

The sons of glory : studies in genius / by Adolfo Padovan ; translated and adapted from the Italian by the Duchess Litta Visconti Arese.

Contributors

Padovan, Adolfo.
Visconti Arese, Litta.

Publication/Creation

London : T.Fisher Unwin, 1902.

Persistent URL

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THE SONS OF GLORY

Studies in GENIUS
by Adolfo Padovan

Translated and Adapted from the
ITALIAN by the DUCHESS
LITTA VISCONTI ARESE

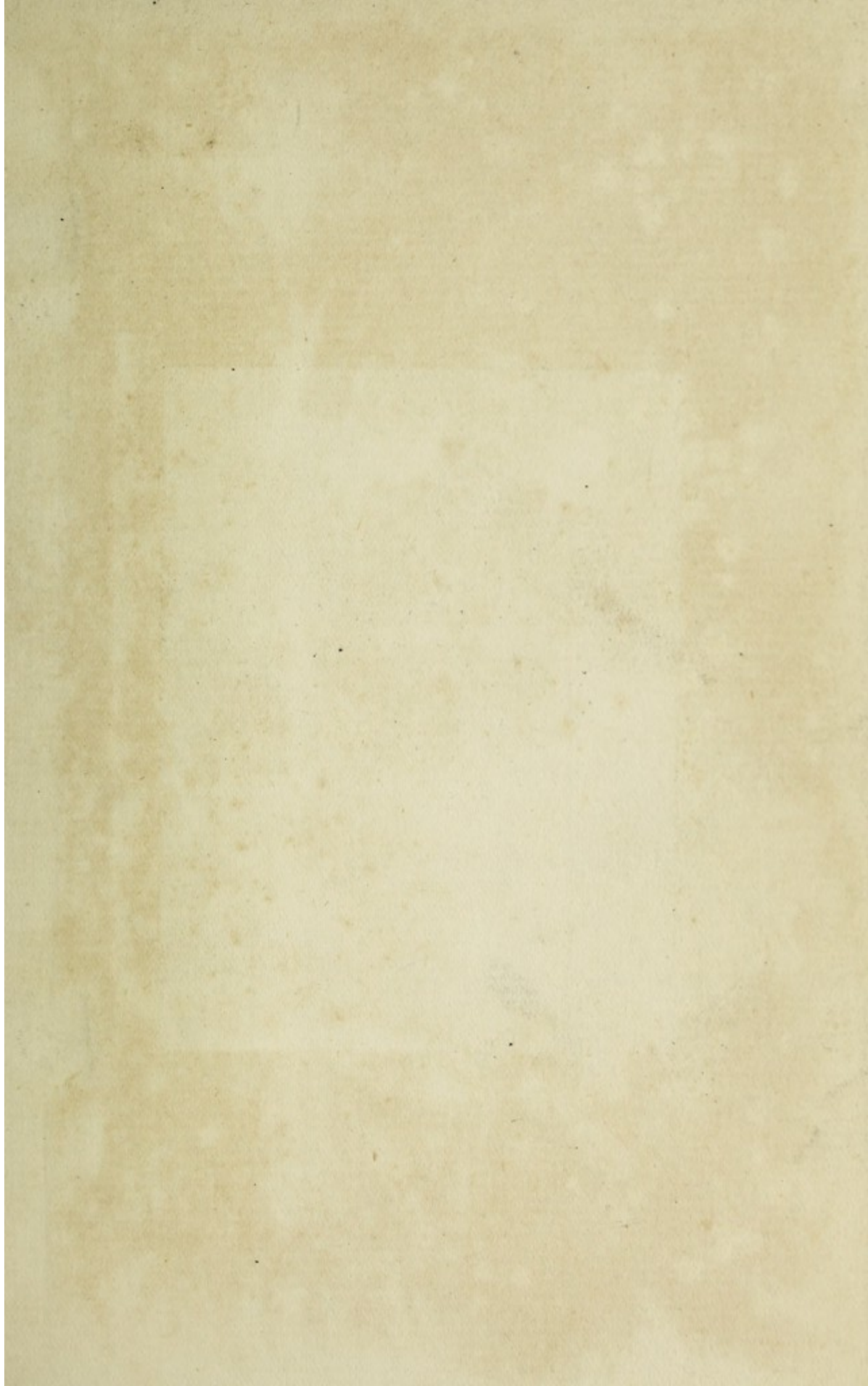
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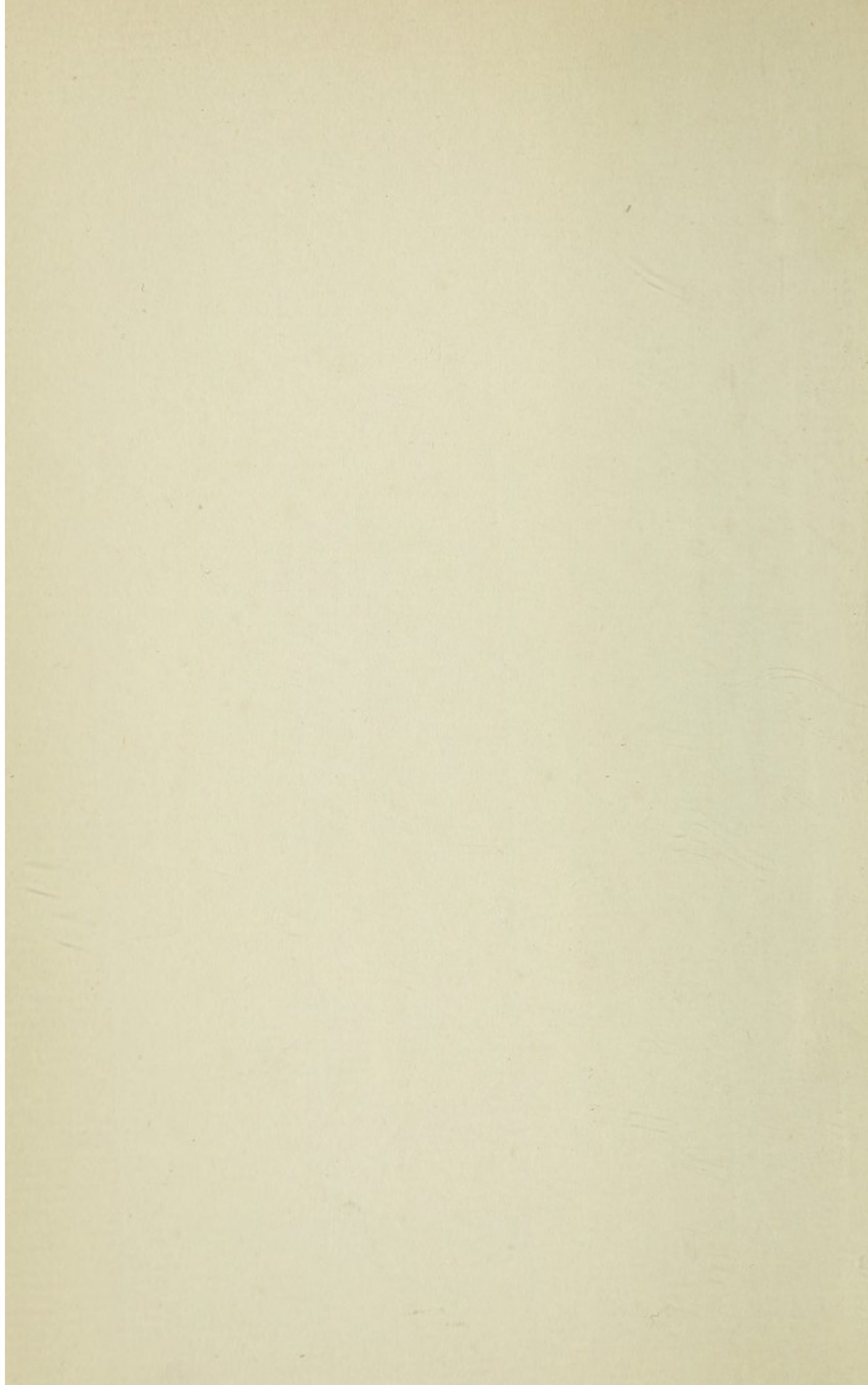



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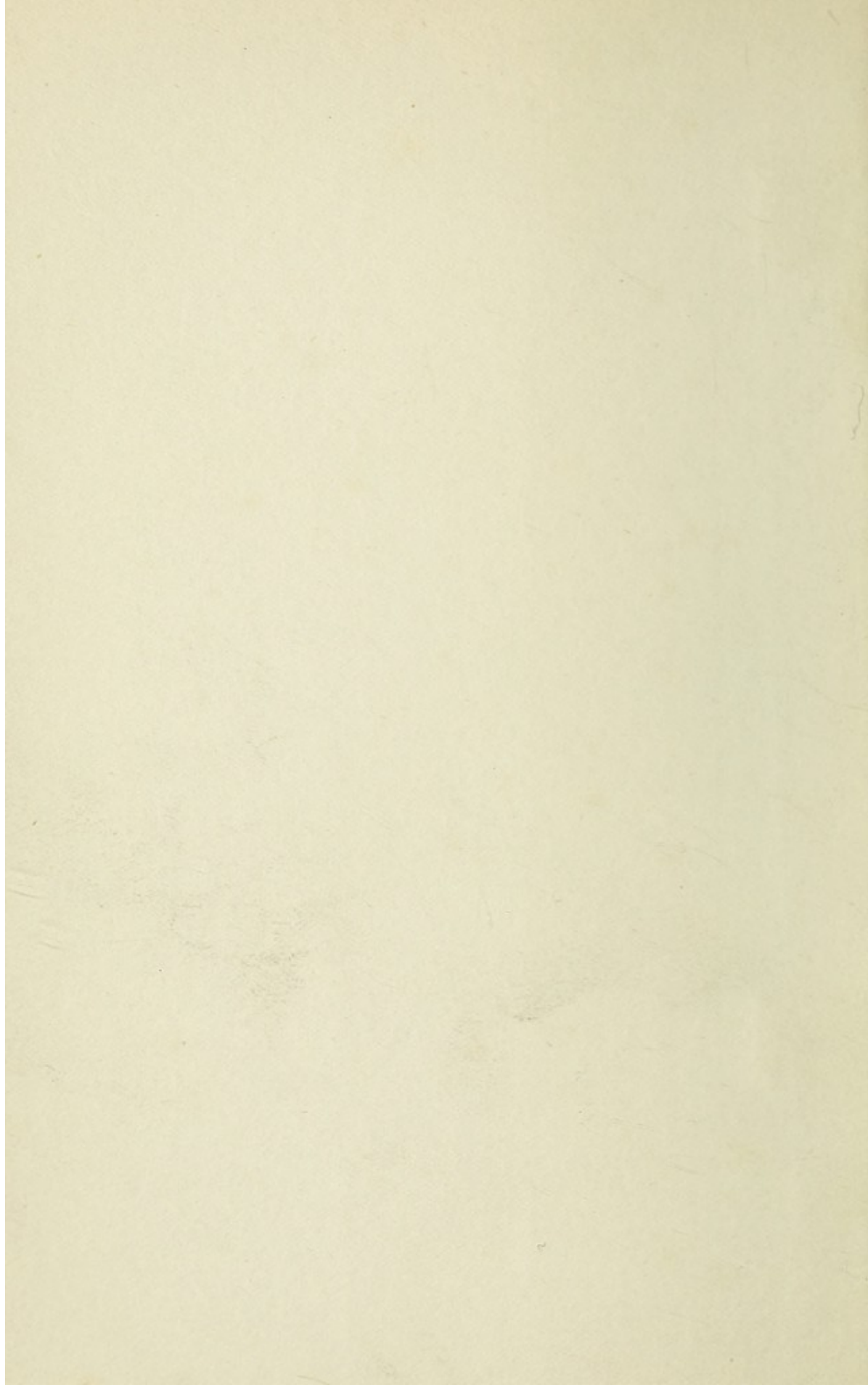






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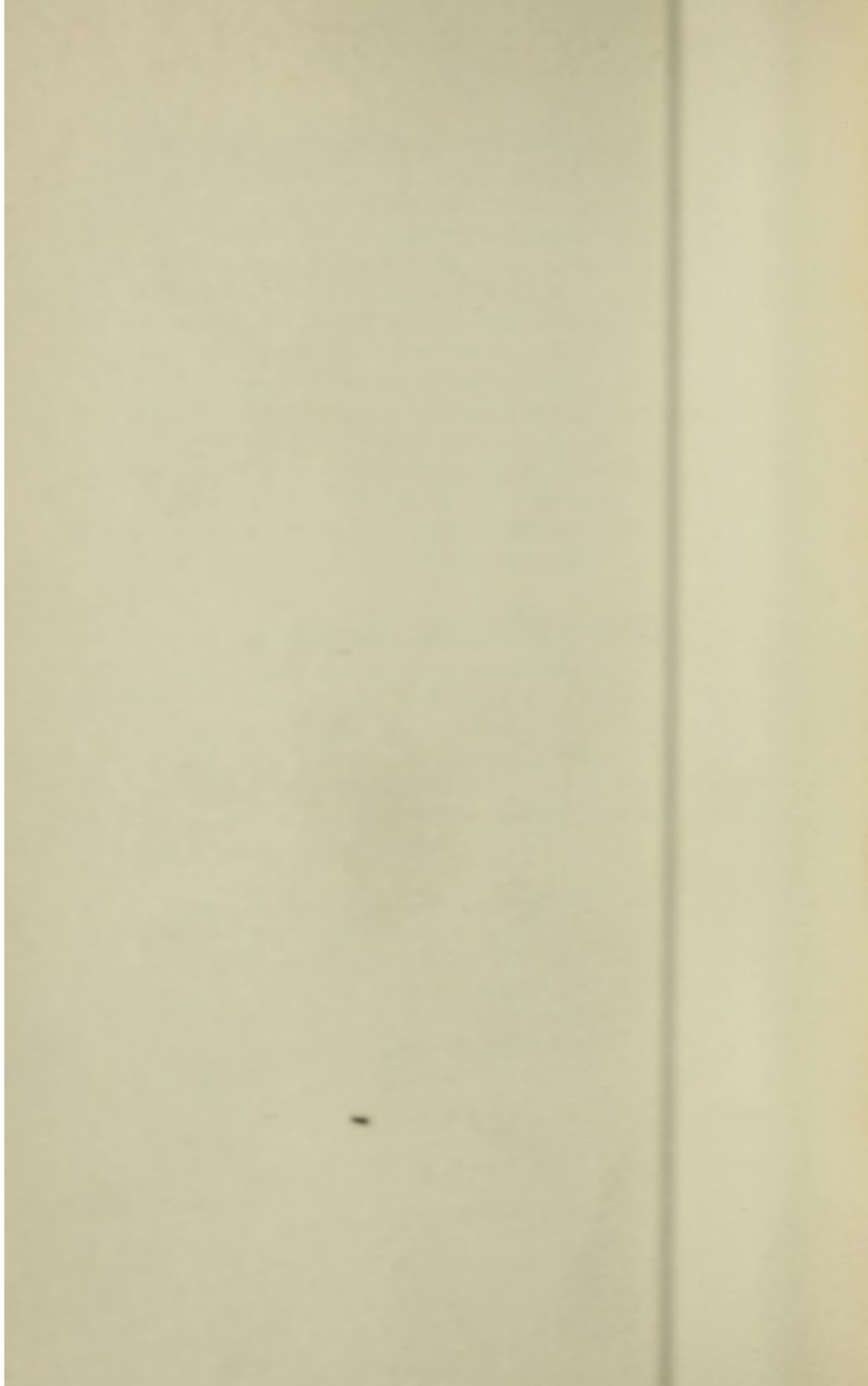


Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung, of Vienna (Austria).—"In this book ('I Figli della Gloria') the Italian thinker, Adolfo Padovan, has attempted to give an explanation of the essence of Genius. The Author declares himself decidedly antagonistic to the school of his fellow-countryman, Lombroso; for Padovan, the man of genius is not a degenerate, but, on the contrary, the most perfect specimen of the *genus homo*. He does not find symptoms of madness in the intellectual and physical conditions of great minds; but his opinion is, that if we find more often mental degeneracy in geniuses than in the average man, this degeneracy is a sort of professional disease, produced by a too intense activity of the brain. Lombroso is a doctor who has found a new disease—Genius; Padovan, a searcher, to whom Science must be thankful, for the discovery of a new species of man—the man of genius. His views are undoubtedly the most consoling, and the arguments, with which he corroborates them, are most persuasive and to the point." . . .

Rivista Musicale e Letteraria, of Milan.—"Here is, at last, a magnificent book, rich in strong and healthy ideas, full of generous faith in the divine predisposition of Genius. . . . Padovan can rightly be proud of his book. . . . His first work, 'Sovereign Creatures,' published some time ago, was an earnest of better things, which we find fulfilled in the 'Sons of Glory.' . . . It is books, such as these, that we need, to counteract the bad effects of those that weary us with their conventional platitudes." . . .

Cyrano de Bergerac, Literary Review of Rome.—"The Author has endeavoured in this work to glorify the giants of thought and action, to whose genius we owe the birth and progress of our modern civilization. . . . Padovan has treated his theme with acute and profound criticism, and with genial synthesis . . . his original theory, concerning the cause of genius, is well worthy of our consideration." . . .

THE SONS OF GLORY



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STUDIES IN GENIUS

By ADOLFO PADOVAN

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED FROM THE ITALIAN BY

THE DUCHESS LITTA VISCONTI ARESE



LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

1902

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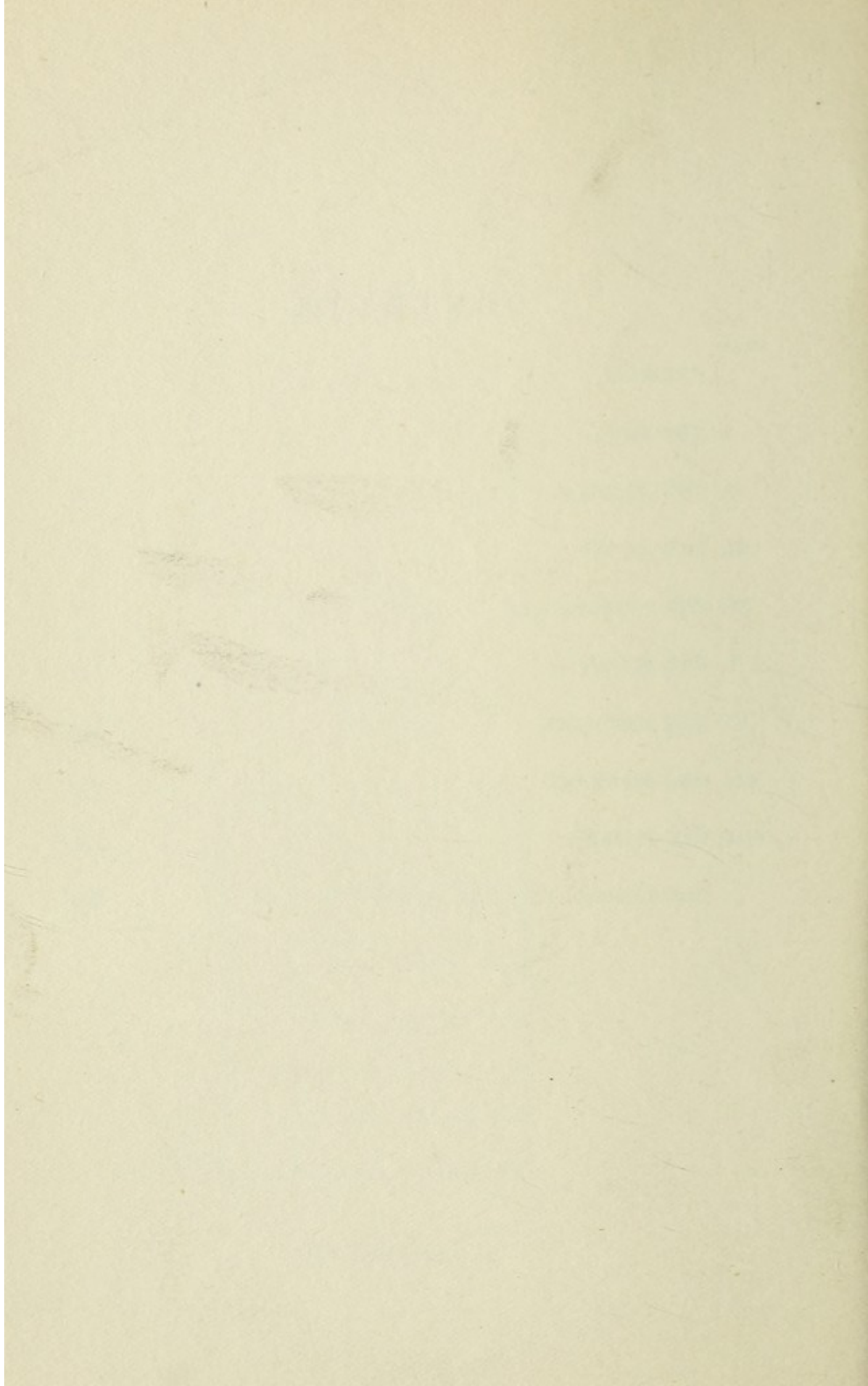


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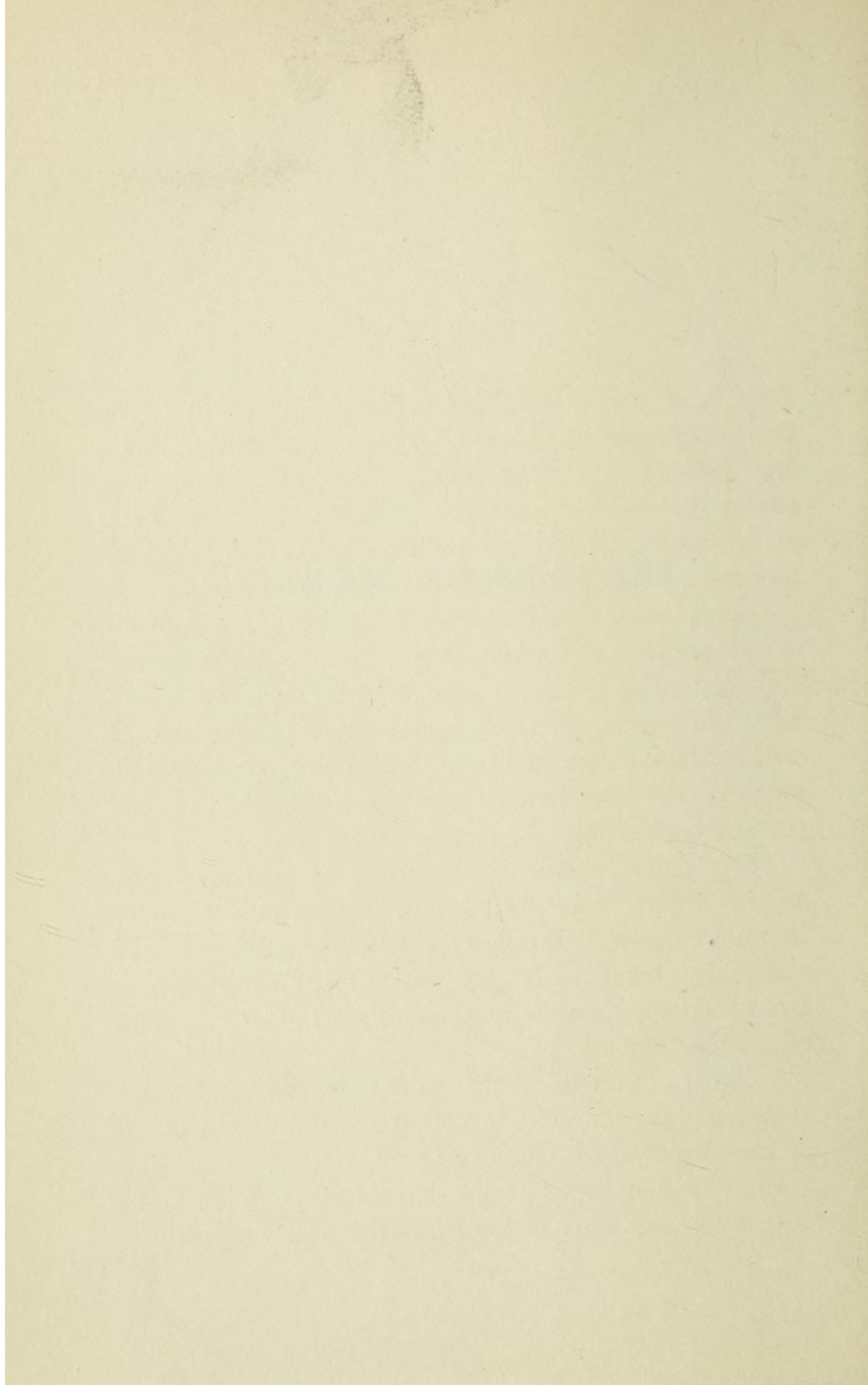
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THE SONS OF GLORY



PRELUDE

THIS book was written just after the first fervour of the honeymoon had passed, and when we lived in hope and fear of a coming birth. For this reason, the reader is asked to excuse an occasional superabundance of life and enthusiasm which exudes from the surface, like resin from the bark of a tree, too rich in sap.

I am pleased that I finished this study of the Sons of Glory, at the moment when my soul could most appreciate the beautiful, and was most accessible to lofty emotions, when, without artificial incentives, I could celebrate the giants of thought and action, who wrought the wonders which are the cause of our present civilization.

These pages exhale the perfume of my happiness, as the bridal dress, enclosed in a chest, exhales ever the subtle odour of the flowers that adorned it. I have spiritually lived with the wonderful men of whom I have written, diverse in their aspects, characters and talents, as they are.

I have admired their works, appreciated their achievements, and find myself everywhere confronted by the all-powerful, Universal Soul.

One by one, these Titans have become familiar to me ; I feel the glory of their intelligence, I am burning

and vibrating with enthusiasm, as though a wave of fresh young blood had re-invigorated me.

So great is the fervour with which I have pursued my researches, so intense have been the suggestions emanating from the spiritual contact which I owe to them, that they have resulted in hallucinations; sometimes, when I stayed my pen for an instant, searching for a word, some of these men have appeared to me as though my spirit had summoned them.

I have in fact seen Dante Alighieri bent over the manuscripts of his poems; the enormous head of Beethoven with its dishevelled hair and deeply furrowed brow; Michael Angelo at the summit of the scaffolding under the roof of the Sistine; Socrates, serene and loquacious, in his miserable prison; Galileo in his little house at Arcetri, sitting on his bed, surrounded by his disciples, in attitudes of fixed attention, as they are represented in the painting of Niccolò Barabino; Christopher Columbus planting the flag-staff on the land which he discovered; Buddha resting under the mystic tree, wrapt in dreams of his undefinable Nirvana.

Thus have I seen time and again, reader, while writing these pages, and thus I hope you may see when you read my book. From the ideas that germinated while I studied the works of these immortals, and from all my wonderful visions of them, this book was born, an offspring welcome to me as, in another fashion, is the vigorous boy who sits on my knees and calls me "father."

The Sons of Glory are of all ages, and of all

countries; they are those who, by the power of genius, have achieved prodigies.

Studying them in their various manifestations, I have selected those whom I considered among the greatest; those, in short, who represent the most perfect specimens of the genus to which they belong.

Hence I have chosen Dante among the poets, Beethoven among the musicians, Michael Angelo among the artists, Socrates among the philosophers, Galileo among the scientists, Columbus and Nansen among the explorers, Buddha among the prophets, Hannibal and Julius Cæsar among the warriors who preceded the invention of gun-powder, and Frederick the Second, Napoleon the First, and Moltke among those who appeared after the death of Berthold Schwarz.

I do not affirm that these men are prototypes of the arts and sciences that they practised, I simply say that they represent, to my eyes, true and perfect exemplars.

Around them moved and shone another crowd of heroes, for each of these giants surrounded himself with celebrated disciples, and it is to the emulation of these illustrious men, that we owe much that is beautiful, good and useful, enjoyed by the world to-day.

These are the true renovators of the world, the true divinities of humanity, who improve the works of God, and create joy and beauty with the splendour of their art. Their service and strength, directed by science, do honour to the world which has generated

them, as good fruit does honour to the tree which bears it.

In another book, I have already celebrated the joy, the grief, the pride, and the death of these sovereign creatures ; now I will only consider their genius, the genius which is the purest and most perfect manifestation of divinity.

Having a conviction that genius stamps on its masterpieces the imprint of its character, and that this imprint is identical with what is called style, I have selected for citation such works as, to my thinking, best record the characteristics of their creators.

It was after a long and patient preparation of study, investigation and research, that I dared to confront genius on its own field of action, and surprise it in the moment in which it achieves its wonders ; yet the present work is not so much the result of my mechanical labours as of a power of divination.

With the poet we recall the past, and hope for the future ; with the musician we dream ; with the artist we contemplate ; with the philosopher we meditate ; with the scientist we study ; with the explorer we enjoy the unknown ; with the warrior we tremble with wrath ; with the prophet we pray. All the energies of the mind, all the passions of the soul free themselves, our *ego* becomes visible and tangible as vapour condensed by cold ; we learn to know art and science as they are. This is the miracle that is accomplished when we dwell for a space with these heroes of thought and action.

Imagine the sentiments and the ideas, that may be born and vibrate in a soul, open to all high influences, which confronts the Sons of Glory with the desire to exalt them and be exalted by them.

It is like a dry sponge, which immersed in water, little by little absorbs it, and afterwards yields, at the slightest pressure, the liquid it contains.

