character, others different, whether superior or inferior.

The variations are sometimes notable reproductions of qualities which, albeit not parental, are yet ancestral; memories perchance of a grandfather or grandmother or of some more remote ancestor. They are then said to be latent, more properly perhaps potential, in the intermediate ancestors who exhibit them not. There is an evident tendency of mental forms in a family to revert to old and stable combinations—to what might be called the stock-forms; not otherwise than as in the hybrid offspring of the zebra and the ass the reversion of skin-stripes is towards those of the common ancestor of zebras. In the line of human descent, notwithstanding the frequent introduction of new elements and possibilities of new combinations by every marriage, the stabler stock-forms from time to time meet with the conditions favourable to their reproductions and recur in successive generations. The popular saying in respect of a vicious person that he comes of a bad stock, which is held to explain and in some measure excuse his shortcomings and wrongdoings, is an instinctive acknowledgment of this law of reversion. It is, after all, but a particular instance of the constant tendency of matter coerced into special and complex developments to revert to more simple and stable states.

As the graftings into the family stock of different mental qualities from generation to generation by succeeding marriages tend to produce different strains of thought, feeling

and doing, these in turn may meet with conditions favourable to the composition of new and more special forms of mental organization. They become then inward variations or inventions, new starts, whence in due course proceed outward inventions in arts, science, industry, and the like. So likewise it comes to pass that vice can be bred out of a family and virtue bred into it by selective breeding through generations, as vice may conversely be bred into a family and virtue bred out of it when the course of compositions goes the wrong way of degeneration instead of the right way of development.

In the changes and chances of mental composition it came to pass once upon a time that parents of no remarkable distinction produced Shakspeare; and elsewhere men of extraordinary genius have proceeded from family stocks of no extraordinary mark. There was manifestly then a singularly happy combination of elements in the product whereby, fit external conditions luckily co-operating, the law of organic development from the more simple and general to the more complex and special was eminently fulfilled. For genius is the outcome of that principle of development in the most special and complex organic structure in the world—the human brain; just a new and special incarnation of the elemental energy of nature betokening its *conatus fiendi*, be it then named divine as a partial embodiment of the Power "that is," or left unnameable.[1] Not that such a well-endowed brain as Shakspeare possessed can be justly counted a mysterious special creation, a quite exceptional freak of nature, something which it never did before and, having done once, could never do again; on the contrary, it may be taken for granted that many times in other provincial towns minds of equal capacity have been produced which, having not had the fortune to light on the exact time and conditions propitious to their perfect development, never grew into such conspicuous eminence as to be accounted quasi-divine and to

[1] "I am He that is," not "I am that I am" being presumably the right translation of God's words to Moses.

have wonderful inspiration discovered in their worst as well as their best performances.[1]

It is a popular opinion that a man of genius or other person of eminent distinction owes his superior qualities to his mother. But it is not always so. He may, it is true, have had a mother of good mental quality, but it is often true that, like Alexander the Great and other notable men, he had a father well endowed mentally. It is not so much the possession of extraordinary mental qualities either by father or mother as the happy combination of sound stocks of good quality which results in the excellent mental constitution of the offspring: the happy and harmonious combination perhaps of the good intellectual elements of the one with the good affective elements of the other. Without doubt the properties of germ-elements and their laws of combination are as definite as, although vastly more complex than, the properties of chemical elements and their laws of combination; and the products may be good or bad. To breed a genius out of the union of two idiots, even were they capable of breeding, would be a vain endeavour, because the potential mental elements are wanting in their germ-plasms; but a genius may proceed from the union of two peasants who, though uncultured and undeveloped mentally themselves, proceed from a sound stock and possess brains of good native power and quality. For the present, the exquisitely fine laws of germinal combination are inscrutable, nor are they likely to be known until an exact knowledge of organic physics and chemics shall have laid the positive basis of a science of human nature dealing not with speculations and words, but with the facts of individual character and the effects of combinations of characters in breeding. Meanwhile, many an altar might rightly be raised to Fortune by

[1] The lucky circumstance in Shakspeare's case was the happy combination of elements into extraordinary mental stature; in another case it may be a combination of elements issuing in extraordinary bodily stature, as when a giant in body proceeds from parents of ordinary height.

the fortunate, seeing that sometimes an unfortunate child of a family, by mysterious chance, inherits the bad qualities and a fortunate child the good qualities of a parental stock, and either thereafter degenerates or develops in life.

The excceding delicate and complex nature and the tremendous import of the reproductive act are overlooked by viewing it in the gross. In it may lie the predestination of the progeny. The male and female germs which then blend in union contain in quintessence all the elements, organs, properties, qualities, the whole mental and bodily characters of the individuals from whom they proceed; they may therefore suit well or ill for composition, or hardly suit at all. Why wonder then at a discordant or deformed product, or no product at all, from the repugnant union of constitutional antipathies? Besides, the reproductive act itself is not simply a gross and mere indifferent function which may be done well or ill anyhow; at all events when it is not the conjunction of lust, as in the animal, but the union of love, as it aspires to be in the man. At its best it is the perfect harmony of the motions and moods of two minds and bodies, summing up in itself quintessentially the motions, as the germs do the qualities of their elements; a harmonious transport in fact, far exceeding in the subtilties and complexities of its notes and composition any instrumental musical performance. How easy then for the harmony of its exquisitely fine and complex combinations to be spoilt by discordant jar, want of sympathy, coarse lust, grating feeling, distraction of mind, the casual mood, natural indifference, and a thousand unknown or unregarded bodily conditions! So stuffed is man with conceit of his spirituality and contempt of his animality that he wilfully ignores or stubbornly neglects the essential conditions of the production of spirituality in him; instead of refining and subliming the coarse lusts of the flesh into the fine graces of spirit, he would fain stupidly reject and suppress them. With all his long experience on earth and his many diligent researches into the relations of body and mind, he has no better understanding

now of the requisite qualities in two individuals for the most successful breeding than his primeval forefathers had: cannot say how far there should be unlikeness rather than likeness of qualities for the most perfect love-product; cannot predict a single feature or even so much as the sex of the offspring; cannot do what the bees easily do to ensure fertility when there is barrenness in the hive.

To obtain the best mental product in the offspring it is probable that the affective element of the parental structure, the strength and quality of feeling, is more important than the purely intellectual element. For as feeling is the expression in mind of the essential nature, testifying to the stock-quality, it acts to fuse and weld the elements in construction; whereas the intellect, being means and instrument, is apt to be critical and destructive. If good parental feeling be not the main factor in the production of good progeny, it is undeniable that bad and perverse parental feeling is a very effective cause of idiopathic insanity, moral weakness, viciousness of disposition in the offspring; in truth, a more efficient cause of such degeneracy than actual derangement of intellect in the parent. Superior intellect, without the requisite fit feeling, notably does not serve well in the highest works of mind, whatever it may do in the baser functions of life; in fact, a good force of feeling may do more with a comparatively simple intellectual instrument than inferior feeling will do with a complex instrument. Other things being equal, the size of the brain is an important fact; but a well-toned, well-tuned, and well-informed brain, though of moderate size only, will sometimes produce a richer activity and finer melody of thought than a big brain which is not so well-equipped in proportion.

To have inherited well, mentally, is then perhaps to have inherited excellent qualities from the mother just because the affective element usually predominates in the woman. Yet it may chance that the affective qualities are inherited from the father, if not immediately and evidently, at all events in intermediate and occult ways from the ancestral

female element in him—from the woman latent in the man. For no individual is exclusively and absolutely man or woman; in the mind as in the body of either there is the rudiment of that which is fully developed in the other; the male nature containing implicitly something of the female qualities and the female nature something of the male qualities of the stock, to be transmitted to the progeny in which it develops explicitly. If it were not so, how could the daughter ever reproduce the features, bodily or mental, of her father's mother, or the son those of his mother's father? In the progress of organic development a division of labour has been made for fertilization by the separation of bodies which yearn passionately to be again reunited in the reproductive act. Nor has the specialization entailed an absolute separation of qualities; the male body, for example, has not so far got rid of the purposeless appendages of its female nature as to suppress the rudimentary nipples, nor forgotten to retain its useless and sometimes mischievous rudiment of the uterus.

Here note may fitly be taken of a fact inadequate apprehension of which has helped to confuse the difficult study of heredity—namely, that as the male or female nature respectively can only be expected to show visibly its hereditary qualities at the particular seasons of their natural development, maturity, and decline in the individual, their absence before that time can nowise count against their existence. The male who inherits sexual mental qualities from his female parent, and the female who inherits such qualities from her male parent, will not exhibit them, though latent, until the seasonal period of their development, nor exhibit the special bodily or mental qualities of a parent of the same sex until that crisis. Heredity being the memory of ancestral function, it is obvious that the function can be remembered only when it wakes into action. Then it is sometimes that one sees with surprise the predominance of the feminine qualities of mind in the man, and of the masculine qualities of mind in the woman. As the

individual from birth to death is never fixed but ever becoming not a constant, but an imperceptiblysteady flux, an ancestral quality may leap into evidence at any moment: a person notably reveal plainly, perhaps for the first time, a parental feature in the process of dying, just as a facial expression soon after death may disclose a singular parental likeness which it had not shown during life. In this case, however, the mould of the firm ancestral structure is clearly defined, because it is no longer concealed, effaced, or defaced by the play of the features in their varieties of expression during life; which, for example, might be memories of the mother, or mixed memories, not always congruous perhaps, of father and mother, while the mould represented the father. Without doubt, an intelligent and duly instructed person who observed closely the different expressions of his features at different times, and in different moods and circumstances, might discover the memories of a dozen ancestors did he but know their features exactly; might perhaps perceive once or twice only in his lifetime under special conditions of health or of strain and stress, and be startled by, a special expression which he could not even simulate, however he tried, but which was plainly an unexpected ancestral reminiscence.

If all his ancestors be quintessentially contained in the individual, as the very structure of his organism implies, he need not mightily wonder at nor seek excuses for impulses which spring up unexpectedly in him from time to time and he cannot in the least account for. Being such a wonderful and inscrutable complex, the small part of him which rises into consciousness is but a partial revelation of the multitudinous subtile activities going on continually below its level and constituting the real forces of his character. Let him take comfort then in all his aberrations and inconsistencies; in fulfilling the strangest impulsion he is living some ancestor or some ancestral quality latent in him. Has he a thoroughly well constituted mind-substance below the level of consciousness by virtue of a good ancestral stock? It is their virtues

which support him if he is virtuous, their counsels which instruct him if he is wise, their good feelings which inspire him if he is good. Obviously in no case can he exactly repeat his forefathers, for not only does he contain some different compositions of elements, but, his brain being brought into relation with the circumstances of a new and different environment, he cannot for that reason act instinctively and automatically, he must needs make fresh adjustments. The result is that he is not, as he otherwise would be, an instinctive and intuitive being exactly adapted to his medium, but that a reflection of nerve-currents takes place—that is to say, a mental reflection with its consequent consciousness. He represents in fact one of many variations of the fundamental type.

As mental compositions may be complete and stable, or imperfect and unstable, according to the qualities of the combining parental strains, it comes to pass that all sorts of minds, sound and stable, strong and wise, erratic and unstable, weak and unsound, are generated. There is no greater absurdity than to speak of mind as if it were always of equal strength and quality; for nature makes as many abortive and imperfect products in its mental as in its other works. One instance of instability is notable, although it has been little noted: I mean when the paternal and maternal elements are mixed rather than completely combined in the individual, retaining their respective characters instead of blending and losing them in a new product with different and, perhaps, superior qualities, so that sometimes the one and sometimes the other nature predominates in the feelings and doings, whether at different seasons or at different junctures of life. Such a one then is not a firm compound whole, not a consistent unity, but a mixture or binding together rather than a vital composition of organic factors; for which reason, witnessing now to the one and now to the other parental stock, he surprises others and himself too, perhaps, by his different explosions of character. It would seem that there had not then been in generation the

requisite antagonisms and affinities of elements whereby, like positive and negative electricity, they are reciprocally attracted and blended in explosive union. It might be curious to enquire whether, in such case of imperfectly compounded natures, there was not an unsymmetrical conformation of the two sides of the head—a nowise uncommon feature—or perhaps other common lack of bodily symmetry, the outer asymmetry being not, of course, cause or effect but natural concomitant of the internal asymmetry. Be that as it may, it is certain that the want of a thorough unity of being, a perfect mental integrity, is the cause of vacillations, inconsistencies, worries, regrets, self-criticisms and other self-consciousnesses to the ill-compounded mortal, and likely to hinder him, however conspicuous his talents, from ever reaching the loftiest mental eminence. He will have too much of the conscious, too little of the unconscious, mental productivity.

Not that any mortal is thoroughly consistent. Everybody contains so many ancestors and such a variety of ancestral experience implicit in him, and is subject through life to so many and diverse influences in the sundry and manifold changes of circumstances, that it is impossible to say what latent factor of so complex and many-faceted a being may be called into action; for any one of the facets may be stimulated to growth by the several aspects and changing conditions of things. The truth is that the vast majority of persons are habitually and grossly inconsistent; believe one day what they disbelieve another day, without any other reason than a change of mood, tranquilly hold side by side inconsistent or actually contradictory beliefs in their minds, and are so inconstant in feeling and conduct that no one, not even themselves, can be sure to-day what they will say or do to-morrow. There is nothing strange in that; the strange thing is to think it strange and to expect consistency in character, as though the individual was a constant not a flux, an end in himself not merely a passing means to a far-off end or no end at all in a process of things

which consistencies and inconsistencies alike fulfil. To the whole it matters not how the forces of human being and doing are distributed individually, nor what the individual feels, thinks, suffers, so long as they do their work in the mass; nor perhaps as much to human society as it seems, which just uses the individual in its service and abounds in inconsistencies and misjudgments, oftentimes condemning the cynic who is actually tender-hearted and sincere, while it praises tender-heartedness and sincerity in the abstract, and belauding the impassioned trader in philanthropy who is actually vain, selfish, and hypocritical, while it condemns hypocrisy and selfishness in the abstract.

The factors of most importance in the reproductive union of two minds being the basic qualities of the stock, not the overt qualities displayed by either of them, the deep implicit subconscious mind-substance, not its express conscious manifestations, it is no surprise that genius is not inherited—the genius, that is, which, using up the vital sap, blossoms in full flower, and that genius proceeds sometimes from the well-structured and rich-sapped stock which, having made no explicit show, has not exhausted itself in flowering many times. The obscure father or grandfather has been a person of larger innate capacity, of greater potentiality mentally, than his eminent son or grandson who flowered brilliantly at the fit season and in favourable conditions. As the accomplishments of a particular mind are individual developments, they can be no more inherited than the athletic accomplishments of a particular body; they tend rather to spend the capital of funded force in the stock, which is then unfit to produce well again in the direct line, fit only, perhaps, if not finally exhausted, to produce another genius through another branch after a long spell of quiet, self-denying, humbly heroic growth.

The little that is yet known of the laws of heredity is just enough to make it certain that there are such laws, and that, were they fully and exactly known, it would be possible by selective breeding and training to form in

process of due time a required character. The more strange, therefore, it is to think how very little has been done to find them out, seeing that the facts to be observed were always in evidence and the instructive experiments being constantly made; yet not so strange as it would be had not the human mind been severed absolutely from nature and deemed exempt from natural laws of organic production, growth and decline, and had not each type of human creature always thought itself the best and done its best to preserve and perpetuate itself.

A few patent and striking facts of heredity could not escape common observation—for example, that genius is seldom or never inherited, and that insanity often is hereditary. Yet little is known definitely concerning the inheritance of insanity: one child of an insane stock becomes insane, while other children of the same parents go through life without becoming insane; and we cannot tell why. Nay, there are not a few instances I could adduce to prove that one brother may rise to eminent distinction, or even show a large measure of genius, while another is under confinement as a hopeless lunatic. In the very instability of a neurotic family stock, indeed, there lies the possibility of greater mobility and freer combinations of elements, whereby in the vicissitudes of composition either a happy variation or an unhappy aberration may chance to be produced. It is no surprise when an insane parent has an idiot child, yet it might prove, were exact enquiries made, that idiocy proceeded more often from parents who were of a mentally unsound stock, albeit not themselves insane, than from an actually insane parent; and it is certainly generated sometimes without any evident defect in the parents or their stocks. There is nothing to wonder at in that if we reflect how surely an untoward shock or jar may spoil the subtile combinations of the germ-elements, and how utterly unknown to us is yet the invisible world of the infinitesimal. One thing is pretty certain—namely, that there are varieties of unsound moral temperament, not

accounted technically insane, which are perhaps more likely to breed insane offspring than actual parental insanity; such temperaments, in fact, as are in their essence mean, miserly, avaricious, distrustful, suspicious, deceitful, narrowly and intensely egoistic, oftentimes specially fanatical. That, too, is natural enough, considering how essentially feeling is the exponent of character, and how surely narrow or base feeling in proportion to its intensity alienates the individual from his kind and from the wholesome welding force of social union. Of such bad mind-stuff a positive mental alienation is the natural degenerative product in the next generation. Always, sound and whole feeling denoting good foundation of character is more important than great intellect.

Another certain fact is that an insane parent or a parent proceeding from an insane stock may beget or conceive a child whose insanity consists mainly or almost wholly in an absence of social or moral sense; a creature so destitute congenitally of moral feeling that it is impossible to implant even the germ of it by any culture, the highest province of mind, the moral structure of its organization, being entirely wanting. Here once more is no cause for wonder; for it is not reasonable to expect mental alienation from the kind in one generation, or that deficiency in the stock, whatever it be, which individual mental alienation betrays—severation, that is, from communion of thinking and feeling—unless it be happily and mysteriously counteracted in reproduction, to develop the sound social feeling of community with the kind in the next generation. A complete absence of moral feeling is then in the natural order of pathological evolution, which is the order of physiological degeneration.

An observation which those who are conversant with the varieties of mental degeneration have frequent occasion to make is the possession sometimes, by a member of an insane stock, of a signal special talent or aptitude, innate since it is not acquired by any labour and often shows itself very precociously: an extraordinary memory perhaps for words or

dates or other details, a wonderful talent for music or drawing, a singular rhyming aptitude, or other remarkable special gift—when all the rest of the mind is little better than imbecile. Although the parents in such case may not be deficient in intelligence, one or the other perhaps possessing a notable talent—artistic, musical, or poetic—yet they are usually unsound in feeling, being intensely egoistic, self-centred, wanting in true social reciprocity of feeling, devoid of sense of proportion, quite unable to see themselves as others see them—exceeding sensitive and high-strung as they say of themselves; strung on an exclusive string of self, as others might say of them. It is this sort of innate special and partial talent, this singular streak of genius in a general waste, which has helped to give vogue to the saying that genius is akin to madness and only divided from it by thin partitions.

To study such instances scientifically and fruitfully instead of helplessly wondering at them as mysteries, it is necessary to substitute for the vague notion of mind as an abstract entity, one and indivisible, the positive conception of a confederate mental organization in which, as in the general bodily organization, one part may be in excess or defect, lame when the rest is sound or sound when the rest is lame. Nor need an exaggerated notion of the moral dignity of mind deter men from such patient and positive study of it, for the certain result will be to prove that the moral decadence of one generation is a rotten foundation on which to expect to build the moral and intellectual sanity of the succeeding generation. Science, confirming and reiterating the lesson which the Hebrew prophets solemnly and passionately proclaimed, will reveal and expound the natural laws of organic growth from generation to generation by which it is ordained that through righteousness and not through iniquity shall man's seed prosper on earth; it may then also soberly preach the duty and prescribe the method of finding out how to do that successfully in the particular products.