Before the multiplicity of the apparitions of human genius which have filled my eyes, it would be impossible that enthusiasm should be limited, and when I re-read this book I perceived that mine rose from my heart to my pen.

Yet even in the midst of the greatest enthusiasm, my thoughts were always on the alert to discover new facts, to portray the Sons of Glory in some vital aspect, heretofore imperfectly viewed.

Mine was a pursuit as eager and relentless as that of a spy, who follows the shadow of his victim, to watch his actions, in the hope that he may, through these, discover the peculiarities of his character. As we are obliged to judge a man by his works, it is necessary to seek in books, in music, in pictures and statues, in fine, in the acts of the Sons of Glory, the quality of their genius.

In the beginning, the investigation is difficult and intricate, one seems to be lost in a labyrinth and unable to find the way out; but the uncertainty is short, the delay momentary.

The vital incarnation of a man of genius emerges, little by little, from the study of his works, as the statue slowly increases in beauty under the thumb of an expert sculptor, escaping from the shapeless

clay as the winged butterfly escapes from the cocoon that imprisons it.

This I assert, but with great trembling, as the judgment is yours, O Reader, and it will be for you to say if my book is a worthy reflex of the great and beautiful visions which have inspired it.

CHAPTER I

THE POET

WHEN the poet has convinced the multitude of his peculiar talent, he becomes famous, and his popularity is the greater, because the poet creates beautiful works more abundantly than other artists.

To the great poets we accord a position apart, and place them on a plane so elevated, that they seem to dominate all sovereign creatures. A poet such as Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, or Victor Hugo, is more celebrated than Socrates, Boetius, Galileo, Newton, Kant or Pasteur.

He is, therefore, more noted than the philosopher and the scientist, who contribute, in a greater measure, to increase the blessings and the well-being of humanity.

If we were to make the natural classification of genius, from its highest to its lowest manifestations, the poet, the musician, and the artist would come last on the list, because they, with more ordinary intellectual powers, are able to acquire fame. This affirmation, so contrary to the opinion of the generality, may seem rash ; but if the reader follows attentively our analysis, he will easily perceive the truth of our assertion.

A sovereign genius is, in the fullest sense of the

word, one who discovers a new truth, and perceives it, while it is yet unknown to others, and, by the power of his intellect, masters a physical force, and bends it to his will, or reveals a secret which, until his arrival, had been jealously guarded by Nature. He gives to humanity either something that it has never before possessed, or something whose existence was hitherto unsuspected by it. Examples that readily occur to one are, Newton who discovered the laws of gravitation, Galileo who invented the telescope, Volta who constructed the pile, Pasteur who found the anti-rabic serum, and Lombroso who created criminal anthropology.

The actions of these men and their discoveries, resemble creative acts; they possessed the God-like power of bringing light out of darkness, and, with a single word, they dispersed error, and made themselves the heralds of truth.

The poet, on the contrary, adapts elements already discovered, to compose the skeleton of a work, which he adorns with beautiful figures; his mind resembles a prism through which his thoughts are refracted, and shed their beautiful hues on all things, re-animating them, and, as it were, permeating them with the beauty and strength of his soul. The poet conceives by means of his imagination, but he reveals conceptions already thought and written by others; describes habits, usages and passions that every one has observed in himself, or in those around him. He may be compared to the musician who expresses his ideas in melody; while the poet uses the melody to embellish his thoughts. He is not, therefore, essentially a creative genius, because he gives only the image, verse not being an

absolute creation, since it is subjected to fixed laws, namely rhythm, which is the seat of accent, metre, which is the measure of time, and rhyme, which is the repetition of sound.

Poetry, therefore, does not so much divine truth as present it in a beautiful form. Music of words and fruitfulness of imagery constitute the creative faculty of the Poet.

Poetic genius is thus, from its very nature, inferior to that of the man of science or the philosopher.

Recall the most sublime poems with which you are acquainted, as for example: the "Divina Commedia" of Dante, the "Æneid" of Virgil, the "Iliad" of Homer, the "Paradise Lost" of Milton, "Os Luisades" of Camoens, and the "Book of Kings" by Firdusi, despoil them of their harmony of verse, take away the images that adorn them, and then examine what remains. Only ideas and conceptions, demonstrations of physical or moral truths, such as you have seen in the works of philosophers who lived before the poets. These thoughts, revived by the breath of poesy, acquire a great beauty, as a gem in the hands of an expert polisher, but the substance does not change its nature.

The philosophy of Dante is that of St Thomas Aquinas, and of Bonaventura of Bagnorea, respecting the moral world, that of Aristotle and Ptolemy respecting the physical world. The thoughts that these men put in their works he clothed in an unequalled wealth of imagery and set to exquisite verbal music.

Often when the poet possesses the genius of Homer, Virgil, Dante or Shakespeare, the power of the images and the harmony of the verse, distract attention from

the subject matter which becomes almost an accessory element. It is as if we were suddenly to encounter a lovely maiden, rich in all the gifts of beauty and youth ; the admiration that she would excite, by absorbing all our faculties, would prevent us from considering the nature (possibly perfidious) of the soul contained in her body.

It is not then the function of the poet to create conceptions or ideas ; he creates music from words, and he is able to compare the qualities of the things from which his images are drawn. It has been said more than once, that his mind reflects the physical and moral world as in a mirror, and that he possesses the faculty of representing faithfully that which he sees. This statement seems to me incorrect. The poet never represents reality in its true aspect ; he always denaturalizes it, uniting with it something of himself, something of his own soul. This is apparent from the fact, that the same phenomena, natural or passional, are diversely described by different poets.

The poet sometimes makes ugly things seem beautiful. What we admire in them then is, however, really the poet's skill.

Another marked peculiarity of the poet is his sentimental temperament.

Dante must have shed tears while writing the piteous episode of Francesca da Rimini, and the terrible death of Conte Ugolino ; Milton, when blind, wept while dictating his address to Light ; and Homer was similarly affected at the adieu of Hector to Andromache, in the sixth book of the "Iliad" ; Virgil wept at the death

of Nisus and Euryalus, and at the terrible anguish of their mother, while writing the ninth book of the "Æneid."

Music and song are the most perfect expressions of universal poetry. The "Divina Commedia" is a symphonic concert, where the music scintillates with light and colour. And Dante Alighieri is to-day pre-eminently the perfect type of poetic genius, a giant of thought, who describes in his three divine Canticles all the science of his age and all the joys, sorrows, and hopes of humanity. His works are, therefore, as universally appreciated as those of Homer, Virgil, Goethe and Shakespeare, but Dante is even superior to these great poets, and shines remote and above them, as a sovereign star.

Twenty-two centuries after Homer, fourteen centuries after Virgil, Dante became the herald of a new civilization. Sixty years before he was born, the meek apostle of Assisi, overflowing with sympathy for human misery, and afire with brotherly love for all creatures, while living in a cell made of reeds, constructed by St Claire, composed, in the newly-born Italian language, the "Cantico del Sole," which is a hymn of beauty and exquisite tenderness. Dante, when he gave proof of the great power of his genius, recalled the tender and pathetic hymn of San Francesco, and decided to write his "Divina Commedia" in the language in which it was written. He lavished on it the treasures of his genius and his enthusiasm for the most orthodox faith. His love for his mother-tongue was so great as to induce him to write the memorable words which we read in the

“Convito”: “Many people despise their own mother-tongue, and esteem most that of others; and of these are the abominably wicked people of Italy, who have debased this precious mother-tongue, which is without fault, except when it issues from the prostituted lips of liars.”

One of the reasons why Dante contributed so much to the enrichment of the language was that in treating, as he did, of the whole universe, he was obliged, in order to express himself adequately, to borrow words from the Latin and Italian dialects, and sometimes even to invent them. The fame of his poem served to sanction and legitimatise the vocabulary which he had adopted. He did for Italian what Demosthenes did for Greek and Cicero for Latin.

His poem, read from the first to the last canto, impresses us as a luminous and glorious crescendo, at the summit of which the soul of the poet seems to mingle with the Infinite. The music of his verses, the purity of his style, the ineffable beauty of his visions, excite a tumult of aspirations, a fervent and ardent desire towards something that is not of this world, that is not human. In the “Divina Commedia” we read the history of a soul, rich in love and faith, that wings its way toward the light. All may find in such a poem more than there really is, because they reflect in it a part of themselves. In the midst of the dark Middle Ages, Dante appears as an unexpected light, so intense, so clear, so penetrating, that all creatures and all things illumined by it, exhibit, in an instant, the undisguised nakedness of their souls. None can stand undisquieted in this great light, inflexible and continuous, which

refuses to accord to any one a place of retirement or of shade.

Not only the poet, but the man is also worthy of glory. Banished from Florence, possessed by a passionate love for his native city, he is overcome by shame, but, in the invectives which he hurls, one always finds a serene and absolute faith in the future of his country, which was for him the supreme religion of heart, of intellect and of will. He had hoped that the sublime poem which heaven and earth had combined to inspire, would overcome the hard-heartedness of those who exiled him from his own vine and fig-tree, whereunder he had dwelt from his childhood. And even to-day, after six centuries, he comforts Italy with his song of glory and of faith. The astronomical theories expressed in the "Divina Commedia" are erroneous, almost all the scientific opinions of that time are repudiated; nevertheless the poem lives, and will live through the centuries, as an immortal work.

Thomas Carlyle, who after Shakespeare is the loftiest literary genius of whom England can boast, wrote: "Dante morally is great, greater than all, and may be called the beginning of everything. . . . Europe has done many wonderful things, has constructed great cities, has founded vast empires, compiled encyclopædias, created systems, opinions and customs, but has produced little that in any respect equals the thoughts of Dante." As we see, the great old man of Ecclefechan, carried away as usual by the fervour of his imagination, exaggerates the truth, exalts the poet above the scientist and the philosopher, and does not consider, or else forgets, that the ideas of Dante were those of St Thomas

Aquinas, Aristotle and Ptolemy; he does not reflect that these ideas are no longer consistent with the discoveries of modern science, but are only true and great when they seek to describe and analyse the passions and sentiments that agitate the human soul.

The works of men of science help on humanity. A discovery, a demonstration, reveals an unknown truth, and favours the progress of our race; and the discovery or demonstration, after the first excitement that it creates, remains in history as a document, to remind posterity of the slow, but continuous progress of civilisation.

Let us recall, for a while, the history of the past.

In Astronomy, Copernicus divines the heliocentric system, Galileo observes the phases of Venus, the satellites of Jupiter and the spots of the Sun, Kepler enunciates his three famous laws, Newton, from these, deduces the law of universal gravitation, Laplace imagines the system of the world, Kirchoff founds spectral analysis, Padre Secchi studies the double stars and the physical nature of the sun, Leverrier discovers the planet Neptune by means of calculation, Schiaparelli evolves the theory of falling stars, and reveals the topography of Mars.

Similarly in the history of Steam, we read in chronological order the names Papin, Savery, Newcomen, Watt, Fulton, Sauvage, Stephenson, . . . ; in that of Electricity those of Franklin, Galvani, Volta, Ampère, Ohm, Oersted, Pacinotti, Gramme, Ruhmkorff, Galileo Ferraris. . . .

In Chemistry, from Lavoisier to Berthelot; in Medicine, from Galenus to Virchow; in Botany, from Camerarius to De Candolle; in Zoology, from Cuvier to Haeckel; in

Mathematics, from Pythagoras to Poincaré, we find hundreds of illustrious men, hundreds of volumes which have had their day of celebrity, and that now are considered obsolete, and relegated to the back shelves of our libraries. Posterity will not even know their names, and will forget the great amount of work they cost their authors, in the same way as an adult forgets the effort it cost him to read, and the child the difficulty it had in learning to stand alone.

The works of the great poets, on the contrary, which are written chiefly with the idea of giving pleasure, and are the products of sentiment and imagination, do not become old; they live on through the centuries, imperishable and incorruptible, even when the conceptions that they have embellished are recognised as false.

Nevertheless, a work of science that contains an incontrovertible truth is more precious than all the poems, music, pictures and statues that man has ever produced.

Science is a solid rock, which the fine arts have crowned with flowers and fruits, concealing the nature of the foundation, but if we scrape away a little of the surface, the rock will show itself, unchanged and compact, and we shall see that it alone would be able to support the weight of such an exuberance of vegetation.

We will now return to the poem of Dante.

How many human creatures have bowed before the poem of Dante, and have meditated on it as devotees over the pages of their sacred book! Truly, with him, thought seems to generate thought; we appear to rise above the confines of the earth; and to ascend great heights, where each step enlarges our horizon; and the

eye embraces in one downward glance the panorama of the universe.

What was the illness that took away from him the one he so dearly loved? Who shall say? He was right to shroud the death of his love in mystery, concealing its cause from the curiosity of the profane; thus has his beloved become to his readers a creature more than human and an object of veneration.

It was the death of Beatrice that stirred the poet to the inmost depths of his soul, and, at the same time, stimulated him to return to his studies; it was this that suggested to him the vision through the realms of darkness and of light . . . "If it be the pleasure of Him, by Whom all things live, that I may be preserved for some years longer, I hope to tell of her that which has never been told of any other."¹

It was well, I believe, that she died before she reached the evening of her life; because there thus remained for ever in his soul the indelible and unalterable image of her youthful charm and loveliness. He had only to cover his face with his hands to recall the vision of her, in the time of her greatest beauty, and from this vision he drew the inspiration to write. If Beatrice had lived long enough to become old, we might have had the "Vita Nuova," but not the three divine Canticles. The poem of Dante was, therefore, born of a great grief and a great love.

And this is not all: if Dante had possessed Beatrice, she would not have been celebrated in his poem, for love, even the greatest, changes its nature when it has satisfied itself. To possess wholly the person we love,

¹ Dante, "Vita Nuova," § xliii.

is certainly a great joy, almost the greatest that is conceded to man, but this fact seems to consume sentiment, and dissipates the poetic ideas which we had erstwhile associated with the beloved object.

It was, therefore, a great blessing for art that Dante could not marry Beatrice, and that she was taken away in the flower of youth.

For that reason, to the day of his death, he preserved intact, in the depth of his soul, the love with which she had inspired him, when little more than a child. Do you remember when he imagines himself confronted by her on the summit of Purgatory? He is overwhelmed with joy, his soul *d'antico amor senti la gran potenza*, and the irrepressible desire which bursts forth at the sight of her, reveals to him *i segni d'antica fiamma*. In this part of his poem we see Dante, the man, the lover, who reveals the emotions which disturb his soul, emotions just as vivid as those he felt when he saw for the first time his Beatrice,

“Benignamente d'umiltà vestuta,
Venuta in terra a miracol mostrare!”

He preserved her memory immaculate, and his ardent desire, which remained for ever unsatisfied, caused him to attribute to her all the gifts of beauty, wisdom and virtue, whereby the human creature became exalted as a symbol of perfection. Dante gave to his daughter the name of Beatrice, and it was she who comforted him on his death-bed, recalling to him, in his last moments, the radiant figure of his first and only love.

The reason why the poem of Dante interests and

exalts us, is the continuous presence in it of the supernatural element. Demons and angels represent something that we do not know; they are beyond humanity. To these beings the poet may attribute the most extraordinary vices or virtues; they dominate and subvert the laws of nature. Dante himself, before these creatures of his brain, to whom he concedes such marvellous gifts, seems to experience a sentiment of fear or of veneration. For him these beings are realities beyond the tomb, and this conviction seems to strengthen itself in his mind, as he weaves around them visions of the vicissitudes of mankind. The supernatural has ever had a great influence on humanity, and possesses a wonderful power of suggestion; even the most learned are, in a measure, subjected to it, because they see good and evil, which are only abstract qualities, struggling with each other, in the form of human beings.

While reading the "Divina Commedia," it is very difficult, if not impossible, to realise that the demons are symbols; that Minos, Cerberus, Geryon, Flegias, and the Minotaur are personifications of vices and of evil.

If we do not guard our thoughts, these monsters acquire an appearance of reality. The poet describes their aspect and characters so vividly, that they are impressed on our minds as the imprint of a seal on wax, and, in spite of ourselves, we begin to consider them as beings of soul and sense.

We are also disposed to accept the supernatural evocations of the poet, because of the fervid and inextinguishable desire he arouses in us, the thirst for

the ideal, the continual aspiration toward something that we lack, and that we long for.

Ideality is an important factor in our lives ; it is like the light that clothes in beautiful colours everything that we see.

The supernatural has, moreover, this extraordinary virtue : presenting itself as an impenetrable mystery, it serves to exalt the mind, and to nurture and fortify the most vain and foolish hopes.

We may prove this assertion by recalling the books which moved us most when we were young ; they were not the histories and narrations of absolute facts, but those where the fantastic and supernatural element was commingled in the warp and woof of the tales, as in the fables of *Æsop*, *La Fontaine*, and *Perrault*, the travels of *Jules Verne*, and the tales of *Hoffmann* and of *Edgar Allan Poe*.

The poets have profited by the great power of suggestion that the supernatural exercises over our souls to create wonderful characters, terrible, malignant and crafty as the *Mephistopheles* of *Goethe*, infallible and perfect as *Milton's* angels, gloomy and prophetic as the ghost that appears to *Hamlet*.

But these are supernatural creations, which are endowed with only a few characteristic traits ; *Dante*, on the contrary, in evoking the most fabulous beings, has conferred upon them all the vices and virtues ; his world is the world of all the spirits, the supernatural is everywhere, as is life in the universe. His damned, penitent, and happy souls are changed from what they were on earth, and possess virtues and vices which they neither had nor could have had before death, and

they seem ever surrounded by an impenetrable mystery.

In the "Inferno" are demons who rush about screaming, barking and biting each other; the elements are in a perpetual state of conflict. In Purgatory, the air seems filled with voices, with prayers and hymns; everything seems to be in a state of upheaval. In Paradise, are choirs of angels singing Hosannas, polychromatic lights, and divine music.

Observe the supernatural, incorporated in a single person, as in Mephistopheles, as in Lohengrin, or as in the ghost of the King of Denmark—what fascination it exercises on the reader! But how much more powerful is the Dantesque treatment of the supernatural, as exemplified in his great work, where, at each step, we find the influence of this boundless power, that violates all known laws, and is incorruptible and inflexible!

Whoever reads the "Divina Commedia," even though he be the atheist who, through study and meditation, has arrived at the point of denying everything, experiences in his soul a re-awakening of the doubts of bygone days. At first he finds himself ill at ease, in the midst of a world which he endeavours to deride and despise, but, little by little, he is overcome by the vision. The beings and things which form the three kingdoms beyond the tomb, acquire importance; they imprint themselves on the memory with outlines ever more clear and precise, and the images succeed each other with unequalled beauty and variety, those images evoked by Dante, that seem really to live and speak.

Thus the world described by the poet becomes

our world ; he has overpowered us, he has conquered us.

In the "Inferno," we feel his vacillations, his terrors and his shudders, and we are overcome by a great oppression of soul, which accompanies us also in "Purgatory," where we experience an irrepressible desire to escape, to be rid of these terrible surroundings, to feel ourselves free, to breathe once more the pure, life-giving air.

It is at this moment that Dante works a miracle ; he transforms himself and changes his nature. The world of light and of eternal felicity opens with the prophetic hymn of the third Canticle. The soul abandons itself to this joyous invitation, and seeks to refresh itself in the stream of divine bliss. The soul, after this, becomes re-invigorated, and experiences the same pleasure as he who, after having traversed a long and dusty desert, under the burning rays of the sun, sees suddenly stretched out before him the beautiful blue sea, and feels its refreshing breezes.

But the supernatural does not disappear in Paradise. Even here it is near us, envelops our souls, and becomes a part of ourselves. We imagine ourselves to be Dante or Beatrice, San Francesco d'Assisi or San Bernardo, or among the purified who are transported to the Highest by the vision of the "Mystic Rose." True it is, when we have finished reading the third Canticle, we are so carried away, that our familiar surroundings look changed, the sunlight loses its brilliancy, the mountain panorama and the view of the sea appear less beautiful and more restricted, the starry vault itself seems cold and heavy as if it were of lead.

Our souls, which seem to have arrived at the extreme heights of ecstasy, are suddenly dashed to earth, and, as it were, awakened from a glorious dream.

The personages of Dante possess another great value in their dramatic characteristics. The poet does not attempt to depict the shades of their temperaments, but delineates only the virtue or the vice most marked and apparent.

With a few incisive and comprehensive words, he portrays to us the man; sometimes he does not even speak of his character, because this is thoroughly expressed by his actions.

This manner of treating his subject is fruitful of marvellous impressions, because the reader is able to imagine all that the poet has left unsaid, and to complete the character of the individual, according to his own ideas. The personages of Dante are similar to the statues of Michael Angelo, which seem to betray a mind indifferent to detail, but where, nevertheless, the expression and character of the figures are brought out with such a power of truth and suggestion, as to leave no doubt as to the meaning of the artist.

In the characters of Dante, we always find virtue and vice exaggerated; his personages are either wholly bad or wholly angelic; in his descriptions he uses no shades or mezzo-tints, every vice and every virtue is personified in its entirety.

There are sinners who hold the Inferno *in gran despetto* as Farinata; others, like Capaneus, who under the rain of fire defies God, and *giace dispettoso e torto*; others do not shed tears under the lash of the

demons, but walk with haughty step like Jason ; others writhe in the jaws of Lucifer, but *non fà motto* like Brutus.

These attitudes and sentiments manifested by those who have no hope of salvation, are yet informed with a power of character which raises them above Divinity itself, because they disdain its punishments, that cannot vanquish their pride and arrogance. We are reminded of Prometheus, bound to the rock of Scythia, who, while suffering tortures from the beak of the eagle that was tearing out his liver, uttered no lament, and who, because of the fortitude which he displayed, appears greater than Jove himself, who condemned him.

Dante thus contradicts the inflexible justice of God, and accords to certain of the damned a power of resistance so great as to diminish the intensity of their punishment.

If they have the "Inferno" *in gran despitto*, if they remain indifferent and scornful under the rain of fire, if they do not shed tears, if they do not show any signs of grief under the lash of the demons, they enjoy a privilege hostile to Divinity. Their pride, which bursts forth even in the regions of eternal damnation, is a species of savage joy, and resounds like a challenge hurled against Heaven. If we stop to consider these wicked creatures, their contempt for suffering awakens our sympathy, and their vices acquire something of the appearance of heroic virtue.

Their acts, their gestures, and their words, considered one by one, are almost too energetic, similar to those of an actor who, because his sentiments are not real,

exaggerates them, so that he may the more thoroughly convey them to his audience.

The drama is evident in every page of the "Divina Commedia"; if it is not always manifest, it is felt to be palpitating below the surface—

"sotto 'l velame delli versi strani."

In the parts where the drama is unmistakably in evidence, the poet makes his personages act, and, while they speak and abandon themselves to their passions, he insinuates himself stealthily into the midst of them, discusses their conditions of soul, and suggests the emotions that he wishes to excite. Take, for example, the scene in the circle of knaves and tricksters, where Dante and Virgil find themselves among demons, who offer us a spectacle of cruelty and stupidity, tormenting the damned with pitchforks, allowing themselves to be deceived by a shrewd sinner, and ending by coming to blows among themselves, over the filth of the boiling pool.

Here the drama is real and impressive; the personages are genuine incarnations of the sentiments which animate them, and the *terzina*, magnificent and sonorous, adorns the whole action and dialogue with imitative harmony. But, in the entire poem, it is always Dante whom we see, even when he conceals himself. His soul never abandons the field of action; he is always in the midst of his personages, ready to share their grief and their joy; he bows himself in humility before the glory of God, and then rises proudly in his might against His enemies: but he never forgets the entirety of his own character, which is successively as malleable as clay and

as rigid as a bar of iron. In the end he becomes almost tangible to us.

It is no disadvantage that so little is known of the life of Dante. The day of his birth, the epoch of his first love, the nature of the illness that killed him, and all the chronology of his existence, concerning which there has been so much discussion, are secondary and unimportant. The man is in his works; the quality of his soul, the character of his genius, are stamped on his "Commedia," as an effigy is upon a medal: even to-day, we can point to no poetic genius as sincere and complete as his.

His century was a century of vileness and crime, but he passed through it haughty and disdainful, a sovereign genius in the midst of men who considered him a subverter of times and customs. Driven away from his own country, covered with ignominy, condemned to be burnt alive, deprived of all earthly goods, a beggar and alone, he ended at last, far away from his beloved San Giovanni, in a strange house, and in a bed offered to him by a kind friend.

To-day posterity exalts him, because he did not stoop to any meanness, and did not condescend to surrender his opinions in order to rise, but found a refuge in himself, through all the adversities of life. Blessed be that burning pen that brands the proudest foreheads; blessed be the pen which immortalised the sin of Francesca, the lament of Buonconte, and the magnificent prayer of San Bernardo!

As a man, Dante Alighieri was a terrible law-giver.

Do you recall the punishment that he inflicted for each fault? It always seems that the castigation is greater than the crime.

The indolent, who sought in this life quiet and ease, he dooms to rush about continually, tormented by wasps and flies; the luxurious are plunged into thick darkness, in memory of the blind passions which possessed their hearts, and they are continually buffeted by the infernal whirlwind, and blown from side to side, up and down, even as their fickleness moved them during life. The gluttons, too, are severely punished, because all their senses are offended, their taste with mud, their smell with rotten odours, their sight with darkness, their hearing with the barking of Cerberus, their touch with a filthy and icy rain. The irascible are immersed in the water of the river Styx, an eternal remedy against the inextinguishable fire which inflamed them during their lives. The avaricious and the prodigal he places on the same plane of punishment; they bear large stones upon their breasts; their hands, that alive were busy in amassing or throwing away, are now inert, because they feel heavy weights upon their hearts—those hearts which in life were deaf to all prayers, indifferent to all reproofs. Murderers are thrown headlong into a pool of boiling blood, and suicides are converted into trees; having voluntarily repudiated their souls and cast off their bodies, they are condemned to remain eternally joined to immovable trunks. Flatterers are plunged in human excrement, symbol of servility; soothsayers, who attempted to predict the future, are made to walk with their heads turned backwards. On the shoulders of hypocrites he places heavy mantles of lead, gilded

on the outside, to symbolize the appearance of virtue and sanctity that they pretended to in the world, and they move on, with slow and measured steps, with down-cast eyes—their habitual attitude during life. Finally, traitors, who had hard hearts, closed to all sympathy, are thrust into the eternal ice, near Lucifer, as distant as possible from the celestial beatitude. It is natural after reading the “Inferno,” to ask what manner of man was the poet who imagined all this torture. He appears to us severe, rigid, inflexible; we might think to find in him the soul of Attila, of Ezzelino da Romano, or of Tommaso de Torquemada. Let us, however, consider well before pronouncing this judgment; it may be shown to be exaggerated, if not false. Only after having read the whole poem can we comprehend and judge the soul of Dante.

After the “Inferno,” read the third canto of “Paradiso,” where the poet describes the vision of souls in bliss; or the twenty-third, where the triumph of Christ and the Incoronation of the Virgin are vividly described, and you will find the nature of the poet entirely changed. The inflexible legislator here exhibits great love and superhuman charity.

Thick darkness, broken by reddish flames, or by uncertain and trembling rays of light, rain and wind, the sound of weeping or of anger, the anguish of suffering bodies and oppressed minds, all the horrors of disease and of torture, combine in the vortex of the “Inferno”; and if the soul were not stayed by the pity that the poet, with rare intelligence, himself communicates and shares, the vision would be still more terrible, and these cruel pains, decreed for eternity to

punish a crime committed in a life-time, would excite the indignation of the most orthodox. And if, as we have already suggested, you pass over the "Purgatorio," where the soul is still agitated by the infernal vision, and read some cantos of the "Paradiso," you will experience sensations diametrically opposite—as happens to one after a bad dream, whence, trembling from head to foot in imaginary peril of life, he wakes to reality and the relief of recognising that he is safe and sound.

In his "Paradiso," Dante has described all the beauty that can delight the spirit; there his soul is always ready to extract from everything the beauty and goodness that are natural to it; he has despoiled the earth and heavens of all their greatest charms to ornament the kingdom of bliss. He brings to adorn this abode of happiness dazzling flights of angels, stretching toward the highest heaven, and music ineffably sweet. Here he sees holy and venerable faces, and young and smiling ones; here he listens to sweet chanting and loving speech. Thus, little by little, the soul of the reader, purged of all earthly passions, and attracted by the light, escapes from his body, is lulled by melodies, enthralled by dances, and soars, overflowing with joy, towards those luminous spheres where, at the empyreal summit, the final ecstasy comes, sweet as repose after overwhelming delight.

Ours is not the opinion generally held; for we do not hesitate to affirm that, in our profound conviction, the "Paradiso" is by far the finest Canticle.

Here the poet is carried away and wrapt in con-

tinuous ecstasies ; he is overcome with heavenly languor, and the images that he evokes are the purest and most beautiful, the music is the softest and most melodious. If sometimes we hear one of the discords so frequent throughout the "Inferno," it serves by contrast to increase our pleasure, and stimulate it by suspense. Thus does a singer keep a note quivering in the air, while he seems to exhale his very soul upon it.

Look at Dante. While in the "Inferno" he is continuously moving hands and feet, his body does not have a moment of repose. He penetrates into all things, even though it torments him ; he burns with disdain ; his imprecations resound against sinners for their sin ; the tumult of passions which agitate him bursts forth without measure. With what reprehensible joy the Ghibelline poet brands Philip Argenti, one of the Adimari family, who took possession of his property during his exile ! With what complacency he sees him plunged into the mud and tortured by his companions ! For this sight he praises God and thanks Him. How he rises against Bocca degli Abati, Celestin the Fifth, Nicholas the Third, Boniface the Eighth, and Clement the Fifth. From time to time, but only in the first cantos of the "Inferno," his heart responds with a cry of pity to such terrible anguish as theirs, but that cry becomes feebler as he descends lower and lower into the abyss, and finally ceases in the last circles of Malebolge.

In "Paradiso," on the contrary, the limbs of the poet are almost inert, the hands are folded in prayer,

and the lips arched with a smile. His eyes are watchful and attentive, ever ready to admire every beauty, and his soul is always in his eyes. This absolute immobility of person, maintained through the celestial spheres, at last makes the reader unconscious of his own body; his soul is freed, and soars beside that of the poet.

The "Purgatorio" is the neutral Canticle, where, whilst still listening to the distant echo of pain, one approaches the kingdom of perpetual bliss; the souls therein confined are in a condition of unexpressed anxiety, and if it were not that the poet takes care to impress upon us that they will one day taste eternal happiness, the "Purgatorio" would be a weak copy of the "Inferno," an "Inferno" where the pains are mitigated, but still are terrible—as for example the torture of the envious, who have their eyelids sewn by an iron wire, tears and blood flowing together from the horrid wounds, while, as if in irony, they hear around them voices of love and charity.

Like all things, therefore, that attempt to connect two extremes, exhibiting the peculiarities of them both, but presenting no original character, the "Purgatorio" is the least beautiful of the Canticles. This judgment will present itself to the attentive reader, after even one perusal of the "Divina Commedia"; he will divine the effort made by the poet to embellish this middle realm, which is neither the "Inferno" nor the "Paradiso," but partakes of the nature of both. The episodes and images that Dante introduces into it do not make of this Canticle a living and natural

picture, but lend it, for the most part, the aspect of a great mosaic.

Dante being obliged to mitigate his sentiments of extreme severity, to be in unison with the nature of the place, and with the characters of the sinners, succeeds but indifferently, and if sometimes he reappears in all his vigour, we recognize that he has allowed the honest expression of his heart to escape him in an unguarded moment.

Dante, while composing the "Inferno" and the "Paradiso," must have abandoned himself completely and unquestioningly to the feelings and passions which burned within him: it is he, always he, who suffers and enjoys, curses and blesses, accuses and absolves.

In the "Purgatorio," on the contrary, obliged as he is to put a brake on his natural passions, his individuality is covered with a veil. Hence, "Il Purgatorio" is less beautiful than the other two Canticles.

We find in the works of Dante the complete manifestation of his character. From facts or from living persons, he creates an image or a symbol. Speculative, theological, and natural doctrines assume the forms of persons. The poem is a combination of reality and of myth. Many of the material facts of the universe, and many historical persons and episodes are, in the "Divina Commedia," transformed into symbols.

Virgil was for Dante the science of human things, Beatrice, that of divine; both of them were only symbols. The three Canticles are three symbols, and each separate part of these is symbolical. In the

"*Divina Commedia*," the principal actor is not Dante: he is simply a spectator who observes and describes; nor is he Virgil, because the Mantuan bard disappears after the second Canticle; nor Beatrice, because she is only seen for a moment in the beginning of the poem, and again when she reappears on the summit of Purgatory. The principal actor is the Eternal Justice—is God. In the "*Inferno*," even the terrible inscription that adorns the fatal gate is dictated by divine justice.

This Eternal Justice speaks through the lips of Beatrice, of the Holy Fathers, of the Scholastics, and finally of itself, but then Dante only hears the wonderful language, under the form of a vision.

The material universe, the Cosmos, was for Dante the theatre, or rather the stage, of the poem; the universe needed to be animated and dramatised, and the poet peopled it accordingly. But it was necessary to distribute the people with regard to their merits and their faults, and here began the terrible work of Dante. He was not yet a poet, but a psychologist. With acute intuitive power, he analysed the human soul, he scrutinised its profoundest depths. Thus all the historic personages who appear as living creatures in the course of the poem were first studied one by one, and then classed according to their vices and their virtues.

Let the reader imagine the great Florentine bent over his desk, his soul on the point of his pen, intently noting the names of the dead and living, and assigning to each his proper position in the three kingdoms beyond the tomb.

After this judicial examination, Dante formulates his code, and in this decides the graduation of the pains which, in the "Inferno," is of the greatest importance. In the "Purgatorio" are all the sins that are capable of redemption, and all those criminals who were conscious of their crimes, and desired purification. In the "Paradiso" are the just souls, those who had attained the different grades of beatitude, and they appear in the nine heavens, where, also, the happiness of the beatified is proportional to their virtue.

After this division, Dante had to choose from the shadowy chaos of history those who would represent the different grades of crime; he judged the judges, and sat as supreme magistrate over humanity.

This is not all; there was the mathematical arrangement of the poem.

He wished to symbolise arithmetically the Three-in-One; therefore there are three Canticles in one poem, each Canticle is composed of thirty-three cantos, and the metre of the verse is the *terzina*. The cantos, however, are one hundred, because a hundred is the square of ten, considered by the ancients as the perfect number. The "Inferno," the "Purgatorio," and the "Paradiso," have each nine circles, and the distance between them is a fixed number, divisible by nine (405 miles). When we arrive at "Malebolge," the calculations are no longer exact, because the "Inferno" was considered as deep as half the diameter of the earth, and as wide as the earth's surface; hence renewed artifices which adopt the cipher nine as a division; this is why the "Malebolge" is eighty-one miles deep (square of nine).

When Dante began to write the first verse of the first Canticle, the mathematical order was all decided upon; this immense work of invention, of architecture, and of distribution, had been calculated with the coolness of the philosopher and the mathematician. Dante had previously measured out to his phantasy the fixed limits within which it was to move.

Finally, the colossal work which was the outcome of this fusion of chaotic symbols was written by Dante, not doctrinarily, in a weak and common form, but as a majestic and unrivalled poem.

This poem is a true miracle of human intelligence.

And now that we have delineated the figure of the greatest poet of humanity, let us see what progress poetry has made, and what good it has done us during the six centuries which separate us from him.

Poetry, like her sister arts, has followed the slow and continuous evolution of progress. She has modified and adapted herself, time and again, to the taste of the age and the characters of men, that change with the progress of civilisation.

One fact is certain and undeniable: the poem no longer responds to the necessities of this impatient and feverish century. The "Ode," the "Canzone," the "Sonnet," the "Elegy," the "Epigram," the "Brindisi," the "Madrigal," and all short compositions are preferred to it.

Poetry has become analytic. Like all other arts, it has not been able to escape the scientific method, which insists upon truth wherever it can be found,

and has adapted itself to the exigencies of modern life, which necessitate concise eloquence.

In order to comprehend this great and radical transformation, we must compare the works of the ancient poets with those of our contemporaries.

In times past, a theme of love, the description of a natural phenomenon, or of some beautiful thing, was made the subject of an entire canto; to-day, on the contrary, that same idea is developed with great efficiency and clearness into a sonnet or a sestina. In fact, modern poetry seems to have rid itself of prolixity.

Images also, which form the decorative parts of all poetry, are to-day clearer, truer to the conceptions they wish to explain; we find, in fact, in the modern poet the influence of that scientific culture which has conquered the world.

The poet sings always the same passions, celebrates the same phenomena, depicts the same beauty, but does it in a manner more consistent with truth; the materials which he employs are richer and more varied, his similes more suggestive, his music more harmonious.

Science has opened a vast field, unknown to antiquity; so, too, has history, which has furnished a legion of authentic heroes. These two branches of the tree of knowledge have enabled the poets to dispense with the gods and demi-gods of ancient mythology.

From this mythology has been developed a truer art, more efficacious in education, because it is founded on truth instead of on fable—an art which celebrates the man, and not the god. Progress has been made,

and is being made every day, because the poet follows the pathway of science, understands its high significance, and has even celebrated its conquests and its glories.

It seems that poetry indicates from century to century the state of soul of a certain epoch, and that, like all other human things, it takes the colour and form of the society that produces it.

The Decadent School, the School of Baudelaire, Maeterlinck, and Mallarmé, has been called a hideous anomaly, but it satisfies persons who on account of their special temperaments find beauty in what others consider the literary products of mental disease.

Poetry also follows its destined road toward an unknown goal, as does humanity, and the poet who celebrates always the same passions, the same phenomena, and the same beauty, changes continually, hoping to make his art more perfect, by enlarging the sphere of its activity, by increasing the expressiveness of the language he writes in, and by refining the perspicuity of his senses.

We cannot say that ancient poetry is greater than modern, nor can we predict that the poetry of the future will be better or worse than that of to-day; we can only assert, that it will be the legitimate product of the age and countries which will give it birth.

CHAPTER II

THE MUSICIAN

THE Divine Art, voice of the Immaterial, the only universal language appealing to the most delicate sentiments of our souls, and reanimating our loftiest hopes: this is Music. Where painting, sculpture and poetry end, it begins, transporting us from pleasure to ecstasy, from earth to heaven.

When the wave of melody envelops us, it dissipates all lower thoughts, it soothes and exalts, till finally we abandon ourselves to its benign influence, as to a caress of love. No art possesses, in an equal degree, the power of fascination that emanates from music. Poetry, painting and sculpture are inferior in the intensity of the feeling that they excite.

Few of the elect, fewer still of the uninitiated, can claim to have arrived at a state of ecstasy by reading a poem, or the contemplation of a picture, a statue or a temple; thousands, on the contrary, have lost all consciousness of earthly surroundings, when transported by some beautiful melody far above the turmoil of ordinary life.

Ask any church-goer how often he has been carried

away, listening to the grand, mournful tones of the organ, accompanying some sacred service.

Music exercises over our souls a most powerful influence; it penetrates to our inmost being, it re-awakens memories, revives hopes, and causes our nerves to vibrate in response to its voice, as though to echo it.

Certain phrases, limpid and clear as those of a clarionet, go directly to the soul, with the velocity of an arrow; others, light and volatile as a breath, are like the sweet suggestion of a perfume; others again, terrible and sonorous as the thunder, make us tremble like vibrating cords.

Music is indefinable; it exalts the soul as the body is exalted by wine. But, notwithstanding its bountifulness, it leaves us unsatisfied, expectant. It is to our souls a continual allurements, a promise which is never wholly fulfilled, so that, little by little, it overcomes the most impassive and indifferent hearers.

Those who cultivate music cannot possess common souls; those who compose it cannot be absolutely wicked. A strong but invisible chain unites them to another world, so that they always aspire toward the highest, and are always as ready to receive the fresh joys that music affords, as is the basin of a fountain to receive the bubbling overflow of water from its source.

The impressions that music excites are as diverse and immediate as they are powerful; no other art can have the same effect. And because music is in harmony with all the circumstances of life, man ever recurs to it when he wishes to increase his joys and mitigate his sorrows.

Certain melodies, brilliant and gay, composed of phrases which come as quickly and brightly as sunbeams, accelerate the blood in the veins, and by their rhythm and melodic iteration invite to the dance, and stimulate amorous desires. Strauss lent his genius to the making of such music.

Certain prophetic hymns, adorned with phrases that glitter like steel in the sun, give the idea of exceptional physical force, diffusing a new vigour through our being, and firing our blood. They rise and aspire like a flame, inciting to action, and urging the soldier to combat. Such a hymn is the "Marseillaise" of Rouget de Lisle.

Other melodies, from their union with drama, possess greater power to excite and increase the fervour with which the actors are able to simulate the passions of their parts.

By this happy combination, the ideas of the drama are the more forcibly imprinted on our minds. For examples, take the masterpieces of Bellini, Rossini and Verdi: "Norma," "Guglielmo Tell," "Aïda."

Other melodies, solemn and grand, pealing from Cathedral organs, penetrate to the innermost chambers of the soul, and compel us to tears. Good and beautiful thoughts surge in our hearts, and to the accompaniment of such music, prayer rises more sincerely and more spontaneously, hope and faith are reanimated. Palestrina is of those who made such music.

Finally comes the abstract music written for

orchestra, where pure and divine melodies intermingle, combine, unite, diverge, pursue each other, die softly away only to burst out again, richer, more varied, more sparkling, intensified by the sighs of the violins, the sobbing of the violoncello, the groaning of the contrabasso, the silvery tones of the flute, the trills of the clarinet, and the flourish of the trumpets. Music like this carries us away to realms unguessed and unknown, and wraps our senses in celestial ecstasy. This is symphonic music, such as was composed by Beethoven and Brahms.

Not even while reading a Meditation of Lamartine, or an Ode of Carducci, or while contemplating the masterpieces (in painting) of Munkacsy or Michetti, or (in sculpture) of Dupré or Thorwaldsen, does the human face express a rapture equal to that which is awakened by beautiful music. Pages of the finest poetry, views of the greatest loveliness, do not appeal to us as does one Sonata of Beethoven. We can express with a wealth of superlatives our admiration of pictures or statues, but we find no words to voice the impressions made by music. It produces a deep and intimate joy.

Whence does music derive this power that the other arts do not possess? Why does it exercise over us this unrivalled fascination?

To penetrate the depths of this mystery, to discover the effect of melody on the soul, to analyse the cause of these effects, would be as impossible as to determine the confines of the universe.

Nevertheless, we can adduce a fact which fixes a

limit to the emotional power of music in one respect. It may seem strange at first, but after being considered attentively, and without prejudice, will, we believe, carry conviction with it.

Music lacks, in our judgment, a power which the sister arts possess. A book, a picture, or a statue, can excite laughter or move to tears, and we have no difficulty in finding reason to justify the cause of the emotions thus expressed. Music, on the contrary, cannot excite hilarity; the most fantastic and noisy melody has never succeeded in provoking in its hearers an honest and sincere laugh.

And if you wish to prove the truth of this assertion, recall all the most lively and vivacious music you have heard, and consider if it has ever excited in you any inclination to mirth.

Perhaps, if you are a cultured musician, with fine execution, and capable of fully appreciating classical music, you may sometimes have smiled while listening to puerile and defective counter-point, but this smile was caused by the ignorance of the composer, and was an expression of contempt.

We are moved to laughter before the spectacle of a comic opera or of a ballet, yet it is not the music which has caused the hilarity, but the words united to the music or the grotesque figures of the dancing which accompanies it.

That music by itself is never mirth-provoking is not, however, a fault; it is, on the contrary, the reason why music holds the first place among the arts.

Demand of the great musicians pages which will excite in the hearer passionate emotions, and make

them shed tears at heart, and they will give you the Seventh Sonata of Beethoven, Chopin's Fourth Prelude in E Minor, the marvellous "Vision" of Schumann, Bach's Sonata in D, the Funeral March in "Siegfried" of Wagner, the Intermezzo in the Fourth Act of Ponchielli's "Marion Delorme."

Demand, on the contrary, a musical composition that is able to produce a hearty laugh ; search among the works of those whose productions contain the greatest brilliancy and life ; go to Offenbach, Hervé, Lecocq, Suppé, Planquette, and you will not find one measure that will excite the spontaneous and sincere hilarity that bursts forth naturally when one is reading a story of Boccaccio, a page of Rabelais, the "Pickwick Papers" of Dickens, or looking over the famous "Geschichte ohne Worte," in the *Fliegende Blätter*. And this is so, because music is the art that expresses tender sadness, even in its most festive melodies, as in the dances of Strauss.

Music wants yet another quality which all other arts possess, and which, like its inability to awaken mirth, is of advantage to it, and not a defect.

Music is not only unable to excite laughter, but is incapable of expressing a well-defined and circumscribed thought. The writer and the artist are able with their pen, pencil or brush, to express a sentiment, which does not leave us in doubt as to its interpretation ; the musician, on the contrary, cannot specify with clearness any exact sentiment, but wields his sway in an indefinable world.

The writer may describe the anguish of a mother at

the death of her child, the painter or the sculptor may depict it in its most minute particularity ; the musician, on the contrary, cannot explain the cause of grief, or the motive which has generated it.

Listen to the Funeral March of Chopin, and then attempt to interpret the character of the grief that it expresses. Is the musician mourning the death of a mother, a brother, of his love ; or is his anguish caused by fear of his own approaching end ? Who knows ? It is a cry arising from the depths of a poetic and despairing soul, and nothing else.

Hence, when the musician wishes to impress his hearer with a special idea, he unites his music to words. But in this relation, the music only serves as an embellishment ; the same melodic phrases could be set to several texts different in sentiment as well as in words.

When the most noted operatic composers of the first half of this century had composed a beautiful melody, they had little hesitation in adapting it to the verse of any libretto, so as to give it publicity. It was sufficient that the verse should agree with the music in metre and accent.

Perform a piece of music before a number of artistically educated persons, and then demand of each auditor the thoughts it has suggested to him ; you will hear expressed as great a variety of individual opinions as there are distinct individualities among the people to whom you have appealed. Those who have a musically educated ear, will probably agree concerning the general character of the sentiment that the music is meant to express, but the majority will dissent as regards its particular meaning, because each one will

have given an individual interpretation to the melody.

Before music, we are as those who see light, and sometimes distinguish colour, but are incapable of explaining either.

Thus the duty that nature has imposed on music, the duty of interpreting all sentiments, is the principal cause of its powerful fascination ; it is because of this that it excites within us visions and emotions that possess no decided character, but are ambiguous and vaporous in outline, capable of many readings.

As those who discern in clouds the design of human forms, and the outlines of castles, and complete the figures according to their individual imagination, so the vague and general sentiment of a melody permits the hearer to interpret it, as the expression of his secret and most cherished thoughts, and thus derive from it a keener pleasure, while, in reality, it is he who is unconsciously putting into it a part of what he enjoys.

It is, therefore, like a mirror where each one sees himself reflected, but, unlike the mirror which reflects the image unaltered, music never lends itself to the expression of detail ; it moves along lofty ideals and vague conceptions, like a cloud of undefined tints.

The musician creates a series of vibrations which afford pleasure to those who feel them. He conceives in his own brain melodies which have the power of suggesting thought, yet are they, in a sense, imitations of the myriad voices of Nature that have, in the course of centuries, become perfect through him and subject to fixed rules.

Some centuries ago a man listened to the wind whistling among the canes and invented the flute; another twanging a distended cord heard its vibrations and invented the lyre, and thus, one after the other, were produced all the instruments of the modern orchestra, which has one soul and a thousand voices.

Any one reading the history of music will be struck by one noticeable fact, that no woman has ever attained to great fame in this art. In contemporaneous history, also, we do not find the name of a woman worthy of figuring in the domain of music. And as women are generally governed by their sentiments, they should be better musicians than poets, painters, and sculptors, because music is the art of sentiment.

It is impossible to cite the name of a woman who has gained in music the fame that Sofonisba Anguissola, Rosalba Carriera, Elisabeth Lebrun, Rosa Bonheur, and Angelica Kaufmann attained in painting, Sappho of Mitylene, Vittoria Colonna, Elizabeth Browning, and Ada Negri in poetry, and Properzia de Rossi, Amalia Dupré, and Adelaide Maraini in sculpture. The women who cultivate music are counted by the hundreds of thousands, especially in these times of artistic dilettanteism, but there is not a sonata, a symphony or an opera in which a woman has left the imprint of genius.

This fact is eloquent, because it proves that sentimentality, which in women is abundantly developed, is not the most necessary gift of the musician. If it were, we should have female musical geniuses, just as we have poetesses of genius. This exclusion of women

from the highest positions in the realm of music, proves that sentimentality and passion are not the only essential qualifications of a great composer, but that to be a great composer implies the possession of some faculty peculiar to the male sex.

Music that reveals genius and exercises fascination is essentially the production of a virile intelligence, and of a strong soul seldom led away by sentimentality.

It is worthy of remark that this art which penetrates to the innermost fibres of the human heart is not the offspring of those who abandon themselves to the sentiments and passions that it excites, but owes much to opposite emotions. The paradox is similar to that manifest in the athlete with the child-like soul, or the huge rock, in a cleft of which blossoms a delicate plant.

The greatest musical composers who personify the science and sentiment of a whole epoch, such as Palestrina, Sebastian Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms, were men in the strictest sense of the word, each of them manifesting most distinctly the psychical differences that distinguish the sexes.

Other musicians, who express more femininity in their productions, are correspondingly passionate in character, and, although they enjoy great popularity, never arrive at great heights. Of this class are Chopin, Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi. . . .

Study the character of Richard Wagner, the greatest innovator of our times. He was the most manly of celebrated musicians. Harsh, rough, tenacious, inflex-

ible, all the attributes of his sex were united in him to form the Titan. Notwithstanding this, his music possesses the unfading charm of exquisite harmony and varied melody.

Picture to yourself Beethoven, with his great shaggy head, robust, vigorous, misanthropic and severe. No one has ever equalled him in the perfection of his melody, the ineffable sweetness of his phrases, and the exquisite delicacy of his composition.

Again, think of Sebastian Bach and Johannes Brahms, the representatives of the Germans of the North, who in all their actions betrayed the severely masculine peculiarities of their race.

The greatest and most wonderful musician who has ever existed, and who is to-day acknowledged as the sovereign master of his art, is, undoubtedly, Ludwig van Beethoven, because he was able to enter into the inmost recesses of the human soul, and to excite there a tempest of emotion.

Those who are familiar with his works, especially the Adagios in his sonatas and symphonies, well know the exquisite pleasure that they produce. It is impossible to free ourselves from the overpowering witchery of his simple and sublime music. The harmonic wave which he creates, is continuous and persistent, sometimes almost monotonous, steeping us in a blissful languor, but when we are on the verge of lassitude, the music suddenly bursts forth in a phrase genial and brilliant as a ray of sunshine, illuminating the clouds and reviving in our souls the joy of light.

The music of Beethoven is as fertile as a cloud of

pollen, because it gives birth to exquisite emotions in all hearts.

There is only one musician who can compete with the Titan of Bonn, in the heights and depths of his conceptions: this is Sebastian Bach; but Beethoven was superior to him in genius and in the freshness of his fancy. Under the thrall of Beethoven's wonderful melodies one can truly be said to be absorbed in delight. They act upon us spontaneously, but the sensations which they excite convert themselves into visions of light, and vibrations of thought, which are never ordinary, but seem like a spiritual bath, cleansing us of all blemish. By their magic they either unite the world we live in with the supernatural world, or else they transport us to realms of unknown bliss, where we experience a vertigo of ecstasy.

Unfortunately, this man, who flooded the world with a stream of melody, became deaf when only thirty years old; thus his finest compositions were produced after his ear became insensible to all sounds.

What greater misfortune than this could possibly happen to a musician? He was so overcome with misery as to entertain thoughts of suicide. But why did he not destroy himself?

"It is the love of virtue, and the love of my art that have enabled me to resist the temptation of putting an end to my days," he wrote in his testament of Heiligenstadt.

The anguish of mind that Beethoven suffered on account of his infirmity is beyond the power of words to describe.

Day by day, he felt his hearing become more feeble,

until, finally, he discovered that he was absolutely deaf. The asperities of his character then developed themselves freely ; but his genius was always on the alert, and he devoted himself assiduously to composition. Perhaps this misfortune was as great a benefit to the great composer as it would have been a trial to a mere virtuoso, because, little by little, as the silence became more profound, his interior life became deeper and richer. He could only hear his own thoughts, which transmuted themselves into melodies, that were deepened and perfected by his meditations. It was at this time, when he seemed to lose all hope of health, that, with the restlessness of a sick man, he passed his time roaming around the woods and fields, gazing on the distant mountains which appeared above the horizon.

It is easy to recognise in all his compositions the fascination that everything living seemed to exercise over him. His music expresses more of geniality and vigour than that of other composers ; even his most delicate and tranquil phrases excite our emotions and are connatural with that overpowering strength, of whose extent he himself is almost ignorant, and which can only be possessed by those who are devoted to nature.

The jovial freshness of Haydn, the subtle ingenuity of Mozart, the severe grandeur of Sebastian Bach, the mystic lyricism of Handel, the passionate sweetness of Mendelssohn, the tragic melancholy of Chopin, all these gifts are united in the form and colouring of Beethoven's music.

Any one who has heard, even though only once, the

Ninth Symphony well executed, is obliged to acknowledge that the musician of Bonn stands far above all others.

I had the good fortune to hear it for the first time, when my musical education was already advanced. It was at Milan, at the Scala, under the skilful direction of Charles Lamoureux. I was in the company of noted musicians, and we were all unusually excited. But although my anticipations were high, they were surpassed a thousandfold.

The first hearing left me overwhelmed ; I seemed to have awakened from a dream of beauty and bliss, beyond all imagination ; I possessed the recollection of a great joy, but a joy that was undefined and nebulous. It was only afterwards, when I escaped from my bewilderment of ecstasy, that I could concentrate my thoughts, and consider, one by one, all the beauties of that wonderful composition.

The Ninth Symphony seems to express the aspirations of all humanity towards some unattainable bliss ; the fervent and desperate prayer of the suffering to the great unknown, the cry of anguished souls, before an inexorable fate.

The Scherzo that precedes the Adagio, is the one gay note in all this sadness ; the sarcasm and irony that mock at grief remind us of the many who are content with what they have, and enjoy without thinking of the future, and who are lively, noisy, garrulous and happy, until death.

The Adagio is a fragment of great beauty, it is like sunshine after darkness, like health after illness ; it is the entrance into a world of peace and oblivion, where

all the senses are quieted, because satisfied ; it is, in fact, the mystic Nirvana of Buddha.

In his last movement, Beethoven conferred on the human voice the symphonic character, putting to music Schiller's Hymn to Joy, and in this he made the most wonderful exposition of his prodigious genius.

It is beyond the power of words to describe it, or of imagination to paraphrase it.

Suppose that the sixteen hundred million of men who inhabit the earth suddenly found all their desires and aspirations fully realised, imagine all of them able to express in music the joy which possessed them, and you will have some conception of the sublimity of this masterpiece of Beethoven, in which we find that marvellous passage, formed from all the notes of the minor diatonic scale, which Johannes Brahms repeated later, in his symphony in D minor.

Recall the first execution of this masterpiece, when Beethoven assisted in person at the concert, seated next to Umlauf, and, according to the habits of the time, with his face turned toward the performers. The unhappy author was deaf to the thundering applause which his work evoked, and Frau Hunger was obliged to make him rise in response to the enthusiasm of the public, who wildly waved their hats and handkerchiefs ; whereupon the Prometheus of Bonn, the hard and misanthropic Beethoven, overcome by emotion, wept like a child, and fainted away like a woman.

In this moment, it is certain that Beethoven experienced more intense joy than he had ever imagined. When he fell into that swoon, it must have seemed to him that his soul had dissolved itself in melody.

As has been shown, Beethoven's deafness was of great advantage to him as a composer. The illness did not strike him suddenly, but advanced by slow degrees, until he was finally wrapped in a silence like that of the tomb.

Little by little, as slight noises became indistinguishable, and louder ones indistinct, his thoughts became concentrated, and when he was quite deaf he acquired, although he had lost his chief source of delight, an extraordinary faculty of analysis, and gradually created a world of his own, which nothing extraneous was permitted to invade or disturb. This was, of course, a musical world, because, for him, most sensations readily translated themselves into harmonic form. When overcome by the knowledge of his infirmity, he expressed his emotions in music. He evoked the memories of his youth, and although insensible to all sounds, he was impressed, in the midst of the exuberant vitality of the fields and forests, by the wonderful power of Nature. Knowledge of her penetrated his being, he divined the mysterious murmurings of the trees, the music of the brook, the rustling of the leaves, the roar of the cataract, and his beautiful musical thoughts were due to his power of divination, and to his wonderful memory of the sounds he had heard in bygone days.

That his deafness benefited him we argue from the fact that while his malady increased, his genius seemed to acquire new power, and arrived at heights beyond heights, even at the Ninth Symphony, which Berlioz calls the most exalted expression of Beethoven's genius, and of which Wagner has said: "There are still some ingenuous persons who continue to write symphonies

without suspecting that the last was written long ago."

But it is especially in the beautiful sonatas for the piano that the peculiar characteristics of Beethoven are most conveniently traced. The symphonies do not admit of dispassionate analysis, they dominate and overpower us, and bear us away to realms of phantasy, where imagination overcomes reason.

In the Sonatas, on the contrary, his character is reproduced with the clearness and fidelity of an object on a sensitized plate. Among them there is one which we consider far above the others, and which, in our judgment, is the finest that Beethoven ever composed.

This marvellous Sonata is the Seventeenth in D minor (Op. 31, No. 2).

It begins with a soft and tender phrase that seems a fervent supplication; the musical thought is hardly developed when the melody accelerates its motion, the notes follow so rapidly as to appear like scintillations, they rush into trills as if they were trying to arrive at some predetermined goal, and then unite in a seemingly inextricable musical tangle. Just as they are on the point of mingling and becoming one, and as the incessant vibrations become more vehement, a grand phrase, solemn as a prophet's admonition, suddenly arises, engulfing all this harmonic excitement, in a wave of intense sadness. But the movement is brief, and the prophetic phrase is almost immediately overcome and submerged in a confusion of notes. From time to time comes another interruption, slow and sad, but the silvery, brilliant, staccato notes gush forth irre-

pressibly and inexorably, and vanquish it. The Allegro is like a stream of water that gushes from a perennial source, and flows, laughing and careless, bubbling with gaiety, over the rocky sinuosities of its rugged bed.

And then, for some moments, the notes, varied and harmonious, rush on almost at their own will, in the acute tonality, interspersed by deep resounding chords, that seem to repeat the solemn prophetic message of the Largo phrases, diffusing at the same time joy and sadness.