## II

### GENIUS AND TALENT

Difference between genius and talent—The man of genius—Special kinds of genius—Sanity of highest genius—Subconscious creative activity—Quality and tone of brain—Genius excites suspicion and enmity—Unhappiness of genius—Native differences of mental faculty—Sympathy and antipathy of minds—The seeing mind—Sociability and sincerity—Want of sympathy with the kind—A life of detachment—The proper part to play in the drama.

THE difference between genius and talent, although not definable in words, is instinctively and quickly felt. On the receptive side genius is sensitive and intuitive, on the reactive side productive or creative, whereas talent is systematically ratiocinative and constructive: quasi-instinctive intuition and heart in the one as against conscious excogitation and invention in the other. It is the difference between the unconscious working of a brain well-instructed and well-intuned by nature and the discursive working of a brain in process of laboured formation and tuning. Successive steps of generalization are the proper quasi-mechanical helps which the latter has constant need of; the former can largely dispense with them because a happy inheritance and propitious circumstances have consolidated them in good mental structure which now functions subconsciously. Therefore all the strainings of talent, however strenuous and diligent, fail to strike the note of genius, and, resenting failure, are prone to strike enviously at it. Howbeit genius and talent are not in the end separated by a distinct line of division in nature: they merge by insensible transitions where they meet.

To say that genius does what it must, talent what it can, is to speak a large measure of truth; to say that genius is only an infinite capacity of taking pains is to speak a large untruth. The man of talent does what he has consciously learnt to do and others can be taught to do, and might, like him, do were they similarly situated, although, having superior mental powers, he does easily and well that which

they only do less easily and well; the man of genius does that which nobody but himself can do; his work is the essential and unique expression of himself, and he does it without being aware how he does it; he is conscious of the mature product, not conscious of the throes of productive travail. Being by gift of his happily endowed nature in deep and true sympathy or tune with the nature in, by, and on which he works he shares its *natura naturans*. Whosoever is obliged deliberately to concoct a good mental product before bringing it forth, whether in poetry, in painting, in sculpture, in true art of any kind, may be content with modest achievements, for he can never be the great artist, he is rather at best a clever artificer. To humanize nature by making thought nature and nature thought in art, such is the work of the true artist who, to do it well, must himself be a good nature-made organ, a person of genius.

Not that the genius need be a complete all round whole. A person of genius in one line of mental activity may notably not rise above, may indeed fall below, the average level of general intelligence, which is what a man of talent could not well do. The different qualities of genius, being as many and diverse as the special qualities of different minds in their relations to diverse circumstances and conditions of life, are incomparable. How compare the genius of a great conqueror with that of a great musician; that of a great mathematician with that of a great poet; that of a great painter with that of a great inventor; that of a Rousseau or a Chateaubriand with that of a Shakspeare or a Goethe? Wonderful is it how special and limited, yet positive, a streak of genius there may be in a mind which is otherwise commonplace: notable imbeciles sometimes exhibit singular special aptitudes, and extraordinary calculating powers or remarkable musical instincts are met with where, so far from being a measure of intellectual superiority, they are quite out of keeping with a moderate or even low general level of mental powers. Even madness is illumined sometimes by a streak of genius. Wholly

different, however, is the well-textured and well-tuned brain of the large genius which reflects nature as a whole, not merely such narrow, partial, fragmentary tracts of it as the specially attuned brain-tracts of these inferior brains respond to, for all the world as though one string of a complex lyre were tuned well while the rest were slack and tuneless. The vulgar saying that genius and madness are near akin is fallacious, although sure of continual iteration in spite of continual refutation; for it is just the gross logical fallacy of making general a statement which is true only of some particulars. A kinship of genius to insanity is met with only in those ill-compacted and malformed brains which, weak and unstable, yet evince a special quality of genius. Such brain-structures, being badly proportioned—that is to say, essentially irrational in structure—cannot make quiet, steady, full social adjustments and assimilations; for which reasons their unstable and eccentric owners, lacking the restraints of discipline which, duly assimilated, are the supports of strength, resent checks as offences and engross themselves in the exclusive function and delirious delight of a special faculty which they feel to be divine.

Hence the frequent wail of the so-called artistic temperament clamouring to be specially protected, aided, coddled, as a marvel of nature, which, were it allowed to perish, nature could never produce the like of again. The genius of highest order is under no such childish illusion and narrow limitation; he sees himself and things in their right proportions and sees them as a whole, is deeply and wholly rational, fundamentally the sanest and most self-controlled of men.

The creative power of genius illustrates well the silent and constant thought-work of brain, its under-currents of productive activity beneath the level of consciousness. The product owes its excellence to the excellent qualities of the brain, as these have been determined, first and mainly, by its native organization, and, secondly, by the incorporated effects of growth in suitable circumstances. Without the

special gift of nature no labour or training will avail to produce the fine flower of genius. Yet in no case can labour and rules of right mental culture, conscious or unconscious, be safely neglected. Close and active attention in observation and resolute practice of clear thinking are essential preconditions of the mental precipitation of the extraordinary product; just the same qualities of steady industry and patient preparation in fact as are necessary to the development of great talent, which are just the qualities lacking in the mad genius. Mind being organization, it obviously can be developed only by the silent, gradual, continuous processes characteristic of organic growth. Although genius is not then merely a capacity of taking pains, yet it is necessary to take pains to develop its capacity, narrow or large; knowing naturally, however, how to see, it sees much in a little thing and sees far in a short time. The pity of it is that the mind of a narrow genius never can be properly cultivated, because a proper mental cultivation implies the cultivation of the whole brain by steady labour, not of a special tract of it intermittently; whereas the special tract of the one-stringed brain craves and by natural affinity selects its own special nourishment, the rest of the brain being left waste and untended. Given the exceptionally well-organized brain duly nourished by observation of facts and occupied in silent brooding on them, and the excellent product is wrought unconsciously; there is no need of forced labour and inventive agony; in a most delicate and complex organic mechanism tuned to fine harmonies the right notes are struck, fitly respond to one another, and combine in true concord and melodies.

Psychologists for the most part have not duly noted and appreciated the import of quality of feeling, of native tone, in the construction of the superior brain; they have thought too exclusively of mental power or faculty. Yet the brain of the born musician is notably tuned from infancy in a very special way. In like manner a well-toned brain feels its thoughts finely as well as thinks them clearly. These call

one another up unconsciously by delicate sympathies of tone rather than by deliberate associations of ideas, which are coarse in comparison; for which reason they are adapted by fine and unerring art to arouse similar thoughts and feelings in other fitly endowed brains. Melody rather than meditation is the note of genius, and therefore every great work is a great harmony; there is heart as well as thought in the work, and heart and thought are in unison; thought being fitly infused with continual feeling, nowise so defused by it as to be mere formless incontinence and delirious rapture. The true poet sings as the bird sings, because it is the natural, free, spontaneous utterance of himself. It is not a question whether the brain be big or little, it is rather a question how it is constructed and tuned.

That genius is apt to be a disturbing element in a settled social system is nowise surprising. It necessarily implies a detachment and freedom of mind from conventions of thought and feeling, whereby things are seen freshly, directly, sincerely, in their true relations and in their causes and consequences—a liberation from the formalisms, circumscriptions and routines of the vulgar mind. As it therefore feels, thinks and acts differently from the common herd it is apt to surprise and startle unpleasantly, even to provoke suspicion, distrust, hostility; people do not understand it, are disturbed by it, and therefore dislike, fear, hate, even calumniate it. Nay, it is possible sometimes to tax it with bad taste when, being sincere and in dead earnest, it revolts against the accepted social reticences and hypocrisies of polite speech and behaviour which decently cover the insincerities and smooth the intercourse of social life. Though it be true, it is not always truly becoming, to call a spade a spade in polite circles; rather than call it so men gladly run the risk of not thinking a spade a spade, and so by natural declension of losing hold of realities, of lapsing into shows and shams, and of staying content in conventional formalisms of speech and conduct. The lower animals—with the exception of the dog whose immemorial association

with man's social life has taught it a measure of necessary hypocrisy—are and can afford to be sincere and genuine in the utterance of themselves, because they are not social as he is; they have no need to dissimulate what they are and to simulate what they are not, seeing that they are not obliged in their own interest to subdue and mould their natures into conformity with a complex social system, as men must do who have to live a double life—the basic life of the animal nature actuating them to live accordingly, and the superstructural social nature which, urging developments that are to be, make them seem to be what they are not. For they have not yet reached that perfect social stability of the beehive in which all disturbing impulses of individualism are extinguished and every member of it subdued absolutely by the spirit of the hive.

As genius is essentially sincere and true, it inevitably comes to pass often that the particular man of genius is unhappy in the world, its fulfilment entailing a kind of martyrdom. Being the nature-made means to do a new thing which nature wants to have done, the variation to subserve a new development by new assimilations of nature, he is inevitably more or less out of tune with things as they are and must break through the hardened conventions of thought and feeling, suffering in the pains of such travail the resentment and hostility of the opinions and customs which he rends; therefore the incompletely developed and unstable brain traversed by a thin streak of genius is prone to howl aloud and to call on men and angels to witness how it is afflicted. But the strong and well-fashioned brain of large genius endures calmly, reacts justly, assimilates steadily, and so makes its suffering its gain; in quietness and confidence is its strength; having all its faculties well-knit in just balance and seeing things in their just ratios and as a whole, it has the insight and outsight to view life as a spectacle—in serene aloofness and with genial humour at the best, in sombre isolation and with cynical disdain or bitter satire when less strongly built and less happily tuned.

The absurd opinion that men are born equal mentally, and that their differences of intelligence are due to differences of education, so long heedlessly held by the vulgar and even sanctioned by philosophers, is still covertly favoured by many who extol beyond measure the value of education, as if, properly waved, its magic wand could make all minds grow to the same height. Men differ actually as much and as variously in mental as in bodily stature, and no one can by taking thought add either to the fixed height of his mind or body. One day of the wise man's life, says the Oriental proverb, is worth more than the whole life of a fool; and it would require more than Oriental wisdom to compute the number of fools' lives which are the mental equivalent of one wise man's life. When a commander of eminent capacity in war wins a great victory and saves an empire, his life is worth more than the lives of the thousands slain in the battle, who only count as so many subordinate and easily replaceable units of low vital dignity whose humble fate it is to serve the national life; all the sadder, therefore, is it when his incapacity loses the battle, and thousands are killed whose minds together, or perhaps some separately, exceeded his mind in value.

Superiority of intelligence and feeling in two casually meeting minds is quickly and mutually felt; an instant note of sympathy which is pleasing being struck, or a jar of antipathy caused which repels. It is only when corresponding chords in two brains are tuned in concord that they vibrate in unison of thought and feeling; therefore, to discern intelligence it is necessary to have it, and to appreciate the quality of intelligence a congenial quality of intelligence is indispensable. Accordingly, when two persons meet and talk together, they fail not to make a quick and subtile valuation of their respective mental powers and to feel a relative superiority or inferiority. Now although it is hard for a superior mind to find pleasure in serious converse with an inferior mind, as it is hard for an expert player in a game of skill to enjoy playing it with a poor player, yet he may

find instruction in it if, instead of regarding seriously what the person says and being repelled by it, he uses the occasion to make a psychological study of the defects of knowledge, fallacies of reasoning, and bias of prejudice which the silly talk reveals; if the fool cannot teach him wisdom, he may learn wisdom from the fool's want of wisdom. The inferior understanding in converse with a superior understanding, whose notes it cannot reflect or reverberate, being sensible of something it cannot comprehend and perhaps of a secret humiliation, feels a sort of repellent jar and is apt to suspect and dislike, even to fear and hate; not otherwise than as when in the physical world some strange and extraordinary event, confounding customary apprehension, produces a kind of panic of mind. All which is quite natural, since it is nothing else but the action of the self-conservative instinct of a narrow mind resenting that which is a threat to its special self-preservation. The superior mind on its side, seldom meeting its peer, is prone to slide into seclusion and self-absorption, the evil effects of which are disproportionate exaggerations of thoughts and feeling; for it is certainly a rare mind which can enjoy what Wordsworth extolled as "the self-sufficing power of solitude," without suffering deformity and deterioration by the isolation.

When the superior mind has thought out some invention which, once found, seems simple and obvious, the world wonders that it did not find it out before, or persuades itself that, after all, the invention was not really so new as it claimed to be. Not new perhaps had there been the intelligent eye to see it; a dumb sort of instinct has been translated into clear thought which has therefore a not quite unfamiliar look. But it was the interpretation of the seeing mind behind the eye which was wanting, the due mental ordering of the scattered facts; and the merit of the discoverer is to reveal to men that which they are mentally blind to and but for his discernment might long continue blind to. Developing nature in himself he then develops an answering development of nature in their minds. The

so-called accident which he, knowing how to observe when he sees, and seeing much in what seems a small thing, apprehends the meaning of, becomes an invention. It is certain that mankind did not foresee and deliberately plan the manufacture of wine; they were no doubt confronted with the accident of its occurrence many times before some curious inquirer chanced to investigate the process of fermentation, and thereafter made methodical use of knowledge to bestow on them a boon which, his name long forgotten, they fabled to be the gift of a God. Suppose that an intelligent inquirer had bethought himself long ago to examine curiously how it was that a dog's wound which it often licked healed soon, whereas his own wound perhaps suppurated and took weeks to heal, he might perchance have discovered the virtues of aseptic or antiseptic cleanliness and anticipated the great practical achievement of modern surgery; a discovery which had to come late and indirectly after it had been found out that corruption ensued when noxious germs got into an unclean wound, and did not take place when they were kept out of it or killed in it.

To call the man of superior understanding who leads a life of solitude misanthropic and to blame him for lack of love of his kind is not always just. In the first place, it is not perhaps the human kind in general but the particular section of it in which his lot is cast which he lacks love of and shuns. How can he enter into real converse of heart and mind with those among whom, if he is to be sociable, he must force himself to superficialities and unveracities of thought and feeling, to affectations of sympathy, to irksome irrationalities of conduct, to calculated reticences and insincerities of speech, to banal phrases that mean nothing or nothing clearly thought out—must in fact for the time be not himself but an artificial creature of convention, an approved social formalism, answering like a machine to each special impression. The continual practice of such performances until they become the habit of a nature must needs be hurtful to the sincerity, veracity, and wholeness of any mind,

which in the end is pretty sure to be subdued to the medium it works in, although an occasional performance might not be without value as an exercise and a discipline. To live sympathetically and sociably in the crowd without being of it is no doubt an excellent counsel of perfection, but in practice it will exact a strength and serenity of nature more God-like than human, and a degree of mental detachment incompatible with real sympathy; for it is virtually a demand that intellectual insight piercing through the show of things and emancipated from illusions shall take illusions in earnest and preserve a serious interest in them, or be falsely earnest enough to pretend well to take them in earnest. When all is said, the dispraise of a particular society might be true praise.

In the second place, a man may perhaps be excused rather than accused for not being fervently in love with his kind when, not being engulfed in and biassed by its colossal egoism, he sees it soberly and steadily as it actually has been and is on earth, not as ideally it would be or feign to be. Although all people are of one kindred, yet they certainly present many varieties, some of which differ more in degree than do some kinds. No more terrible reproach can be hurled at any one throughout Christendom than that no Christian would act as he does, whereas in Moslem lands to be counted a Christian is to be counted no better than a dog of an infidel. The single Christian among Moslems, if he had a genuine faith, and the single Moslem among Christians, how could either choose but be solitary? To love mankind in the abstract is an ideal aim which necessitates an ideal life of love in seclusion; it can exist on no other terms; for love of mankind in the concrete, when the concretes differ so immensely as to be almost opposites, is incompatible with the experience and necessities of practical life among them. The Chinese philosopher, studying in seclusion the lofty moral precepts of the Christian religion as set forth in its sacred books, might feel his heart glow in sympathy with so sublime an ideal of conduct; but the

Chinese statesman who has been the sorrowful witness of the spoliations, devastations, brutal outrages, and savage slaughter of men, women, and children perpetrated by Christian soldiers in the name of their religion, cannot well be expected to feel a like glow of brotherly sympathy. He might perhaps be excused if he felt more love of a member of a lower animal species than of a Christian member of his own species.

As man is neither angel nor brute but a mean between angel and brute, he cannot incline overmuch towards either pole of his nature without suffering detriment in consequence; he ought neither to get rid of his passions to become angel, nor to live in them to be brute, but to find out and keep the just mean. The natural results of a mental detachment whereby the goings and doings of men were surveyed with a cool impartiality, much as the scenes and acts of a play are watched by an indifferent spectator, would, according to the degree of detachment, be either a towering egoism of contemplative serenity, which might not, however, protect him altogether from frets and follies at home, or an acrid cynicism springing from greater intensity of feeling and less detachment of intellect: in the one case, a coldly indifferent or smilingly tolerant outlook on the follies, frauds, vices, aberrations, aspirations, ambitions and achievements of men by virtue of a sublimely isolated self-centralization; in the other case, a bitterness of resentment and criticism because of real earnestness of sympathy turned to sour satire, nowise wholly diverted to and engrossed in a supreme egoism. After all, there was probably more heart, a keener sympathy with his kind, more real unselfishness of feeling in the savage satire of Swift than in the cool serenity and calculated selfishness of Goethe? However that be, it is certain that the man who aspires to attain such a detachment from human concerns stands on a giddy height where sense of proportion and relation are likely to be obscured, and from which he may easily slide either into a megalomania or a hypochondria. The greatest genius, being human, has the

same human basis and must develop along the same human lines as other beings of his kind, and for that reason cannot occupy a very safe situation when he thinks to stand aloof and either contemplate indifferently or criticize scornfully.

The prosaic conclusion is, then, that as everybody has to play the part set for him by nature and circumstances in a drama of mixed tragedy and comedy, of which he neither knows the beginning nor can foresee the end, and has done with it and is himself done with when his part is played, he ought not to take himself and the business too seriously, but should make up his mind quietly to act it to the best of his ability with all the goodwill and good humour he can command. Bad humour or overmuch self-consciousness will only fret and hurt himself and spoil the play. If he be so constituted that he cannot help taking the business in dead earnest, let him throw his energies into a transport of impassioned enthusiasm—an enthusiasm for humanity, if he can reach that ecstasy—prompting and pleasing himself with the belief that he is acting a great part in a great cause, the effect of which will work silently or resound loudly through the ages. The melancholy thing is when, being half-emancipated and half-infatuated, he cannot play either part consistently through, but, distracted between them, does neither well and makes himself ill.

# CHAPTER XII

## FATE—FOLLY—CRIME

### I

#### FATE AND FORTUNE

The little hinges of great events—Estimates of events—The way of development the right way—The epoch-maker—Epoch-maker or epoch-made?—The dependent fate of a great movement—Incalculable operation of mental forces—Power, not wisdom, in the multitude—Fortune and providence—Homo magnus or homo felix—The fate of organization—Christianity and Paganism.

On what little hinges ofttimes turn the mighty events of the world! Had St. Paul died from the severe cerebral stroke which befell him on his way to Damascus, when for three days he was unconscious, neither eating nor drinking all that time, what would the fortunes of Christianity have been? It is incredible that, wanting his fervid zeal, his vehement energy, his indomitable perseverance, his sagacity and subtlety, and his great organizing capacity, it could ever have made the progress which it made; nowise incredible that after flourishing for a while as a local sect, as the like-doctrined Essenes did, it might have waned and ultimately died out. If Pharaoh's daughter had not caught sight of the Jewish woman's babe lying naked in the bulrushes and taken pity on it, Moses could not have risen up to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage to found a kingdom of God-chosen people. Had Proserpine not chanced to have unwittingly eaten three pomegranate seeds before her mother

Ceres descended into hell to rescue her from Pluto's embraces, how different would her fate have been. Amazing indeed, almost awful sometimes, is it to think how trivial and accidental a circumstance at the critical moment has turned the whole course of a life. A momentary caprice, a petty accident, a letter gone astray, a chance-visit, the inclination of a hair's-breadth, ever so small an incident determining this turn or that may change and fix a life's career. The battle lost or won because the general's liver was functioning ill or well has lost or saved a kingdom; and a single mortal's death owing to a wasp's sting, or a stray bullet, or a microbe wafted here or there has determined the course of human affairs through the ages. Now if so small a thing may involve so momentous an issue, it is surely strange to question, as is sometimes done, whether the exceptionally strong man exerts any great influence on the course of human events.

Viewing things calmly and at large in reason's light, where lies the littleness or the greatness but in human thought? Why should the sting of a wasp be a little thing and the life of a man a big thing? The wasp which has killed the hero nowise prides itself on having done a great deed. To man the catastrophe at the time, though oblivion fails not soon to ingulf it, is strange, awe-inspiring, a mysterious dispensation of Providence; the meanness of the cause is deemed nowise to detract from the magnitude of the event; deeming the universe to have been created and ordained for him, he cannot bear to look on his greatest calamity as a small event in a larger order of events, no bigger in the long run perhaps than the killing of a wasp on a summer's day. It is the wasp that is the implicit philosopher, the man who is the explicit self-idolater. In the far-reaching, subtile, and complex interworkings of the mysterious universe there is nothing great or small save in quite human sense; all things being indissolubly bound together, the least are felt in the greatest and the greatest in the least. Destiny rules alike in a living molecule and in

a solar system, in the fall of a leaf and of a kingdom, in the constitution of a character and of a planet, in the death of a microbe and of a man.

Because the living world has gone the way of development it has gone, the belief is that this was the right way, as no doubt it was, things falling out as they did, but it does not therefore follow that it might not conceivably have gone another and perhaps better way. Still less does it follow that man might not have been so constituted as to perceive it in quite other fashion; for a new sense in a sense-fashioned world would entirely transform the world. Had it gone a different way, or he been framed to perceive it differently, he would still have thought that the right way, and have discovered admirable aim and purpose therein, because aim and purpose are the necessary conceptions of his mode of looking at things in relation to himself. Meanwhile men have tried hard for a long time, and still persistently try, to make the world go a more righteous way. What they naturally want is to make it better for themselves, and as means thereto—since they multiply fast and have to co-operate more and more—themselves better towards one another; and in doing so they deal with the notself as if it were made solely for them, no otherwise than as a nest of busy ants does on a smaller scale. What matters it to man or ant that the cosmic system shall go on its inexorable and endless way when the drama ends, so long as each plays well his part in it while the play is on the stage.

The epoch-making mortal arising among men from time to time whom they glorify greatly is one who, having instinctive feeling of the forces at work around him, insight into and foresight of their operations, and sagacity and capacity to direct them, gathers them into himself, and by a happy intuition gives a turn or push to their line of action at a particular time in a particular place. Having gone that way and prospered in it, they declare it to be the right way, indeed the way of righteousness, and cannot choose but think him an extraordinary man, wonderfully inspired, and

celebrate him accordingly—consecrate him perhaps as semi-divine, assign him a special day of commemoration, erect statues of him in marble or bronze, apotheose him in poem, in history, in fable, in the end perhaps make a quite mythical being of him. As all this is essentially a magnification and adoration of the collective self in a concrete symbol of it, a colossal human self-idolatry; and as different sections or types of mankind have their different ideal types of self-worship, it comes to pass naturally that each section owns and reveres its own type of superior being and deifies him. Each human hive is self-sufficing, nowise deeply concerned with the economy of another hive, unless it be to rob it; the hero of one hive, therefore, not necessarily the hero of another hive. So fierce, indeed, has this spirit of the hive been hitherto that the struggle for a higher humanity has always been at the cost of a lower humanity, whose dethroned God, the personified symbol of its national unity, has then been degraded into a demon.

Does the epoch-maker make his epoch, or is he made by it? That is an old question which, many times debated, is not solved because, like other questions put in such inexact form as not to admit of solution, it is not rightly put. In seeking the answer a neglected distinction ought properly to be kept in mind—namely, the distinction between the epoch-making thought or discovery, philosophical, or scientific, or mechanical, towards which the general mind is in slow and sure travail at a particular time and place, and the much more complex, more uncertain, more variable, less predictable action of man on men. Mind working on the properties and relations of ordinary matter is one thing; mind working on the minds of men is quite another thing. Had Harvey not discovered or demonstrated the circulation of the blood—an achievement which nowadays looks childishly simple—or had Darwin not formulated the doctrine of evolution by means of natural selection, it is certain that the discoveries would soon have been made; indeed, in respect of them as in respect of most discoveries, there are contending claimants to priority,

and the eternal dispute arises whether they had not already been made. As a machine can be constructed to perform the mental operations of arithmetical calculation, and to do them better than most minds can, and a machine might probably be constructed to perform the operation of reasoning if only the facts and relations to be operated on and their equivalences could be definitely and exactly fixed, so it is not difficult to conceive that among several similarly trained brains working on the same material in much the same environment more than one may reach the same conclusion at or near the same time. The strange thing truly would be if in such conditions a concomitant jumping of wits did not take place at the due season. Widely separate peoples in time and place have therefore naturally made independently very similar myths and proverbs, just as they have necessarily made similar tools to do similar work, and done similar deeds to maintain and continue themselves: how indeed could like organisms at the same stage of growth in similar circumstances help doing so, any more than machines constructed on the same plan can help doing the same kind of work. A record of the common fallacies of human thought, everywhere alike though certainly not borrowed by one people from another, discloses a similar mechanical jumping of faulty wits into similar errors of reason, the same modes of function implying the same modes of going astray in function.

But when one thinks of the momentous action of such men as Alexander and Cæsar on the fortunes of the human race, it is incredible that the course of human things would have been what it was and is, had they died in their cradles; incredible, too, that the history of England would have been the same for the last two hundred years had Cromwell not lived at all, or had the ague let him live twenty years longer than he did; incredible, again, that France would be the France it is now, had not a poor, sallow lieutenant of artillery, out of work and out of elbows, disheartened with his prospects, and gloomily minded to enter into the service of the Grand

Turk, been persuaded casually to call on the Director Barras, whose mistress he subsequently married. If each of these men was the product of his epoch, as of course he was, having been born and bred in it, yet he so grasped, directed, guided, and used the forces then at work as to make an epoch in human events which was largely his product. No doubt it may be said that he, fulfilling the organic nisus, expressed and gave effect to a silent ideal struggling blindly for utterance in the people at the time; but had he not chanced to have been there to utter it fitly, the utterance, if not stifled, might have had a much different direction, at any rate for a century or more, even had the ultimate issue been the same. Nothing seems more certain than that the issue of a great social movement, nay, the very fate of a nation, may depend on the lucky chance of the right man being opportunely there at the critical time to defend, guide, and govern the venture. He truly in such case is often greater than he knows, because, embodying unconsciously the elemental forces at work, he partakes of the *natura naturans* which is accomplishing the *natura naturata;* for which reason his very blunders perhaps are converted into strokes of genius.

As an organism is the more modifiable intimately the more special and complex it is in structure, and as the most complex organization in the world is the mental structure of man, it is impossible to estimate, hopeless to predict with the least certainty, the many subtile and far-reaching effects which the impact of a great mental force shall produce in it. Still more futile would it be to attempt to estimate and predict the effects of such a force on a multitude of such mental organisms bound together in the unity of a national organism. The prudent and sagacious statesman soon learns that he cannot foresee what will be the play of the limited political forces amidst which he works from hand to mouth in a groping, uncertain, almost haphazard way as best he can, and proceeds warily; though he may still accomplish much of what he wants if he has a definite aim in mind and works definitely and resolutely for it, not paralyzed by over-meditative musings

nor craven fears of responsibility, nor weakly terrorized by conventional scruples of conscience. He certainly will do most who, feeling himself in a sort of tacit compact with destiny, and disdainful of the fine moral fetters befitting men in ordinary social life, deals with them, if necessary, as ruthlessly as nature does in the fulfilment of its ends. Though he seem rash, impetuous, even dangerous, yet the audacity which plunges him into the enterprize may imply the vigorous energy which shall bring him well out of it, and his conduct in the circumstances be less pernicious at worst than that of the musing impotent who, drifting aimlessly in difficulties, actually attracts them about him and is overwhelmed by them. And when all is said, activity impelled by conscientious motives is sometimes exceeding mischievous, while unconscientious activity may be very beneficent.

Emerging into general acceptance at the present day is the theory that in the impulses and opinions of the multitude lies the nation's way of salvation; not the might only, that is, to propel its course, which is indubitable, but the wisdom also to direct and rule its course, which is questionable. No less wise, perhaps, might it be to believe that in the gross appetites and desires of the body lies the right instruction of the individual for the conduct of life; both for the maintenance of life, which is evidently true, seeing that he must gratify them to live, and also for the contrivance and regulation of means, which is manifestly absurd, seeing that they are blind. The impelling force lies in the multitude, but not the guidance of the impulse to wise execution. It is from the superior understanding of the few wise men, whether from the east or west, who interpret and rule the dim, blind, inarticulate impulses of the people, that the light must come to guide the many who are for the most part ignorant and foolish. Unless human nature has been vastly transformed since Moses, Mahomet, and like men of light and leading, instructed, beguiled, dominated and used the multitude for its good, we must accept the facts of their lives to warrant inductions that still hold true. Education of the

democracy, it may be said, will teach it the wisdom necessary to rule well. Did the cultured Athenian democracy, which spent most of its time in listening to the harangues of its instructors, show much wisdom in government when it thought the best use it could put its wisest to was to ostracize or poison them? Is it quite so certain, then, that there will issue out of the low average of understanding a higher knowledge to illuminate better ways of progress than could ever come from the inspiration and foresight of a few superior minds which it is pretty sure to ostracize if they flatter not its foibles nor regard its immediate interests? Will the many-headed Hydra belch forth wisdom from its multitudinous mouths? It is hard to believe that a groping multitude on the same low level, subject to simple and violent passions and incapable of sustained reasoning, will manage to feel its way more wisely and safely than the individual insight of the superior mind raised aloft can point it out; or that its blind force has no need to be manacled and directed, lest, like a blind Samson, it pull the State down in ruins. The best, perhaps, to be expected from it is that it will become more prolific in the production of superior men and more intelligent to appreciate and follow their wise guidance. Then it may not in time to come be so much at the mercy of a bacterium in a great man's blood as it has been in time past, and it can never more happen that the chance-turn of a microbe shall affect much the course of human events. The worst to be expected, on the other hand, is that it may steadily pull down the superior from their seat and exalt the inferior, until, bringing all to one level, it brings the nisus of development to a stop and initiates a degeneration. Then it will not matter much what turn a wandering microbe takes.

The ancients paid a homage to Fortune which the moderns, with their greater insight into and power over the forces of Nature, are not inclined to pay. Fortune was represented by them as a woman standing on a globe, with bandaged eyes and a rudder in her hand; signifying thereby

that it was variable as a woman, unstable as a station on a rolling sphere, blind steerage in the tempests of life: the whole a perfect symbol of instability and dark uncertainty. The truth, of course, was, it was they who, being blind to the causal, ascribed to Fortune a casual course of things. Thinking as they did, however, they naturally raised altars to a goddess whose ways were so uncertain, capricious, and unpredictable. As the moderns cherish the fast belief of no blind fortune, but of an all-wise Providence over-ruling everything, so that not even a sparrow falls unheeded nor a microbe goes astray on its mission, they might be expected to show a tranquil resignation to whatever happens, in full assurance that everything is ordained rightly in a rightly governed world—in any case, not to "argue against Heaven's hand or will," but always "to bear up and steer right onward." All the stranger, therefore, is the inconsistency when they fret and fume habitually, vex themselves with regrets and remorses, distress themselves with anxieties, invent devils to torment them and disturb the divine order, consume their hearts in ambitions, envies, competitions and strifes more hotly than the ancients apparently ever did. Knowing not what a day or a night will bring forth—whether when they go to sleep they will ever wake, or whether when they wake they will ever go to sleep again—yet sure that all is foreordained for the best, they still disquiet themselves perpetually in vain about what is to come, just as if the day without a to-morrow would not soon come to them; and while perceiving plainly that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor riches to men of understanding, nor fortune to men of skill, but that time and chance always and one event at last happen to all, they bitterly resent the fortune which has favoured others and not favoured them. Two very positive uses they persistently make of the reason by which, being exalted, they exult and insult over the brutes—namely, to use it on occasions to be more ingeniously brutal than any brute has the ingenuity to

be and to torture themselves by follies of reason in a way no brute is irrational enough to do.

That "the worst pig picks up the best acorns" is a Spanish proverb which, proverb-like in its one-sidedness, embodies the common fallacy of making universal a conclusion from a few cases. So also does the proverb that "fools only are fortunate," which were better used perhaps to mean that fools only rely on fortune. No doubt the worst pig sometimes does get the best acorn without merit on its part or demerit on the part of better pigs; withal, the poor pig which then perchance prides itself on its merit is no worse than the foolish person who always links his good fortune inseparably to his merit. Let any one look back impartially on his own life and on the lives of men known to him who have reached eminence, or take a cool survey of the histories of eminent men in the past, and he must needs see, if he have insight, and own, if he have candour, that fortune has often counted for more than foresight in the event. Befalling accident or opportunity, the apt occasion suiting the capacity and the sudden impulse to seize it, the folly or death of another person, the casualty of a call, the rude push of unreflecting audacity or the weak halt of meditative timidity, a stroke of favour or disfavour, the opportune turn at the critical juncture,—these or the like incidents were perhaps the determinants of a career which without them would have gone quite differently. Biassed by self-love, the successful man is prone to think otherwise and to ascribe the prosperous event to his own wisdom and merit; he would rather be the *Homo magnus* than the *Homo felix*, and he is perhaps only mock-modest when he expressly disclaims merit and praises his good fortune. All the more probably so when such praise is only an indirect way of putting himself under special favour and care as a man of Destiny or divinely-inspired person and priding himself on his genius. What good reason is there for pride in that fortunate case? Why should he be more proud of his genius, as a woman

is of her beauty, which is a gift of Nature, not acquirable, than of a virtue which could be acquired and would be a merit. It is strange to think a person should be most proud of that in which he has least part.

Besides the destiny which things outside him make for every one, there is the fate, good or bad, which his own organization makes for him. That is a fate which he can in no case elude. In the interaction between organism and circumstances the more powerful its action on them the more manifest is the fate of his nature and his apparent merit; the more he is acted on by circumstances the more evident the fate of his fortune and his seeming demerit when it is bad fortune; for although the fortune of circumstances and individual merit play their respective parts in every life, yet it is on the whole certain that the greater the merit the less is the scope for fortune's play. Every one has a certain power and freedom of action within the circle, small or great—small enough at the best—circumscribed by his individual organization; but the circle is inexorably fixed. If such a view of things seems calculated to encourage a kind of pagan fatalism, it is only necessary to substitute the word Providence for the word Fortune and the doctrine becomes good theology.

In that case, however, the substitution would not be a substitution of words only. The Pagan equally with the Christian may acknowledge the vanity of striving with anxious mind to foresee an uncertain future, in which that which is not expected happens as often as that which is expected; may discipline himself steadily to endure with resignation and fortitude the caprices of fortune, since where it gives little it can take little away and may give more; may patiently resolve to do his best to develop his nature in the manifold changing uncertainties of things; but he cannot, like the Christian, pray in faith, and feel in prayer that the "everlasting arms" are beneath him to support aspiration and sustain endeavour. That is the reason doubt-

less why Christianity has excelled Paganism as a working force of civilization, and why Marcus Aurelius who lacked the illusion to live looks a more pathetic figure in history than Jesus of Nazareth who brought life and immortality to light.

## II

### FOLLY AND CRIME

Fools constitute the majority—Need no compassion—The criminal—The anarchist—Clever and weak-minded criminals—Reasons and attractions of crime—Routine of respectability—Criminal, epileptic, insane, and fanatical temperaments—Degeneration by natural law—Organized nervous substrata—The lesson of punishment—The aim of punishment—The prevention, or reformation of criminal—Nature's possible irony—Crime evidence of organic vigour.

AUGUSTINE spoke well when he said that wisdom in the world is driven to place itself under the protection of folly, for fools are in a preponderating majority. Whosoever would rise high among his kind must so contrive as to get the preponderant force, which is the force of ignorance and folly, at his back; in one way or other, whichever suits his temperament best, openly or insidiously, directly or circuitously, by intrigue or by force, must subdue and yoke it to work for his ends. Not one of the great leaders of mankind, whether prophet, legislator, conqueror, statesman, charlatan, great man of any sort, but has taken skilful pains to enlist the battalions of fools on his side. For what avails right without might? And as might is not with the wise few but with the foolish many, to be wise among fools, if not wise enough to use their folly for his profit, is a positive calamity to a mortal. That is how the pedantic purist comes to fail and wail; he would have the ideal end without willing the non-ideal means. Duper and dupe, the one to prey on and the other to be preyed on, such has been the ordained means and method of nature to accomplish its organic evolution in the human kind through the ages. But ought he to be deemed unqualified knave who unscrupulously dupes the fool for the fool's good? Surely he would be himself a fool to present intelligent reasons only to one who had not the intelligence to comprehend them. No, he has

the good sense to treat the innocent according to his simplicity, instructing him wisely by practising on his credulity and luring him into the right way by guile. As it is the nature of man to believe, he must believe something, and will believe the false if he has not the true to believe. For wisdom, then, to imagine that it can do without folly in the world is just the folly of wisdom.

How unjust and unwise to be impatient of stupidity! That against which the gods themselves fight in vain every man must perforce suffer patiently; not to speak of the sheer good sense in any serious struggle of having the blind force with him, not against him. Besides, as the fool can in no case by taking thought add to his natural mental stature, he is rightly to be pitied, not to be blamed, for his defective or deformed mind. That he obtains not the compassion which he deserves for his natural stupidity as he obtains it for bodily deformity or infirmity is because, unconscious of his defects and perhaps proud of them, he irritates and exasperates by his extreme self-satisfaction, which may even go so far as to persuade him that it is he who is sound and others who are lame in mind. The bigger the fool, therefore, the less is he usually in need of pity; while smaller fools are compensated by not lacking the soothing fellowship of a multitude of like-minded fellows and a congenial mental atmosphere. It is curious in this relation to note how much easier is indulgence to intellectual than to moral defects, the reason no doubt being that the former hurt less obviously, because their effects, if at all distant, are not discerned by the average mind unused or unable to look beyond the first link in a chain of effects and content to believe in accidents; whereas moral faults are immediately felt and resented as wilful. Yet the vain, the envious, the jealous, the malignant person might well be pitied, for he has an ever-festering sore at heart, an abiding moral fault, which renders him perpetually unhappy.