And then, softly and sadly, is announced the end of the first movement.

A sad plaint, overflowing with longing, pregnant with desire, is the Adagio of this wonderful sonata, a musical gem, dazzling and beautiful, beyond the power of words to describe.

The melodic phrase that forms its principal theme is a poem of divine beauty, a heavenly song. And in the midst of this tender lament occurs a passage of surprising volubility, a passage in demi-semiquavers, that by contrast renders its tender forerunner the more suggestive.

The principal phrase resounds pure and clear, like the exquisite voice of a soprano in the midst of a grand choral liturgy. It is impossible to go further; the joy that possesses the soul is so great, so intense, that our remotest longings are satisfied; we have a feeling of absolute peace and perfect bliss, such as we experience when we commune with Nature at the hour of a lovely sunset.

Then, little by little, like the last gleam of light in

the evening sky, which dies slowly away, leaving everything wrapt in a mantle of mysterious darkness, the melody slackens, softens, and expires, as with a sigh.

We do not know what thoughts occupied the mind of Beethoven when he wrote this Adagio, but it is certain that it was the lament of a poetic soul, over a long-lost happiness.

The last movement of the sonata is a terrible effort, made by a giant to overcome the obstacles that would debar him from virgin summits yet unsullied by human contact. Emotions vibrate in this movement, with the velocity of a shuttle.

It goes dancing, bounding, full of living voices, a continuous surging and bubbling of notes, that rush together, clash, embrace, separate, again unite, violently hurl themselves against each other, till, finally, with a convulsive motion, as if overcome by extreme exhaustion, the movement finishes.

So great is the power of this movement that the soul, suddenly awakened, finds itself irresistibly carried away on the great wave of sound, like a butterfly engulfed by a whirlwind.

And when thus tempestuously the sonata ends, we remain dazed with emotion, until a burst of enthusiasm relieves us, and, in that moment, we feel ourselves inundated with a wave of perfect happiness.

Beethoven was in this sonata, absolutely grand; none of his other sonatas for the piano, compare with it, not even the Sonata "Patetica," or the Sonata "Appassionata," or the one that contains the famous

funeral march for the death of a hero. This phantasmagoria of light and colour is a torrent of tempestuous harmony, in which the listener is whirled away.

Any one who has not heard this sonata, should seek among his friends for an intelligent pianist, and beg him to perform this wonderful composition. The revelation of beauty that will then be made will, I do not hesitate to assert, be always remembered by him with joy.

The reason why the music of Beethoven is fascinating above all others, and is even able to exalt and delight a soul familiar with the finest melodies of other musicians, is the universality of its appeal, due to the variety of meanings that may be found in it. Every hearer finds in it a part of himself, a translation of his own thoughts. The proof of this lies in the diversity of opinion regarding the signification of the same work. The same symphonies and sonatas heard at different periods, excite different emotions.

The genius of Beethoven was as immeasurable as the universe; it conceived universal thoughts which have the power of expressing simultaneously all the passions of mankind.

This statement may at first appear paradoxical, but we invite the sceptical reader to prove it by an experiment. Let him listen to the same pieces of Beethoven's music, rendered at different times, and he will always experience new emotions; this rarely occurs in hearing the music of other composers. They who are familiar with the classics can assert and repeat that with a sonata of Bach, an oratorio of Handel, a nocturne of

Chopin, a song without words of Mendelssohn, a symphony of Mozart or Haydn, frequent hearing does but confirm the impression at first produced, and can never change it; the sentiments of the hearer remain the same, except in those passages where that impression is intensified by the fuller understanding resulting from familiarity.

The music of Beethoven, on the contrary, does not obey this law, and the emotions that it left yesterday in our souls, are cancelled to-morrow, and replaced with others. In this peculiarity we recognise a great cause of the fascination exercised by the musician of Bonn, who is brilliant and solitary as a sun without planets. For this reason, Beethoven will remain for ever the thaumaturgus of musical art, a sovereign creature who fears no rivals.

Like a universal benefactor he delights every one, laymen with the caress of melody which quiets their perturbed souls, and lulls them to sleep; musicians with the depth of his conceptions and the rare inspiration that bursts forth suddenly from his most ordinary phrases.

His music has an influence on our souls like the reading of the Bible, it stimulates our ideality and incites us to meditation.

The hearer who is initiated into the secrets of his art, discovers new beauties never before imagined by him; the horizon enlarges around him as it does around one who is carried skyward in a balloon.

If you would prove this, select one of those evenings when the soul retires within itself to meditate on the past and dream of the future, and then study the

impression made on you when listening to an Adagio of Beethoven. In order to experience this intellectual ecstasy, it is only necessary to listen to an expert pianist, when he renders the Largo of the Seventh or the Adagio of the Eighth Sonata, or the first movement of the Fourteenth, well known even to the uninitiated under the title of the "Moonlight" Sonata. Thus, as by an improvised revelation, appears all the grandeur of the genius of Ludwig van Beethoven.

Another virtue of the Beethovian compositions, besides the indetermination of their conceptions, is the natural sentiment that envelops and clings to them as the ivy to the poplar.

But what is this sentiment of nature that works within us subtly as a love-philtre? And what are those complex emotions which are aroused by a celestial or terrestrial spectacle, that, by virtue of its grandeur and magnificence, elevates the spirit and mortifies the flesh? These emotions seem absolutely opposed, yet, taken together, they are analogous, because the pleasure that they give is more or less intense, but always of the same character.

The sea that glitters and glistens like gold in the rays of the setting sun, brings us under the influence of a moral and physical force superior to that of our temperament or constitution. A calm sunset induces a peaceful melancholy in which the soul feels itself transported to realms of peace, oblivion and tears. A starry night in winter excites a sentiment that alternates between joy and sadness. Our souls become proud and uplifted when we think that we also are

citizens of the Universe, that our country is heaven, which offers itself to all investigation as a great open book. We are awed and grow humble, when we feel ourselves crushed by the power of the Infinite, by the immeasurable grandeur of the sun, and unknown worlds beyond the sun, and in this moment of abasement, the stars seem to us like glistening tears.

A vast and beautiful plain extending to the horizon, covered with waving ears of golden corn, is as a distant promise of the beautiful, a hope of benefits to be reaped.

A nightingale singing in a wood, a bubbling stream, a roaring cataract, the conflagration of the clouds, the silence which precedes the tempest, the peculiar odour that arises from the earth after rain, and the thousand sensations of colour, odour, and sound that we experience when in harmony with the overflowing vitality of nature, these sentiments, seemingly antagonistic, taken together, give rise to that inexplicable sensation which we style the fascination of nature.

The music of Beethoven, more than any other, possesses this peculiar fascination, because the sensations which he derived from the contemplation of nature were wisely and intelligently elaborated into music that invariably recalls its origin, as certain perfumes bring to our mind the flowers from which they have been expressed.

With his divine melodies Beethoven interprets the beauties of nature as we have seen, and reproduces agreeable sensations that we have already experienced. Perhaps he himself was ignorant of the great power that his genius possessed, ignorant that by means of

sound he had become a marvellous painter of the wonders of nature, which had been realised to him.

Himself insensible to all sounds, his eyes were for him his sole fount of joy, his soul looked out incessantly from those windows. The colours that he saw became sounds to him, became luminous notes, beautiful phrases that corresponded to the natural spectacle.

The deaf musician saw the colours and translated them into sound; the attentive listener, hearing the sounds, sees again the colours. It was thus that natural scenery suggested to Beethoven immortal melodies, and his music is saturated with a sentiment of nature.

The works of Beethoven possess the virtue of perennial freshness, they never tire or annoy us, even when they become as familiar as a poem committed to memory. In this aspect also they resemble the grand spectacles of nature, which we enjoy most when we are most familiar with them.

Music exercises on the human soul a wonderful influence, and is a most important factor in the progress of civilisation. And the more men refine their tastes and perfect their senses the more necessary will music become, because it renders plain and tangible the link that unites the life of the spirit with the life of the sense. So long as man cultivates music, idealism will prosper, even when, governed by reason, he deludes himself with the idea that he has suppressed it.

In these days of profound investigations and subtle criticism, even music is subjected to critical analysis.

Science has divined its laws, has imposed on it formulas and rules; students have sought to discover the cause of its fascinations. Music has become more intellectual, more complex, but has never changed its nature. Pure and incorruptible as the diamond, it has preserved intact its peculiar characteristics, and its power remains the same through all the centuries. The first Pelasgic paintings, the rough Etruscan sculptures which to-day are stored away in Museums, these documents of the history of art have no longer the power of exciting emotion; on the contrary, the first musical compositions, the pastoral songs handed down from remote antiquity, have the power of awakening in us the same sentiments that we suppose they aroused in those who first heard them. Poetry is, in this respect, similar to music because it is the music of words.

A profound revolution in the musical world will be impossible, even in the future. Wagner himself failed when he attempted it. His best music is not found where he has united the melody with words, hoping to obtain a homogeneous relationship, but in his marvelous descriptive symphonies.

Recall the Fire Enchantment in the "Walküre," the forest life in "Siegfried," the Funeral March and the Holocaust of Brunhild in the "Götterdämmerung," the Incantation of Good Friday in "Parsifal," and the Prelude of the "Rheingold."

These extraordinary instrumental pieces will never be forgotten, and must ever retain their wonderful power of suggestion. Where Wagner thought he had in verity married music to words, in such wise as to

describe musically a well-defined and precise sentiment, he met with less success. To prove this, take any musical phrase for which he has written particular words, which are supposed to express the sentiment of the musical phrase, substitute other words and the music will adapt itself as readily to these words as to the others, if we have been particular to use the same metre and accent.

All efforts made with the intention of forcing music to express certain definite ideas have been proven as vain as would be those of a man who, wishing to rise above the earth, tried to pull himself up by his own hair.

For this reason instrumental music is as eternal as life, while melodramatic music disappears with the sunset of the epoch which generated it.

We have in our own time seen the decline in popularity of such Operas as the "Euridice" of Caccini, the "Orfeo" of Monteverde, the "Serva Padrona" of Pergolesi, the "Nina" of Paesiello, the "Matrimonio Segreto" of Cimarosa, the "Giuramento" of Mercadante, the "Saffo" of Pacini; our descendants will see the decline and fall into oblivion of the works of Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Rossini, which to-day (apart from Wagner's music-dramas) constitute the most important repertory of the world's theatres.

The great Wagnerian Tetralogy will also pass into oblivion, and posterity will only know it through those few descriptive fragments of which we have spoken.

We shall see, later, the golden century of music as we have seen that of painting and of sculpture, but this will only come when music has liberated itself

from words, and rests alone, eternal and inviolable sovereign of all the arts. Melodrama will then have entirely disappeared, but the triumph of music will attain to its maximum of splendour; the new era of musical art will then begin.

We believe in the coming of this musical millennium, as we believe in the plurality of worlds; this will certainly arrive as, little by little, man, perfecting his sensibilities, begins to understand that the union of music with poetry constitutes an alloy as unnatural as that wherein a precious metal is forced to mingle with another more ordinary, thus diminishing its proper value.

We should, in conclusion, greatly venerate this art, which defies time, and which is a divine gift bestowed on cultured and civilised man.

Cultivate music, then, if you wish to be noble, if you desire to nourish your minds with lofty thoughts. And let the Sons of Glory whom benign nature has endowed with the gift of musical creation be celebrated as benefactors of humanity equal to those patient and studious men who pass their lives in laboratories and observatories, working for the benefit of their more ignorant brothers.

Although music has not the power of producing laughter, and is not able like poetry to define all the subtle gradations of sentiment, yet, since from the lack of this power it produces greater joy, we assert that its mission is sacred, that it is inviolable and intangible as the essence of divinity itself.

Unconsciously, men have from the most remote

ages appreciated its beneficial effects, and have always welcomed music in the most solemn moments of their lives. Perhaps if we could thoroughly analyse it, we would find that our noblest thoughts and loftiest sentiments are but musical echoes that are only perceptible to our souls.

I advise you, therefore, O Reader, if you would soar to greater heights, if you would possess a clearer and more satisfying idea of future life, to study music, to listen to it, to abandon yourself without hesitation, and with perfect faith, to the charms of that Siren who will not lure you to perdition, but will be a beacon to guide you to the haven of your heart's desire.

CHAPTER III

THE ARTIST

UNDER the heading of Artist, we include painters, sculptors and architects, but we will discuss here only painters and sculptors, because the architect is but a clever designer, and the architectural structure in its entirety a work of sculpture.

In order to understand the importance of the artist's mission, we should first seek to define the beautiful, that enigma which, century after century, has exercised the minds of all great philosophers, from Plato to Tolstoi, from Socrates to Spencer. We will not attempt to cite the often contradictory opinions of these great men, but will enter at once into the heart of the question, and decide the position of the artist in the hierarchy of genius.

It is as difficult to give an exact definition of the beautiful, as to comprehend the intimate essence of the human soul, and this is, perhaps, because the beautiful is not without, but within us ; because it is, in fact, a personal opinion, an inclination of soul, more or less decided, that causes us to view things from one aspect, rather than another, but responds after all to the universal law, to which all are subjected. This fact

is shown even in our physical constitution, for although all men possess the same organs, they differ, both in appearance and character.

The artistically beautiful does not, therefore, possess the glory of truth, but is an alteration of truth, reproduced by the artist, as it appeals to him. So it is, that a painting is not a photograph, nor a statue a cast in clay.

Although the eye of man resembles a *camera obscura*, the artist does not reflect crude reality ; he modifies it, denaturalises it sometimes, and stamps it with the imprint of his own style. Because of this, great works of art are generally the autobiographies of those who have conceived them.

Raphael's pictures reveal the gentle and loving soul of the artist ; his style is always beautiful, even when the nature of the subject requires a different treatment.

In the fresco of Heliodorus chased from the Temple, the avenging angel, here depicted, should express excessive anger and menace ; instead, he is represented as manifesting a calm disdain, tempered by a shade of melancholy tenderness. Again in the "Spasimo di Sicilia," the Virgin before the prostrate figure of her Son, overpowered by the burden of the Cross, does not exhibit the intense agony that would naturally be felt by a mother, but reveals a sentiment less powerful, a grief more ordinary. Her mood is one of compassion, rather than of desperation.

As the moon in her passage through the heavens surrounds each cloud that she encounters with a silvery nimbus, so Raphael's brush encircles his Madonnas with a luminous halo of love and pity.

In all the pictures of the Urbinate, not only those in which we trace the influence of Perugino, as in "Lo Sposalizio della Vergine," and "L'Incoronazione," but also in the works which he accomplished in Rome, after having seen those of Michael Angelo, we find, more or less predominant, the same peculiarities.

The works of Michael Angelo, on the contrary, are a decided contrast to those of his rival; they are grand, terrible, gigantic, replete with an overpowering force, as bold and fearless as the character of the man who conceived them. Any one who has seen the wonderful entanglement of the figures in the "Last Judgment," and is acquainted with the character of Michael Angelo, must admit that this picture is more eloquent than Ascanio Condivi's biography of the artist.

Another Italian artist has plainly declared his character in his works. Full of fire and spirit, hasty, passionate, imaginative, caustic and sensual, Lorenzo Bernini, like Michael Angelo, has left the imprint of himself on his sculpture. Naturally disposed to pleasure, he did not know how to dissemble, even when it was his duty to do so. In his masterpiece, the group of "L'Estasi di Santa Teresa," where we see the Carmelite nun assailed by the darts of an amorous and beautiful angel, the nun manifests no religious fervour, but rather the extreme ecstasy of carnal enjoyment.

Whoever visits the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, in Rome, will be able to judge for himself how plainly these sentiments are expressed in the face of Santa Teresa.

In the pictures of Paul Rembrandt there is a strange mixture of light and shadow. His life was full of

contradictions and vicissitudes, and even in his masterpiece, "Les Syndics des Drapiers," the picture in which there is most balance, we can recognise signs of the overpowering restlessness of his impulsive character.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Rembrandt often chose the most ordinary subjects for his brush; navvies and prostitutes were reproduced as Saints and Madonnas.

His biographers inveigh against him for this, forgetting that he was obliged to obey the dictates of his temperament, that his works necessarily reflected his life. He married for love a young girl of rich and noble family; but, after her death, notwithstanding the scandal it excited, he became the devoted lover of his maid-servant, and with the same artistic care painted the portrait of his wife Saskia, and of his mistress Hendrickje.

Anthony Van Dyck offers another pictorial autobiography. The heads of the men he paints are always those of cavaliers, masquerading as saints, his Madonnas are queens, and the melancholy expression habitual to the painter is reflected in the countenances of all his sitters. The elegant, effeminate man of the world could paint in no other way.

Take, for example, his picture in the Pinacotheca of the Brera Palace in Milan, which represents St Anthony of Padua, the Virgin, and the Child; the head of the Madonna is that of a matron of great beauty, but expresses neither tenderness nor humility, and the Saint, who is kneeling before her, closely resembles a cavalier, masquerading as a Franciscan friar, passionately imploring a token of love from his lady.

There is another element of great importance that helps or hinders the beauty of a work of art. This is the power of appreciation, and the disposition of soul, of those who contemplate the picture or statue, because there is no such thing as impartial judgment; he who criticises must himself become part of the work of art, approving or disapproving of it, according to the emotions that it is able to excite in him.

We must agree concerning two unquestionable facts, before we begin to speak of artists. First, it is impossible to reproduce the *exact* truth in a work of art; secondly, it is impossible for the artist to paint or sculpture without leaving the imprint of his character in his work. Accepting these two axioms, it follows that an artistic conception becomes a masterpiece, when those who contemplate it are able to identify themselves with the work, in such a manner, that its beauty appears to each according to his capacity of soul.

The most beautiful and famous works of art are not those which are the most faithful interpretations of truth, but those remotest from it.

Where do we find a face as beautiful as that of the "Madonna della Seggiola," or a nude figure as lovely as that of the "Venus of Milo"?

These two masterpieces are cited because, by universal consent, even among those works which are considered unquestionably beautiful, they are awarded the palm, and because they are, as representations, as far as possible removed from truth, their many perfections making it impossible to find their prototype in any one human creature.

We will now consider works of art which are as exact copies of reality as it is possible for man to produce ; the portraits of Van Dyck and Lembach, the landscapes of Salvator Rosa and Ruysdael. We shall see that the admirers of these are not so numerous, nor are they so much in accord, because the works of these men do not express the sentiments and desires of the beholders, but impose upon them the idea that the artist wished to express ; therefore, to enjoy these works, it is necessary to identify oneself with their creators.

The artist, therefore, in his efforts to arrive at, or surpass truth, creates elements that, although similar, are without truth, and it is in these personal creations that we detect the talent of the artist: this is what we call the genius of the painter or the sculptor, elements as specific as the ovule in a plant or the ovum in the animal.

The artist reproduces nature, not as it really is, but as it impresses itself on his mind ; the mission of art is the satisfaction of our innate longing for perfection ; and the skill of the artist deludes us with representations more beautiful than truth, attempting thus to compensate us for the imperfections of reality.

In the present state of art, the artist is a perfecter, copying the truth, and correcting, according to his abilities, the defects that present themselves. But it is only in the last few centuries that artists have acquired the power of improving on nature ; for many hundreds of years, art was divorced from natural beauty, because the eye and the hand were not trained as they are to-day.

The progress of art has been slow and gradual, and we are, to-day, able to study it in every phase, from its remote origin, to its present apotheosis.

A few hours spent in archæological and numismatical Museums, Pinacothecas and Glyptothecas, will show us the path traversed by art through the many centuries.

From the celebrated mammoth carved on ivory of the Maddelena, in Dordogne, we are led to the "Adam and Eve" of Albert Dürer, the "Aurora" of Raphael Morghen, and the "Adultera" of Francesco Bartolazzi.

The dolmen and the obelisk were the ancestors of the Tower of Giotto and the Cathedral of Cologne. A fetich, carved from the trunk of a tree, was the progenitor of Thorwaldsen's "Adonis," and the monument to Frederick II., by Christian Rauch.

From the monochromatic designs of the Egyptian sarcophagi were generated the hemicycle of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, painted by Delaroche, and Munckacsy's "Christ before Pilate."

The first pastoral nenia modulated on the bagpipe was the forerunner of Wagner's "Parsifal," and that prodigy of musical technique, the "Fourth Symphony," in E minor, of Johannes Brahms.

Slow and continued progress will carry us toward conceptions vaster and more marvellous. Is there not an immense difference between the rigid Byzantine paintings and the "Cena" of Leonardo da Vinci?

And between them is only the space of three centuries. But what centuries!

Giunta Pisano's picture in the Church of San Francesco d'Assisi, representing Christ on the Cross,

adored by Angels, and the "Byzantine Madonna" of Guido da Siena, exhibiting a delicacy of treatment eminently Italian, are the first works of art that hint at the coming dawn. These two pictures show traces of the conventional hardness of ancient art, but there is in them the indication of an awakening genius; the first pale ray in the East, while the stars are still palpitating at their zenith.

A few years pass, and the dawn indeed is here.

Cimabue's Madonna for the Church of Santa Maria Novella so delighted the people that they carried the picture in procession through the streets. Giotto, the great dramatist of painting, surpassed his master, and put life in the hieratic figures; and at Assisi, Rome, Florence, and Padua, his fame became so great, as to eclipse that of his successor, Andrea di Cione, whose paintings were the ornaments of the Strozzi Chapel.

But now the sky is flaming, and the day is nigh.

The fifteenth century comes, bringing Masolino da Panicale, who emancipated himself from the style of Giotto, and his celebrated pupils Masaccio and Fra Filippo Lippi, who, in their delineation of expression and of details surpassed those who had gone before. Masaccio, the friend of Donatello and Brunellesco, has left an indelible mark on the history of art; in his own peculiar style is expressed a great and noble individuality, which is, to-day, universally recognised. Death took him when still young, and at the height of his renown.

After him came Gentile da Fabriano, a mystic painter; and then shines the first true ray of the sun,

dissipating the dimness of dawn and flooding the earth with light.

He was followed by Fra Beato Angelico, mysterious and tender, and, later on, by his pupil Benozzo Gozzoli, a spirit gay as the lark at morning.

Now is no more darkness, no more dreams ; day is here—it is life itself that has grasped the brush and the palette.

In the history of art, every new artist seems to take for watchword the last utterance of the dying Goethe : “Licht, Licht, mehr Licht noch !” (Light, Light, more Light !)

The light shone first on Sandro Botticelli, the “egoarch” of the fifteenth century ; this elegant and refined artist is the first true individuality that we encounter.

His “Allegoria della Primavera” is a marvel of fine sentiment and originality. The painter of the unforgettable “Mercury” and of the “Three Nymphs” was a truly great man, full of artistic and literary fervour. Botticelli also illustrated the “Divina Commedia” and the works of Girolamo Savonarola.

His contemporaries were Domenico Ghirlandajo, the aristocratic realist, and Filippino Lippi, a bright sentimentalist. In the Church of Santa Maria della Minerva in Rome, Botticelli’s “Life of St Thomas” is to this day much praised and admired.

Later, followed Antonio Pollajuolo with a small battalion of bold spirits ; later still came a giant, Andrea del Verrocchio, who expressed his sentiments in popular types, a giant who had such pupils as Lorenzo di Credi, the Perugino, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Verocchio modelled the equestrian monument of Bartolomeo Colleoni, now placed in the Piazza of St John and St Peter in Venice, and this alone is enough to have brought him glory. His "Vergine fra Quattro Santi" in the Gallery of the Uffizi, is full of fervour and sweetness. Verrocchio brings us to the midst of the Renaissance; the sun is almost at the meridian; and Luca Signorelli comes to announce the advent of Michael Angelo; Pietro Perugino heralds the coming of Raphael.

Signorelli, although the most original of the early painters, was for a long time unknown. His style and conception have affinity with Buonarroti's.

Perugino's style was all his own, sweet, sentimental, and mellifluous, sometimes attaining the heights that Sanzio (Raphael) reached.

Their contemporary, the Pinturicchio, who decorated the Borgia apartment in the Vatican, displays talent of a high order, though his individuality is not marked.

While the Florentine school touched meridian with the works of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael, pictorial operoseness flourished in Northern Italy, under Francesco Squarcione, and his great pupil, Andrea Mantegna, who painted his pictures as if they were sculptured; the figures of his "Pietà" in the Brera Museum in Milan, are foreshortened in a manner both audacious and suggestive.

After Lorenzo Costa and Francesco Raibolini came Bernardino Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari; and in Venice, Giovanni Bellini, Crivello, Carpaccio, and Cima da Conegliano, heralded Giorgione Tiziano (Titian), and Paolo Veronese.

Everywhere man worked feverishly, because the noon was nigh.

Leonardo's appearance in the world of art was like the coming of Christ to the Pagan world. A century before Galileo, science and art, united for the first time, had created in the "Cena" a masterpiece in the Refectory of the Grazie. Leonardo's work was modern in style; and was a revolution in the dominion of art. This wonderful and subtle observer penetrated into the essence of things, and translated what he saw.

He cannot be classed either with Raphael or Michael Angelo. For the genius of these, like a chess-pawn, moves generally in a straight line, but occasionally obliquely, according as they derive from Perugino or from Luca Signorelli. Leonardo, on the contrary, was outside his century, making no claims, observing no bounds, a man before his time, beyond ours, a soul as solitary as Mount Ergias.

Among his followers, only Bernardino Luini has perpetuated his style. He reveals in his works all the tender grace and Lombard beauty of his master; but Cesare da Sesto, Marco d'Oggionno, Andrea Salaino, Giovanni Boltraffio, are not worthy interpreters of da Leonardo.

Now arose the giants: Michael Angelo the mighty; Raphael, surpassing his predecessors; Titian who mixed blood with his colours, and vivified even the marbles of Venice; in the epoch of these men, Italy possessed the monopoly of all art.

At this moment, there was great emulation among the intellectual giants, not only in the dominion of art, but in politics, science, and literature.

This was the century of the Popes Giulio II. and Leo X.; Christopher Columbus was discovering America, Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, Francis I. and Charles V. were fighting for the dominion of the world, Martin Luther had denounced and burnt the Papal Bull, Niccolò Machiavelli dictated the "Principe," Lodovico Ariosto composed his "Orlando Furioso," and Pier Luigi Palestrina wrote his great "Stabat Mater" for two choirs.

These were the days when Michael Angelo sat beside Pope Giulio II., surrounded by twelve Cardinals, when Charles V. picked up the brush dropped by Titian, Leo X. kissed the dying Raphael, and Francis I. uncovered his head before Leonardo.

It was the golden age of Italian art, since Rubens, Van Dyck, Velasquez, Nicholas Poussin, Rembrandt and Murillo, had not yet appeared: their glory was to reflect Italy's, and would be seen in the coming century.

After Leonardo, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian, the afternoon was short, and the shadows gathered quickly, as they do in winter evenings.

Sebastiano del Piombo arose to imitate Michael Angelo, Giulio Romano ventured to copy Raphael, while Tiepolo denaturalised the art of Titian and Paolo Veronese.

Some individualities rose above the rank and file of mediocrity, but the men of genius were few, and their works no longer marvellous; the sunset of the Renaissance was less beautiful than its sunrise.

Art slumbered, but science was awake: the day that Michael Angelo died, Galileo was born.

But so much work and so much talent could not but bear good fruit. Italy became the sanctuary of art; artists came to her from all countries seeking inspiration, and it was only in the sixteenth century that painters dreamed of attaining to greatness outside Italy. Modern Art was initiated in the sixteenth century by David Teniers, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck, Franz Hals, and Diego Velasquez, after they had studied the art of the great Italian Masters.

In the history of art the figure of Michael Angelo attracts us most. In him is represented the perfect artistic trinity; he was a magnificent sculptor, a marvellous painter, a sublime architect, and the "Mose," the "Giudizio Universale," and the cupola of St Peter reveal to humanity the greatness of his genius.

The genius of Leonardo may perhaps surpass him, but because of the inconstancy of his imagination, his productions are too fragmentary, too eclectic, to admit of a serious examination of his artistic character.

Perhaps, if there remained to us the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, if the "Cena" had not been destroyed by time and the vandalism of soldiers, the son of "Ser Piero" would be the greatest artistic genius we could find to consider, but since a greater part of his works are lost, and others are only half finished, it is almost impossible to study thoroughly his character, except as a writer and a scientist.

Michael Angelo, in spite of the complexity of his conceptions, seems to be the greatest artist of the

Renaissance ; his soul is akin to Dante Alighieri and Richard Wagner.

These three men are great, powerful, and overbearing as the antique divinities of the Vedas. Read the twenty-first canto of the "Inferno," study the "Giudizio Universale" in the Sistine Chapel, listen to the third Act of the "Götterdämmerung," and the affinity between the poet, the painter, and the musician will be made clear to you.

The reason of this similarity consists in the exaggeration of truth that is in the works of these three men.

Dante portrays in his personages all the vices and all the virtues, not as they exist, but accentuated and exaggerated, so that his characters are entirely vicious or entirely virtuous, according to the sentiments of which they are symbols.

Michael Angelo's figures also possess an overpowering force, a sovereign energy not comparable with our physical and mental constitution. Even his Madonnas possess the over-developed muscles and immense shoulders of a race of giants.

Richard Wagner also exaggerates all musical sentiments, carrying them beyond their natural limits ; and adorning his works with melodies so tumultuous, that they seem to magnify even the terrible Gods of Walhalla.

For this reason, these three athletes of thought, at the distance of centuries, find themselves so closely united by the sympathy of their creative genius, that a believer in the transmigration of souls would say that the genius of Dante was reincarnated in Michael Angelo, and came to life once again in Richard Wagner.