And what of the criminal who, antisocially constituted, is alien from his kind and will not or cannot conform to the

rules of the society of which he is a member? Ought he also to be pitied as obeying the tyranny of his organization or blamed as a wicked person? Foolish he plainly is, since he foolishly fights a power which is vastly stronger than he is and by which he is sure to be worsted in the issue. Common intelligence, did he possess it, might teach him how stupid was such an unequal combat. No, cries outraged society, he is not wanting in ordinary intelligence, he wants only the wish to do right; he is selfishly immoral because he will not subordinate vicious desires which please him to the social interests and welfare. But where is the selfishness of making a victim of himself? Certainly he would show a more intelligent self-love to conform to rules which he cannot break without pain and degradation to himself. If a short-sighted and uninstructed selfishness prompts him to gratify his present inclination without heed of consequences, it makes him his own enemy, and does so because his self-love is stupid and he so far a natural fool. Society, then, may rightly pity while punishing him, compassionating the criminal while castigating the crime.

Violation of the laws enacted for its own self-preservation society cannot choose but use its right and power to penalize, if it is to continue in well-being; for the offender is a noxious antisocial element who, like a morbid element in the bodily organism, must be isolated or extruded or destroyed. Though it style its action moral and his action immoral, it is the self-conservative law of organic nature which operates in either case; the criminal being moved by the egoistic instinct of his antisocial nature to develop itself freely and fully, the society moved by the egoistic instinct of its self-preservation to cancel or eject the hurtful element in its economy who would live by it without living for it. Should the criminal ask indignantly "Why should I obey your law of loving my neighbour and doing to him as to myself?" society simply replies "Because it is for my good, of which I am supreme judge and you are only a humble function, whose whole duty is to do rightly in your situation." Should he thereupon,

being a fanatical socialist or enraged anarchist, demand further "Why, then, am I treated as an enemy of the human race, a sort of antihuman monster, when my whole ardent aim is to destroy grinding oppression, to abolish unjust inequalities, to make men loving neighbours, not in words and pretence only, but in deeds and sincerity?" society's imperious answer is tantamount to this: "Because you are either an impracticable fool or scoundrel who would, had you your mad way, destroy my present social order. If that order be not good, though it suits me, so much the worse for you, who would mend it in a way which does not suit me."

Thus it comes to pass now that the anarchist who is outraged by the inequalities, oppressions, and injustices of the social system in which his lot is cast, and explodes in violent revolt against it, is naturally execrated as an anti-social monster. Thus, too, it once came to pass in a former social system that "the divine Communist" of Nazareth, proclaiming inopportunely and importunately the universal brotherhood of mankind, was condemned and crucified by the upholders of the existing system. Now, as the modern anarchist, however foolish or bad he may be, is a social product within and of the civil organization, nowise a strange intrusion into it from without, his furious action is the natural convulsive reaction of an element of it; a sign of unease, therefore, to be taken note of and the lesson of it duly pondered even when he is promptly extinguished. Moreover, he is still human, despite the easy execration of him as inhuman; and if it be right to reverence the sanctity of the kind in the most abject specimen of it, and to protect and succour him solely because he belongs to the kind, it is not logical to thrust the anarchist outside the human pale and repudiate responsibility for his production and function in the social economy; for when all is said, it is not he that has made himself, he is the creature of its manufacture. Having bred him in its womb, society has the right to destroy him for its own safety's sake, but it may justly consider whether it were not a better way so to amend the

social conditions as not to generate him. When it declares again in its exasperation that he is moved by nothing else but an outrageous morbid vanity to do an exploit which shall astonish mankind and make him talked about everywhere, it might reflect, too, that such motive verily testifies to his human nature and sympathies—being just an instance of the bad working of a principle whose good working makes much for society—since he is so mightily pleased to astonish and interest his fellow mortals, and that if he were ignored, and no more interest shown in his exploit than by a flock of sheep, the motive would be forceless. Scientifically one might place the anarchists in a small and special class of spasmodic or convulsive criminals as distinguished from the common class of defective or deformed criminals and the large class of occasional criminals; their passionate revolts against the established social system being, so to speak, so many repulsive fragments thrown off from the regular social orbit. He is really not far removed in kinship from the philanthropic fanatic whose keen vanity is equally eager for notoriety, though it has found another convulsive outlet.

A cursory survey of criminals suffices to show that however foolish they may be in the conduct of life they are not all wanting in intelligence. Some of them certainly are more or less deficient mentally. Not to speak of the plainly imbecile or positively insane, whose manifest defects are allowed to excuse their deeds when they do wrong, there is a large class of criminals who, degenerate in greater or less degree, are more or less weak in mind and perhaps in body, lacking sufficient reason to check, rule, and guide their gross instincts and passions. The more complex a civilized community is, the more difficult it is then for such ill-organized persons to adapt themselves to its special requirements. They form, indeed, a pretty constant body of habitual criminals who are seldom long out of prison, since they have no sooner expiated one offence than they commit another and are again incarcerated. It is their bad fortune

to be badly born and bred, without blame to them, as it is the good fortune of the great genius to be well born and bred, without merit to him, albeit the social body naturally regards very differently the one who is a help and a credit to it from the other who is a hurt and a discredit to it.

But to say that all criminals bear the visible signs of physical and mental degeneracy is untrue. There is a large class who show no such stigmata, most of them possessing average mental powers, and some of them a grasp of intelligence, a tenacity of purpose, and a strength of will in the plan and execution of crime which, had they applied their powers and industry to social ends in conformity with social rules, would have raised them to virtuous eminence. Though crime, then, often be the outcome of vicious passion which a low intelligence is powerless to guide and control, yet it may also denote a will served by an acute and entirely self-seeking intelligence, sagacious to devise and skilful to execute criminal enterprises. The want, then, is not intellectual, it is a lack of that finest feeling of social responsibility which is known as moral sense. Now it is undeniable that a great lack of moral sense may coexist with extraordinary intellectual powers, despite the inveterate inclination and desire to believe that they must somehow go along together. History, on the one side, supplies striking examples of their independent existence, and mental pathology, on the other side, exhibits not infrequent instances both of great moral defect or perversion with comparatively undamaged intellect and of weak intellect with good moral feeling.

As a clever criminal cannot properly be called an intellectual fool, the explanation of his crime must be sought in a large and close survey of the circumstances. Three principal explanatory reasons may be taken into account: first, an innate weakness or want of moral sense which, however much the plane of moral may be higher than that of social sentiment, is just as real a physical deprivation as intellectual deficiency—an asocial deprivation of nature leading to active

antisocial conduct; secondly, the special circumstances of the particular temptation which put a critical strain on a weak moral nature, either because of the urgency of a present need, or because of the strong provocation of the apt opportunity, or because of an unlucky conjuncture of need and opportunity—in all cases a greater or less degree of inward proclivity no doubt coinciding with the outward temptation; thirdly, the thrilling excitement of the adventurous game of crime with its fierceness of struggle and pride of success. As the eager huntsman does not hunt for the value of the fox, which he would not care to have given to him dead or alive, but for the keen joy of the uncertain chase, so the clever criminal delights in the excitement, ardour, and danger of his hazardous pursuit. Knowing well the risks and difficulties of his career he believes himself strong, bold, and cunning enough to surmount them, or at any rate to make it worth his while to hazard the venture, and his nerves are stimulated and braced by the fierce passion and peril of the combat out of which he hopes to come winner. Successful too he often is as a matter of fact. Because the world will gladly have it so, or have it believed so, the belief being most useful socially, it is loudly proclaimed that crime seldom goes unpunished, that "murder will out," and the like; whereas the truth is, as many a criminal has occasion to know, that crime is often undetected and when detected often unpunished, that murders are done which are not suspected, murders suspected which are not detected, and detected murders not always duly punished.

To the ordinary sober and decent citizen whose mind is caked in the customs of respectability it seems inexplicable that any one should be willing to be the scorn of his fellows and suffer pain and degradation as a criminal when he might live an honest and respectable life in social harness. But to the criminal it seems incredible that any one can so esteem the opinion of men as contentedly to endure day after day the dreary drudgery and dull routine of the ordinary citizen's bald and insipid life—to be, in fact, like the working

bee, from birth to death the contented slave of his social system in a mean occupation. Such an atmosphere of honest respectability is stifling and suffocating to one who has once tasted fully the excitements and chances of a criminal career, its uncertainties of luck and unluck, its surprises and risks, its anticipations and apprehensions, its contrasts of privation and plenty, its captures and escapes, its keen interests and exertions. Gambler-like, he stakes desperately and eagerly expects the result; and if he loses as often as he gains, he still deems one hour of fierce life compensation for a month in gaol. This is a motive which works in criminals more generally and powerfully than is suspected by those who have not made themselves intimately acquainted with their ways of thinking and feeling, and is probably the main reason of the frequent relapses into crime by those of them who at great pains have been put into the way of earning an honest livelihood. What wonder that the dull grinding monotony of respectability is intolerable to them? Considering indeed what a dreary and squalid routine that life for the most part is, it speaks volumes for the efficacy of social manufacture that multitudes do endure it patiently.

Still a surviving instinct of primeval freedom lurks deeply in the breast of the civilized man and from time to time flares openly, overladen and hidden though it be by many layers of culture-conquests through the ages. The revolt against the cramping fetters of social bondage, which increasing and multiplying divisions of labour continually make more special and minute until the man is contracted and absorbed in the specialist, and the urgent impulse of the natural man to burst through them into a freer life, are notably sometimes the effect and evidence of a temperament in the criminal near akin to that which is met with in some epileptic and insane persons. It is organically explosive; its several parts not being compactly knit together by fit bonds of interrelations and interinhibitions, outbursts of decomposed fractional and quasi-convulsive wills are prone to occur.

Hence the kinship which has been shown to exist between insanity, epilepsy and crime, and the frequent occurrence of their morbid neuroses in the same family.

Nowise distantly related is the narrow, sensitive and hotly fanatical temperament which, wanting balance of structure, is absorbed in one idea or project, devoid of all sense of proportion, utterly unable to get outside the small illuminated area of self and to see things in full light, sure that the gratification of its passionate self-love is the sublimest altruism, burning to take all humanity into its embrace so long as it is a humanity which disagrees not with its special digestion. The tender sensitive who is distressed beyond measure at the sight of the bleating lamb which has lost its mother, sits down soon afterwards to feed on the leg or loin of that or another lamb, denouncing the while with intemperate passion the vivisector who, instead of mutilating the lamb in order to make good food of it—without giving it chloroform—cuts a rabbit or a guinea-pig under chloroform in order to find out something which may alleviate suffering and save life. Such a temperament is badly bred and likely to breed badly, for it wants mental ratio, is unstable and untrustworthy; and whether its possessor become, on the one hand, the fanatic of a wise or foolish cause, or on the other hand a criminal of some kind, overt or secret, depends not so much on natural virtue in him as on the circumstances of his breeding and fortune in life. Should ill fortune cast him on a criminal career and he perchance later undergo a conversion to better ways, be may be as zealous a fanatic as he was formerly a criminal. The revolution is not then really a revolution of character, as shortsighted reflection is apt to conclude, it is only the turning of its fierce and narrow energy into another channel.

A weighty fact which is overlooked by moral philosophers, or ignored by them as below the dignity of their notice, is that this kind of temperament furnishes very bad stock to breed from; for unless it be happily, though mysteriously, counteracted in marriage it is pretty sure to produce

degenerate offspring. When Plato said that knowledge was remembrance, he might have gone on to say, and to say more truly, that conduct, which at bottom denotes character, is remembrance. For it is not by accident but by natural law that offspring turn out insane or criminal or otherwise degenerate; they are then necessary products marking nature's judgment on ancestral character which was not compounded in right proportion of parts, lacked literal integrity therefore, was more or less deformed. In due course of pathological degeneracy a more disproportionate or irrational product is wrought out in the succeeding generation: that is the Nemesis of nature. Wonderful indeed it is to see how stubbornly, in spite of experience, people go on wondering that unreason in a stock does not breed reason in its offspring, guile in conduct and character not issue in sincerity and veracity of nature; as if unreason and guile incorporate in silent structure could ever speak aloud in function as a conscious memory of reason and truth.

Metaphysical psychology has always postulated, rightly or wrongly, three mental planes or levels in man: (*a*) The lowest plane of social obligations and offences on which the lower mind functioned; (*b*) The higher plane of moral duties and vices, which was the province of the higher mind; (*c*) The superlative or spiritual sphere of holiness and sin, in which the soul had its life and being. It has gone so far indeed as to assign *reason* exclusively to the last, allowing *understanding* only to the other two. If its postulates be granted, still no adequately informed mind will now deny that each plane of mental being has its necessary nervous substratum, and that the highest mental structure is not separate from, but is superposed on and organically connected with the lower structures, representing, so to speak, the sublimed evolution of them, and comprehensible only therefore through them. As the Apostle Paul said, "the natural comes first and afterwards that which is spiritual"; which is to say in other words that the root and stem are

prior to the leaves and flowers. Now it is the latest acquired fine nervous tracery ministering to the most spiritual functions of mind which is damaged or effaced first in the course of degeneracy—that which, being the last put on, is the soonest put off and being the most delicate is most easily hurt.

As the right of society to punish the criminal is its self-conservative right to keep itself in well-being, it advisedly makes a painful and dramatic example of the wrong-doer, to the intent that it may perchance instil into him who suffers and others who witness his degradation a fear to do wrong by the spectacle of his punishment. If it be objected that the offender could not help doing as he did, his nature and circumstances being what they were at the conjuncture, the answer is that its concern with him is as a means not as an end, and as a means to its end, and that the preventive aim of its punishment, so far as he is concerned, is to change the balance of things at a similar conjuncture in the future by adding to the right scale of the balance the weight which the memory of the punishment may amount to—by the bad aftertaste to spoil the appetite for crime. Though the circumstances and the temptation seem exactly similar at another crisis, yet he at any rate will be so far different; for he has had a sharp experience infixed into his nature, the memory of which inevitably affects the incidence of the next temptation. Freewill or no freewill, it is undeniable that punishment works to hinder crime, and that the effect of law is to breed conscience. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, seeing that the case is simply one of organic moulding? No doubt the infusion of a sounder and more lasting social feeling would be done best gradually by good breeding and systematic culture from generation to generation, but when they are wanting it may suffice to bring the sharp motive of a fear to do wrong, by the present apprehension of a quick-following pain, to bear in the particular instance.

The primary aim of punishment being to preserve the weal of the society, the punishment inflicted by it on the

criminal is essentially retaliation; being hurt, it resents the hurt and strikes back effectively in its own defence. But its self-conservative action is not therefore vengeance; there need be no deliberate desire nor angry delight to inflict undue suffering because of the offence, albeit that its judicial instruments of execution fail often to show the fit serenity of spirit. To the noxious member its protective measures must in any case be a punishment, seeing that they deprive him of his liberty to do what pleases him, and make him do what he does not like. Even when its justice endeavours scrupulously to proportion punishment to the gravity of the offence against itself, it is still ultimately sole judge, just or unjust. It certainly does more than is necessary to protect itself when it takes the criminal's life, since it might protect itself without killing him; but the stern exaction of a life for a life is then justified by a belief in the protective effects of the terrible example. Whether capital punishment be really a more effective deterrent than perpetual imprisonment is a question on which opinions differ and every State has the right to decide for itself; whether, again, if it be the most effective deterrent, it is wholly justifiable for that reason, may also be a matter of dispute, seeing that the justifying reason might be extended to sanction the torture of a criminal as a tremendous terror to evildoers, and therefore a surer deterrent from crime. The truth is that human lives are of different value in different social states, and that the question of dealing with them is one of calculated expediency. Meanwhile, as civilization progresses the manifest tendency is for opinion to become more tender towards the criminal, not only because humanity grows more sensitive to the pain to itself which the suffering of one partaking of a common nature is, but also because of a growing perception on its part that the criminal is fundamentally a manufactured product for which society is mainly responsible and which it ought to reform and reabsorb into its sound life.

Considering well what the reformation of a nature really

means—literally its re-formation—it is no wonder that the small success of reformative measures have hitherto been out of all proportion to the pains they have cost, and that more hope is entertained of the systematic adoption of preventive measures. Not to form the criminal at all will clearly be much better than to try to reform him when once formed. Protective all punishment is bound to be, reformative it seldom is or can be, preventive it ought deliberately and persistently to be. It is strange how little serious thought is ever given to the question whether it is wise and just to absorb the criminal, whether wholly or partially reformed, into the constitution of the social body, which would presumably be saner and stronger without such an element of weakness. When the industrious bee returns to the hive maimed and spent after a long and perilous labour of honey-getting, it is mercilessly ejected as a useless unit and the health of the hive thus maintained. The frequent and numerous executions and transportations of former times, whatever their moral aspects, were certainly an effective means of extruding the noxious element from the body politic and keeping it in a sound condition. The more kind a society is to the wicked by loving and assimilating instead of hating and repelling them, the more in proportion must its constitution needs be weakened or vitiated. Even the reformed criminal at best preserves the weakness of moral fibre which made him criminal and, if assimilated, adds to the social constitution that which it would be better without. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" was a fine sublimation of morality, if it were not an Oriental extravagance of expression not intended to be interpreted literally; but its rigorous application in practice would not only be incompatible with the health, it would entail the subversion, of any civil organization.

It is then an odd contradiction which reflection seems to strike against—namely, that the increase of social tenderness and practice may be accompanied by a deterioration of the social organism; which would mean that the progress of

humanity may be checked by the keener developments of its moral sentiments. For if morality requires socially the doing what is good for the social body, and at the same time the doing good individually to the weakest and worst member of it, the tendency will be to kill social by moral development. Happily optimism can cherish brighter hopes —namely, that the great organism of humanity may, like the bodily organism, possess a *vis conservatrix naturæ*, whereby in absorbing the vicious substance it cancels the vice of it. In any case there is the consoling thought that if it is always to be a blessed thing for the wise and good to be reviled and persecuted, as it has been hitherto, there will be no overgrowth of morality, since they must needs continue to be in a minority.

Meanwhile the explosive criminal may be excused, if not welcomed, as a proof of organic vigour, albeit badly controlled and directed, which might be lost in a community of perfect moral beings of sheep-like placidity, ant-like industry, machine-like uniformity. And although his absorption into a settled and complex society may be pernicious, yet in a new and thinly peopled country, a ruder society, and a simpler life, where there are freer outlets for turbulent force and less exacting specializations of adaptation, his unruly energies might find scope for outward discharge in useful work, and so be ruled inwardly to right developments. It is notorious that the person who has done badly in an old and settled country has often done well in a new country, and that communities have been largely founded on the criminal and other turbid overflow of a complex civilization, without smacking too grossly of their origin.

# CHAPTER XIII

# PAIN—LIFE—DEATH

## I

### PAIN

Pain a necessary condition of existence—Endurance not complaint—Increasing susceptibility to pain with increasing complexity of organization—Types of organic structure according to need of killing and not being killed—Pain a danger-signal serving self-conservation—Not remembered *as* it was, only that it was—Lowest organisms feel little or no pain, and instantly forget—Pain attends the organic decay of old age—Although felt in, not felt by, the part—No fixed and constant consciousness, but so many several consciousnesses—Manifold varieties of pain—Useless and exhausting pain—The pains of parturition—Consciousness of pain and curiosity to know—The erect posture and the bodily conditions of labour-pains—Fable and allegory—Unconscious wisdom or wisdom consciously obscured—The design of pains of parturition—The negation of the desire to live—Pain a natural effect of organic undoing—Spontaneity or attraction : sensibility and susceptibility—Pleasure and pain as motives of action—The reconciliation of individuality with solidarity, physiological and social—The design of pain—Avoidance of pain the prime motive of conduct—Voluntary infliction of pain—The moral good of pain—Over-sensitiveness to pain and over-sentimentality—Human optimism.

THOUGH pain is a condition of coming into the world, of living in it, and of going out of it, yet man can never wonder enough at the mystery of pain; living a pain-stricken life he is yet perplexed and perpetually troubled in mind by the anomaly of pain. Such is the mighty conceit he has of

himself as an end, and of a world divinely created and ruled for him and his uses, that he ceases not to puzzle his wits to find out why pain should be, to demonstrate that it serves wise purposes, and in further course piously to persuade himself that it is not the evil it seems, but somehow his good in the making. Nay, he is even capable in a stoical transport of the proud declaration or fatuous self-deception that pain is not pain.

If instead of the tremendous postulate that the universe was created for him he start with the modest acknowledgment that he is but a transient step in an endless flux of things, a brief phase of the becomings and unbecomings without beginning and without end, he may perceive and own that he being made for the whole and not the whole for him, it is a small thing whether he wails or joys, is sad or glad, so long as he goes on living and performs his ordained function for his brief span. The one thing which matters is that the pain be not too great to prevent him doing his work, yet sharp enough to make him do that. Though it be grievous from a self-conscious standpoint to suffer ills now that others may enjoy good in time to come, and in any case that the will of destiny may be accomplished, yet a stoical temper may steadily school itself to view the vast unintelligible process of things from the standpoint of a negation of self, and so be subdued to resignation. After all is said, man has small right to complain of pain when he recollects and reflects on the incalculable amount, the ingenious varieties, and the excruciating qualities of pain which his inhumanity to his fellows and to other living creatures has wilfully devised and inflicted; why should he, the chief sinner, commiserate himself and alone claim the right to protest?

As pain is a constant accompaniment of the evolution and dissolution of things throughout animate nature, the same rule of life-devouring life thrilled with the same note of agony being in force from the bottom to the top of the scale, it would be a strange thing if man who inflicts most pain

and devours most life were exempt from it. So far from being exempt he pays for his superiority of organization by a greater capacity of pain; not only in being sensible to moral pains and imaginative apprehensions which other creatures feel not, yet which cause worse suffering than they can ever feel, but also to keener, more special and various bodily pains by reason of his more special and complex nervous organization. If he be not higher in organization because he is capable of more pains, he certainly suffers more pains because he is higher in organization. To say, as Shakspeare says, that the poor beetle which we tread upon suffers a pang as great as when a giant dies, is as untrue as it is unphysiological; it is pretty certain that the beetle does not feel so keenly such pain as it feels, if it feel any, and quite certain that it cannot feel the variety of pains which man feels. Specialization and complexity of nervous structure importing manifold intimate and recondite sympathies of parts implies a corresponding intensification and specialization of pains, the compensations of which are more various and keener pleasures. As self-consciousness begins with complexity of nervous organization, so increasing specializations of consciousness accompany its special and complex increases.

Nature has provided another and remarkable counterpoise to pain in the pleasure attached to the infliction of it. Rapture of delight in the killer goes along with ecstasy of fright and pain in the victim. Here again, however, there is probable qualification of the suffering in the very ecstasy of the fright, which there is good reason to think entails more or less insensibility; for the absorbing quasi-convulsive strain of a nervous ecstasy is always attended by partial or complete suspension of the dissociated nervous functions. Not only the wellbeing of one species of animal, but its very type of admired form, its fearful symmetry of organic structure, is owing to the growth of parts adapted to pursue, kill, eat and digest other creatures; while another species owes the characteristic features of its graceful form and agile structure to its ever watchful care and alert efforts to

escape the pain and death which its natural enemy is always seeking or lying in wait to inflict on it: the whole life of the hunted a constant exercise of anxious caution and cunning to frustrate the constant ferocity which is the pleasure and whole life of the hunter. Instincts have thus been providentially infixed and organs framed in one animal, by exquisite adaptations, to avoid the destruction which the instincts and organs of another animal have been providentially infixed and framed to do it. The present aim of organic nature being the maintenance and increase of life, not care for individual life, its pervading law is that one creature must suffer pain to spare another's pain, must die that it may live: a signal instance of the discordant concord of the grand cosmic harmony.

Recognizing pain as a constant agent in the natural order of things, without which the order could not be, one may go on to inquire what are its special uses in human life. Being an organic effect, whatever else it be, it testifies, like all organic effects, to survival by natural fitness to survive; it has survived because it had the right and might to survive. A principal use manifestly is to help to keep the body alive in its struggle of life; for pain signals danger and prompts efforts to escape from it. Were there no pain when a person's toe is inflamed he might go on walking on it until inflammation lapsed into suppuration and suppuration into gangrene; did the touch of a red-hot body not cause an instant pain, a man might burn himself fatally before he was aware of his danger, as the insensible general paralytic sometimes does; if hunger were not pain he might not care to eat; were it no pain to keep a muscle in protracted contraction, the limbs might get fixed in a rigid cramp; if it were not painful to stare at the sun at noonday, a swift blindness would deprive his eyes of the benefit of its beams. Subserving as it thus does the self-conservation of the organism, pain is a useful danger-signal, the outcry of hurt and life-threatened organic element which has no language but that cry.

That is the reason perhaps why pain has a short and bad memory; it imports disorganization, imminent or actual, whereas conscious memory implies functioning organization —definitely organized associations whose dissociations are dismemberments and therefore not rememberable. Nobody recalls a pain as he really felt it; in fact the keener the pain the less keenly can he revive it in memory; he can, it is true, recollect that he suffered it, that it was excruciating at the time, and all the circumstances of his suffering, but to remember it as it was in feeling would be to revive it so vividly as actually to re-feel it—to have it over again. Being disorganization, there is nothing with which it is connected by organized associations, and therefore when it is past its pang is lost to memory. In this respect pain resembles other simple sensations of the special senses, which are not actually remembered as such unless they be so vividly revived as to be virtually re-felt; only that in the case of pain there is temporary dissolution of function, a passing dissociation, whereas in the case of sensations there is a natural want of associations on their low nervous plane, their associations being organized on the higher nervous plane of ideas. It is no unreasonable surmise then that the lowest organisms, if they suffer pain, never remember what they suffer, that they feel and instantly forget it, living from sensation to sensation without sense of connection or succession; in which respect they may be paralleled by the person who, having a surgical operation performed on him under chloroform, sometimes shrieks, howls, struggles and gives all the signs of suffering terribly, but is utterly unaware, when he comes to himself, that he cried out or felt any pain or even that the operation has been done. In such case one of two things may be supposed: either that the chloroform has paralyzed the higher parts of the brain, but has not gone deep enough entirely to suspend sensibility, the brain of the higher creature being for the time brought functionally to the brain-level of creatures which have no cerebral hemispheres, so that he suffers but remembers not; or that the

chloroform has paralyzed sensibility but not abolished consciousness, so that he watches the mutilation of himself and resists it, as in a dream, without feeling it; in which case, however, one might expect him sometimes to remember the scene when he regained consciousness.

If the function of pain be self-conservative by giving warning of menace to life, why does it not cease its function when, the danger being natural and inevitable, and self-conservation no longer possible, the warning is futile? Many are the ways of death, nearly all of them more or less paths of pain; even a green old age low-ebbing calmly to its end is accompanied by increasing aches and pains. To the supposition that things might have been so benevolently ordained that when the inevitable ending began the unavailing pain always ended, the obvious answer is that thereby the very function of pain would have been annulled. It signals danger and destruction, and what greater danger and destruction to an organism can there be than its decay and death? Therefore it does not cease its dull and weary plaints then. That the organism no longer does anything to preserve its being when warned is not the monitor's affair; its work is done when it has given the warning, which is after all a warning to prepare to go decently out of being. Notably the warning becomes less urgent, duller, more faint as gradually increasing decay feels neither the care nor the power to attend to its call.

It is necessary, for the sake of clear insight, to distinguish between the pain and the physical condition of which the pain is conscious sign. Though the condition of the affected part is local and the pain is felt there, yet it is not felt by the part but by the organism. It is felt in the part because the part is vitally one with the whole, but it is to the organic whole that the local alarm and appeal are sent—to the unity to which the hurt unit belongs. The hurt nervous fibre—whether an ordinary tactile or a special fibre is not yet known certainly—conveys the message to the cerebral centre where it is received and noted. Just as in every well-

constituted society or state due provision is made to protect and succour the member who is in peril or suffers wrong, and to defend itself from the anti-social member who does wrong and is a hurt to it, and no state nor society could subsist save on such terms, so in the physiological organism the hurt unit must be helped to take its place in the ordered flux of life or be quietly extruded from it when it cannot be so helped. Pain then is a function of the organism, not of any part or organ of it: a subtile, sharp message from the disordered part to the brain as the chief central office of intercommunication, where it becomes *con-sense* or *con-science* and therefore conscious.

"Presented to consciousness," "emerging into consciousness," "rising above the threshold of consciousness," such and suchlike are the expressions used habitually with respect to consciousness. Yet they mislead much when they are understood to mean that consciousness is a sort of special and superior region into which mental states rise to be illuminated. There is no such elevated region of self-subsisting and constant consciousness apart from the particular act or state of consciousness. When a shooting nerve-thrill manifests itself on the mental side as a pang of pain, the particular pain is not something thrust into consciousness, it is the consciousness. The pain and the consciousness are one and indivisible, not two separables, co-existent and so to speak conterminous; if there be a keener particular consciousness elsewhere in the body, the pain is not felt although the conditions of it continue in being, for consciousness cannot go beyond its immediate excitation to be in two places at the same time. Nevertheless, though a state of pain be one in feeling, it is not simple and uncompounded in nature. Just as consciousness at its high removes of thought denotes more than a simple element, a complexity of things, in fact, so pain is not single in essence but composite; it is the resultant of a physiological sympathy of parts, a complex organic effect, and varies in quality according to its constituent factors. An organ severed from its special organism,

or an element apart from its organ, could not feel pain even though it continued to live, as it might do for a little while; a person suffers no pain when he cuts his hair or nails which, although not quite detached from his organic life, have no nervous communication with or part in the economy of the whole, being no more than excreta retained by a weak vital thread for external use or ornament; and in like manner if the supreme mental confederation in which all parts of the body are represented were rent into sundry and separate parts, a completely dissociated part or organ of it would not be conscious at all—at any rate would not, if it regained its associations, remember its conscious state.

The right question to put concerning pain is not the general question why it exists, nor the futile question what its mystery means, but the exact question, What are the physiological conditions of the particular pain which exists? What is the nature of the special local disorder which it signals? How is the message of disorder transmitted to the central nervous office? Where is it delivered and what are the reactions which it elicits? Now as these conditions are more or less special in every case, pain cannot rightly be discussed as if it were always one and the same in kind; there are many varieties of pain, each of which needs to be discriminated and analyzed so as to find out exactly what it signifies. In the natural course of a disease, whether to death or to recovery, there is sometimes a sequence of characteristic pains; so that its history might be written in the appreciation and description of the qualities of its pains, were these accurately interpretable. Common language, untainted by the theory of an abstract pain-consciousness, has always distinguished diversities of pains, speaking of them as dull, sharp, grinding, boring, burning, throbbing shooting, lancinating, and the like; and common observation recognizes the different meanings of the dull, heavy pain of oppressed vitality, the quick, keen pain of vital revolt against dangerous hurt, the tender tingle-tickling pain of reviving life as it regains reactive vigour. What are the

diverse physical conditions of these diverse pains? Clearly one cannot expect to measure pain by any instrument, however delicate, seeing that it is not a matter of degree only, were that objectively measurable, but of kind or quality also. Perhaps the nearest approach to a physical expression of its qualities might be found in the notes of agony which an expert musician can wring from his violin.

The theory of the self-conservative function of pain, plausible as it seems, fails not to encounter difficulties when it is applied in particular cases. Though the pain of a rheumatic or an inflamed joint does well when it enforces the rest requisite to ensure healing, and then looks for all the world like a beneficent provision for the purpose, yet if its plaint be too closely and too long listened to the result is permanent stiffness and incapacity. By over-attention to a nowise serious pain a person can convert that which might be temporary disorder into permanent disease, whereas by distracting attention to fix it elsewhere in wholesome exercise of mind and body, the physical conditions of the pain are rectified and it disappears. In that case the sound sense of the whole organism takes due note and hold of the natural proclivity of pain to self-indulgence: like an individual in a society, the peccant part needs and profits by the supports and restraints of the economy. What, again, of the beneficent function of pain in some serious morbid dangers? An inflamed patch of the lining membrane of the intestines provokes violent spasms of the intestinal muscles which aggravate the disorder and cause agonizing torture, notwithstanding that rest from motion is the one thing then needed. The whole feels and detests the pain acutely but cannot restrain the ill-doing part; the unintelligent reflex action going on with its mad work when the implicit intelligence of the organism can only look on impotently at the destruction which is being done. Far from being beneficent, the pain then kills by its protracted torture, however benevolent the import or its violent outcry. As it is no doubt right it should kill when it does kill, it is then good to the cosmic

whole, bad as It may be to the individual whom it kills. Presumably there was good reason in the nature of things why other reflex functions were not, like breathing, put partly under the control of will so that they might be slackened or quickened or stopped for a time, yet it is no unfair surmise that a measure of such subordination might have added immensely to the comfort of human life. Consider, for example, how vastly the sum of human happiness would have been increased and the sum of human misery lessened, nay, how different might have been the fate of individuals and even nations, had the colon been so far under the control of will as always to act promptly when urgently bidden.

It is hard to see what good function the pain of child-bearing serves. Nature has not left that important function to the conscious efforts of the woman; it has done with it as it has done with all the fundamental functions of life by putting it under the dominion of involuntary reflex action; silently bent on excluding any uncertainty whether mankind would go on living and multiplying as they do, had they to do so voluntarily with deliberate foresight and determination. Would women ever willingly make the painful parturient efforts now made in spite of them had they to do so with clear foreknowledge and voluntary endurance of the attendant pains? Good care has been taken to make the process independent of human wills. Yet the pain is neither necessary nor useful; it serves no apparent end; for the labour of child-birth might have been done, as it is done sometimes now, especially in savages and the lower animals, with little or no pain. Why then is pain such a constant condition of so natural a function?

So strange and needlessly gratuitous an adjunct to a natural process did it seem, that it was ascribed to a primal curse on womankind for the sin of the first woman in eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge in order to be wise. In which story there was perchance couched an excellent substratum of truth allegorically expressed. Not

otherwise than as in other now obsolete fables—for example, in the luminous fable of Prometheus lighting his twigs at the sun's chariot, and thus bringing down fire from heaven to ungrateful mortals; and in the obscure fable of his enchainment to a bleak Caucasian rock, where his daily regrowing liver was daily gnawed away by a vulture: the probable allegory of humanity chained to the world-rock and heart-gnawed there ever more by the knowledge which it more and more covets and adds to. Out of the curiosity to know in the Garden of Eden came the consciousness of suffering, the birth of consciousness being the penalty of knowledge; for then it was that man lost his primal innocence, perceived that he was naked and was ashamed, made his first acquaintance with pain, knew good from evil. On other grounds it is probable that the first dawn of consciousness in organic life was through pain—the pain of a hurtful impression and the co-ordered endeavour to escape from it, they together signifying the commencing discernment of difference which, translated into terms of understanding, is the beginning of knowledge. Moreover, it is in certain developments of the bodily structure which have gone along with the developments of mind in the highest animal form that we may seek the true cause of the pains of parturition.

To question what is the design or purpose of the pains is to put a vain question; the right question is, What is the cause of them? Whatever their use, if they have any, they are the direct and evident consequence of the superior bodily organization of the parturient woman, who suffers more than any other parturient female simply because her anatomical structure is such that labour is hard and protracted and pain therefore its accompaniment. The special structure is the apparent penalty which the human body pays for the erect posture which it acquired long ago, but to which it is not yet so completely adjusted in all its parts as to be exempt from troubles and incommodities incident to the strain of it—such troubles as hæmorrhoids, uterine

displacements, varicose veins, as well as difficulties of parturition; such sustained effort, too, as must be steadily kept up to prevent the erect body from falling suddenly forwards to the ground. Now, as the erect posture requires a contracted, firmly compact, not easily yielding structure of parts to support the gravid womb, such as is not necessary in an animal going on all fours, the changes which have been effected gradually through the ages to give that requisite basis of firm support have had the effect of increasing the labour and pains of parturition to overcome the structural resistance. If, then, it is to the superiorities of organization which his erect posture implies, and especially to the freeing his hands thereby for mental purposes, that man owes his mental development, the connection between knowledge and labour pains is evident. Because Eve was curious to know, therefore woman was condemned to bring forth children in pain.

There are two ways of viewing a fable sanctioned by immemorial tradition, either of which is consistent with the recognition of a hidden vein of truth in it: either as dumb undeveloped wisdom involved in fantastic and perhaps monstrous form, to be discerned, defined, and made articulate at a riper stage of conscious thought—myths of magic to be made science some day; or as the essence of wise insight which was on purpose so wrapped up to suit and teach the simple understanding of the multitude—truths of knowledge purposely mythified. If fable, then one may suppose that when mental development was inchoate and weak, and men, like children and savages, were incapable of abstract thought, capable only of reasoning from the particular to the particular, a mixed feeling and perception, instinctive and undefined, that knowledge was the bane of happiness, prompted them to construct a fable involving an implicit wisdom which they could not perceive and set forth definitely. For it is surely an error to think that there cannot be reason in a childish fable unless the reason has been consciously infused and can be logically expounded. As well declare that there is no reason in the bee's hive, in the spider's web, in the

varieties of floral structure and form, in all the ordered operations of organic nature. Reason is the conscious irradiation, the discursive exposition, of the ratio which has been unconsciously learnt.

Man never found out by reason that he was naked and unashamed, any more than he invented a steam-engine with all its embodied reason by the projected light of predesigning consciousness; what he did was to learn by gradual experience and reflection thereon the good uses of clothing and shame, thus building into mental structure, tentatively and implicitly, the reason which he can now set forth explicitly. It would go ill, too, with the brilliant genius if he were obliged to see and judge by discursive process of reason; he sees the truth intuitively without knowing how he sees it, and sets forth or leaves to others to set forth openly the reasons of it afterwards; the operations "differing but in degree, in kind the same."

If, on the other hand, the traditional myth be not mere fable but allegory, one may suppose that wise men—whether of the east, west, north, or south—having discerned a truth which it was not wise to lay open plainly, or not possible to convey intelligently to childish understanding, designedly wrapped it up in a form suited to the mental digestion of the ignorant multitude. For it is no more credible that wise men did not live before the dawn of history than that the sun shines for the first time when the last-born person first beholds it. That being so, it might well be that remnants of their wisdom, though they are sunk in oblivion, still linger in human traditions and fables; not otherwise, in fact, than as remnants of animal structure still, after countless ages, linger in human structure, as the simian-like ancestors survive in the toe-grasping propensities of the human baby, as the quite primitive beliefs of the race are still extant in the vulgar superstitions of the country-side. The inner mysteries of knowledge were notoriously concealed on purpose from the people by the priests of ancient Egypt; it is nowise improbable, therefore, that Moses, who was initiated in their

mysteries, wrote the story of the creation and fall of man (supposing him to have been the author of the Pentateuch and the recorder of his own death) in allegory as the fittest way to instruct and rule the Israelites. After all is said, it is no more possible to feed babes in knowledge with the intellectual food of wise men than to feed sucklings with the meat which full-grown men eat and thrive on; in one way or another, crudely or astutely, the multitude must be gulled for its good. Hitherto in the story of the world's great movements lofty aims have not been carried out by altogether lofty means.