As an artist, Michael Angelo regarded humanity

through the lens of a telescope. Every man painted by him is a Hercules or a Samson, every woman a Judith or a Clorinda ; and he not only exaggerates the form, but the expression ; for him, love was a passion ; grief, an agony ; aversion, a loathing. He was incapable of expressing neutral sentiments, those undefined conditions of soul between sympathy and love, excitement and spasm, anger and rage ; he was incapable of representing those shades of feeling in which Raphael excelled.

He is greatest in the manifestations of extreme sentiments, because this was the especial characteristic of his genius.

On this account, before the paintings and sculptures of the great Tuscan, we experience a vague sense of fear, not unlike that which affects us when the silence of nature announces a coming tempest, and we are conscious of our powerlessness to delay or avert it. When the sense of fear has vanished, we recognise that the art of Michael Angelo is a long and continued illusion, because he presents humanity as he imagined it, and not as it is, satisfying, in fact, that unfulfilled desire that every man feels within himself for physical, intellectual, and moral power.

In the magnificent nudes of the "Giudizio," with their broad chests, and muscular limbs, one single body possesses the strength of ten men of to-day ; the majesty in the face of "Mose" is more to be revered than the dignities of all the Cardinals of the world ; in the melancholy and profoundly meditative head of Lorenzo dei Medici's statue, there is more intensity of thought than we find in the faces of all living philosophers !

The "Giudizio Universale" is an orgy of muscular contortions, a wonderful entanglement of naked limbs, in which we do not discover a single indication of weakness or flaccidity.

From that arched ceiling all humanity seems ready to precipitate itself upon us; we are filled with high thoughts and vain hopes; we hear the music of Wagner, we see the vision of Dante in all its terror.

Conception and execution far outstrip the truth in this picture painted by an apparent megalomaniac. Michael Angelo was sixty-six years old when the picture was finished, and had just arrived at the zenith of his glory. He stood on the threshold of old age, at the time when pride is man's inseparable companion.

Michael Angelo seems to have transfused into the "Giudizio Universale" all the proud, turbulent and overbearing elements of his character. The wall of the Sistine Chapel, with more than seven hundred square metres of surface, seems to summon him from the grave to confront us, a disdainful figure hurling anathemas at the world.

If, while standing before this picture, we could hear the "Divina Commedia" read aloud by an orator as great as Mirabeau, and, after this, listen to the magniloquent "March of the Gods of Walkalla" by Richard Wagner, then we would be momentarily in touch with three giants of thought, for whom the planet of Jupiter would seem a poor and restricted dwelling-place.

In strong contrast with this trinity, three other men of

genius stretch out their hands to one another across the centuries. These three kindred souls are, Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael), Vincenzo Bellini.

Compare Petrarca's sonnet in eulogy of the dead Laura, at the moment in which he is most overwhelmed with grief for her death: "Oimè il bel viso! oimè il soave sguardo," with that of Dante in the "Vita Nuova"—"Venite a intender li sospiri miei."

Both poets would fain express sorrow for a lost love, but the plaint of Petrarca is the cry of a simple and childlike nature. He speaks brokenly and interruptedly, repeating words, and wandering from one conception to the other, as a child does, when grieved:

"Oimè il bel viso! oimè il soave sguardo!
 Oimè il leggiadro portamento altero!
 Oimè 'l parlar, ch'ogni aspro ingegno e fero
 Faceva umile, ed ogni uom vil, gagliardo!
 Ed oimè il dolce viso, ond'uscio 'l dardo
 Di che morte, altro bene omai non spezo!"

But in Dante's sonnet, although he is bowed with sorrow, his strong character is made manifest; he is still the philosopher, and knows that he will not die of this grief, because he has given it words, and speech is the mitigation of pain:

"Venite a intender li sospiri miei,
 O cor gentili, che pietà il desia;
 Li quali sconsolati vanno via,
 E s' e' non fosser, di dolor morrei."

This strong self-control and inflexible will are peculiar to the author of the "Divina Commedia." In all the works of Petrarca, no such strength of spirit is visible.

Even so is the contrast between Michael Angelo and Raphael: one is all strength, the other all grace and tenderness. The proud Madonnas of Michael Angelo might be Sibyls; Raphael's, on the contrary, are true Madonnas, humble, sweet, and tender as the soul of the artist who painted them.

Bellini and Wagner offer a similar contrast. Where the Catanese ought to be terrible (as in the final act of "Norma") he cannot free himself from sentimentality: where Wagner should be tender, as in the duet between Elsa and Lohengrin, he cannot conceal his strong and overbearing temperament.

We have seen then that the author's temperament is inevitably shown in his work. More than a hundred and fifty years ago, Buffon put this truth into a celebrated phrase: "Le style c'est l'homme même."

Thus the peculiar art of Michael Angelo appears in the epoch of the Renaissance as an open rebellion. He was not like Leonardo, an innovator, because Luca Signorelli had preceded him, as Perugino had preceded Raphael, but he remained the sovereign epic painter, as Raphael was the sovereign lyric painter.

The fifteenth century had its three giants: Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Raphael, representing the brain, the strength, and the heart of Italian art. The second of the great trio was not an innovator like the first, but he appeared as a mighty rebel in the Renaissance epoch, disdaining prettiness, painting muscle and strength. In the "Giudizio Universale," the men greatly outnumber the women, and among these are no tender maidens; they are all mothers and matrons.

Like the old Spartans, Michael Angelo disdained

pretences; he painted his nude figures naturally and simply, did not trouble himself with arrangements of drapery, nor adopt artificial shadows or unnatural postures to conceal nature, but presented the truth as it appeared to him. Like Emile Zola, he did not hesitate to depict moral or physical deformity, when it was necessary to the sincerity of his art.

In the right-hand corner of his "Giudizio Universale" the figure of "Messer Biogio" appears with the ears of an ass, because he had dared to insinuate to the Pope that Michael Angelo's paintings were obscene. Notwithstanding this savage sneer at the critic, an artistic sacrilege was wrought, at the command of Pope Paul V., when Daniele da Volterra painted drapery over some of the figures. Later on, Clement XIII. had others veiled.

A characteristic of Michael Angelo's genius is the lack of shading; his pictures show only light and darkness. The delicate gradation of tints in which Leonardo excelled, Michael Angelo repudiated; he rejected also all accessory ornaments, unnecessarily decorative landscapes, flowers, jewels and ribbons, all of which, in his judgment, diminished the artistic effect.

He accepted no suggestions, but followed the dictates of his own intelligence unhesitatingly. This is shown by the last line in the madrigal dedicated to Messer Luigi del Riccio:

"E vo per vie men calpestate e sole."

His strong personality stood out during a lifetime which covered nearly ninety years of a century full of turbulence, never swerving from the course he chose

to follow, but going doggedly on, from youth to age, from his first work, the toothless head of a Faun, to the Cupola of San Pietro.

He is one of the few artists who are able to impose themselves upon their critics. Standing before the pictures of Raphael or Murillo, one can form an opinion upon the work; not so with the works of Michael Angelo. His imperious genius annihilates the will to criticise, and the fascinated beholder is carried away by the mastery of one stronger than he. Bewitched by Michael Angelo, we feel we possess a physical strength which is not ours, and a psychical strength which is in the grasp of no mortal man.

Perhaps because of this very originality, Michael Angelo is generally placed lower than Raphael. The less personal painter left to his students the liberty of their own convictions, of interpreting his pictures as they pleased.

The most original men of genius, Dante and Ariosto, Wagner and Beethoven, Michael Angelo and Rembrandt, although at the summit of their art, are not general favourites like those who less vehemently impress their individuality upon us.

The individuality of Michael Angelo not only masters his observer, but inoculates him with the artist's own restlessness. This may be seen, not only in the "Giudizio Universale," which is a hurricane of motion, but also in the "Sibyls," the "Mose," and the statues on the Medicean sarcophagus. These figures, fixed as they are, betray in their attitudes the restlessness of their artist.

Peace and tranquillity he abhorred, and therefore his

pictures have little or no landscape. In the "Giudizio Universale," it is reduced to the sea of the Deluge and the tree of Eve, and the painting of the "Sacra Famiglia," in the Palazzo degli Uffizi in Florence, has for background, instead of landscape, five nude figures.

This idea of motion is, therefore, a peculiarity which Michael Angelo endeavours to make evident in all his works, and he has succeeded so well in stamping his own personality on his personages, that new words have been coined from his name to indicate his special style. Who hears of a Michaelangiolesque figure knows exactly what it is like, as we know the type of poem that is Dantesque, the kind of music that has a Wagnerian imprint.

One statue of Michael Angelo is perhaps flawless; this is the Bacco that he sculptured at Rome, about 1500. In this figure there is little indication of Michael Angelo's usual style. It is difficult to imagine how the wine-bibbing god could preserve intact such beauty and harmony of proportion. The rules of Greek art are scrupulously observed in this statue; and therefore neither this Bacco, nor the David is a true example of Michael Angelo's genius, for he has not portrayed in them his whole soul, as he did in the "Giudizio Universale," the "Mose," and the tomb of the Medicis. In these works he is like Dante in the "Vita Nuova" and the "Canzoniere," like Wagner in "Rienzi" and in "Dez Fliegende Holländer," he has not yet found his wings. The David and the Bacco are the first-fruits of his genius, and so do not greatly impress us. We look upon

them as we do upon Rembrandt's "Presentation at the Temple," an inferior picture, but a promise of the "Lesson in Anatomy."

Masterpieces are not the first-born of artists of strong individuality, but the result of a slow and continued evolution. They are wrought out of the suffering and experience of years, and so reveal the characteristics of their authors, like the "Trasfigurazione" of Raphael, the "Assunta" of Titian, the Wagnerian Tetralogy, the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, and Dante's "Divina Commedia," which are all perfect examples of complete autobiographies.

As a man, Michael Angelo was religious; his piety being shown especially in his "Rime" and "Lettere." Considering his sins, and asking God for a changed heart, he exclaims:

"Ma non basta, Signor, che tu ne invogli
Di ritornar colà l'anima mia,
Dove per te di nulla fu creata.
Prima che dal mortal la privi e spogli,
Col pentimento ammezzami la via,
E fia più certa a te tornar beata."

And in another poem:

"Tu solo il puoi, la tua pietà suprema
Soccorra al mio dolente iniquo stato,
Si presso a morte e si lontan da Dio."

He believed himself to be the Heaven-designed builder of San Pietro,¹ the receiver of divine inspiration. In Michael Angelo, there are many characteristics

¹ Michael Angelo, in one of his letters, says, speaking of the construction of San Pietro: "Perchè molti credono, e io ancora, esservi stato messo da Dio."

of the prophet, not of the Buddha or the Christ, but rather a Mahomet or a Luther. To see his conception of Jesus in the "Giudizio Universale" is to be convinced that he was the intellectual brother of Savonarola and of Giordano Bruno. His inflexible and threatening Christ has none of the majesty of God, but seems as much of a rebel as those against whom he hurls his wrath.

Michael Angelo detested priests, and held the Popes in lofty contempt, and it is possible that if his passion for art had not been stronger than his prophetic genius, his name would to-day be among those of the great reformers.

This man greater than his giants, and more majestic than his Cupola, lived in a century of magnificence and munificence, towering there, above all others, side by side with his great competitor in the "Battaglia d'Anghiari," Leonardo da Vinci.

Michael Angelo died, and Titian followed him, and the golden age of the Renaissance ended. To-day, who runs may read at a glance the great evolution of art that began with Giunta Pisano and Cimabue, and swept on to Titian and Correggio; their works declare them, and in these we can detect the precursors and innovators, Giotto, Niccolò Pisano, Luca Signorelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Titian. We see their art developing from simple to complex, from the monochromatic pictures of Dynias and Charmys, to the "Source" of Dominique Ingres, from the hieratic figures of the Assyrians to the twin statues of Goethe and Schiller by Ernest Rietschel.

Often, in a single gallery, like that of the Louvre in Paris, or the Pitti Palace in Florence, we see Art's sunrise and sunset, even as a few pages of manuscript can cover the history of many centuries. But the most learned and subtle critics of the past are unable to pass judgment on contemporary art. This must be left to those who will come after us.

As some names held cheap to-day were borne by artists whose contemporaries considered them immortal, while those who, in their day, were unappreciated and despised, are now famous, posterity in judging the art of the end of the last century may display a similar disregard of existing opinion.

Those of our contemporary artists whom to-day we put in the front rank, may have to occupy a very different place. Who knows?

All nations have had their aspirants to immortality and their legions of adventurers after glory, some of whom have struck out for themselves new and unexplored paths.

We have, in France—J. L. David, P. P. Prudhon, Théodore Géricault, Eugène Delacroix, J. A. Dominique Ingres, Paul Delaroche, Ernest Meissonnier, Puvis de Chavannes, J. F. Millet.

In England—Thomas Lawrence, J. M. W. Turner, John Constable, Richard Parkes-Bonnington, Edwin Landseer, William Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Frederic Leighton, Edward Burne-Jones.

In Germany—Peter Cornelius, Karl Begas, Wilhelm Kaulbach, Adolph Menzel, Ludwig Knauss, Franz Lembach, Max Liebermann.

In Italy—Giuseppe Palizzi, Francesco Hayez,

Domenico Morelli, Niccolò Barabino, Giacomo Favretto, F. P. Michetti, Giovanni Segantini.

In Spain—Goya-y-Lucientes, Federigo de Madrazo, Mariano Fortuny.

In Belgium—Alfred Stevens, Louis Gallait. In Holland—Yof Israels, Antonius Mauve, Alma Tadema, Hendrik Mesdag. In Denmark—Wiljoem Marstrand. In Sweden—Anders Zorn. In Russia—Basile Verestchagin Siemiradzki. In Switzerland—Gleyre, Boecklin. In Hungary—Mihali Munckacsy. In the United States—William Chase, James McNeill Whistler. In Japan—Hokusai, Suzuki Shonen.

The art of to-day is powerfully executed, expert in technique, and wisely conceived; it is free from the contagious mysticism that for many years filled the world with Madonnas, Holy Families, Lord's Suppers, and episodes culled from the Pentateuch or the New Testament. Modern art occupies itself with our daily life, in its varied and intimate manifestations, studying hospital and casern, school and prison, church and market-place, huts and palaces. It renders little lakes and boundless ice-fields, the sea and the clouds; it seeks in all places for an anomaly to explain, or a sentiment to express.

The pictures of to-day are not only pictorial autobiographies, but are sometimes complete biographies, eloquent as diaries, true as history itself. Does not the Napoleonic Epos, illustrated by Meissonnier and by Verestchagin equal the "Mémorial" of Las-Cases? Are not Anton von Werner's pictures of the war of 1870-71 worthy comments on the Journal of Von Moltke? And where are truer biographies than

Lembach's portraits of Mommsen, Bismarck, Björnson, and Gladstone ?

Modern art is universal, giving life to lifeless things, more searching than science itself. Not only has it reproduced things visible, but it seeks to make comprehensible the invisible, to personify abstractions. It desires to make a revolution in technique. It has created new schools, which reveal an audacious and initiative spirit; for example, the Pre-Raphaelite school, initiated by Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti; Manet, Degas and Caillebotte, the impressionists; and, lastly, Van der Velde and Segantini, exponents of the divisionist school.

The contrast between antique and modern art, between the Renaissance and the nineteenth century, shows not an evolution, but a revolution, not a progress, but a conquest.

At one time, painters and sculptors vied with each other in depicting the life of the Virgin, the passion of Christ, or the conventional world of Mythology; such subjects were repeated to weariness; the artists themselves were concerned almost entirely with variety of posture, perfection of design, and pureness of colouring.

To-day, the most important point is the subject, because artists must represent life, and not mythology; they must symbolize the passions of man, not those of Olympus or Walhalla.

If we lost all the books of antiquity, and only the pictures and sculptures were left, we should know very little of the lives of men in those days; but if posterity knew nothing of our century but the paintings and

sculptures that illustrate it, our descendants could easily reconstruct our history by means of these.

The modern artist, therefore, possesses a faculty unshared by his predecessors : the painters and sculptors of antiquity and the Renaissance could not reproduce the soul.

This is a modern achievement, the fruit of a subtler intelligence, the legitimate outcome of immensely diffused culture, and the progress of science.

Modern art does not only reveal the artist's soul, but the spirit of the times in which he lives.

We cannot anticipate the judgment of posterity on the art of to-day, but we can affirm that this acquired faculty alone is sufficient to mark the commencement of an era of great promise.

There is another point in which the progress from ancient to modern art is shown.

The ancients painted what they knew, not what they saw. Although a distant tree appeared to them a mere blotch, supported by a trunk, they knew that a tree has leaves, and they painted these leaves, one by one, not as they saw, but as they knew. We see in the background of old pictures, blades of grass delineated with the greatest care, branches of trees far away towards the horizon, painted as if they were a few paces distant.

A tree has leaves, and the leaves are there, even when the distance renders them entirely invisible. A house has roof, windows, and doors, even when these details cannot be seen, and they are lost in distance.

Art was therefore so artificial as to deprive the

picture of the beauty that is in a natural landscape; it was a childish art, which lost itself in subtleties and tricks.

To-day, the painter paints what he sees, and not what he knows.

In a large picture a whole village may be represented by a horizontal streak of white, a whole wood is reproduced by a blotch of dark green, with irregular contours.

Yet what power of suggestion the modern pictures have over those of the ancients! There is more light, more air, more life in them, not dependent on the freshness of the colouring, but on the fact that now the artist trusts to the physiological, not to the intellectual eye.

Beside a modern landscape an ancient painting looks like the handiwork of a child, crude, stiff, and unnatural.

We see then that the psychology of art is no longer individual, but collective. Old painters elected to render violent and extreme passions; modern art, instead, analyses the soul, and reproduces all the shades of psychical emotion.

Photography, which surprises and fixes on a plate the most fugitive expressions, has favoured this development of art. In modern pictures and statues, our epoch shows itself neurotic, impatient, unquiet. Progress, therefore, is incessant, and technique is continually in search of a new way whereby to arrive at perfection.

Holbein and Raphael were among the most perfect and exquisite of designers; they were noted figures of the Renaissance, but to-day, Holbeins and Raphaels are

counted by the hundred. In line and without colour, the artists of to-day can delineate the most opposite sentiments and the strongest passions. We go even further. The painter of the future will have to be still more skilled, more powerful to excite emotions, and surprise truth. He must be able to paint a landscape in full sunlight, to give the illusion of high-relief, that is now obtained through the stereoscope. Science will aid the painter in this, his last step towards perfection, as it has already assisted him in forming the laws of perspective, and in determining the composition of colours.

Sculpture, leaving the classicism of Canova and Thorwaldsen, has also devoted itself to the imitation of truth in all its manifestations; has sought to animate marble, to make it assume the most diverse positions, the most varied expressions. The sculptor's thumb has become more supple, and more expert, till it seems as if he would remake and improve on the work of God. So fixed has been the desire to impress on stone the idea of motion that the blind eyes of statues have been given pupils, the flesh its natural tint, and the skin its furrows and wrinkles. Looking at a modern statue we seem to see the tendons vibrate, the muscles contract, and the nerves tremble: it seems motion fixed at its most vehement moment.

Radical reforms will come with the future. Marble and bronze are not the materials best adapted to imitate life, nor do we think it possible to revive the polychrome sculpture of the ancient Greeks. Instead, there will be discovered a material more malleable, more flexible, that will be in every way

more fitted to the purpose for which it will be used.

Art neither sleeps nor turns back. She goes on her way, accessible to all, embellishing all, achieving conquest upon conquest, the recognised benefactress of humanity. She is the good fairy of trade and manufacture, and her gifts are no longer the privilege of the few, but the inheritance of the many.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHER

To attain to the loftiest plane of thought, to subject all phenomena to a single law, in order to discover the origin and destiny of beings and things: this is the goal which, for centuries, philosophy has endeavoured to reach. Writing, therefore, of the philosopher, who is the man of all sciences, we ought to experience that intense pleasure which possesses an author when he dilates upon his favourite theme. On the contrary, we feel ourselves embarrassed, and intellectually deluded, as if we had witnessed a spectacle that we had imagined beautiful, and discovered to be most ordinary. A philosopher, in the true sense of the word, never has been and never will be. All those philosophers who have devoted their time to writing volumes have wasted their lives; they have attempted the solution of an enigma which will never find its *Œdipus*, because it transcends human intelligence, and is beyond the power of genius itself.

These men, in fact, contradict each other, and sometimes contradict themselves, as did Ausonio Franchi, who, after posing as an inflexible rationalist, returned to the most rigorous orthodoxy, publishing the "Ultima

Critica," recanting all his opinions as free-thinker ; and Friedrich Nietszche, who first applauded and then decried the musical reform of Wagner. Some philosophers affirm that all that exists is one substance ; others, on the contrary, discover innumerable varieties of substance ; some assert that everything is in a continual state of motion ; others say that motion is an illusion ; some affirm that all are born, and all die ; others insist that no one is born, and nothing can die. Some use their lives and their intelligence to create a philosophical system, which their successors demolish with a single phrase ; and the latter, in their turn, have constructed edifices which will be absolutely destroyed by posterity.

Let us return for a moment to the past.

In China, the cradle of all inventions, six centuries before the Christian era, Confucius let fall the first germs of philosophy, and expounded the first laws of duty ; in India, Buddha, the genius of sentiment, was the first to sow the seed of a fruitful philosophy. He promised to rich and poor an eternal repose, if they lived worthily, and sowed the seed in fertile soil where it took deep root, and produced strong, hardy branches.

The years passed, the plant blossomed, the fruit matured, and it seemed destined to enjoy a long life ; then, suddenly, a tempest arose, and tore from the tree its strongest and healthiest germs, and cast them on the shore of the Mediterranean in a rich and vigorous soil, where they immediately began to put forth shoots. Greece was the hospitable land ; Greece, already so famous, was to foster and nourish the new gift received from the Orient. In Greece the young trees were

carefully cultivated by men of intelligence. Pythagorus preached metempsychosis and asceticism; Democritus conceived the atomic theory, and the sophists, those Titans of logicians, cunning as foxes and malicious as monkeys, discussed all subjects. Now, Socrates arose, armed with his great wisdom and virtue, and gathered the first-fruits of Greek-Buddhism, and he it was who brought it under the notice of the then mysterious Occident. He was followed by Plato, who gave to Greek-Buddhism the grace of his ideality. Marvellous times were these, and not only for philosophy. In them Greek art arrived at its greatest perfection, with the Jupiter of Olympus, the Pallas Athene of Phidias, the Niobe of Scopas, and the Venus of Praxiteles.

A few years pass, and behold Aristotle, the *maestro di color che sanno*. He combined in his treatises, as in a great encyclopædia, all the sciences of his epoch. At this period Buddhism seemed to have the promise of eternal life, and to assure posterity perennial shade, and flowers and fruit in abundance. But a destroyer came in Epicurus, who undid the work of his predecessors, dissipated superstition, and revolted against the Divinity.

But, thanks to the work of Socrates a century before, seed of Greek-Buddhism had travelled Westward, and some of it took root in Italy, where Rome spread her immense wings over the known world.

Devoted to war and to conquest, the Romans, for a time, did not deign to cultivate this strange tree, but after a while, a few of the studious among them began to nurture it. Cicero, at the summit of his oratorical fame, drew to it the notice of his fellow-citizens.

Lucretius Carus celebrated it in a wonderful poem, and Seneca, the preceptor of Nero, and Epictetus, sovereign soul of stoicism, paid it the tribute of their genius. Afterwards, for many years, the tree was neglected, and left to the care of inexpert husbandmen, whose injudicious treatment tended greatly to injure it. Already many branches hung down broken and dry, and the solid bark began to split and fall away, when, as though by a miracle, there arose from the bowels of the earth, from the catacombs themselves, a pure and fresh stream which revived the dying roots. Christianity was born.

Again the tree became radiant with health and beauty. St Augustine demonstrated the existence and essence of divinity. St Thomas Aquinas declared the soul to be the dwelling-place of God, and proclaimed man immortal.

After him many others interested themselves in the mystic tree, and a century later than the great theologian of Roccasecca, arose a new Plato, who with the power of his genius revived the ideas of St Thomas and of Bonaventura of Bagnorea, and created a masterpiece, the "Divina Commedia."

This was the swan song of the scholastics, because almost immediately after Dante there arose the great pruners, and the useless and dangerous branches of the tree were, one by one, cut away.

It was at this moment that Christopher Columbus discovered America; Vasco da Gama made the circuit of the Cape of Good Hope, and approached the Indies; Copernicus gave the first shake to the cosmic Ptolemaic system; the authority of the Bible began to diminish,

and the birth of the experimental method was announced by the advent of Galileo and Bacon.

Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella, the great rebels against the scholastics, defied science in the name of philosophy. The aged tree was subjected now to ingraftings, and surrendered itself, without question, to the desires and caprices of the new-comers.

Francis Bacon, the great practical modern spirit, who conceived wisdom to be the most efficacious instrument with which to dominate nature and to utilise the strength of humanity; Descartes in his "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I exist); Locke in his "Essay on the Human Understanding," and Nicholas Malebranche with his theory on "Occasional Causes," provided yet further grafts; but at last came Benedict Spinoza, who with his pantheism restored to the tree its original organic unity. "All is one with God, everything that exists is an attribute of God"; such is his system.

Nurtured by the wise and expert philosopher, the tree prospered and regained its pristine vigour; Wilhelm von Leibnitz conceived the theory of monads, and of Pre-established Harmony; Blaise Pascal, a gloomy misanthropist, subject to delusion from excess of faith, returned to the old system; Giambattista Vico created the Philosophy of History, and thence arose the warlike band of Encyclopædists: Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert . . . who did their best to keep alive the poor tree which was now nearing its end.

But Buddhistic ideas had meanwhile been carried north to Germany. There they flourished, under the care of the giant innovator, Emanuel Kant, who

destroyed for ever the vain metaphysical fancies, and created modern criticism.

After him, Amedeus Fichte, Schelling, and many others guarded the new treasure; then came Hegel, who once more decked the mystic tree with ideal flowers, until Arthur Schopenhauer, "the Leopardi of Philosophy," hurled against them his contempt, contending that the world is only our will, and almost inviting posterity to make an end of it. With him came more arborators, who made and unmade, pruned and enriched. Auguste Comte instituted positivism; Jeremy Bentham made himself the head of the utilitarian school, and considered pleasure as the most beautiful flower of life; John Stuart Mill developed the great doctrine of gnoseology; and Edward von Hartmann united the system of Hegel with that of Schopenhauer.

About this time Herbert Spencer declared the law of evolution to be an organic progress from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and on this founded his whole system, and Friedrich Nietzsche put into the mouth of his prophet Zarathustra the sceptical words: "Follow thy personal character, and thou wilt become what thou art."

The tree still lives, sends out branches, produces flowers, matures fruit, but the antique vigour is lost, and the torpor of old age insidiously advances.

Will it reblossom in other lands, as it has done many times before?

Under the shade of its branches will it welcome the future Sons of Glory?

The future is closed, and is as inaccessible as the

Kaaba, but a presentiment warns us that the tree is on the point of changing its species, as it has matured its last seed.

The conditions of being, before birth and after death, are impenetrable mysteries to the human understanding.

Even the most fortunate, those whose intelligence has permitted them to master the sciences and adapt them to their theories, have failed in attaining their goal. And is it not true that to-day, three thousand years after the birth of Philosophy, we find ourselves, in confronting the great problem of the origin and end of man, on the verge of an unfathomable abyss?

The works of the ancient philosophers are still read, because they resemble so much modern philosophy; all of them make use of an hypothesis to explain the origin of the world and the destiny of the soul; therefore, all philosophers can consider themselves right, all of them can find readers and disciples, supporters and contradictors.

To read in chronological order the books written by these patient and studious men, is to trace the great evolution of thought: they only use the discoveries of science to strengthen with proofs subjective theories, originating in their own brain, which they consider true and infallible.

The philosopher, therefore, resembles the reformer and the prophet. But he is inferior to both, as metaphysics are useless to the greater part of the human race.

Philosophy may be indirectly useful when a man of action and genius, reading a philosophical work, is

inspired by one of the ideas contained in it, to accomplish a prodigy, but many noble thoughts and great actions have been suggested by very commonplace books.

The moral precepts, moreover, which we cull from the greatest philosophers are not their own creations, but the spontaneous fruit of the collective human conscience, and are the simplest maxims, expressed and repeated in a thousand fashions by their predecessors or contemporaries.

The hypothesis is the foundation upon which the philosophers construct their edifices—edifices which they adorn with syllogisms for friezes and pilasters. Between these edifices there is a great resemblance, the skeleton of the fabric is always the same. The arguments of Buchner and of Moleschott, who deny the intervention of God in nature, are as plausible as those of St Thomas Aquinas, who places God above everything, and as those of Spinoza, who finds God in everything.

All these men have created their systems out of their inner consciousness, and have merely made use of opportune discoveries of science to give the appearance of truth to what, in reality, are only sophisms. All these systems of Philosophy resemble a pyrotechnical display, which has its moments of splendour, dazzling us with stars, Catherine wheels, arabesques, and fiery serpents, and so gratifying our characteristically human love of new sensations. But of all this glitter there at last remains only the charred framework of the Catherine wheel and the arabesques.