Considering the pains of child-birth from the human standpoint of preordained ends it is hard to see what the design of them can be. Not certainly to make men leave off walking erect, nor again to infix such a dread of parturition as to make women leave off having children, although that happens sometimes, may happen oftener in time to come, if parturition become more difficult and painful, and might happen oftener now did both sexes share alike in the painful process. To prevent such an event and to ensure the continuance of human life on earth, nature has implanted in both sexes an overmastering passion of love, which is absorbed in the present, an ecstatic abandonment, wholly self-regardful, inhibitory of or overswaying counsels of reflection; it is nothing less than a translation of the blind productive force of organic nature into mortal lust almost equally blind, just the corresponding mental evolution of the organic transport which renders the procreant frog insensible to the mutilation done to it during the ecstasy. Wonderful is it to see how quickly, the pangs of labour over, the woman forgets them in the joy of maternity, and instead of repelling, turns eagerly to embrace, that which has cost her so much; in the birth of life the past anguish counts as a negligible by-effect, to be remembered no more for joy that a man is born into the world.

Nevertheless, considering curiously this association of pain with the production of life, and of the most pain with the most complex life, one may perhaps see in its outcry a

deep significance, fundamentally indeed an exclamatory protest against life. An inarticulate and quite ineffective protest, it is true, yet perhaps essentially akin to that which has found conscious expression, religious and philosophic, in doctrines and lives of absolute self-renunciation and of the negation of the desire to live. Evermore in a full survey of human life, past and present, is there evidence of two opposite states of feeling—to wit, the strong lust to live and propagate life, which is still general, and the negation of the desire to live and to propagate life, which emerges here and there occasionally in theory and practice. It is a curious question, then, whether the conscious protest against life, which is weak and infrequent now in comparison with the general lust of life, may be destined to grow some day to a stronger, more effective, and more widespread negation. Certainly the fundamental note of all religions is a profound conviction of the misery and vanity of life and the negation, implicit or explicit, of the love of life as it is; for to live it as a sort of self-annihilation, or not as the real life, but as a pilgrimage to future and better life elsewhere, is practically to disown its present value. As every composition in the ascending organic scale has its period, containing within itself the seed and silent prophecy of its disintegration, and one cannot think of the organism of humanity as exempt from the universal law of organic undoing, so it perchance is that alike in the conscious negation of the desire to live and in the organic pain-protest of parturition lies a prophetic intimation of the ending of mortality.

As pain signals impending and accompanies actual processes hostile to life, pleasure imports unity, pain disunity. The instinct of an organism, its natural strain and aim, is to continue in unity, for unity is life; it is its pain to suffer disunion, that is to disintegrate and die. Therefore to shun pain is the fundamental motive of self-preservation. Creatures so low in the scale of life as not to feel pain, still by natural repulsion shrink from and shun the offences or hurts to their structures which would be attended with pain in

higher organisms, and by natural affinity turn to the impressions suited to stimulate their growth and maintain their being. Pain then is simply an effect just as natural and necessary in the order of things as the undoing of that which has been originally done or the great organic undoing which is death. Where would be the mystery of it were it not for man's stubborn belief that he was created not to suffer but to enjoy, and that there must be an exceptional reason special to him among animals why he, like them, has to undergo the pains of living and of dying. So it comes to pass that his colossal egoism will not take death of himself in good part except it be not as the end of life but as a transition to a higher life.

When an organism so low in life's scale as to be insensible to pain shuns that which hurts it, does it turn actively and as it were spontaneously from that which is a hindrance to its life and growth or, being hindered, does it turn mechanically elsewhere to an impression which, being agreeable, it can assimilate and embody in structure? The shoot which grows straight upwards towards the light, or turns obliquely if it can get more freedom and light that way, does it thus grow because of an active quasi-spontaneous impulse in it to strive for the needed light, or does it so tend because, being repelled by that which hinders, it cannot help turning to that which favours its growth? The simple truth perhaps is that it reacts to the stimulus which excites physio-chemical processes in it, not to that which does not. Experiments have been cited to show that a vine-tendril swaying to and fro in the void will bend towards a support purposely fixed at a little distance, though it has then to turn away from what seems its direct and natural line of growth. In that case it looks as if, being somehow sensible of the neighbourhood of the needed prop, it elected to reach it, not otherwise perhaps than as the stamen of the flower bends purposely towards the pistil. Why not indeed? As the growing shoot must needs radiate subtile waves of energy answering to every motion of growth in it,

infrasensible yet not entirely insensitive, those of them that meet with no response will be dissipated while those which meet with a fit receiver will react responsively. Anyhow, it seems to respond to a stimulus favourable to its growth.

Such are the subtilties of nature's motions in the regions of the infinitesimal that we have not the right to deny a possible susceptibility to impressions which take effect where human organs with all their instrumental aids cannot perceive them; for as special sensibility signifies only special susceptibility to a particular order of vibrations, so assuredly insensibility need not be insusceptibility. However that be, instead of speaking of spontaneity and election in the vine-tendril, and thinking of its motions of growth in those terms of thought, it might be a wiser way perhaps to search beneath human will and choice for the cognate determining physical conditions to those of the tendril's unconscious motions which are sensible physically, so to speak, albeit below the level of conscious sensibility. He need not count himself iirational who when he gazes on a distant star, and still more when he feels himself in a sort of mysterious self-abandoned sympathy with it, believes that it may affect him by a secret influence which is imperceptible, intangible thus far; for it would be no greater mystery really than his vision of it, still less than the vision of it thousands of years after it was extinct, or than the vision of a star by one eye which another eye cannot see, or than the disquieting of the magnetic needle by a sunspot. To limit nature's subtilties of motion to such as affect human consciousness and are translatable into its terms is a supreme conceit of intellectual egotism.

Is it the seeking of pleasure or the avoidance of pain which is the real organic motive and therefore ultimately the conscious aim of life? When one digs down to the fundamentals of motive it is hard to distinguish between the avoidance of what is painful and the endeavour after what is easing or pleasing, the one involving the other. It is just as hard perhaps to distinguish between pleasure and

pain where they meet and merge, seeing that there are pains which in their beginning and endings are almost pleasant, and pleasures which in some circumstances are almost pains. One thing is certain—that all organic life in its normal state evinces an affinity, elective or not, for the stimulus which is profitable for self-preservation and growth, pursuing and embracing it, though it may be not otherwise than as one chemical element shows an affinity for another. Withal, this is true, not only as a general motive of human conduct, but true also in a measure of the inclinations or properties of every individual mind; for when any one hurts himself by pursuing that which is not his true good—as it is his privilege and habit as the most rational being consciously to do—he does so not because he thinks evil to be good, but because of the temporary domination of some passion or mood in the mental confederation which strives naturally to maintain and increase its being by selecting and feeding on that which, being suited to nourish it, is good to it; notwithstanding that such egoism be to the detriment of the whole which it has captured and leads in triumph. Thereupon comes in the use of pain whether of body or mind, which, signalling danger to the whole, is a warning and at the same time a motive to check and rule the culpably egoistic and therefore unruly action of the part: there is an appeal to the unity of the whole to regain its ease by stopping the disruption threatened by an overgrown egoism and self-seeking action of the part which, being its unease or pain, may otherwise become disease.

Running parallel courses on different planes of organic being, the physiological and the social organisms have much the same problem to solve—namely, the just reconciliation of individuality with solidarity in the increasing specialization which goes along with increasing complexity—of the organ with the organism and of the individual with society. An organ in an organism, whether organ of body or faculty of mind, is not free any more than an individual in a society, or a society of individuals in a state; it performs its perfect

function only with fullest freedom, therefore, when it does so within the physiological limitations imposed by its nature and situation, which it can in no case ignore. Within those circumscribed bounds it is free to fulfil its individuality to the utmost, to make the best of itself, but it is not free to transcend them and so do the best for itself. So likewise each individual in a society has the freedom of will to will what he can will, but is not free to will any will; for when all is said it is the real man who wills the real will, not an ideal will which is free to will the man, and every man as well as every will has a particular organic basis.

As the avoidance of pain is a motive urging man to higher function and structure, the theological design-finder fails not to see and seize his opportunity. He proclaims pain to have its benevolently preordained purpose in the economy of nature as a spur to his development, by prompting the avoidance of those things which cause it and the pursuit of those things which mitigate or abolish it, albeit that by one of nature's paradoxes the higher he rises in the organic scale the more sensitive he becomes to it. To shun sensualities which cause pain, remote if not immediate, to cultivate such loving-kindness and courtesy as conduce to social amity and unity, to find out and settle the physical conditions which best promote health and comfort, to strive for such increase of knowledge as will more and more subdue nature to human uses and lessen human pains, to cultivate in affliction a patient spirit of endurance and fortitude, by which the whole moral character is raised and strengthened;—could pain serve all these excellent uses were it not specially designed by overruling Providence as a means thereto? It is plain that it has so wrought, and that if it had not, the effects would not have followed. Mankind therefore owes a psalm of thanksgiving to pain for the useful spur which it has been in the process of humanization of nature. Only mankind, it is true, since the lower animals receive no compensation for the pains they suffer, which cannot serve now to raise them in the organic scale, seeing that the way

upwards is completely blocked by the dominant ascendency of man, who has monopolized it and deems animal pains to fulfil their purposes when they serve his purposes.

As the work of human development is done mainly in pain, man being brought forth in pain, learning wisdom through pain, eating his bread all the days of his life in labour and pain, it would appear that pain, not pleasure, was the original and principal motive of conduct. How indeed could he ever know and desire pleasure until he had once enjoyed it? Labour he calls a duty and finds a pleasure just because, occupying his mind and body, it distracts him from reflection on the monotony, weariness, and miseries of life, flattering him with the feeling that he co-operates and counts as a factor in the world's progress; and he is driven to invent and pursue a variety of diversions to prevent or alleviate the pains of inactivity and life-weariness. If the avoidance of pain then be not the prime motive of conduct, pain is certainly the real thing which he shuns and often gets, whereas pleasure is the ideal which he seeks, often does not get, and not seldom disappoints him when gotten. Strange it is to think what a course of perpetual illusionment and disillusionment he follows as he proceeds from pain to pleasure and out of pleasure generates pain. For the very pleasure gained becomes in secondary development a motive to avoid pain, seeing that, once enjoyed, it is a want or pain to be without it, and the want then operates as a motive to further endeavour. Desire strains to enjoy, and enjoyment, causing satiety, pants for desire. Yet it is in the multiplication of desires and of the means to gratify them that the progress of civilization consists: to multiply pains which are real in order to multiply pleasures which, soon fading, are more ideal than real and by such alternations to achieve progress. No wonder that a deep basic note of sadness sobs throughout the process of human things. Let the jubilant optimist exult as he may in his bounding delight of life at its prime—and he sometimes exhibits a pitiful spectacle of melancholy despair and futile revolt when, his

vitality at last nearly spent, he is being dragged downwards against his will to death—sober experience fails not to convince the reflecting mind that mortal life is on the whole a pilgrimage of cares and fears, regrets and tears, illusions and deceptions, labours and sorrows, vexations and vanities; no abiding rest for human aspirations to stay in, but at best a warfare and discipline either to prepare and fit the chastened mortal for a joyful immortality or to fashion a better life of mortality in time to come on earth. For in no case will he willingly entertain the suggestion that he can never change much, but will ever be essentially what he has been immemorially and still is, in spite of all the good that pain may continue to do for him; pain too so incalculably lavish in quantity and excruciating in variety of quality. How terrible indeed, could we contract it within the compass of imagination, the aggregate of pain, bodily and mental, which one generation only of the thousands of millions of men on earth endures!

Notwithstanding the good uses of pain, man is strenuous in his endeavour to get rid of as much pain as possible; though he is sure it is for his good, he is sure it is good for him to do away with it. In his conflict with nature he therefore uses diligently the powers which he gains over it by successive discoveries of its secrets for his own ease and well-being in the world. What sense is there in suffering pain which he can avoid, or of making for himself gratuitous pains? Yet many pious persons notoriously condemned, and would gladly have prevented, the use of chloroform in midwifery when that drug and its virtues were discovered, because the abolition of the pains of parturition was an impious defiance of the divine sentence passed on woman for the primal sin of Eden. Perhaps they were not, after all, so uncommonly foolish as they are now commonly thought to have been; for if nature has made pain a necessary condition of organic development on earth, the abolition of pain by man may be no sign of human progress. Many pious men and women, too, have spent their lives in

inflicting on themselves all the sufferings which ingenuity could devise, just to have the merit of enduring them, and have been canonized in consequence. Monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and servile obedience are solemn renunciations of those things which are the very motives and essence of progressive life—to wit, property, love, liberty; and, whether wise or foolish, such collective renunciations, and the approbations which they obtain, are remarkable protests against human life as it has been and is lived. Do they really testify, as supposed, to the right means of obtaining a better human life in a world to come? Or do they signify that pain and renunciation are the necessary conditions of a perfecting human life in this world? Or are they, perchance, fundamental protests against the value of any sort of human life?

Considering what pain has done as a spur to wise action in the process of human adjustment to surrounding men and things, how it has helped to ingraft courage, fortitude, patience, self-sacrifice, devotion, sympathy, charity in human nature, its seeming cruelty being really masked kindness, it is hard to see that its abolition could be a benefit, and that men could be strong and thrive without it. Hitherto, sorrows and sufferings have been the nurseries of virtue—*παθήματα μαθήματα*—affliction's good teachers; purified minds are chastened, disciplined, and perfected by tribulations, trials, and pains; the deepest and most vital truths have been uttered by those who "breathed their words in pain." Still, too, that must be wrung from the heart which is to work on the heart. Prayer to be delivered from pain, natural as it may be to mankind, is really contra-natural unless it be qualified by the prudent prayer to ask only for that which is foreordained.

The question might fairly be asked whether, out of exceeding self-pity, men are not nurturing a tacit self-persuasion that they ought not to suffer pain at all. For the evident tendency nowadays is to a straining and sharpening of sentiment which is ever ready to explode

instantly in passion of pity and horror at the imagination or the spectacle of pain, and a clamorous cry for its instant abolition: instead of choosing to suffer and be strong, as men of old did, they had rather be weak and not suffer, sentimental and self-pitying, not stoical and self-suppressive. Though it has been the fate of countless myriads of mortals through countless ages to suffer incalculable pains without any qualm disturbing nature's serenity, yet now, for the first time apparently, it shows a revolt against the hideous horrors of its past course in its human horror of the infliction and suffering of pain. Progress in the discovery of means to prevent or alleviate it has bred a growing feeling of repugnance to the sight or thought of it. Is, then, human progress likely to find out a way to dispense with the good work of pain as a means? Or is it, peradventure, that a growing sensitiveness to pain will end by making mankind painfully sensitive to that which ought not to be pain? And if so, what will the end be? On the whole it does not seem probable, when we consider calmly the human outlook, basing a forecast of the future on an induction from the past, that organic life is destined ever to reach perfection on this planet, whatever it may be destined to do on some nobler planet. That is an event which may perhaps come to pass, if it has not already come to pass, in the immensity; for as nature brings to maturity only a few out of the teeming myriads of seeds and germs on earth, the rest being prodigally wasted, the universe may well afford to waste planets in like proportion. Now if such perfection ever has been reached in the past, it might be a curious conjecture whether the story of Paradise was not an obscure organic reminiscence in man of an event of the cosmic process.

Certainly it is an odd spectacle which the world now presents to serious contemplation. For what is it that we behold? Nature out of harmony with itself, protesting by its human mouthpiece against the horrors of its way of evolution, by painful travail evolving a moral sense which is

shocked by the prevalent immorality of things. How dissolve this apparent discord except by one of two conclusions? Either that man, as he attains to a more complex social organization in the progress of his civilisation, is getting out of tune with the fundamental natural law, and so, by growing too tender, is losing the fierce energy of organic evolution, in which case regress will eventually take the place of progress; or that a quite new order of events is to supervene and reign at last in organic evolution—at all events, in its human sphere—when the glorious ideal shall be realized of a life of righteousness and peace on earth in which sorrow and suffering shall be no more: an aspiration of the race which prophetic enthusiasm has translated into a glorious expectation—"Behold, a king shall reign in justice and princes shall rule in judgment. The fool shall no more be called prince, neither shall the deceitful be called great. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid. They shall not hurt nor kill in all my holy mountain."

## II

### LIFE

The lust of life—A drama of mixed tragedy and comedy—The love of life despite the vanity of it—The routine of life—Self-renunciation, religious and stoical—Christianity and stoicism—Nature's wonted irony—Unadaptibility of the fixed structure of age—Old age and youth—Praise of the past by old age—The pleasures of old age.

HOWEVER unhappy the days of a man's life, he can always comfort himself with the assurance that his happiest day is yet to come—the day which ends them: in no case can he miss the day of his death. It is the organic lust to live which gilds in mind the misery of life and hides the happiness of death; inspiring the strong illusion, while it is strong, that happiness consists in life, it is urgent to go on living, doing in mind consciously what it does in every living creature unconsciously.

Impartially viewed, the conditions imposed on life are not cheerful: the long imbecility of childhood, the ignorance and errors of youth, the labour and anxieties of manhood, the regrets and remorses of memory, the fears and apprehensions of expectation, the aches and infirmities of age, the humiliations and pains of dying, the gradual realization of the utter vanity of life with the gradual waning of it. Being by nature a conflict with hostile forces to maintain and increase its being for its fixed period, while they go on for ever, every hour hurting and the last hour killing, the drama of life is one of mixed tragedy and comedy in its growth and prime, a dull and protracted tragedy in its declension.

It is wonderful how little the many wise saws concerning the vanity of life from time immemorial have done to lessen the desire to live. Not to be were the best, the next best thing soon to cease to be; the happiest day of life is the day of leaving it; he whom the gods love dies young; weep not for a person's death but for his birth; if you hate a man pray that he may live; give thanks to God for the deliverance of this our brother or sister from the miseries of this sinful world; what is life but a brief period of poor being between two eternities of nothingness, a span of illusive importance between the prattling imbecility of childhood and the babbling dotage of senility?—these and the like pessimistic sayings have not hindered mortals from loving life well enough to go on living it. The folly of reflection is to reflect too widely and deeply, not to accept life quietly for what it is worth and to make the best of it while it is; the folly of boundless desire always to expect it to be something better than the bounded thing it is; the folly of both to utter outcries of lamentation concerning it. If it be no more than a dream, it is still good sense to dream it well; for a dream may be pleasant or unpleasant, and it is better to have a good than a bad dream. Though happiness be a phantom which soon vanishes away, yet it is happiness, or would not be so called, while it lasts. In no case was it

meant to last, any more than life whose mortality it shares; withal it would soon cease to be happiness if it did continue at a stay. The plain rule of good sense then is to play the game of life well while in it or to leave it off, not to grumble and play badly. He who would excel in it must take good care of his health so as to be in the best physical condition, govern well his temper so as not to allow bad temper of any sort to spoil his performance, know well the rules and practice of the game so as to play skilfully—must in fact have knowledge, self-mastery, health, which Spinoza declared to be the true conditions of happiness.