The philosopher, as a man, is generally without heart or consideration for others; he is accustomed to interest himself in things only so far as they go to prove his theory; he pretends to look at the world from an altitude, and always through the prism of his system, and he speaks of human passions as of natural phenomena, from which he alone is absolutely exempt. He is like a general who, on a field of battle, looks upon his soldiers as the blind instruments of his will, with which he hopes to obtain the victory. The heart of the philosopher is a fossil that preserves the imprint of a past life, but which no human power can reanimate. In him thoughts alone are on the alert, thoughts which, when not disturbed by passion or enthusiasm, are a pale reflection of a sun about to extinguish itself.

You may ask, after considering the unattractive picture that I have drawn of the philosopher, why so many men bearing that name are revered as benefactors of humanity? But we should understand that the esteem in which we hold them, is not on account of their sterile philosophical discussions, but is due to some achievement, or work in which they have manifested passion and enthusiasm.

Although it is true that no philosopher has succeeded in solving the problem of the Origin and End, yet their books have been read, and are still read, with the greatest pleasure.

Why?

We turn voluntarily to their works, because we find there discussed those questions which every man asks

himself more than once, during the course of his existence.

What am I? Whence do I come? Why am I here? What will become of me after death? How often, in the silence of the night, in the moments between sleeping and waking, when we are all alone with our own conscience, these terrible questions arise. What is this spirit that lives and rules within us, that questions and responds? Reason that judges and governs, sentiments that are felt and expressed, fancy that creates, thoughts that conceive, memory that retains and reproduces—in a word, all the faculties of the soul, what are they?

The philosophers vainly discuss these problems, and from time to time, some delude us with the idea that they are partly solved. They allure us with aphorisms, which become to us dogmas of faith; but, woe betide us, if, after having nurtured these convictions, we dare to study the works of their opponents! Our new-born hopes and faith then fade and die, scepticism invades our souls, we are possessed with a fervour of study and inquiry, we search everywhere, but are never satisfied, and are, finally, obliged to admit that our most ardent attempts to solve the problem of life were futile.

But, although unsuccessful, the very efforts which we made have left their impress on the soul, have purified and improved it, because, after so much study, we are persuaded that man is but a frail molecule in a boundless Universe. And, if at the bottom of all research we find mystery, and if it is as inexorable as the crater of an active volcano, we cannot, on this account, deny the light from beyond; we may permit

ourselves to suppose that it exists, and that some day, with other eyes, we may see it. Philosophical works influence men to meditate, and render them capable of comprehending and admiring the marvels of the Universe.

A circumstance that sometimes reconciles us with philosophers is this: they often become prophets. They begin with sterile philosophy, deluded, like others, with the distant mirage of truth; later, by virtue of auto-suggestion, possessed of an idea which to them is the mirror of truth, and stimulated by an all-powerful phantasy, they create religions, believing themselves inspired by God, and they become prophets.

They do not for a moment stop to consider whether their theories are in harmony with natural phenomena, but, fired by great enthusiasm, they are possessed with one burning desire, an overpowering anxiety to make proselytes, to propagate their ideas, and have them accepted by the multitude.

Then the heart, which has remained for many years inert while the brain worked acutely, suddenly awakes from its torpor, the passions burst forth impetuously, like steam from open valves. The effect of this awakening is sometimes like that of sparks falling on a rick of straw: a sudden and destructive conflagration. The crowd rush towards the blaze, and prostrate themselves before the new prophet, as before a new Messiah. They accept his theories as gospel truth, not by virtue of science, but by force of passion, and his belief becomes the code of a new faith. It is in this way that religions have been born in

centuries past, when philosophers have become prophets.

Hence, philosophy has been able to benefit humanity.

The philosopher has not succeeded in solving the enigma that weighs like an incubus on human minds, but he has influenced men, and compelled them to think of the great mystery that surrounds them. He has deluded them with promises of future felicity, and kindled in their hearts the sacred fire of hope, which is the stimulus to all great actions. But times are changed, men no longer believe in miracles. An actual prophet would be considered mad, as David Lazzaretti was, and would be shut up in an asylum to be cured of his mania, while the crowd would not even deign to give him a look.

It is now generally allowed that certain transcendental problems cannot be solved, except, possibly, by the distant triumphs of spiritualistic theories, and thus, if one were to try to create a new metaphysical system, it would immediately fall to pieces. However, on account of long habit, we still call certain men of our day philosophers, who are really men of science, sociologists, or legislators.

It is undoubtedly for the best that we are unable to see into the future; that, after our most minute investigations, we find ourselves confronted with a mystery which we cannot solve. Were it otherwise, we should be the most miserable of creatures, because to know everything is equivalent to desiring nothing, and if we desired nothing, we should see leafless, rigid,

and dying, the most beautiful of all trees, the tree of the Ideal.

It is just this profound and inscrutable mystery, enveloping us like the atmosphere, that has originated and advanced the arts. Poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture, are aspirations towards something above us, beyond this life, born of the unquenchable thirst of the soul for the Infinite.

The cry is ever to know, to know more, as if we could be happy in omniscience! It is just because of the insoluble mystery of life that Humanity works, enjoys, and hopes.

The poet sings of love, and does not understand what it is; the painter and the sculptor seek the beautiful, but they know that they can imagine an ideal more beautiful than that which they can create; the musician is able to produce and intermingle melodies, but he knows that there are melodies far more beautiful than any he will ever compose. And yet all humanity, possessed by an irrepressible desire, vainly stretches out eager arms towards the unknown; from century to century history repeats itself, and although we work and study to perfect ourselves and to change the face of the earth, yet, concerning those questions which, centuries ago, the nomad shepherds of Asia vainly asked themselves, the men of to-day are still perplexed; and, notwithstanding the thousands of volumes that the philosophers have written, they are still obliged to repeat the aphorism of Socrates: "This alone I know, that I know nothing."

Among the numerous philosophers whom the world

has produced, I have chosen for our study the Greek Socrates, because I consider him the most exemplary of all philosophers, for, although he never wrote a book, his teachings have come down to the present day, and we can cite him as the wisest and most virtuous among the ancient Greeks.

In a more propitious age he would undoubtedly have become a great prophet, and would have converted the crowd to a new faith, because he possessed the power of persuading them by appealing to their reason, and, owing to the purity of his life, he could also teach by example.

Many books have been written about him, and among them there remain three, famous in the history of thought, because they show, as if reflected in a mirror, the imprint of his character, the wisdom of his researches, and the vastness of his genius. These three books are the "Memorabilia," by Xenophon, where we study the man in his relations to his family, and in his popular discussions; the "Phaedo" of Plato, where we read the last dialogue of Socrates with his disciples on the immortality of the soul; and the "Apology of Socrates," also written by Plato, where the philosopher defends himself before his judges, repelling the false and calumnious accusations made against him, and explaining his theories. In these three books we see the man, the philosopher, and the citizen.

Truly he was a sovereign creature. We rarely encounter a man like him—imperturbable, just, serene, inflexible with himself as with others; his every act

responsive to the law, as the echo is to the voice. But, inasmuch as he believed himself to be inspired by a God, his mission became similar to that of a prophet, and every day, with an unusual consistency, he admonished the Athenians in persuasive and powerful words.

Like an expert miracle-worker, he was skilful in treating every argument, skilful in disentangling the most knotted skeins, and, at the end of his perorations, there was always some wise counsel or maxim, which, even to-day, retains its virtue and force.

One must read the "Memorabilia" to realise the wisdom which this man brought to bear on every question; and how acute, subtle, and intelligent was his analysis in discourse. He taught, for the most part, a practical philosophy; he instructed the Commander-in-Chief how to regulate the cavalry; discussed with the artisans the matters of their business; with Theodoto, a woman of ill-fame, he spoke of the easiest manner of enticing men; he gave lessons in the arts of politeness and frugality; he advised as to the best way of travelling on foot; he talked with Ippias concerning justice, and with Eutidemus about temperance; and, after twenty centuries, we read as his precept in works of contemporary hygiene: "We must avoid those viands which induce us to eat when we are not hungry, and to drink when we are not thirsty, because they spoil the body, the stomach, and the soul."

Read in the "Memorabilia" the dialogue which he held with his son Lamprocles, because he discussed and found fault with his mother, and that with

Cherecrates, whom he exhorted and persuaded to make peace with his brother, and it will be easy to appreciate the power and style of the Socratic logic.

But what must he have been considered by the Greeks of twenty centuries ago, who did not tolerate censure, believing themselves possessed of all wisdom and culture? We know that Socrates, fearing no one, unhesitatingly admonished Alcibiades, who was one of the most influential citizens of Athens; reproved Eutidemus, the bibliomaniac, and Epigenes, who neglected his own body.

He wished, in fact, that men should carefully consider their own acts, should look within, and practise self-examination. "He who does not study himself, does not know the difference between his own property and that of others!" Thus he expressed himself in "Alcibiades Major."

He searched deeply into the thoughts of men, and was not only a great moralist, but also a great psychologist. What strikes us most forcibly, was his wonderful power of persuasion, which he exercised equally over ignorant and learned, swaying men of the most opposite characters. He appeared as great an educator, when he spoke with artisans and his familiars, as when he unfolded his philosophy in disputing with Xenophon, Euclid, Symmias, and Cebetes, who, by virtue of his teachings, became the largest planets in his system. Like the Star of Bethlehem, whose light attracted the wise men as well as the crowd to the miraculous stable, he, by the brilliancy of his genius, attracted to himself the most learned and intelligent of the Greeks. We know that when the war was raging most violently

in the Peloponnesus, Euclid travelled in great peril, and at great sacrifice, from Megara to Athens simply to listen to his discourses, and that Symmias and Cebes came from Thebes to delight in his eloquence.

He was everywhere: in the public parks, at the gymnasia, near the benches of the trapezists, in the shops, at the meetings of the sophists, and even in the houses of the courtesans, this prophetic man made, from time to time, his appearance; ugly, uncouth, poorly clad, but armed with a formidable dialectic and a lightning intuition. His method, seemingly very simple, was, in reality, most dangerous for those who were not fortified in their own convictions.

He probed his questioners, and, little by little, as they unfolded their souls to him, he proved the falsity of their ideas, and left them confused and deprived of all argument. It was then that the genius of Socrates manifested itself most clearly. Recommencing the discussion, he repeated the questions they had asked him, and answered them, one by one, proving to them, according to his idea, what was right and true. Thus his dialectic strategy tended to purify the intellect of many false conceits, and to prepare it to receive new science.

Like an artisan who takes to pieces the machinery of a watch, displacing the pivots, springs, and wheels, and, after having corrected their defects, puts them together as they originally were, so Socrates patiently searched the secret chambers of the soul, and after having caused disturbance and confusion, gave back to the troubled one absolute tranquillity, leaving him better and wiser than he was before.

He established moral science, which reached its apex in the works of Plato and Aristotle.

When Socrates died, after serenely drinking poison in compliance with his sentence, Aristotle was not born, and Plato was about thirty years old. After this terrible drama, the disciples, who survived him, passed their lives in spreading the doctrines of the master, Plato, on account of his great learning, proving the most efficient among them.

Picture the young Aristotle, athirst for knowledge, listening with rapt attention to the maxims of Socrates! When Plato, overcome by his memories, spoke of the master and of his end, the young man passed into a state of exaltation when there arose before him the gigantic figure of the philosopher, whom he had not had the privilege of knowing, but whom he considered as a sovereign innovator.

This indeed was the great merit of Socrates: he was an innovator, and the innovators in the hierarchy of genius always rank above the others, for they have discerned light, where for their contemporaries there was only thick darkness; they have been the first to hear the gurgling of the spring in the bowels of the earth, and to point it out to their fellow-men as the fountain at which they might quench their thirst. For this reason, Socrates, who has left no writings, is greater than Plato; Darwin than Haeckel; Volta than Edison and Thompson; and Columbus than Vasco da Gama, Stanley, and Nansen.

The work of the innovator resembles a creative act, because the revelation of a mystery, the solution of a problem, represents for humanity a new state of things,

a change in the physical and moral world, in fine, a turning of the course of civilization from the wrong road, and a consequent acceleration of its progress.

Socrates was really an innovator, because he was the first man who searched within himself to discover the reasons for the sentiments which animated and disturbed him. "Know thyself": this was the sentiment that he repeated to his disciples, this the counsel that he diffused freely, being convinced of its truth. He made a path for himself, a path that had never been trodden by others, and with his words, and still more by his example, he pointed out to posterity the distant goal. The continual impulse that forced him to philosophize, the constant unrest that never abandons the man of genius, before he has achieved the mission to which he feels himself called, were to him as the monitory voice of an unknown God, by whom he had been chosen as the regenerator of his race: "And, as I affirm, it has been ordered me by God to do this, and by way of oracles, and by way of dreams, and by other ways by which, in ancient times, the divine will directed a man to do anything. This, O Athenians! is the truth, and easily demonstrated."

He, therefore, imagined himself an instrument of Divine Will, and his obedience to this inward voice was unquestioning and complete.

And so we may cite him among the great reformers—with Confucius, Christ, Mahomet, and Luther. The thirty days, decreed by the tribunal to elapse between his sentence and his death, were days of sublime agony, which Greece records in the most beautiful and imperishable pages of her history.

But the greater number of his contemporaries did not, and could not, comprehend him. Seeing him wandering in the streets all day, intent only on discussing and questioning, they considered him almost a madman possessed of a fixed idea, and, as they passed, regarded him with looks of compassion; and it was, perhaps, this, the opinion of the majority, that caused theatre-going Athenians to applaud the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, where the philosopher is brought on the stage in a basket,¹ and is contemptuously derided. But, if the ignorant and silly crowd ridiculed him, he was recompensed for their slights by a company of illustrious men, who, to-day, are considered among the wisest and noblest of humanity. They had faith in his genius, and, by their devoted friendship, atoned to him for the disbelief of the crowd.

Pure and incorruptible as a diamond, he continued on his way, never arrested by an obstacle or doubt, never, for an instant, perplexed. Before the tribunal which accused him, he spake thus, with the firmness of one who possessed the conviction of being in the right: "If you absolve me on condition that I will not occupy myself with research and philosophy, if, as I have said, you absolve me on that condition, I will say to you, O Athenians, I esteem and love you, but I will obey God before you."

Giordano Bruno, twenty centuries after, hurled at his judges a terrible admonition, and Socrates in his "Apology," burst out with this famous prediction: "I say to all of you who are killing me, that, shortly after my death, you will succumb to a fate more severe

¹ Act I. Scene 3.

than that to which you have condemned me, for, if you believe by killing men you will prevent others from blaming and condemning those who do not live rightly, you are in the wrong."

Socrates had no masters ; he formed a doctrine of his own, which he desired to become famous. He was an insatiable searcher for knowledge, gifted with unusual perspicacity. His thought was able to perceive the subtleness and discord of the universe ; he penetrated into the essence of being, and where others found absolute unity, he discovered infinite variety. Like the sophists, he was a great demolisher, but he destroyed only worthless ruins, which did not even possess the virtue of antiquity, and he indicated to posterity the place of their fall as the site of a future structure.

What was his manner of philosophizing ?

He asked his disciples : What is Good, Beauty, Honesty, Justice, Gratitude ? receiving uncertain and insufficient replies. He received and explained their definitions, discussed them, compared their different views, tested them repeatedly, and at length arrived at the true significance of the terms he had submitted to them.

Where he could not construct, he contented himself with demolishing, hoping that others after him would rebuild. Has not this analytical method assisted science in its researches ? The scientist also proceeds by way of elimination to illumination.

The chemist who wishes to discover the elements of which a substance is composed, submits it to a variety of tests, and at first finds out those which it does not contain.

Socrates the moralist is a man of great intelligence, but Socrates the psychologist is a sovereign genius.

If we wish to discover the creator of the scientific method, we must necessarily go back to Socrates.

Because of this, we consider him the equal of Galileo. The Greek, by means of questions, investigations, and reasonings, attempted to discover the laws of moral force, and to define vice and virtue; the Italian, by way of experiment, proof, and comparison, attempted to discover the laws of physical force.

Across the gulf of twenty centuries, these two men clasp hands as creators; the one, of the scientific method; the other, of the experimental method.

But it is especially in his manner of meeting death that the character of Socrates excites our greatest interest; it is in the "Phaedo" and not in the "Apology," nor in the "Memorabilia," that we find the man at the height of his glory. The thirty days between the going and coming of the "Theoris" may be justly compared to the last days of Christ, and, strictly speaking, the advantage of the comparison is with Socrates, who remained serene and imperturbable even to the last, while the great Martyr of Golgotha, before submitting to the last agony, let this desperate supplication escape: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."¹

When we read in the "Phaedo" the conversation between Socrates and his disciples, on the day of his

¹ The comparison between Christ and Socrates might be considered unjust, for Christ added to his desperate supplication: "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Moreover, the agony of Christ must have been greater than that of Socrates. —(*Adapter's note*).

death, and reflect that he who spoke with such fervour of the immortality of the soul was on the point of crossing the dark river, we are overcome by the beauty of what was for centuries considered the grandest book in the world.

When we read the "Phaedo" for the first time, we are most moved by the stoical grandeur of the drama or tragedy (as one may call it); our admiration for the hero becomes greater and greater, almost immeasurable, as we arrive at the supreme act, and when the philosopher has taken the poison, and Apollodorus and Phedo, overpowered by sorrow and compassion, burst into tears, we also, after twenty-four tragic centuries, feel our hearts beat loudly within us, as if the death of Socrates was an episode of yesterday, as though we were Symmias or Cebes, Crito or Hermogenes. The Platonic dialogue is not only a magnificent philosophical essay, but a work of art, a drama true and living, and intensely real, because it was written with the love of a son and the intellect of a disciple.

Let us now attempt to recall the acts of this memorable day.

After the condemnation, Socrates remained thirty days expecting death. It was necessary to await the return of the ship sent to Delos, as during the time of its absence it was not lawful to execute death-sentences. The day before the vessel was expected to return, Crito, who was one of the favourite disciples of Socrates, went early in the morning to visit the philosopher in his prison, to induce him to escape by flight from his unjust doom; and this affectionate colloquy we read in "Crito," which is also one of the Platonic dialogues.

Socrates disdainfully refused the generous offer, and, philosophizing as usual, demonstrated to Crito the necessity of obedience to law.

The morning after, the ship anchored, and Socrates had to die. At an early hour, his friends gathered together before the prison awaiting the opening of its door, but waited longer than usual, because the Eleven had to announce to Socrates that his last day had arrived. When the door was opened, the disciples entered solemnly and silently, as do the faithful who accompany a sacrament.

Socrates had been freed from the chains with which he had been bound, and his wife Xantippe and his sons were with him. The woman was weeping, and so much overcome by the thought of the pending misfortune, that Socrates begged Crito to conduct her to the door and try to comfort her.

When he was alone with his disciples, Socrates began to rub his limbs where they had been lacerated by the cords, and then spoke of the origin of joy and sorrow, which are natural neighbours, the one ending where the other begins, as though they were different manifestations of the same sensation.

Next he discussed the immortality of the soul, and, with absolute conviction and unequalled clearness of expression, he proved to his hearers that the human soul is incorruptible and immortal, and that, after death, it will enjoy an existence gladder, wiser, and more virtuous than its life on earth.

“ I comfort myself with the assurance that something remains of that which dies, that, in all ages, it has been said, the good shall be better off than the bad.”

In this phrase, at once solemn and prophetic, do we not find the essence of the Christian dogma ?

“The soul, the invisible substance, passes after death to . . . a noble, pure, invisible sphere, or rather toward the good and wise God, to whom, if he pleases, my soul will soon journey. Is it possible that such a soul, endowed with such a nature, shall perish and disappear, so soon as it is liberated from the body, as many say ? It is impossible that this will happen, my dear Simmias and Cebes ; it is easier to believe that, purified from the body, the soul departs without carrying with it anything corporal, since during life it had no communication or sympathy with things of the body, but, on the contrary, despised them, and fled from them, always retiring within itself to meditate. Thus, the truest philosopher, voluntarily and naturally, meditates on death.”

Reading these lines, does it not seem that we are listening to Marcus Aurelius, in his “Meditations,” which is a Christian book written by a pagan ? Do we not hear in these phrases of Socrates the first announcement of the coming of Christ ?

The oftener we read the Platonic dialogues, the more strongly we are convinced that this man possessed all the gifts of a great prophet, but was born in a period unpropitious to religious reform.

When, on the contrary, Christ appeared, less profound than Socrates, but, undoubtedly, more imaginative and enthusiastic, the moment was favourable to the great mission to which the Nazarene felt himself called. Paganism, which had ruled so long, was exhausted, and unable to fill the great void in the sceptical conscience,

and satisfy the thirst for ideality. Men felt the need of a religion of love, which appealed more to the heart than the intellect, which in some manner, even though it were by means of a beautiful fiction, would justify human grief, and revive the hope of a future life. Christ appeared, therefore, as the man designed to work the miracle, and his cruel death, and the terrible persecutions to which the early Christians were subjected, were the circumstances necessary to the triumph of Christianity, and by virtue of these, it was propagated in the world, overthrowing from their pedestals the gods of evil and falsehood.

But, as Socrates, four centuries before Christ, had preached the ideas which afterwards became Christian maxims, we must recognise in him a remote precursor of Christianity, as was also Marcus Aurelius, who wrote in his "Meditations" a great many of those sentences that Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas repeated later with the enthusiasm of faith.

And Socrates, who serenely and stoically died, in the conviction that he was passing to a better life, and not delaying for a moment the drinking of the fatal draught, lest he should disobey the law, was as great as Christ who endured scourging and crucifixion for the triumph of the cause to which he had devoted himself.

After reading the "Phaedo" for the first time, and experiencing the natural commotion of soul which this drama excites, we ask ourselves if the imperturbability of Socrates, before death, did not arise from that inward resistance to physical and moral suffering that specialists in psychology call "anæsthesia"? We recall the

execution of Pranzini and of Sellier, which were memorable for the indifference manifested by the condemned, and we know that there have been martyrs, who, dying for their faith, were able by the power of auto-suggestion to exhort and pray and manifest joy in the midst of their sufferings. If we believe that Socrates was able to suspend his consciousness of pain by auto-suggestion, our admiration for the stoicism displayed by him in the hour of death, is diminished, because we must suppose it to have cost him less courageous effort than has been credited to him.

But on a re-perusal and a maturer study of the "Phaedo," the philosopher reappears before us deprived of none of his luminous grandeur. We then comprehend that the pain of death was supported with unequalled stoicism, not because of the victim's innate insensibility, but by reason of his absolute conviction that there awaited him beyond the tomb another life, promised by the mysterious voice which spoke in his soul.

In the "Apology," Socrates displays the most exquisite tenderness of soul when he speaks to the judges of his children and family; and in the "Phaedo" he lovingly comforts the curly-headed disciple who bitterly laments his approaching death. That his stoicism was the result of his education is very plainly displayed in his dialogues, and, if we read them attentively, we shall see that Socrates was always anxious to discuss with his disciples the immortality of the soul, removing their objections, quieting their doubts, even when he knew that his life was near its end, and felt the bitterness of parting. The fervour with which he spoke proved

this; but his soul was able to master itself, and look death calmly in the face. Advised by Crito not to heat himself too much in discussion, as the poison would then be more painful in its effects, this being the advice of the man who was to administer it to him, Socrates kept quiet for a few moments, and then said: "Do not pay attention to him, let him do his duty, and, if necessary, let him give the poison two or three times."

Remember that the man who said this was really on the point of death, that he was about to swallow the poison, so was fully able to appreciate the value of the words he pronounced with such serenity.

It was near sunset when Socrates, accompanied by Crito, retired to the bathroom. He remained there a long time, bathing himself with care, in order to save the women the disagreeable necessity of doing so after his death. His sons were then brought to him; two were yet young, but the other was grown; there came also his servants. He spoke to them all in the presence of Crito, and then sent them away, and returned to his disciples just as the sun was setting, and the moment had arrived to drink the poison.

In this solemn hour, Socrates was as tranquil and serene as though about to set out on a voyage of pleasure towards a country that he had for a long time desired to visit. The disciples, with difficulty restraining their tears, hung on his words, studying him attentively, as if to imprint on their memory his last utterances, and the last expression of his benevolent face.

“But I do not think,” said Crito, “that the sun is yet set, and I know that others have taken the poison after it was ordered them, dining luxuriously and quietly, drinking deeply, and sometimes enjoying the company of their loved ones. Therefore, do not be in too great haste; there is yet time.”

But Socrates, regarding his disciple with his great protruding eyes, smiled and replied: “The others were right to do what you say they did, for they hoped to gain something by so doing; but I have no right to do so, for I do not believe that I shall gain anything. Were I to drink the poison a little later, it would make me ridiculous in my own eyes, as it would seem as though I were covetous of a few moments more of life, and avaricious of that of which naught remains to me.”

These words were pronounced by a man in the moment preceding his last agony, a man in the full glory of health and vigour. They should remain in our memory as examples of almost unparalleled courage.

With a tranquil and dignified gesture, Socrates emptied the fatal cup as if it contained a love-philter, and when he saw Phedo and Apollodorus burst into tears, this marvellous man, who already felt the icy embrace of Death, evinced once more the imperturbability of his soul, the unrivalled strength of his character. “Why do you act thus, most admirable of men? It was just on this account that I sent away the women, for I did not wish to see them do what you are doing. I have learnt that one should leave this life willingly and joyfully. Tranquillize yourselves at this moment, and endure.”

A little after, as the extremities began to get cold, he

lay on the bed. The chill of death was already creeping up to his heart. He uttered then his last words: "O Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius; give it to him yourself, and do not forget."

After this, he remained quiet for some moments, then he shuddered, his eyes fixed and turned upwards—he was dead!

"On n'entendait autour ni plainte ni soupir,
C'est ainsi qu'il mourut, si c'était là mourir!"

—LAMARTINE.

The sun had sunk beneath the horizon, the twilight deepened around the prison, enveloping everything and every one in its shadowy light. The disciples quietly left the fatal prison, almost without emotion, stunned by their great grief. Meanwhile, the sad news was spread over the city, and was received with unusual indignation.

Twenty-four centuries have passed since the death of Socrates, and not an atom of his body remains. In the meantime, the world has undergone many changes; nations and civilizations have been born, and have disappeared, but the war against ignorance continues ever, and spurs on science in its researches. It remains always unsolved—the inscrutable mystery of the beginning and end, and becomes even more grave and terrible as humanity grows more wise and studious.

To-day, before the corpse of a man, we stand dismayed, thinking of the fate of the soul that is gone, of the great enigma beyond the tomb.

Astronomy, which has exposed to us the natural

phenomena in the heavens, and histology, which has revealed the existence of microbes, have contributed to make this mystery more frightful.

Science, which has discovered the smallest and strangest things, has not, so far, cast a ray of light on the hereafter, but has, in fact, obscured the faint glimmer that the ancients believed they had discovered; because the telescope and the microscope have so enlarged the confines of the universe that we see the immeasurable in the heavens, and the infinite on the earth. Thus man, wiser and more cultivated than formerly, is more conscious of his ignorance, and recognises his powerlessness to solve the impossible problem.

Contemporaneous philosophy renounces the attempt of a theoretical research of the Absolute or the Unknown.

It admits that we can obtain science only from Phenomena, it confesses that human beings can possess only a relative knowledge, and for this reason alone it advises us not to occupy ourselves with the Unknowable, or that which is beyond human intelligence. It is, therefore, a philosophy that studies facts, with the hope of arriving at a universal and synthetic principle; it is the analysis of those subjects which one can examine with the aid of science, without losing himself in hypothetical abstractions.

At one time, a philosopher formulated a theory, and sought to apply it to all natural phenomena, in order to create his system; to-day, on the contrary, he does exactly the opposite. First, he studies the phenomenon, then the laws that have produced it, and from these

facts he seeks to deduce a theory. In the philosophy of the past centuries, imagination created the hypothesis which the philosopher made the starting-point of his reasoning; in the contemporaneous philosophy, a general synthesis is gradually reached by the experimental scientific method.

Modern philosophy admits its limitations: that is its great merit. The beginning and the end are impenetrable mysteries; concerning them, all dispute is admittedly futile.

Future philosophy will be the integration of science, a species of new, lofty, and scientific poetry, which will find an expression for mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology, in one unique, irrefutable principle. Pursuing this road, philosophy will render great benefits to humanity, and some day, perhaps, will give birth to a large and vigorous synthesis, uniting science with the moral and religious aspirations of humanity.

If such be the future evolution of philosophy, the ancient tree of knowledge will blossom again in centuries to come, and confidently promise to posterity new and wholesome fruit, and cool and lasting shade.

CHAPTER V

THE SCIENTIST

IN beginning this Chapter we might say with Horace: "Hoc erat in votis." Our intention is to pay just tribute to those mighty giants of thought, who have attained to the highest throne in the hierarchy of Genius, and who are, in very truth, the direct emanations of Divinity.

Scientific genius is inexhaustible, and its scope of action is as boundless as the universe. Painting and sculpture, poetry and music, abound in repetitions. All four repeat themselves, and the first three copy each other alternately as well. The progress of their acts may be rapid for a while, but there is always a possibility that they will turn back only to take the same path once more.

Science, on the contrary, does not reproduce what has been done before, and does not turn back, but progresses toward the highest goal, and possesses the power of creating, in the heart of the world, a *new* world, which is the fruit of its own discoveries.

Art can create wonderful beauties, but science works miracles.