The ordained course of every human life is simple and regular: to hope, love, joy, suffer, sorrow, sicken and die. To resent the sad side as not quite natural and proper is singularly unreasonable; it proceeds from the self-adoring egoism which makes man think himself an end, everything wrong which hurts him, and the event which ends him not the end which it seems. Let him limit the boundlessness of desire and he will have less cause to lament the limits of its fulfilment; if instead of getting up every morning in anticipation of some fresh joy, and going to bed every night in expectation of a brighter to-morrow, as from cradle to grave he fatuously does, he bethink himself that every day will be on the whole as much like another as each getting up and going to bed, and that a second life, could he have it, would be in essentials a repetition of the wearisome routine of the first, with a succession of the same passions, follies, virtues, strifes and struggles—in fact the same theatre with the same plays, the actors only changed—he may view and value more justly the part in nature he is ordained to play by living. All the less inclined too will he be to bewail the vanity of human things in sad plaints if he reflect that both songs and wails, easing as they are to him, count for no more at last than the rapturous songs of hope which in spring the birds pipe on every tree, or the subdued trills of memory which they warble in autumn.

Theological dogma apart, is there not a more genuine self-

renunciation, a deeper sympathy with elemental nature, a closer feeling of unity therewith, in the abject resignation of religion to the "power above" than in the self-conscious frigid maxims of stoical fortitude, or in the rational demonstrations of the pessimistic philosophers who go on living against all reason? To act well one's part in the world, to make life a work of art not of analysis, that is the main concern and the secret of such happiness as can be got out of it. Schopenhauer might have practised better philosophy, perhaps, if, instead of translating cosmic force into will, and supposing that he had advanced matters by stretching words out of definite meaning into equivocal vagueness, he had gone definitely to work to translate will into cosmic life. Nor might Marcus Aurelius have done amiss if, instead of schooling himself to a sublime patience and fortitude of endurance, he had not tamely endured and condoned the excesses of the infamous Faustina.

The immense advantage which religion had over philosophy was that it inspired hope and stimulated endeavour by creating a glorious ideal. In the fight against Stoicism, Christianity was bound therefore to win. Though both doctrines frankly accept the doctrine that whatever *is* must needs be right, yet the practical consequences are very different. Stoicism fortifying itself painfully to suffer patiently, nay, even persuading itself that ills were no ills, could not go along with the dissatisfaction, unrest and revolt which incite fierce and ardent struggles to better things, whereas such revolt and struggle against the evil tares sown in the world by a malign power were expressly sanctioned by religion as motive and means to better things; the sufferings of this present life in the process being of small account in comparison with the exceeding glory to be attained in a perfect life to come. Religion, thus exploiting the strong lust to live which Stoicism ignored, therefore triumphed easily; for it is certain that the active motive to do must prevail over the passive motive to endure so long as the organic *conatus fiendi* works in human nature to inspire

ideals and incite progress. Looking back on the mighty movements of mankind which history records, it is pretty evident that not one of them, not even probably the slow upward movement of unrecorded savage life through the ages, but was effected under the sway of illusion; the multitude was inflamed, fascinated and energized by feeling, not moved and governed by reason; the illusion witnessing to the strong throb in mind of the organic life aspiring to fuller and more complex being. The special prophet of the epoch was he who incarnated and expressed the obscurely brooding and instinctively lacked ideal of the people and the time. Another obvious advantage therefore which Christianity had over Stoicism was that, by deepening and widening the feeling of humanity into that of one great brotherhood to be aspired after, it was linked on to the elemental law of organic development from the simple and general to the complex and special as it works in the progressing organization of human society.

It is one of the many instances of nature's wonted irony that just when an individual attains to the maturity of its powers the body begins to decline; for the result is that as life consists in action and the fullest life in the fullest action of all the faculties, mental and bodily, it never can be enjoyed in full perfection. When the pleasures of sense and feeling are most keen the understanding needed for their best management is wanting, and they are abused or not wisely used; when the understanding to govern well their gratifications has been gained, they are growing dull and sluggish. Nature, indeed, takes good care to provide for its human continuance by a full and free stream of unrecking enthusiasm in youth before it forms and uses the chastening reflections of age; its course one of a perpetual rehabilitation after perpetual exposure of illusions.

That life is short is an oft-reiterated complaint which men are rather pleased to make, as implying that they would do great things were it long. Yet it is in every one's power to make it long or short, according as he puts much or little

activity into it; for by the use which he makes of time he may contract ten years into one year or stretch one year into ten years. Therefore it might be no unjust answer to his complaint, Cease your damnable iteration and henceforth begin to live. Thought being life in mind, it follows that sound and active thought is not only a wholesome invigoration but also an actual augmentation of life; wherefore to think much and well is to live long in a short time. Those who, spending time in wasting it, thus employ life in not living, have no right to accuse its brevity. Moreover, calm reflection on the sort of work which men do who continue to live after they have done their best work—which was done, perhaps, when they were comparatively young—may conclude it a pity that individual life is sometimes so long.

The time comes in old age when life is but a habit of action in an accustomed medium and the pleasure possible to it consists in the exercise of the fixed faculties. The hardening and decaying mechanism can go on doing quietly its wonted work, but it has neither plastic substance to make new adjustments to new experiences nor pliability of structure to make accommodations to changed conditions; therefore an abrupt change into new circumstances, especially if it be a complete transplantation necessitating a change of habits, is apt to turn out badly. So in parallel way the rigid structure of an old and complex civilized society cannot lend itself to novel adjustments; for which reason a new law imposed on it, though it seem called for by circumstances to correct patent wrongs, yet by disturbing settled habits when new consequential adjustments can only be partially and imperfectly made, runs the risk of doing more harm than good. There is no greater absurdity than to accuse a decaying nation of dying slowly because it will not adopt measures of reform which it could only assimilate and profit by were it capable of being regenerate or formed afresh; if adopted in the actual circumstances they would only hasten its ending. As well ask the stiff impotence of age to perform the vigorous

exercises of elastic youth as require the rigid tissue of an old national structure to adapt itself plastically to a new order of being.

If wisdom be not always the attribute of old age, at all events it is assumed that they ought to go together. Taught by experience and reflection, age can view things calmly and reasonably, seeing them in their due proportions and foreseeing their consequences, whereas impetuous youth, vaunting in its vigour and unrecking of consequences, acts impulsively and boldly; destitute of the after-thoughts which would qualify it to perform prudent forethought, its boldness is apt to be foolhardy rashness. It is indeed by virtue of this its natural function that, as history shows, on the one hand, many or most of the great things done in the world have been done by young men; and, on the other hand, that the greatest calamities have been brought on their country by them.[1] But it is not wholly experience which disillusions old age; losing by natural decline the passions which give fire and force to youth, age undergoes a steady detachment from life, as decaying leaf from branch, and so far from being tempted by their objects is indifferent to or repelled by them. When that which once provoked ardent desire now excites aversion, nay, perhaps turns lost desire to disgust, it becomes easy to look on it calmly and clearly in the cold light of reason and to perceive its vanity. Assuredly the old man who does not realize the vanity of life must needs have an immense fund of vanity. Howbeit, there could be no wisdom in youth thus viewing it; that which would be the folly of age is the wisdom of youth, whose rich sap, happily for the march of human things, bursts out in innumerable buds, though few of them ever come to growth. Some do so thrive; and as it is almost certain that indurated age cannot perceive their value and will probably despise and oppose them, there is apt to be

1 "But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him."—I Kings, Ch. xii. v. 8. So all Israel, save the tribe of Judah only, revolted from Rehoboam.

something wanting in its wisdom when applied to the enthusiasms of youth; though it give good counsels of regulation it cannot impart or share the impulses of production and the energy of execution. Life is essentially action and the very pulse of active life illusion, so that the waning of life is the necessary waning of illusion. The persistence of an exceptional vital glow in the ashes of decay is nowise always an edifying spectacle. Consider, for example, how it infatuates the old man who falls violently in love with a young woman, blinds him to the patent evidences of his decay, even deludes him into the belief that warm lust may joy in the freezing embrace of sapless December; consider, again, how tenaciously, limpet-like, weak senility clings to a post the duties of which it cannot properly perform, utterly unable to conceive the notion that it now represents a weak and foolish old man. Certainly wisdom does not always accompany old age; as there is sometimes wisdom without grey hairs, so there are sometimes grey hairs without wisdom.

If wisdom were a constant accompaniment of old age, how could old age be, as it commonly is, the *laudator temporis acti?* As things have presumably gone right the way they have gone on earth, the universe being ruled on rigorous lines, the usual praise of the past and disparagement of the present must for the most part have been wrong; for the present is the mould in which the past is fused into the future, the past becoming the present and the present instantly being the past. The reason of the prejudice is obvious. Because dull and rigid life cannot feel interest in and take vital hold of the present; because in fact the most real to it is not the present experience, which it can but partially assimilate, but the experience when, full of sap, it lived most, and when desire, inspiring hope, imbued life with the glamour of illusion; because it is not the life that now is, but the life of apprehension and assimilation which was an addition to life in structure, that constitutes the most important part of the present life. Therefore, too, it is in old age that recent events soon seem distant, and distant events

are vivid in memory; that a day spent seems a day subtracted from life, whereas in youth a day spent seems a day added to life; that the thought of age is, How shall I get through the day? whereas in manhood it is, How shall I get done in the day what I have to do? No marvel then that the old man likes to talk of the past, to recount and magnify his doings in it, even though they may have been of a questionable sort—and sometimes most triumphantly those which were most questionable—and if perchance, happily for himself though not always so happily for others, he retain extraordinary physical and mental energy, to assert and utter himself in a way which is apt to be more detrimental than beneficial. He may admire himself and be admired by others because of his senile vigour, but it is after all senile, unfitting him to keep up with the stream of events which is running past him; for let him think what he will, he, leaf-like, undergoes a gradual detachment whereby he cannot deal fitly with the fresh forces of the present.

The pleasures of old age on which philosophers sometimes descant at length are just the colourless pleasures which the senile conditions of weakening life permit. They amount pretty well to this—to walk slowly because you cannot walk quickly, to think quietly of your happiness in not wishing to do the things which you cannot do, nowise to worry because there is nothing worth worrying about, to cultivate a serenity of mind which detachment from the vital current makes easy, if not inevitable: to have done with ambition, envy, hopes and fears, toiling and moiling, and to rest quietly in a calm contemplation of men and things. All which are no doubt excellent things in the circumstances, only they signify life in the process of undoing or unbeing, not life in the doing or being; and if they have advantage over the full life of passion, turmoil and activity, it is because their slack and slackening motions prophetically anticipate the rest of death, and its day is better than the day of birth. He who is pleased to set them forth elaborately for human edification, instead of modestly keeping them in silent mind, shows how

self-gloriously the vigour of vanity in life can survive the vigour of life in mind. He is then perhaps capable, like Cicero, of thinking, and being happy in the thought, that his doings in life could not have been done better and that a letter from him would suffice to immortalize its recipient.

## III

### DEATH

Death the natural ending of life—The waning of desires with the waning of life—Religion and philosophy augment the fear of death—The gloomy ceremonials of the scene of death—Thoughts, feelings, and behaviour at the point of death—The preservation of character in dying—Social dependence in dying—Deception and self-deception of the dying person—No special illumination, but gradual weakening of mind before death—Death a necessary concern to the individual—Continuance of life against reason—Praise of death—Death a necessary condition of life.

MORTALS perpetually fear death yet perpetually tell themselves they have nothing to fear. By its very nature life must revolt against that which is the negation of it; most of all when it is in full vigour, less when it is weak and dull, least of all when it is so sluggish, faint and feeble as, being scarce alive, to resent not but rather to crave its ending. But that natural instinct hardly justifies imagination's panic-stricken picture of death as the terrible enemy which, ever lurking in ambush, seizes at last on the quailing mortal who has been all his life anxiously trying to baffle it, and the dressing of it in a panoply of horror. Death being simply the end of life, the cessation of the infinitely subtile and complex motions compact in the particular bodily form and structure—its motions of aspiration, sorrow, joy, fear and other energies—comes naturally to mind and body as that natural event when they are spent. Life is the something which ends, death not the something which begins. What people cannot help doing is inveterately to think of the

ended life as if it were still somehow and somewhere in cold being beyond the warm precincts of mortality, and so to pity it and scare themselves. Picturing death as something more than the absence of life, as children imagine darkness to be more than the absence of light, they, like children, fear to go into the dark. That is the chief reason of the vulgar dread of death, as it is the triumph of the exultant faith which can exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Another reason of fear is the habit of the lookers on at the agony of death to ascribe to the dying man, whose struggles they pitifully watch, the feelings and thoughts which they, strong in life, have now and imagine they would have still if they were in his situation, notwithstanding that they would then be quite other selves with quite other feelings. The feelings belonging to one situation they cannot help transferring to another and quite incompatible situation. As life wanes, the feelings and thoughts which it inspires necessarily wane also, and end when it ends, a progressive effacement of its passions and interests steadily taking place: first, pleasures die, then hopes and desires, and last of all the very love of life and repugnance to death. It is while life is strong and militant that its instinctive vigour in mind finds and frames conscious arguments against the prospect and fear of death; for its being is to be, and its instinct of feeling in mind therefore to wish to continue to be, notwithstanding reason's foresight of the inevitable not-being.

Religion and philosophy, being concerned to make men go on living, have conspired to augment the fear of death by the solemn array of fortifying counsels which they have mustered and ostentatiously marshalled to confront and conquer the fear of it. By frequent and solemn adjurations to courage, and inculcations of the fortitude becoming human dignity in face of the inevitable, they have lent the unnatural proportions of an awful adventure to a quite natural event which occurs every instant, and thus magnified

mightily the terror of it. How can a weak mortal help thinking formidable that which is pictured in such dire shape of horror as to require all the stimulated bravery of his nature to encounter it? Besides, theology has gone on to add supernatural to natural terror by investing death with new and special terrors of its own, and thus augmented immensely the awful import of the natural event.

Then, again, there are the dismal circumstances of death and the gloomy ceremonial of sorrow: the spectacle of the process of dying, the moans and groans, the gaspings and distortions, the coughs and chokings, the spasms and convulsions, the humiliating impotences of body and mind, all so distressing and pitiful to behold; the soft tread and conventional hush of ministering attendants, the solemn whisperings of weeping friends feeling or feigning a decorous woe—all the surrounding gloom and pageantry of a tragic scene in which the chief actor, if he be strong and self-conscious enough to play up to it, is admired and applauded.

To add to the conscious repugnance to death are the gruesome thoughts of what follows it as the body goes through the successive steps of putrefaction and destruction. Organic life in active being has a natural repulsion to the putrefactive processes of its undoing, a repulsion which in its most conscious being translates itself into disgust and horror. The hideous contrast between the body as it was in its strength, beauty and activity of living form, and as it is in process of dissolution is well calculated to produce a shrinking horror of death in the mind of the living, whose natural sympathies are with living not dead matter.

The thoughts, feelings and behaviour of persons at the point of death have been the occasions of many gross fictions and foolish moralizings. When a person of great eminence meets his fate without fear or faltering, calmly stoical or piously resigned, sustained withal it may be by the belief that he is leaving the miseries of time to enter on the felicities of eternity, there is a pleased murmur of admiration, especially if the last half-caught words he feebly

uttered can be interpreted into a fine sentiment of some sort. Yet the spectacle then exposed to public gaze as singularly noble might be seen every day on a humble theatre in many a poor cottage where it is quietly attended on as the simple and natural departure of one whose time is come. From time to time again a fiery preacher, eager to believe fables which slake desire, may be heard to set forth in flaming horrors the terrible mental agonies of the hardened sinner, or the impenitent infidel, as if they were fated consequences of an ill-spent life or a wilful unbelief. Such stories suit well with the settled principle of social policy to make men the moral or religious citizens which it is wished they should be, by kindling their admiration, flattering their vanity, and working on their fears. But is it true that the good man always welcomes death piously and that the bad man recoils from it? Not in the least true. The moral firmness or weakness shown at that mortal juncture depends on the person's character and the nature of the disease which is killing him rather than on his piety, or his philosophy, or on the remembrances, good or bad, of his past life. When agonies of torturing pain or the prostration of abject nervous exhaustion leaves no scope for heroic moral display, the ease produced by a benevolent injection of morphia is more blessed to comfort and support than either the maxims of philosophy or the consolations of religion; whereas they are ideals which appeal to imagination and may perchance help, the pain is a real something which he can nowise doubt that he feels.

It is a common and amiable opinion that the deathbed is a scene of sincerity and freedom from self-deception. Then at last the dying man is supposed to put off the social mask which he wore and to show his true self. But it is a fanciful and quite false notion. Self-love usually lingers as long as life lasts and does its deluding work to the end. The dying person keeps his character in dying, whatever abrupt change thereof take place after death: if a liar by nature, he lies with his last gasp; if a hypocrite, dissembles to the last; if

avaricious, clings with his last grasp to his possessions, "loth to part with a penny who must soon part with the whole"; if vain, perhaps calls for the looking-glass; if penurious, grudges the expenses of his sickness; if vindictive, nurses his vengeance to the last, or, like King David, bequeathes it to his successor. The principal feature of a character, being deepest-rooted, keeps its vitality when qualifying and less stable features are effaced by the far-advanced decay. How could it well be otherwise seeing that the fibre of strongest vitality in the man must last the longest? We are told that Vespasian, like Rabelais, died in making a jest, Tiberius in his habitual dissimulation, Septimius Severus in despatch of business; and we know that David charged his son Solomon not to let Joab, the son of Zeruiah, go down to the grave in peace, and to bring down the hoar head of Shimei, the son of Gera, with blood to the grave, notwithstanding that he had solemnly sworn to hold him guiltless.

It is curious to note the form which deathbed retrospect sometimes takes in one whose working life has been a consistently grasping and little scrupulous self-seeking. Is he repentant and remorseful? Far from it; not only does he not sorrow much for what he has done much amiss, but he may naively congratulate and comfort himself with the recollection of some good work which he can think he has done, and of a hidden sympathy with his kind which he had, notwithstanding the small show he made of it. As he feels himself sinking through the foundations of his individual being he clings to a bond of social unity which he tries now to think was more real than he ever really felt it, and would fain die in charity with all men; a striking illustration of the existence of the social nature in his nature and of his craving to reconcile his ending self with its continuing life.[1]

[1] He has lived in and by, and as he would fain think for, his social organism, like the bee for its hive. Let a bee be captured and isolated, and although supplied with ample provision and kept in a favourable temperature, it dies soon of solitude; it is an organ of its society and dies when separated from it. So the man, when he dies,

Though every one has himself to do his dying and can get no part of it done for him, yet his social dependence manifests itself then, for there is hardly any one in a civilized community who feels not the need of some support, who would choose to do it quite alone, who craves not a friendly presence as he sinks into the void of unbeing. Such solemn ceremonies as the administration of the last sacraments of religion to the dying man—which, when his vital tenacity is strong, he is apt to put off until they are forced on him or until it is too late to administer them except as a solemn show—represent a grand function of social attendance, absolution, and valediction, and are therefore a wonderful support and solace to him when the end is imminent. They soothe him with the pleasing notion that he is not being quite extinguished. "Farewell, you are absolved from all that you have done amiss; happy be your journey, and may you rest at last in blissful peace"—such is the implied social valediction to its detached unit. Belief in the efficacy of prayers for the dead carries the consolation beyond the tomb.