Science can upset the physical and moral world at

the same time, and this fact is freshly demonstrated from century to century. Steam and electricity have already modified the surface of the earth; universal gravitation and the telescope have revealed the Infinite, and dissipated ancient metaphysical ideas. The air-ship and the submarine boat will make a new revolution in the physical world; the proof of the inhabitability of other planets, and the spiritualistic laws to be formulated in the future, will overthrow, once again, the moral world. Scientific genius is, therefore, the sovereign master of beings and of things, and the autocrat of humanity. No obstacle can arrest its progress; its soundings have explored the depths of the ocean, and its telescopes have penetrated the heavens: we find it everywhere, as universal as force and matter.

It demonstrates its creative faculty in a manner absolutely new, because it conquers the natural forces, and, bending them to its own will, wrests from them their greatest benefits.

The discovery of a new law is a creation for those who are ignorant of it, and the invention of an instrument or machine for utilising physical force is also a creation, because it brings into the world another element which modifies its aspects and customs. We may, therefore, say that God created the world, but that science has remade it; that God formed man, but that science has made man master of the forces created by God.

Art can excite, or weaken passion, by exercising an influence exclusively sentimental; science, on the contrary, acts on the heart and the intellect, and can

therefore, by a single discovery, gradually modify the physical constitution of man himself.

The machine that is a substitute for manual labour tends to weaken and atrophise certain muscles of the body. But the constant use of delicate instruments develops a more acute power of perception.

Science is like a conqueror who drags the arts behind his car as vanquished and submissive monarchs. Which are the books, statues, pictures, and music most celebrated to-day? Those which reveal the scientific method, those in which the analysis is profound, subtle, and absolutely sincere.

The works of Zola and D'Annunzio, Tolstoi and Dostoieffsky, Ibsen and Freytag, demonstrate in the domain of letters the union between literature and science.

Jacques Lantier in the "Bête Humaine," Tullo Hermil in the "Innocente," Count Wronski in "Anna Karenin," Raskolnikow in "Crime and Punishment," Oswald Alving in "Ghosts," Schröter in "Soll und Haben," are marvellous scientific creations.

Contemporary music, pictures, and statues also call science to their aid, recognising in it their polar star, and turning toward it, as the needle turns to the pole.

The artist who wishes to depict a scene of murder, does not choose at random any brutal face to represent the assassin, but visits the prisons to find the type of a true criminal, or studies criminal anthropology. A sculptor who wishes to symbolise passion consults medical books, or a treatise on physiognomical mimicry. A musician, who wishes to write an opera, studies the

customs and local colour of the time and place in which the plot is laid, and will adopt in his observations the scientific method in order to attain the greatest artistic effects.

Literature and art, therefore, recognise the supremacy of science, and not only consider it as their faithful counsellor, but vie with each other in celebrating it with pen, brush, chisel and burin.

Hence such productions as Vincenzo Monti's ode, "To Montgolfier"; Malfilâtre's poem, "The Sun in the midst of the Planets"; "The Discovery of Printing," by Legouvé; "Im Eisenbahnhof," by Justinus Kerner; the "Ode of the Animalcule," by Richard Savage. Science receives further tribute when Niccolò Barabino paints Volta at the moment in which the idea of the electric pile dawned in his mind; when Giulio Monteverde models his "Genius of Franklin"; when Sébastien Leclerc etches his famous engraving of the "Académie des Sciences"; when Alberto Franchetti writes his opera, "Cristoforo Colombo," and Luigi Manzotti composes his choregraphic hymn to science in "Excelsior."

Science triumphs; science, born after art, has conquered the world; it has penetrated everywhere, from the bowels of the earth into the heights of heaven, studying beings and things, from the greatest to the smallest, the visible and the invisible.

Its power is appalling, its future beyond all imagination; it can truthfully promise to man the powers of a God.

It is, therefore, reasonable to investigate the exceptional gifts by which the scientist arrives at the

discovery of a law, or the invention of an instrument, and to attempt an analysis of the mind of this giant, who ignores all obstacles and disdains all barriers.

Scientific genius is creative with its inventions; it brings into the world new elements; with its discoveries, it reveals truths which were before unknown.

The principal gifts of the man of scientific genius, those that enable him to work miracles, are the power of observation and an innate curiosity. These two qualities are absolutely necessary to the scientist; they are the emblems of his genius, the vital centre of his intellect.

The writer and the artist, even if they are not profound observers, succeed sometimes in attaining to great heights; their imagination and intuition now and then produce masterpieces. Before criminal anthropology was thought of, Shakespeare personified in Hamlet the morally insane and the genius of Goldoni depicted in Lelio the born liar.

The scientist, on the contrary, if not a profound, subtle, and scrupulous observer, is a miserable failure in the domain of his own profession.

Put a painter before a beautiful sunset, and by due observance of the laws of perspective, he will reproduce it, in its aspect, form, and colouring, with the glowing sun, the rose-tinted clouds, the distant mountains and landscapes. Hence such a masterpiece as a picture of Salvator Rosa, or of Jacob Ruysdael.

The same view will inspire the musician with melancholy; he will imitate the sighing of the wind, the song of the birds, and will also produce a master-

piece, as the "Abendlied" of Schumann, or the Sixth Symphony, in F major, of Beethoven.

The writer will unite in a book or poem the description of what the artist saw and the musician heard, and combining sound and colour, give us such a poem as the "Soleil Couchant" in the "Feuilles d'Automne" of Victor Hugo.

But the scientist surpasses them all, for he is not content with superficial observation. He penetrates into unsounded depths, studies the conformation of the sun, the structure of mountains, the density of clouds, the life of plants, the organs of insects, the flight of birds, the composition of water, and, before this landscape, he produces such a pre-eminent masterpiece as the *Cosmos* of Alexander von Humboldt.

When artists or writers devote themselves to profound analysis, they usurp unconsciously the domains of science; they become scientists, and if they are subtle and scrupulous observers, they attain the summit of greatness; in science and art, as did Leonardo da Vinci; or in science and letters, as did Wolfgang Goethe.

The greatest spirit of observation united to the talent for abstract mathematics produces the scientific lawgiver, such as Kepler, who discovered the three great laws of planetary movement; Pascal, who demonstrated the principles of electrostatics; Leibnitz, who invented the differential calculus; Ohm, who discovered the fundamental laws of continuous currents; Mariette, who proved the principle of the compressibility of gas; Galileo Ferraris, who discovered the theory of rotating magnets.

The greatest spirit of observation united with the practical experience of the mechanic, gives us the scientific inventor, such as Jacquard, who designed the loom; Watt, who perfected Newcomen's machine; Stephenson, who constructed the first locomotive; Graham Bell, to whom we owe the telephone; and Edison, to whom we owe the phonograph.

But in science there are relative degrees of greatness as there are in the arts which give us, for example, Teniers and Rembrandt, Cellini and Michael Angelo, Tennyson and Byron, Mendelssohn and Beethoven. In science we have the pre-eminence which results from the union of the scientific lawgiver and scientific inventor, in one person, as in the case of Galileo, who discovered the laws of the pendulum, and invented the telescope; Newton, who discovered the laws of gravitation, and invented the catadioptric telescope; and Helmholtz, who demonstrated the conservation of energy, and invented the ophthalmoscope.

The scientist's curiosity is the spur that induces him to act; it is a spirit of unrest of which he never rids himself during life.

When we see in a child an excessive curiosity, we are able positively to predict that he possesses the germ of scientific genius, and that it will be as impossible for him to free himself from this overpowering stimulus as to escape from illness and death.

This excessive curiosity, which we characterise by the noble phrase "thirst for knowledge," is the first impulse that develops in a man the power of observation and makes of him a scientist,

The man of science, while yet a child, demonstrates suddenly the inborn faculty that especially distinguishes him. He wishes to see everything, to touch everything, but does not act like other children, who destroy their toys from an inborn destructive atavism; the future man of science, smashing his pots and pans, is lost in ecstasy, listening to the different sounds he produces, and having taken a plaything to pieces, proceeds carefully and thoughtfully to see how it was made, evincing thus a curiosity not common to ordinary children, since it is the gift of observation in embryo. That child, when a man, will see what others have never been able to see; will discover that which before him was unknown.

It is on account of this continuous intensity of thought, inseparable from him even in sleep, during which he has been known to solve a problem or invent a machine, that the scientist represents the most active and indefatigable mind in the hierarchy of genius. His brain knows no more rest than his heart, because curiosity spurs him on, circulating in his brain with his blood.

Scientific genius lives therefore in a world of its own, where it is ever working and searching for new truths.

By the specialization of sciences, and with the multiplication of knowledge, the scientist will also become a specialist. He will no longer be a great naturalist, a celebrated physician, but he will demonstrate the power of his genius, in one branch alone, of the subject he has chosen, and will be either botanist or zoologist, a lung specialist or oculist,

Universal geniuses, acquainted with all sciences, men like Pascal and Leibnitz, are unknown to-day; and they are as impossible to find as the original manuscript of the "Divina Commedia," because the domains of science have become too immense for one human mind to apprehend them all.

A man of genius dedicating himself to scientific studies is a direct benefactor of society, but, notwithstanding his great gifts, he is generally inclined to solitude, and often lives like a hermit, contenting himself with the interior joys that science alone can give him.

The artist, on the contrary, is a social being; he is obliged to live among men, in order to excite his inspiration and to be able to conceive his masterpieces. The scientist is self-concentrated: the workshop, the observatory, and the laboratory are his world.

Unfortunate is the man of science who possesses a great vivacity of imagination; he will become a mere dispenser of the ideas of others, like Camille Flammarion, Louis Figuier, Carus Sterne, Michele Lessona, and Zimmermann.

There is an abyss between art and science, because their modes of procedure are exactly opposed: the masterpieces of the one are produced through excess of the imaginative faculty, those of the other by a process of strict reasoning.

Art is more popular than science, because it rules over the sentiments, and because all may enjoy it without possessing extraordinary culture. Science does not afford much pleasure to the public; it can

only excite admiration, which is a sentiment more intense, more rare, and by no means universal.

Art makes one weep with Goethe's "Werther" and for the younger Dumas' "Dame aux Camélias"; it makes one laugh at Boccaccio's tenth tale in the third Day of the "Decamerone," and over Carlo Porta's "Desgrazi de Giovannin Bongee"; or fills one with terror at Shakespeare's "Macbeth." One grows hot with warlike ardour in listening to Rouget de Lisle's "Marseillaise," or the Rakotzky March in the "Damnation de Faust," of Berlioz. One is moved at Repine's painting, "The Duel," or Vincenzo Vela's "Last Days of Napoleon the First." Science, however, has nothing in common with great sentimental excitement, with the public which weeps and laughs, which is depressed or exhilarated. Shut up within herself, like Minerva in her armour, she excites admiration and gives intellectual, though not sentimental, pleasure.

But the scientist, when he discovers a new law or invents a new instrument, is filled with a double joy.

Who can express, who can imagine the quiet emotion experienced by Galileo when he saw the Medicean planets; of Volta, when he drew the first spark from the pile? It is an internal joy that satisfies the scientist and compensates him for his labour; it is a joy that is born and dies with him.

Scientists do not seek the approval of the multitude, who admire discoveries only when there is a possibility of practically applying them. The inventor puts the acquisition of knowledge above industrial utility.

Hence it often happens that an able and ingenious man gets possession of a new theory, and acting on it, reaps the benefit of it instead of the inventor. Sometimes he reaps the fame as well.

Guglielmo Marconi, whose recent success in wireless telegraphy across the Atlantic is the first great discovery of the new century, is better known to-day than Herz and Righi, by whose studies his invention was made possible; Edison has given his name to the electric incandescent lamp, but it was Davy's celebrated experiment that suggested its construction.

Let us imagine, if possible, the state of mind of the scientist at the moment in which he invents or discovers that which makes him immortal. Did you ever try to recall a forgotten name? You will remember with what intensity of thought you applied yourself, hoping to succeed, but your efforts were vain, the name always escaped you, and, finally, with a certain irritation against yourself, you gave up the attempt. But, some time after, the long-sought-for name suddenly came to your mind, without any apparent effort; you know, however, that this circumstance is the natural consequence of the effort of memory already made.

The inspirations of a man of science are similar to these phenomena of memory; they are the unconscious result of repeated meditation on the same subject.

Multiply a thousand times the pleasure you experienced in being able to recall the lost name, and you may possibly fathom the joy of the scientist who has accomplished a miracle. Scientific discoveries are never

fortuitous events, even when they appear to be suggested by casual phenomena.

Even seemingly accidental discoveries are the direct consequence of preceding phenomena and intensity of thought; thus some fact, observed with indifference by ordinary eyes, provokes a creative act from the man of genius, because it excites in him some sudden association of ideas. Thus is Nature united with Genius, and so it happens that the scientist is fecundated by casual facts in a manner which recalls the fecundation of anemophilous plants, but in his case, instead of a new variety of coniferæ, we have a new discovery.

Vincenzo Possenti's bronze lamp suggested to Galileo the isochronism of the pendulum; a falling apple gave Newton the idea of universal gravitation; a soap-bubble revealed to Young his principle of interferences in the undulatory theory of light; a spider's slender web taught Samuel Brown how to construct the suspension bridge; and the wriggings of a fish in a pond suggested to Savage the application of screw-propellers to steamships.

Rarely does a discovery burst on the mind of the scientist all in one piece; it requires a succession of efforts to perfect it, but the creative act is the immediate consequence of an improvised association of ideas.

The discovery of the principle on which Galileo Ferraris founded recently (in 1885) his theory of the rotation of magnets is an example of this phenomenon.¹

¹ See R. Arnò, Commemoration of Galileo Ferraris, in "Acts of the Italian Electrotecnic Association," Milan, vol. i. 1898.

Similarly we see James Watt perfecting the steam-engine by the invention of the condensator, the conic pendulum, and the articulated parallelogram; Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley discovering a number of similarities between man and the animals, to accumulate proofs for their theory of the transformation of species.

The principal gift of scientific genius is, therefore, an extraordinarily observant spirit, a spirit which manifests itself under the continual stimulus of curiosity.

Scientific genius, then, to arrive at any discovery or invention, accomplishes a creative act, by means of an improvised association of ideas.

Notwithstanding my sincere love of art, I am convinced that science is more useful than art, that the scientist has in all ages surpassed poet, painter, and musician; and my ideal genius has always been the scientific lawgiver. Whenever I witness, at the performance of a celebrated comedy, or melodrama, the delirium of the applauding crowd, whenever I read, on the face of the author the satisfaction that praise affords him, I think of the hundreds of sovereign beings who, in the quiet of their laboratories have, by unceasing research, blessed humanity with the most wonderful discoveries, without ever tasting the joy of public approval.

Recognising in all the necessities and luxuries of life the trace of scientific genius, I unhesitatingly acknowledge it as the greatest factor of civilization, as the religion of the future.

The world judges the value of science by its practical application, and only when industry possesses itself of

these discoveries do the multitude render it just praise, as, for example, was rendered to the first balloon of Montgolfier, the locomotive of Stephenson, the boat of Fulton, the phonograph of Edison, and the apparatus for utilising Rontgen rays; but the industrial value of these inventions is far inferior to the immense heritage of scientific knowledge which is maturing the germ of future inventions.

This patrimony, jealously guarded in books full of formulas and cabalistic signs, is the property of a few students. The world does not appreciate it; hence, many men of genius who have contributed to increase this treasure, do not enjoy the fame which belongs to them of right as true benefactors of humanity.

Omnipotent as light, powerful as electricity, immeasurable as space, scientific genius dominates the earth, and prepares, for future generations, peace and universal blessing.

Galileo Galilei was the first man who, with the aid of lenses, turned his eyes toward the heavens, discovering the spots on the sun, the mountains of the moon, the phases of Venus, the satellites of Jupiter,—the first man whom God permitted to explore the infinite.

This fact should be enough to render Galileo immortal, like those heroes of antiquity who were designed from their birth to accomplish miracles.

Picture the man who with mortal eyes penetrated for the first time into the immensity of space; the first man who felt the earth rotate, and was able to say, "I am a citizen of the universe!" a man who could discover a fact which is so little self-evident that it

would sound like a fable if its certainty was not unquestionable.

We can well understand the persecution to which Galileo was subjected, the insults of the Peripatetics, the defamations of Cesare Cremonino. His contemporaries undoubtedly considered his discovery superhuman and incredible, and naturally enough took him for an impostor.

Only at this epoch, three centuries from that memorable day, can we rightly value the importance of his revelation. Infinity, closed and inaccessible for many centuries, was suddenly unveiled to the eyes of one who possessed the culture and the genius to comprehend and expound it; who had the courage to rise up against everything in order to demolish the formidable past.

The virtue of the stars, the incorruptibility of the heavens, considered by all as dogmas of faith, were henceforth to be relegated to the domain of legend; and the Ptolemaic system, celebrated in the *Almagest*, crumbled as if by a sudden upheaval of the earth.

It is impossible to read the "Nuncius Sidereus" of Galileo without experiencing a great spiritual excitement.

After making his discovery, Galileo was impatient to publish it; he wished all the world to know his great news. "Nuncius Sidereus" was written in less than two months, and written in Latin so that all the learned men of Europe might understand it. He spoke as a prophet who has tasted the grace of revelation; his language was as magniloquent as that of Moses descending from Sinai, after having received the tables of the Law. "Sidereus Nuncius!" the title of the

book, is as fatidical as a prophecy and stern as an admonition. He, in fact, announced to men that the crystal heavens had been broken to pieces; that the sun and moon had revealed their surface; that he had seen thousands of new stars shining silently in space; and that suns and planets, which had been deemed immovable, whirled through space. The earth, supposed until then to be the centre of all systems, was shown by him to be in fact but a grain of dust in the celestial whirlwind, an insignificant molecule in the boundless universe.

This little book of twenty-eight pages, printed in Venice by Tommaso Baglioni, rich as it is in stupendous announcements, concludes by promising greater wonders: "*Ulterius progredi temporis angustia inhihet; plura de his, brevi, candidus Lector expectet.*"

The experimental method, which is the tool of present-day science, was first used by Galileo. The new era of science begins from his birth, as the Christian era begins with that of Christ.

Galileo was the redeemer of science, not its creator, because it existed before his time, though by his genius he set its feet in the right road. A century before he was born, Leonardo da Vinci had written these eloquent words: "Judgment errs, but never experience."

When we think of the wonderful effects of the discoveries made by Galileo, of the great revolution brought about by them in the world of ideas, we are astounded.

When he had spoken, the philosophy of twenty centuries became as nothing; thousands of volumes filled with theories, hundreds of formulas considered infallible, were exposed in one instant with all their

fallacies; in fact, the heritage of all the learned and studious of antiquity was suddenly annihilated.

Aristotle, Pythagoras, Ptolemy, up to then considered as the great lights of science, paled before the new flame, as the light of Philip Lebon paled before that of Alessandro Volta.

The man that is able to accomplish such a wonderful transformation is at the same time a scientist and a prophet.

In the period when Italian art was a declining glory, Michael Angelo having died in Rome, and Titian in Venice, Galileo overthrew the whole past, and initiated that experimental method to which we owe all modern inventions and discoveries, from Torricelli's barometer, to Edison's phonograph, from Marcello Malpighi's "Anatome Plantarum," to Rudolph Virchow's "Cellularpathologie."

It is true that before him, Telesius, Campanella, and Bruno had turned their minds to the study of nature, with an intuition of the experimental method, but this amounted only to a vague foreshadowing; Galileo, on the other hand, confronted the vastest problem, and by calculation and direct observation, stripped it of all preconceived mysticism. The experimental method is, therefore, his creation; the merit of the discovery would have been entirely his, if he had not had a precursor in Leonardo da Vinci, but precursors are inevitable in the history of all great discoveries.

As volcanic eruptions warn us of a coming earthquake, so all creative acts produced by men of science are announced by precursors.

Camerarius preceded Linnæus, Leonardo fore-

shadowed Galileo, Lamarck came before Darwin and Huxley, and Pacini before Koch. Humanity, however, justly considers as creator, not the man who has divined a thing, but him who has demonstrated it. Hence Linnæus is more celebrated than Camerarius, Darwin and Huxley than Lamarck, Koch than Pacini, and Galileo in the field of science overshadows Leonardo.

Galileo, furthermore, was not only a scientist, but a prophet. In his old age, on account of the prodigious activity of his thoughts, he felt that in his brain there throbbed an all-powerful force, capable of renovating the world, and for this reason he dared to predict the future.

Recall in the "Dialoghi delle Nuove Scienze," written by him in Arcetri, at the sunset of his life, the memorable words he puts in the mouth of Salviati:

"Truly we can say that now the door is opened for the first time to new contemplations, full of infinite conclusions, so admirable that in days to come they will inspire new geniuses."

And further on, continuing his studies on the impact of solids and their resistance to fracture, he adds, "these studies open the door to two new sciences, that speculative geniuses, in the centuries to come, will augment to infinite propositions." It was modern physics that he prophesied.

These phrases of Galileo were certainly prophetic; he undoubtedly wrote them at the moment when his genius embraced at a single glance the great revolution he had initiated.

Here we have the union of prophetic genius with scientific genius; two qualities rarely found together

in a single man, as each of them is sufficiently powerful to create a giant of the intellect.

Galileo Galilei was, like Newton, a scientific law-giver, and an inventor at the same time, possessing thus all the requisites of the scientists as we have described them.

While yet a child, he manifested a great curiosity, and an extraordinary power of observation. Making complicated little machines, which were sometimes copies, sometimes inventions of his own, he arrived at his discoveries by a series of creative acts. He himself furnishes us the proof of this in his "Saggiatore," where he relates to us with admirable vividness the history of his invention of the telescope.

"This then was what I said to myself. This machine is composed of a single glass, or of more than one: a single one it cannot be, because the surface of it must be either convex . . . or concave . . . or comprised between parallel surfaces; but this could not change in the slightest degree the apparent size of the objects looked at. . . . The concave diminishes them, the convex magnifies them sufficiently, but in a hazy and indistinct manner; therefore a single glass is not enough to produce the required effect. Passing, then, to two glasses, and knowing that glasses of parallel surfaces cannot change anything, as I have already said, I concluded that the effect could not be arrived at by uniting one of these with any of the other two. So I applied myself only to experiment with the other two, and I saw that, in this manner, I arrived at my end."

The nature and fruitfulness of Galileo's scientific

method, recalling here the method of Socrates, are aptly illustrated by this reasoning, which impresses upon us the fact that all new principles ascertained by the method of direct observation are undeniable, and are truths of mathematical certainty, like the binomial theorem of Newton, or the formula of Cayley.

At the same time in which Galileo worked his miracles, lived another man of genius, almost of the same age, and his rival in power, who together with Descartes is sometimes credited with founding the scientific method. This other giant was Francis Bacon, the author of "Instauratio Magna," a work composed of two books: "De dignitate et argumentis scientiarum," and the celebrated "Novum Organum."

But the fame of the Englishman does not overshadow that of the Italian; from a comparison with him, Galileo emerges rather greater than he was before, for if Bacon defined the manner of arriving at truth, it was Galileo who had already employed it. Between these two men we find the same intellectual relationship as between Paolo Toscanelli and Christopher Columbus.

As to Descartes, he wrote his "Discours sur la Méthode" when Galileo was near death, and the new day of science had already dawned.

Galileo was expert in music, and a lover of poetry. He had committed to memory, among Latin authors, a great part of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Seneca, and among the Tuscans, almost all Petrarca, all the rhymes of Berni, and nearly the whole of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso." He possessed, therefore, a prodigious memory and keen artistic taste.

Even to-day his writings are used in the schools as models of philosophic, scientific, and polemic prose.

All intellectual gifts were showered on him, and if he had enjoyed perfect health, he might have been called God's chosen one. His life, on the contrary, although a rather long one, was full of suffering, and, like Charles Darwin, he never enjoyed the vigorous health which permits one to live without discomfort. The unique man who was rich in health, vigour, and genius, who possessed all physical and intellectual gifts, and at the same time was great as scientist, artist, and writer, was Leonardo da Vinci.

His soul was universal.

No other genius possessed so many splendid gifts, physical and intellectual. Galileo, although he had the genius of Leonardo and of Michael Angelo, did not enjoy the health of one, or (old as he lived to be) the longevity of the other; he was both a martyr to science and a victim of illness. The will must therefore have been adamantine, that in the midst of the most trying circumstances forced him to pursue truth, and enabled him to attain to so glorious a height of fame.

The thermometer, the proportional compasses, the microscope, the telescope, these were the wonderful creations of his genius as scientific inventor.

The law on the isochronism of the pendulum, its application to the measure of time and music, the determination of longitude inferred from the motion of the Medicean planets, a theory on the fall of bodies, and studies on dynamics and hydrostatics, are among the prodigies of his genius as scientific law-giver.

Besides these magnificent discoveries, there still

remain his observations on heavenly bodies. These observations were the beginning of astronomy, a science in which such progress has been made, that it is now possible to discuss scientifically the great problem of the plurality of inhabited worlds.

That Galileo was an innovator, although Leonardo preceded him, was proven by the fierce jealousy of his contemporaries, and by the persecution of the Church, which forced him to abjure his theories before the judges of the Holy Office.

Misology is common to all times and places,¹ and manifests itself especially in art, science, and letters. Whenever we see a scientific man persecuted or derided by his contemporaries, we may at once salute him as an innovator. Even in our so-called century of science, the phenomenon is daily observable in a manner less brutal, but equally striking.

Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Richard Wagner were, for many years of their lives, the victims of misology, simply because they, like Columbus and Galileo, belonged to that category of geniuses who were innovators. And if Leonardo da Vinci, instead of confiding his observations to the margins of his designs, had published them, with the intention of proving their truth, he also would have suffered from the

¹ Cecco d'Ascoli and Saverio Bettinelli rose against Dante; Bottero against Macchiavelli; Fernandez de Oviedo against Columbus; Baccio Bandinelli against Michael Angelo; Cesare Cremonino against Galileo; the Jesuit Castel against Newton. Thus from century to century, wherever a man of genius manifests himself, we find an audacious mediocrity who tries to defame him.

insolence of the ignorant and the jealousy of the learned.

It is well that the enthusiasm of this class of genius for their own work is so great, that it inspires them with the force to meet and vanquish the hostility of the crowd.

We believe, in fact, that it is just on account of this hostility that they persevere in their intention, and arrive sooner or later at the desired goal.

It is not true that the man of genius is entirely different from other men. Despite the superiority of his intellect, he is liable to the passions and defects that are common to ordinary mortals.

If the biography of a genius reveals peculiarities shared by the ignorant, it is customary to marvel at the fact, and treat it as extraordinary.

The crowd are puzzled when they hear that Goethe found pleasure in fondling little children; that Manzoni looked after silkworms; that Volta, during his passages on the Lake of Como, delighted in the conversation of boatmen, and that Rossini often cooked the dinner to which he invited his intimate friends.

They cap these facts with long anecdotal digressions which seem to say: "Think of it! a man of this intelligence comporting himself like any ordinary man!"

Why should they suppose that Genius would act differently?

In common daily life men of genius act like all others, and when their brains are resting, they appear more like children than most men.

Therefore, like other men, the more their intentions

are opposed, the more determined they are to fulfil them, and in the effort bring to their aid all the vigour of their intelligence. The anger of their contemporaries is a spur to their enthusiasm, and causes them to arrive more rapidly at their desired ends.

We should not, therefore, deplore the persecution to which Galileo was subjected, because it is to this that we especially owe the development of his genius.

The great enemy of genius is not the open and noisy hostility of mediocrities, but their indifference and silence. When the crowd inveighs against genius, we have Columbus, Galileo, Huxley, Darwin, and Wagner ; when, on the contrary, it responds to their discoveries or inventions with indifference, we find John Ficht,¹ Denis Papin, Horatio Wells, and Philippe Lebon.

On one side, triumphant geniuses ; on the other, unhappy martyrs !

Now for another proof of what has been stated.

Galileo himself offers it. In a letter by him to Cesare Marsili, dated 17th January 1626, we find these words: "In fact, my dear Signor Cesare, the speeches of my enemies strengthen somewhat the slight, if not mean, opinion that I have always had of my intelligence, and far from frightening me, they increase my anxiety to follow out the work I have undertaken, and prove that I am able to finish the Dialogues, hoping that Heaven may grant me force, greater than I possess at present, for only weakness and bad health are real enemies of my work."

¹ John Ficht was the first American inventor of the Steam-boat. He committed suicide in the Delaware River, despairing to convince his detractors.—*Adapter.*

Even if he had not written these words, my point would have been equally demonstrated, because after the solemn abjuration made before the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, Galileo wrote another masterpiece, in the Dialogue "Le Nuove Scienze," in which the characters are the same as those who figure in the Dialogue, "I Massimi Sistemi," that is to say, Sagredo Salviati and Simplicio. The persecution of the tribunal, the hostility of Pope Urban the Eighth, rekindled in the soul of the giant a great enthusiasm for science; it acted like a breath of oxygen on a half-extinguished flame.

Galileo, who had been obliged to retract his Dialogue of the "Massimi Sistemi," did not keep silent, but, after submitting to a most trying ordeal, found strength for another extraordinary achievement.

The use of opposition as a stimulus to enthusiasm is, it may be added, not confined to individual cases.

Did not the persecutions of Nero and Diocletian contribute considerably to the eventual triumph of Christianity?

Does not invasion increase the patriotism of those whose territory is invaded?

Therefore, when reading the story of a man of science, you find that he had been made to suffer unjustly, do not, out of pity for the man, forget that his trials contributed to the development of his genius, and stimulated him to his greatest actions.

As, after the death of Christ, His apostles continued to diffuse the Word of the Master, so, after the death of Galileo, his disciples continued his methods.