When all is said, however, most deaths take place without the dying person being aware that he is dying. Friends conceal the fact from him if they suspect or know it, usually comfort him with cheering assurances of recovery, and he with an amazing self-deception conceals it from himself until advancing disease has so dulled his senses that he cannot realize it. Strange indeed it is to see how little able dying persons, even though they may themselves have seen many persons die, are to apprehend their real state, and how persistently with all their wits about them they believe that they are going to recover when, if it were the case of another person, they would see at once that there was not the least chance of recovery. An occasional though happily rare spectacle, pitiful to behold, is presented by a dying old man

feels mainly the social separation, and is comforted by the social support; "for that man is esteemed to die miserable," says Jeremy Taylor, "for whom no friend or relative sheds a tear or pays a solemn sigh."

who, having been always busy, selfish, intriguing, energetic, never sick till now and still tenacious of life, revolts vehemently against his ending, is obstinately incredulous of its approach, resents as humiliating insult, while rabidly exacting, the necessary services and attendance of his feebleness. That is, however, before disease has wholly quenched the strong and still militant vital resistance which it fatally threatens; even he sinks at last into the apathy of resignation or stupor.

It is an error bred of fond desire to suppose that when death is near the mind gains an extraordinary freedom and clearness of insight which it never had before. Being weakened as the body is weakened, its functions then usually belong to mental pathology rather than to mental physiology. Therefore it is much at the mercy of the surrounding influences brought to bear upon it, which it has no longer the grasp of judgment to weigh justly or the strength of will to resist. Two practical conclusions are thence to be drawn: (*a*) that stories of deathbed illuminations, repentances, conversions, and the like, so far from witnessing to phenomena of extraordinary mental value, reveal the ordinary infirmities of mind going through the morbid process of dying; (*b*) that wills or testamentary dispositions made under such conditions are often dictated by the suggestions of those about the dying person, who can then exert an influence which, though it might be no more than due were he strong and well, easily becomes undue influence on a weakened mind incapable of recalling and weighing all the proper facts and their relations.

Epicurus asked the pretty question: Why should death concern me, since when it is I am not, and when I am it is not? But the answer is not far to seek. Because it invades and threatens me while I am, and as I like to *be* I cannot like the process of my unbeing or undoing. When I am so far undone that I mind it not, then it will not concern me, but until it *is* I am; and in no case can I like the weakness, the helplessness, the sufferings, the humiliations of the

process of dying. For the pity of it is that it *is* in some measure while I *am*, and *is* more and more until I am not.

But that is always free choice, it may be said, seeing that there are many ways out of life, some of them easy enough, and one of which may be taken at any moment. He who consents, like a sentry, to stand in starless night and wait the appointed hour of relief has no right to complain of a situation which he voluntarily keeps. What greater folly can there be than to live when life is and must surely to the end be a constant pain? to live in agony when life is only a futile gradually lessening resistance to death? That may be true as a question of pure reason, but what has feeling to do with folly? Reason and feeling speak different languages and cannot speak to one another intelligibly; for as folly is a word signifying the violation of reason it has no meaning when addressed to feeling. The truths of feeling are discerned by feeling, and the life and joy of it are to be folly sometimes; therefore irrational sentiment often prevails over rational judgment and is justified of its irrationality by the cosmic sanction. Reason never taught man that he fell from a perfect state of bliss long ago, nor does it teach him that he will ever attain to a perfect bliss in time to come; yet these two beliefs have been manifestly most potent motives of his toilsome and painful struggles to recover the Paradise which he lost on earth by fitting himself for a Paradise to come on earth or in heaven. When any one voluntarily kills himself it is because he is so weary of the burden of life that he likes not to go on living—he does that which he likes best; when he goes on living it is because, however miserable he may be, he still likes to live. Though it be, then, from a personal point of view, quite contrary to reason to go on living in conditions of continual and hopeless pain, it is quite as contrary to reason to judge feeling by reason's measure.

If every one did not necessarily regard death from the egoistic standpoint of his precious self, all people might join together with one consent to sing its praises and laud its

blessing. Thus bravely indeed has its panegyric been proclaimed sometimes. Hail! all-conquering Death, just, beneficent, divine! Thou that extinguishest the exaltation of pride, the insolence of arrogance, the greed of rapacity, the cruelty of oppression; annihilatest the parade of pomp, the ostentations of luxury, the triumphs of wrong; givest rest to the weary and heavy-laden, peace to anxiety and anguish, and blessed end to suffering. Without whose omnipotent immortality the crimes, vices, cruelties, wrongs, and follies of mortality would have been eternal, the strong the eternal oppressor, and the weak the eternal victim. Though hostile to the individual yet friend to the species, blessed be death, seeing that life dies that life may live and grow into fuller life, and higher death evermore be the condition of higher life. Such-like is the chaunt of the altruistic pæan befitting the on-struggling and perfection-craving race of men; in which, if the individual cannot join heartily, so much the worse for him because of his present hardness of heart and contempt of the future good of his species.

Without death the moral and intellectual progress of mankind could no more go on than life in any particle of the body without daily death. Neither the word life nor the word death has any meaning apart from the other. Therefore the words "eternal life" are a contradiction in terms; as unmeaning as a "liquid solid" or "a boundless boundary," and only not perceived to be so because no clear and distinct ideas are resolutely formed of what *life* means and what *eternal* means, as distinct ideas are formed of what a solid is and what a liquid is; they are in fact a feat of self-deception whereby to a substantive is joined an adjective which is the negation of its very substance, and the ligation of opposites afterwards treated as a transcendental reality. It would be no greater paradox to call death the last function of life, seeing that it is the natural event which ends it when life has fulfilled its ordained period: just the inevitable transformation of matter and energy which takes place when its special formal composition undergoes de-

composition and the elements thereof enter into other compositions of the ceaseless flux of things. Because "I" begin and end, therefore the terms *beginning* and *end* can be applied to the universe—that is the supreme absurdity of human egoism.

# CONCLUDING CHAPTER

## END AND AIM

The doctrine of final causes—Order and disorder, goodness and badness—Mental products purely relative—Sin, evil, disease and death nowise anomalies—Every death a natural and necessary event—The good use of revenge—Anger justifiable socially—Ambition neither vice nor virtue—No evils from standpoint of pure reason—Absurdity of seeking for the origin of evil—Immortality, personal and impersonal.

SPINOZA, whose fortune it has been to have been more often commented on than comprehended, pointed out clearly the errors of thought springing naturally and directly from the notion of mankind that the world was made specially for them, all things therein being purposely created and ordained for their uses and ends. Thence came the invention of final causes, the pride of reason to discover them, and the magnification of itself for its discoveries: the final cause of the eye to see, of the eyelid to wink, of the winds to fill the sailor's sails and to turn the miller's mill, of the sun to give light by day and the moon by night; nay, as must needs follow in further logical issue, did not logic come to an abrupt stop, of a spasm to torture, of a microbe to kill, of a straight line to be the shortest distance between two points, of a triangle to have the sum of its angles equal to two right angles. As knowledge grew, it inevitably came to pass that many final causes thus invented in the course of its growth receded in distance, faded in form, and eventually vanished —that the stars, for example, which once had special control

over human nativities are now only parts of a universe of which man is end and aim, crown and consummation.

Viewing creation in that light it was natural for him to count good, orderly, beneficial, beautiful, that which was pleasing and useful to him within the sense-bound and sense-framed minute fraction of the inscrutable whole, and to call bad, disorderly, pernicious, ugly, that which was not to human use and liking, but disagreeable or hurtful. As the order is not in the things but in the individual mind, it follows that order beyond the limits of the order perceivable by him, being that to which no mental adjustment can be made, confounds apprehension, defeats recollection, offends as disorder, yea, sometimes appals as mystery. Yet the so-called disorder, although jarring upon and confounding human systematizations, is quite as truly order in the whole outside their narrow apprehension as the fractional order discovered and utilized within it. So is it also with regard to good, beautiful, virtuous, and their opposites; which are terms of human relation only, just the mental language in which by reason of their forms of mental structure men interpret things; being reactions of feeling by fit means to that which, being pleasing, they affect and like, or, being displeasing, they dislike and reject in their interactions with their surroundings. Fundamentally the thing is good or bad according as it pleases or repugns sense and feeling.

To think and speak of any mental product, even when raised to its highest power, as if it had value outside human limits of thought—as being ever the final and absolute truth of things-in-themselves—is not to think and speak in terms of understanding. The bee would do much the same which should deem its buzzing to be of like transcendental import, as at heart doubtless it unconsciously yet exultantly does. Let a creature buzz, hiss, howl, roar, sing, crawl, fly, creep, walk, or talk, as its mode of living self-expression, it must needs translate the world into the terms of such mode of being, shape the things thereof accordingly, and feel or find therein the foundations of its beliefs. That is a truth which

every one who would interpret rightly the minds and doings of such creatures as ants, bees, and other clever insects, will do well to keep in mind, in order that, so far as possible, he may think on them not in terms of his mode of mental self-expression, but in the terms of their beings and doings as they live in a quite different world of sense. The reflection might serve also to teach him the narrow limits of the conclusions which he has the right to draw from the data his own senses supply.

It is because of the inevitable strong bias of judgment owing to man's conceit of his position and value in the universe that sin, evil, corruption, decay, disease and death are anywise anomalies or mysteries to be wondered at as needing explanation. His towering egoism prompts him naturally to look on disease which sickens, weakens, humiliates and ends him as a continually recurring calamity which he would fain abolish. Yet from a wider point of view than the anthropocentric standpoint they are seen to be good, seeing that they are natural and necessary events in the ordained sequence of things. Not a microbe but has its right place on earth even when that is the suitable soil of a man's body where it multiplies joyously; when it kills him, that is an evil to him whose chief concern is to live as long as he can and to be as much alive as he can while he is alive, but it fulfils its ordained function and works its maker's praise by killing him. When he kills the microbe, which perhaps implicitly feels the universe to be made for it and everything evil which hurts it, he rightly fulfils his function in nature, howbeit the microbe which he kills might, like many more living things on the earth, in the sea, and in the air feel him to be the greatest evil in the universe. The quality and value of every creature depend on its own nature, not on the likes or dislikes, the uses or hurts, which another creature feels in regard to it. Mankind count disease and death the greatest evils, because disease is hostile and death fatal to them, yet disease and death are of excellent use in nature, which could not continue its

progress without them, and, being necessary and beneficient workings of it, may well be beautiful to it. Though the stink of putrefaction is repugnant to man as an organic being, because it is associated with his and other organic dissolution, it may well be a grateful odour to nature, which rejoices to fulfil its course of evolution by his death and decomposition.

Did ever mortal, mighty or mean, die except when it was right he should die? Sorrowing friends loudly lament his untimely end, and bitterly bewail the inexpressible and irreparable loss of a life so good, so noble, so invaluable, and what not besides, especially when he was a person of some eminence; but that is only the pleasing ease of an emotional discharge on their part, for it was certainly better for a human race wishful to go on living and perfecting that the man, who was nowise indispensable, should die as he did than that there should have been a suspension of the laws of the universe with the consequent instant wreck thereof, which would have been the tremendous alternative. It is obvious that mankind are all too prone to lament unwisely what is wisely done, and that they are yet far from having learnt the stern lesson of renunciation and resignation which is the solemn-sounding refrain of every passing hour.

Equally obvious is it that the lower passions of human nature are not the unqualified evils they are vulgarly declared to be; for they perform their useful function and therefore fulfil their ordained end in the maintenance and development of the social economy. A close consideration of the workings of a particular passion might correct the shortsighted observation which sees the evil and does not see the good in it. In truth things might go badly on earth without revenge, or anger, or ambition. When the startled bee, instant in impulse of defence, stings the offender and, leaving its sting in the wound, dies (*animasque in vulnere ponunt*), it spends itself in the stroke, sacrificing its life to its retaliation. What profit is there in an act which entails the bee's death? None certainly to the particular bee, but,

great profit to the race of bees, which owes its continuance on earth to this power of deadly retaliation. Had not bees time out of mind defended their lives and hives by stinging, it is certain that they could not have survived as they have done: honey and honey-makers might long since have vanished from the earth. They have formed and kept up an admirable social union, peaceful, industrious, stable, through innumerable ages, because, inspired by the social principle of atonement, they have been faithful members of one body and members one of another. Had the bee selfishly tried only to save its own life when the hive was attacked, like a coward in battle, or hesitated to take instantly the place of another slain in the battle, the society must have undergone swift dissolution.

Were mankind to consider well the courage and self-sacrifice of the bee for the good of its society—neither for an instant ever at fault—when they glorify these qualities in themselves as if they were their quasi-divine prerogatives, they might perceive that nature did not wait for the dawn of a moral sense in man to start and exhibit morality in function for the first time in the animal kingdom; and were they to consider the admirable structure of the hive, and the perfect social economy of its industrious inhabitants, they might own that organic matter did not wait for its embodiment in human form to learn the principles and practice of social life. Nay, they might extract a yet larger lesson of self-renunciation from the conduct of the bees, which notably sacrifice the present to the future life of the species in a way exceeding that which the human race is yet capable of.

Bacon called revenge a kind of wild justice which the law ought to weed out, since it putteth the law out of office, and moralists are wont to denounce it as sinful. Nevertheless it has its good use in the social economy which without it would hardly run so smooth a course. The fear of a person's revenge works directly and effectually to protect him from injury and thus acts indirectly, yet largely and widely, to check wrong-doing in a community; indeed, like many small

vices and virtues, the humble workings of which philosophy is too lofty to notice, such fear operates more powerfully and generally as a preventive force in the conduct of life than the exalted precepts of morality. An act of revenge is no real benefit to the doer, sweet though it be at first, since it rouses retaliatory passion and detrimental hostility, but it makes for the welfare of the social body; the private vice becomes in a measure a public virtue; the avenger, like the angry bee, sacrifices his private interest to the larger interests of the community. It is not then the whole truth to say that revenge puts the law out of office, for it works deeply and widely to execute a humble and effective kind of social justice which the law cannot condescend to and lofty moral precepts hardly touch.

Moralists weary not in their righteous denunciations of anger, but they might bring things to a sorry pass if they succeeded in abolishing it. Anger has its social justification, as it has its physiological basis, in the roused energies of the organism reacting against an impression hostile to its self-preservation and self-expansion; and its kindling in that case is self-assertive evidence of vital vigour in mind. Its discharge being natural and useful, the whole question of its wisdom or folly, of its benefit or hurt to the individual and society, is a question of degree and rule, of its wise dispersion and guidance, of the maintenance of the just mean. A mind insensible to anger would be nerveless and impotent, as a society in which everybody was meek and placid would be unprogressive, stagnant, and liable to corrupt. The right is the trite rule of nothing in excess; for a society in which everybody was self-assertive, aggressive and revengeful must needs issue in tumult and disruption, while faithful observance of the rule to turn one cheek after the other to the smiter until he tired of smiting, could not fail to put good men at the mercy of knaves and to strangle honesty in a wild growth of knavery.

Ambition, again, is a passion which is neither vice nor virtue exclusively; it is the quality of a nature and may be either

vice or virtue. An earnest and vigorous character infused with the strong passion of selfhood, is bound to be self-assertive, strenuous, ambitious, openly and rudely or secretly and subtly, for its natural impulse is to appropriate to itself in self-growth and to discharge accumulated energy in action: it must find food and vent, good or bad, be it in conqueror or criminal, saint or sinner, according to circumstances. Small matter is it what the aim of action be—a toy, a crown, a medal, a title, a fortune, a great score at cricket, an immortal name among mortal men, so long as it is deemed worthy of attainment. The ambition to be a great actor on the stage of the theatre seems a strange vanity to one who aspires to be a great actor on the political stage, yet one stage-player is consumed with jealousy of another and one statesman pines with envy of another. For a self-respecting human being to make himself a mime in order to elicit the applause or laughter of the gaping crowd, looks humiliating to the ambitious person who craves and strives for admiration and applause on what he deems a superior stage, though he knows at heart, if he be not himself a naive fool, that the applause of the crowd is commonly ignorant and foolish. Why should their shouts be raised in quality by the raising of the stage on which the performer plays?

It is fortunate for the performer of every sort and for the public to which he appeals that the higher motive to instruct and benefit goes, or can be believed to go, along with the personal ambition. Such happily is the solidarity of the social organization that when a person of real capacity gratifies his ambition to fulfil his nature completely, he does well for his society. Nevertheless, he has to suffer detriment in the process of arriving, because, as society is yet constituted, it is often necessary to wade through dirt to dignity, and it not seldom happens that those whose chief merit is to wade cleverly through dirt arrive at great dignity. He must suffer and do many unworthy things that are hurtful to character, for he must reckon and deal with the meannesses, the guiles, the intrigues, the interests of

those with whom and against whom it is necessary to act. The fine-textured, tender, and scrupulous nature which cannot bargain with and manage that which revolts its sensibilities as wrong, mean, or unclean, is not practical enough to succeed well; it would have the ideal to be the real, which is madness, and things behind the scenes to look as they do on the stage, which is absurd. If it be pain and grief to any one to hurt another by pushing before him, there is an end of ambition; for, as Seneca said, ambition looks not backwards at those whom it has beaten, it suffers by seeing a single person before it on the track of its goal. Withal, its very nature is still to rise, for its horizon ever widens as it mounts. To count ambition a vice would be to imply that man had risen to his present plane of being mainly by means of his vices.

Obviously then, diseases and passions and other seeming evils are not the absolute evils they appear superficially. Whatever their final causes may be, their actual workings have been necessary and useful factors in human progress. Of all vain quests in which ingenuity has laboriously busied itself, there is perhaps none more futile than the quest after the origin and meaning of evil. If there be no evil but that which, being for the good of the whole, mankind wrongly call evil, there is no mystery to unravel; the proper wonder is the tremendous postulate which, assuming the universe to be created and kept going for them, concludes that it must always be working in their interest and finds something anomalous in that which hurts and ends them. And that, too, in spite of the unavoidable confession which sincere insight must frankly make, that their past records yield no sound reason to hope for a perfect human end on earth until organic nature in its evolutionary progress through man has risen so much above present human nature as completely to transform it.

It was natural for humanity urged by the organic impulse to strive for a state of higher being, to hope that its end was not on earth, and to expect a real end of perfection and bliss

beyond mortal life. Immortality being thus called in to supplement the brevity, compensate the sufferings, and perfect the development of mortality—notwithstanding the difficulty of logically ascribing immortality to a mortality of which it is the literal negation—failed not to be a powerful incentive to strive evermore. If a perfect humanity is to be achieved sometime somewhere, those who expect it elsewhere than on earth through a miraculous individual transformation may perhaps claim that they have as good reason for their belief as those who, despite the record of human doings, look for its ultimate perfection on earth by a process of natural development.

An impersonal immortality will hardly satisfy any but those who, learning the largest lesson of self-renunciation, can reconcile themselves to an immortal abnegation of self. Nothing in the universe being created out of nothing, and nothing being ever annihilated, the matter and forces which the mortal embodies must needs continue when its unity is dissolved and the work which he has done, good or ill, in the humanization of nature, be eternal in its human effects. As the spirits of those who have lived yet live in him, so he in turn will live in the spirits of those who live after him; and thus he, being dead, shall yet speak in that wherein, being alive, he did well or ill. Feeling or dimly perceiving the eternity of things, the natural cry of individual egoism, which has found expression in so large a part of the human race, is to be eternal individually rather than eternally merged, and its self-conservative instinct, despite all doubts of reason, to trust in some deeper reason of the heart to justify the belief of a personal immortality. Such absolute conviction of feeling is the natural expression in conscious mind of the instinct of organic life, while it is in being, to continue to be.

THE END.

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