Benedetto Castelli defended his astronomical theories, invented the system of projections for examining the solar spots without hurting the eyes, and introduced diaphragms in telescopes; Buonaventura Cavalieri studied the problem of focal distances in concave and convex lenses; Evangelista Torricelli invented the barometer; Vincenzo Viviani wrote on conic sections; Gian Alfonso Borelli studied the motion of animals, and at last the celebrated "Accademia del Cimento" arose, which took for its emblem the motto "Provando e Riprovando" ("Probe and Probe again").

It was an unexpected scientific renaissance, active, enthusiastic, and fruitful; an unprecedented rising among those who, after thirsting for a long time, had, at last, found the pure and life-giving fountain. The new road indicated by Galileo promised fame and riches to all, and mankind turned itself resolutely in that direction.

The life of Galileo represents, in the history of civilization, a decisive moment that changed the aspect of things, and was a victory more remarkable than those achieved by Scipio at Zama, and by Charles the Fifth at Pavia.

At the decline of his life, Galileo was so blind that that universe "which," wrote he, "I with my marvellous observations, and clear demonstrations have enlarged a hundred and a thousand times more than was commonly believed possible by the wise men of past centuries, for me is now so diminished and restricted, that I do not see more of it than what I possess in myself." These

pitiful words were written to Elia Diodati, the 2nd of January 1638.

The old man had become the shadow of himself. "I am disgusted with everything; wine injures my head and my eyes, water increases the pain in my side, so that . . . my drink is reduced to a few ounces of wine and water"; he cannot eat because "my lack of appetite is great; nothing tempts me." His state was truly, in his own phrase, "a daily increase of my many ills."

When he was seventy-seven years old, the grand old man, suffering from numerous maladies, and overcome by "an immense sadness," feeling himself "continually called by [his] beloved daughter," died in Arcetri, the same year in which Isaac Newton was born at Woolsthorpe.

What can be the destiny of these great souls beyond the tomb?

Whenever a man of genius disappears from the earth, this terrible question arises in the minds of the living, and excites a tempest of thought. It is not possible to resign ourselves to the belief that great souls have ceased to be, and that the spirit, as well as the body, is dissolved. We have an intimate presentiment, which is almost a certainty, that their spirits watch over us, and continue to live somewhere, in some planet, perhaps, where the physical conditions are more favourable to their existence.

Thus it is, thus it must be, because otherwise life would be without a goal.

When we turn our eyes toward the heavens, and see, in the planets, so many worlds resembling the earth.

also possessing conditions favourable to life, when we observe through the telescope the remote stars, which are centres of other systems, and see that all suns, all worlds, reveal the same composition of terrestrial elements, we feel that life exists on those far-away spheres, although our poor instruments do not permit us to distinguish small objects at a distance of millions of leagues. Feeling that our souls are not excluded from sidereal life, and that, unconsciously, we participate in it, it seems to us that there is the same mutual attraction between souls as that which exists between sidereal bodies.

We need not, therefore, regard ourselves as having merely a scientific and impersonal interest in the phenomena of the heavens and the motions of the stars. Astrologers assert their influence on human destiny, and future science may corroborate their assertion by proof. Since God has permitted man to penetrate the infinite, and science has already succeeded in approaching sufficiently near to the stars to distinguish the irregularities of their surface, we can hope that we shall go on advancing; and from another Galileo we may expect a new and miraculous instrument that will reveal to us other inhabited worlds than ours. That which the astronomers of the nineteenth century divined by force of logic will certainly be demonstrated by new discoveries, just as the heliocentric system, guessed by Copernicus, was demonstrated by Galileo.

We believe in this fact, because we know that imagination always precedes scientific demonstration as the thought precedes the word.

The great mystery of the "Beyond" has troubled all conscious beings, even the great thinkers; it is an abysmal gulf where all philosophers have been shipwrecked, one after another, from Plato to Spinoza, from Kant to Spencer.

It is, undoubtedly, this impenetrable mystery that conceals from us the origin and destiny of beings and things; it is this that is the life of science, and because we do not know what we seek to know, we call science the continued effort that enables man to advance towards truth; a titanic and boundless effort, that, in its last analysis, seeks to discover the origin and destiny of the soul. The more we augment our scientific patrimony, the deeper becomes the mystery; all efforts seem vain, as those of a man who should desire to hold the terrestrial globe in his arms. But it may truly be affirmed that science, with its amazing discoveries, has more and more demonstrated the insolubility of the great problem. Now that we feel ourselves in the infinite, and are acquainted with the motion of the stars, our impotence is yet more evident, because we know that our solar system is, comparatively speaking, but an atom in space, even as a drop of water is an atom in the ocean.

Even Galileo experienced the vertigo that comes from penetrating into space, but we are terrified at the fearfulness of its infinity. Galileo's telescope, in comparison with the colossal refractors of Yerkes and of Pulkowa, is but a plaything. From day to day, man makes new discoveries, the scission of comets, the solar faculæ, the double stars, the polychrome systems, the spiral nebulæ, the canals of Mars, the fifth

satellite of Jupiter, and the ninth of Saturn, all represent true conquests of the heavens, most satisfying to scientific curiosity of to-day, but which to-morrow might cause a revolution more profound than that caused by the discoveries of Galileo.

It is necessary to pass some nights in an observatory, with body and mind concentrated on the study of the infinite, in order to comprehend the immensity of the mysteries that surround us; we must bend over the microscope investigating the nervous cells and the organs of insects to see how vast and unexplored is the great domain of science.

In all times, for all beings, before birth and after death, there is an impenetrable mystery. Old scientists who habitually reasoned *a priori*, and contented themselves with hypotheses, have explained with many ingenious theories the universal origin and destiny of beings and things. But these were the fictitious creations of human fancy, only suited to entice and satisfy peripatetics. For the old scientists the heavens were incorruptible, the earth immovable, and constituted the centre of all the systems.

Then suddenly arose a giant of thought, and proved to men that the sun is covered with great spots, that the earth continually travels in space, and that our system is but one of an unknown number of systems. The facts that prove these assertions are incontrovertible; telescope and calculations prove them, and they compel us to forsake past theories and continue, with the assistance of science, to search for truth. In fact, scientists continue from century to century to search in the heaven above, in the earth beneath; a fever of

curiosity consumes them : the glory of discovery becomes their dream, and thence arises in the wake of mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, and after these the later sciences of biology and sociology. It almost appears as if the experimental method will enable us to solve all problems, that of the soul included.

In the meantime, the wonderful discoveries already made brighten existence, lighten human labour, improve our environment ; mechanical science has transformed the face of the earth.

Every day science accomplishes something, and, in the brief period of a human life, we witness some miracles and many prodigies.

Observe Stephenson's "Rocket," and compare it with a compound locomotive ; think of Fulton's *Comet*, and compare it with a modern man-of-war ; recall Volta's pile, and examine a Siemen's dynamo ; put side by side the hand-press of Sennefelder, and Marinoni's continuous paper-printing machine. These are the prodigies of science. These are results of the experimental method introduced by Galileo.

It is only a hundred years from the invention of Volta to 1900, but how many miracles have been wrought in that time ! The history of science in the nineteenth century is worthy to be made the subject of many volumes, which would redound to the glory of many sovereign minds. I must here content myself with the mention of their greatest discoveries, by which I mean those that have opened up new horizons, that have created new supplementary sciences, or have demolished others.

Volta discovered the pile ; Kirchof and Bunsen

revealed spectral analysis ; Meyer, Youle, and Clausius demonstrated the transformation of forces ; de Charpentier and Agassiz discovered the ancient dimensions of glaciers ; Boucher de Perthes and Ruetimeyer proved the antiquity of prehistoric man ; Darwin, Huxley, and Wallace proclaimed Natural Selection ; Sars and Steenstrup discovered the alternating generation in inferior orders of insects. Finally, the famous expedition of the *Challenger* explored the bottom of the seas. These fundamental discoveries, like the nebulæ, contain the germ of new worlds.

And the future ? What are the miracles that a mature science will give to humanity, if it has produced so much in its infancy ? The patrimony of theoretical knowledge that we have accumulated in our books is so vast as to make us foresee an infinite variety of practical applications.

The problems which now seem to us most terrible, may perhaps be resolved, and the future man may suffer less agony of doubt than we, as regards his origin and his final end.

If a man of science in the coming century should read by chance these pages, he must not smile if he find our prophecies fall short of the truth, because we repeat, with the most fervid conviction, that science is inexhaustible, that its future is beyond all imagination, and that it may even promise to man to give him the power of a god.

Around these great giants of thought move and work a vast crowd of disciples, who complete, perfect, and divulge the work of the masters.

These are the valorous artisans of thought, they who equip new theories with proofs, or perfect the adjustment of new machines.

Theirs is an immense work, continuous and fruitful, entirely unknown to the great public, and understood by those alone who study the branches of science in which this work is done.

A man of science discovers a new law, and creates criminal anthropology, and behold there rise up around him hundreds of fervent disciples, who embrace his theory with the enthusiasm of apostles, illustrate it, discuss it, explain it, happy to live in the rays of the light that emanates from genius, satisfied to be able to employ, in this manner, their intellectual faculties.

A mechanical genius imagines a new machine, and immediately there gather around him skilled artificers who perfect it in all its parts, and thus render it more useful.

Recall the history of the locomotive, from Cugnot's steam-cart to the modern steam-engine, and consider the hundreds of patient workmen who have contributed with their ingenuity to its present perfection. Think of the first typographic press, and of the continuous paper-printing machine, and another crowd of engineers, mechanics, and artificers will rise up to claim your recognition of the benefits the world owes them.

In these last years the artisans of thought are a band more numerous and compact than they were. You cannot visit a great factory, or an arsenal, without encountering numbers of intelligent men who have perfected a machine, rearranged a structure, or modified an instrument. It is a phenomenon of every day,

always as vital and continuous as the rhythm of respiration, or the ebb and flow of the tide.

Herein is demonstrated indubitably the great power of science, its constant progress even among the less-privileged classes. Moreover the prerogatives of scientific genius increase daily. Humanity increasingly realises its importance, and would fain transmit it to its children. As science is for humanity a perpetual inspirer, as mankind could not repudiate science without subverting all laws, we believe that from the heart of science will arise the religion of the future, which will be an unique and universal cult, contenting all hearts, satisfying all aspirations; it will invite a faith commensurate with the progress of the times, which will not enfold itself in absurd dogmas, but will follow the natural evolution of the physical world, keeping pace, step by step, with its divinity.

All things, all beings, are in a continuous state of evolution; animals and men modify and transform themselves from century to century, and with these customs and laws are changed contemporaneously. It is, therefore, impossible that institutions which base themselves on absolute dogmatism, which do not bend themselves to the course of progress, but that, on the contrary, remain rigid and immobile, should continue to live. Slowly, therefore, from century to century, from year to year, they degenerate and become sterile, and will end by taking their own lives.

Science, the new goddess, will not overthrow the altars of existing religions, but will gradually alienate from them all their followers by the power of her precepts, she will bury the old faults, slowly, one by

one, as the sea entombs in her bosom the shells of dead molluscs. The triumph of the new religion will be the dawn of a new era, such as, in times past, arose with monotheism.

So it will be, so it must be, because it is impossible that institutions, in open contradiction to modern civilization, should enjoy perennial life.

I do not believe that a prophet will preach the new faith, nor dare I affirm that a scientific genius will arise to demolish the synagogues, basilicas, pagodas, and mosques, to build on their ruins a new temple ; but I believe that all I have prophesied will be accomplished slowly and gradually, as the seed becomes a plant, and the ovum becomes a man. This I believe because all existing religions from Islamism to Christianity, from Brahmanism to Buddhism, cultivate within themselves the worm that will gnaw away their existence. This is proved by the history of religions, which, in its record of schisms and reforms and the multiplication of sects, bears witness that man has not yet found the true universal faith that responds to all his aspirations. Faiths founded on dogma do but demonstrate a ceaseless instability, as of bodies unable to find their proper centre of gravity. But science, from the moment she adopted the experimental method, has steadfastly progressed ; and, considering the changes she has accomplished already in the beliefs of mankind, I believe that she will some day satisfy his thirst for ideality, that she will become a substitute for dogmatic religion in the moral world, since she already fills the place of empiricism and kabala in the physical world.

Our epoch is a destroying one ; in all the books of

modern critics, from Renan to Taine, from Max Nordau to Gaetano Negri, the negation is constant, the scepticism is continuous. We feel the necessity of disencumbering the world of the accumulations of the dark ages.

What does this signify ?

It signifies that we are approaching a great crisis ; that humanity feels the necessity of destroying before it rebuilds ; that new intellectual forces are progressing slowly in the modern man, and that the advent of a radical reform is at hand.

The audacious critics that attack the greatest problems, do not respect masterpieces, and push their way everywhere, with the effrontery and insolence of a courtesan, but, however unpleasant their rudeness may be, and however slight the value of their critical work, they are welcome in so far as they demonstrate that the scientific method has become a universal instrument.

For the scientific method purifies a past infected by prejudice, empiricism, and superstition ; its universal use shows that men at last understand that it is idle to try to restore where ruin is inevitable, but that it behoves them to demolish worn-out structures that posterity may have free and open fields on which to build new ones.

CHAPTER VI

THE EXPLORER

Is the explorer truly a man of genius, or an audacious adventurer, who rushes into the unknown, like the soldier into the midst of battle?

If the name of Christopher Columbus were missing from the history of the world's discoveries, if the great Genoese had by chance alone landed at Guanahani, as Pedro Cabral did in Brazil, we would hesitate to place explorers in our list of geniuses, because what they possess is not really genius, but only the rude courage of seamen, who risk their lives in venturing out on an unexplored ocean.

The explorer is only a genius when he divines the discovery before he made it. He must be a dreamer as well as an adventurous spirit; he must guess as well as plan, and we must be able to recognise that his achievements are the fruit of a creative act.

Christopher Columbus was a genius because, before he sailed from Palos, he was convinced by study and by intuition that there was a western land. Because his faith was not to be shaken by difficulty or contumely because his belief was stronger than his enemies' scorn, after twelve years, he attained his heart's desire.

Neither is it possible to deny genius to Fridtjof Nansen. He also was a diviner as well as an adventurer. Before starting on his famous voyage to the Pole, he was assured that his ship would be ice-locked in the north of Siberia, and that she would necessarily drift with the ice across the Polar Sea, until she reached the Atlantic, passing by a point north of Francis-Joseph's Land (that is to say, between it and the Pole). The course of the *Fram* was even as he foretold.

But we cannot admit into the ranks of genius Vasco da Gama, Magellan, Cook, Livingstone, and Stanley. We do not, however, deny that their actions were as heroic as those of Columbus and Nansen, and fill an important place in the history of great discoveries.

Marco Polo is a guerilla chief, Christopher Columbus a great general. Between them is as wide a gulf as that which separated Garibaldi and Napoleon.

Yet our present knowledge of the earth's surface is due to the intelligence of these adventurers, who have travelled over and around the globe, opening up new roads to commerce, industry, and civilization.

There lies now before the writer the celebrated Map of the World made by Fra Mauro in 1457, whose original is preserved in the Marciana Library in Venice. Compare it with Berghaus's Chart of the World. At one glance we can see the mighty work that has been accomplished by adventurers all over the world. The chart shows us a slow but continuous conquest; there have been spent, for its sake, hope and industry and many lives. Fra Mauro's map was made thirty-five years before Christopher Columbus

discovered America, and twenty-nine years before Bartholomé Diaz sighted the Cape of Good Hope. Four centuries and a half have, therefore, passed from the day in which the Camaldolese Monk completed his map, and to this day the Earth has jealously kept the secret of her Poles. But elsewhere secrets Fra Mauro never dreamed of have been revealed. American science and industries excel those of Europe; Australia has her cities of more than half a million inhabitants; and the firearms of African tribesmen defy the trained soldiers of Europe. Change upon change has come.

Continents and islands, peninsulas and archipelagos, mountains and rivers, lakes and deserts, are made familiar to us through the audacity of explorers. Science and industry follow in the footsteps of these eternal pilgrims, and these two have left everywhere the germs of their inventions. Thus civilization, little by little, spreads over the globe.

There are now no Pillars of Hercules to stop daring navigators; there is no "Ultima Thule" for travellers; men may go everywhere without bar or danger, except into the regions of eternal ice.

But much labour was spent, and many lives were lost before the polychrome maps of Stieler, Berghaus, and Johnston were made. They are coloured with the blood of adventurers.

Five hundred years before Christ, Hanno of Carthage sailed past the Columns of Hercules, and reached Cape Palmas, on the western coast of Africa. Next, Herodotus visited Egypt, Lybia, Ethiopia, Phœnicia, Arabia, Persia, and the Caspian Sea; then Pytheas of Marseilles

explored the coasts of Spain and France, crossed the Channel, visited England, and reached the Shetlands, the "Ultima Thule," declaring that "beyond these, there was neither sea, land, nor air." Nearcas, Admiral of Alexander the Great, explored the Asiatic coast, from India to the Persian Gulf; Strabo travelled in Asia and Egypt, and by the birth of Christ there was abundance of geographical knowledge, mostly inexact, and full of fables. Part of Europe, the greater part of Asia and Africa, all America, and all Australia, were still unsuspected and unknown. For nearly two centuries after the birth of Christ, geographers contented themselves with describing the countries already discovered, and with repeating the errors of their predecessors. Not an inch of unknown ground was explored.

One hundred and seventy-four years after Christ, Pausanias travelled over ancient Greece. From his travels he compiled the first guide for strangers, thus preceding Karl Baedeker and Adolphe Joanne by twenty centuries. Fa-Hian visited the countries west of China; Willibald described the Holy Land; Soliman crossed the Sea of Oman, visited Ceylon, and Sumatra; Benjamin da Tudela of Marseilles pushed across Palestine and Persia, as far as the coast of Malabar; and finally Marco Polo made his famous voyage from Venice to the confines of China. These men bring us to the middle of the fourteenth century.

While the bold Venetian explored the countries of the Rising Sun and of the Morning Quiet, the "Sicilian Vespers" broke out in Sicily. Henry VII. made a descent on Italy, Dante wrote the "Divina Commedia,"

and Giotto designed the Tower of Santa Maria del Fiore. The Renaissance had begun.

After the death of Marco Polo, there came a century that knew no great explorer—the century of Petrarca, Boccaccio, Donatello, and Orcagna. Literature and Art arose and flourished, but there was no adventurer after new lands. The next century, however, bore the greatest of all explorers, Christopher Columbus. America was discovered; European cupidity satisfied its craving hunger; and the world was infected with the travel-fever.

Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached the Indies; John and Sebastian Cabot explored Newfoundland; Pedro Alvarez Cabral by chance discovered Brazil; Affonso de Albuquerque conquered the rich provinces of Asia.

The fever rose to its height. From all ports of Europe well-equipped ships sailed for unknown destinations; every brave man shipped for a sailor, and dreamed of the gold of Marco Polo and the glory of Christopher Columbus.

At last, in 1519, Ferdinand Magellan accomplished the first voyage of circumnavigation, and the world was shaken by such an emotion as had been kindled by Vasco da Gama. The last great venture was achieved when man succeeded in making the circuit of the earth. No longer was the idea of ultimate conquest only a dream; it was a possibility that might well be realised.

The Pole then became the goal of all desires. The North-East and the North-West passages were attempted; Barentz explored a great part of Nova

Zembla and Spitzbergen; Cornelius arrived at Cape Celijuskin; and John Davis sailed around the coast of Western Greenland.

The passion for discovery became a mania.

Europe armed and sent out small fleets; rich Commercial Companies undertook expeditions at their own expense, and even the religious missions, with the excuse of Christianity, adventured by land and by sea.

In the quiet cloisters, meantime, patient cartographers, scanning their planispheres, filled up voids, corrected errors, reproduced more and more exactly the true aspect of the globe. These illuminated charts, in the hands of the explorers, were like the clue of thread that Ariadne gave to Theseus.

Products of remote countries began to arrive in Europe. Jéhan Nicot introduced tobacco into Portugal, and Walter Raleigh brought into England from America the potato and Indian corn. Voyages continued, and discoveries succeeded discoveries. Godinho de Credia was the first to set eyes upon the coast of Australia; Abel Tasman discovered Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand; Henry Hudson gave his name to the great American bay; William Baffin baptized the land and sea as far as 78° of north latitude, and James Cook explored Polynesia.

A handful of men crossed Africa from Tunis to the Cape, from Cairo to the Congo.

Richard Thompson, Host, William Bruce, Brisson, Mungo Park, Le Vaillant, John Barrow; these were the first heroes of the Dark Continent.

We are now at the nineteenth century. Steam is applied to navigation, and new inventions favour great

enterprises. Exploration is now not only of geographical interest, but becomes a science. The naturalist Alexander von Humboldt traversed Northern Asia and America; the archæologist Paolo Botta exhumed Nineveh's remains on the banks of the Tiger; the paleontologists Lopatin and Schmidt followed, in the North, the footsteps of Wrangel, and discovered in the ice the immense bones of Mammoths; the astronomer Schwarze finished the geodetic work on the great chart of Eastern Siberia; Admiral Nares directed the famous scientific expedition of the *Challenger*; the polyglot Burckhardt went in disguise among the Mussulmans, and penetrated into the sanctuary of Mecca.

Huge regions are now known to us; the great achievements of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, and Cook cannot be renewed, until man puts his foot upon the Pole of the Earth. But the *outline* of each country is only vaguely defined. On the planisphere there are vast gaps; details must be studied more closely, rivers followed from their mouths to their sources; the vertebræ of the great mountain chains, the exact configuration of the islands, the sinuosities of the coasts have yet to be known. The work remaining to be done is a miniature, not a picture. Nor will that work remain long undone. Travellers leave few spots on the earth unvisited. Audacity and industry have been their watchwords from the first; nor indeed have they hesitated to die martyrs to that spirit of adventure, which has led them on, from Cook to Nansen, from Mungo Park to Stanley.

On the great planisphere of Berghaus, you will find, sometimes, a man's name indicating a sea, a strait, an

island, a river, or a lake. That name records a martyr or a hero.

Here is the Cape of Good Hope, where its discoverer, Bartholomé Diaz, perished by shipwreck; here is Lapland, where Sir Hugh Willoughby and his crew died of hunger in 1554; here, in the Sandwich group, is the island of Hawaii, where Cook was assassinated; in the isle of Matan in the Philippines, Magellan was speared to death; here, in the American Archipelago, is Beechy Island, where the heroic Franklin met his end; Melanesia has the rock of Vanikoro, where Lapeyrouse was shipwrecked; in Southern Australia, on the banks of the Cooper River, Burke and Wills died of hunger and fatigue; in the region of Laos, in Hindo-China, the Frenchman Mouhot languished of fever; at Lake Bangewolo Livingstone died, praying; and in the region of Gobò, Captain Bòttego was killed. If we go from Greenland to Cape Horn, from the Congo to Behring Straits, we shall find yet more martyrs and more heroes.

Even to-day the Odyssey continues, less epic, but equally sad. From day to day, the white spaces and the voids in our maps are filled with names and numbers as numerous as ants in an anthill. From time to time they note the height of a mountain, the form of a glacier; they displace for some kilometres the source of a river, they indicate where an oasis can be found in a desert, they mark out vast regions of forest; they colour with a deep blue the greatest depth of the ocean, or indicate with a few little lines a hidden rock. Heretofore geographers studied the topographical anatomy of the earth, now they are studying its histology.

The great task is nearly done. An inextricable network of submarine cables and aerial lines surrounds the globe as the arachnoid tunic surrounds the brain: and there remains now only to study those men who were the banner-bearers of civilization. We must find out the reason why they succeeded, because the adventurers grow fewer and fewer, and will altogether disappear on the day when the earth shall have completely revealed her configuration and structure.

We have already seen that the scientist is curious, and we shall now see that the discoverer is always restless. His is the desire of novelty, the mania of movement. All the great discoverers have been men of action. The wandering life by land or sea is their dream and desire: no consideration will weigh with them when they are possessed with the idea of penetrating the unknown; all ties are powerless when the thought of a new voyage is before them. Christopher Columbus abandoned his son to the care of monks, when America called him; Sir John Franklin left his wife, and went to die of hunger on Beechy Island; Nansen separated himself from his family, to discover the Pole; the Duke of Abruzzi abandons the ease and pomp of Courts to rush into the unknown. It is therefore an occult power, of the same nature as themselves, which bids men resign their wealth and ease to travel in search of new lands, which they will leave to others; it is a force stronger than any ties they may make.

This force that carries a man into undiscovered countries is the explorer's greatest virtue; it is courage.

A brave man is a man of action always : that man full of superabundant vitality which, from time to time, he uses up in the labour and peril of travel.

In his youth he expends his ardour by climbing his native hills, by taking short cruises ; but, little by little, as the boy becomes a man, he dreams of unknown lands beyond seas, and he becomes an explorer. He will be a man of genius if his intelligence is of a high order ; he will go far if he is merely plucky ; but he must always be a wanderer on the face of the earth, like the " Juif Errant " of Eugène Sue, or the Dutchman of Wagner's " Fliegende Holländer."

In the records of great voyages, on the books of Nordenskiöld and Stanley, the diaries of Columbus and Nansen, the characters of the explorers are stamped for all men to see. Their periods are brief and dry, their descriptions are concise and vigorous, they write with a singular crudity and directness, which are like the men themselves.

Even in Nansen's fantastic and pathetic pages, written while wintering in the ice, we divine the impatience and restlessness of the writer. Stanley's and Livingstone's books are mere fragmentary jottings of daily thoughts. We never find in them the long and slow periods of the writer, whose ideas flow, little by little, in a natural crescendo ; but in these pages we find an intermittent explosion of thought that reveals the impatience of the mind that has conceived them. Men of action are these, vibrating with force, who use the pen like a sword ; restless spirits, who write the history of their adventures as hurriedly as if they were inditing a telegram.

The courage of these men is as inborn as the organs of sex. Their books and their actions give us proof of this, especially when they are obliged to speak of some dangerous encounter in which they gave evidence of their intrepidity. They refer to these actions with a simplicity shorn of all affectation and boasting, as if they were of all occurrences the most ordinary.

During da Gama's second voyage to the Indies, the sailors, feeling the ships shaken with the violence of the sea-quake, became frightened, and cried out that the earth was trembling under their feet. Their admiral replied, "It is the sea that trembles at our sight!"

Livingstone, speaking of an encounter with a lion in the Valley of Mabotsa, in his book, "From the Cape to the Zambese"; and Lieutenant Tyson, relating a struggle with a white bear, in his diary of the expedition of the *Polaris*, speak as lightly of the peril through which they passed as a huntsman would of a day's sport.

This innate courage, which is an individual gift, and as notable a characteristic as the scientist's spirit of observation, and the imagination of the poet, is due to the lack of moral sense that we find more or less pronounced in all explorers. In the souls of these men there is the species of insensibility, which is seen in certain criminals condemned to the gallows, the guillotine, or the garrotte. They do not seem to be able to fear.

These men can abandon children and wives, country and friends, carried away by the overwhelming desire of adventure; but we can cite cases even more striking, and proofs still more clear.

In Christopher Columbus's letter to the Princes of Castile, extolling the fecundity and riches of the new lands he has discovered, he writes: "There is as much aloe as Your Highnesses desire, and as many slaves as you wish." He thus considered the men and the merchandise as legitimate objects of sale; both were valuable stock.

On his voyage to India, da Gama attacked certain Arab ships, and distributed the booty among his sailors, keeping for himself the charts and books that he had stolen. This unjustifiable act of piracy was a matter of course to him.

Has not Stanley, the abolisher of slavery, acted unjustly and cruelly to the natives of Africa?

Fernando Cortez took prisoner the Emperor Montezuma, accused him unjustly of murder, heaped chains upon him, and burned his son alive before his father's eyes.

Diego Almagro and Francisco Pizarro committed unheard-of atrocities in the Peru they had discovered.

Even those heroes who have been considered as the redeemers of oppressed nations yield numerous examples of moral insensibility.

The oldest navigators of the globe were pirates and slavers. If their names do not appear in the history of geographical discoveries, it is because they have not written any accounts of their voyages. They were just as brave and just as cruel as the great explorers.

Because of this deficiency of moral sense, which seems to increase their courage, the explorers resemble the warriors. Sometimes we see the explorer become

a warrior, as did Jehan de Béthencourt and Francisco Pizarro; or the warrior is, at the same time, an explorer, like Julius Cæsar in Gaul and Great Britain, and Napoleon I. in Egypt.

The explorer who reaches his goal is as joyful as the general who wins a battle. The fatigues he undergoes, the long and dangerous voyages, the immense journeys on foot, resemble, in many ways, a military campaign. The explorer also sleeps under a tent, and eats the food which he carries with him, or which he can procure from day to day, and incurs the same risks and perils as the soldier. These men assuredly are alike fundamentally, although to-day, the temperament of the explorer is somewhat modified, and we find as great a difference between Vasco da Gama and Nordenskjöld as lies between Alexander the Great and Napoleon I. This diversity is the logical consequence of the civilizing effects of progress which, from century to century, differentiates more and more the European from the savage.

Little by little, as the unknown regions grow fewer, the heroism of the adventurer is less noted. When the Poles of the Earth are also discovered, it will be the day for the travelling Scientist to replace the Explorer. Students then, for love of science, will abandon their families and travel to distant regions to study the flora and fauna, the aspects and habits of an almost unknown country. The explorer of coming centuries will also encounter disagreeables and perils, but he will not be travelling toward the unknown—he will only follow the path blazed by his predecessors.

And between those who, for the first time, make an extraordinary discovery, and those who follow in their footsteps, there is the same great abyss as between master and disciples.

For this reason, the first voyage of Christopher Columbus is more wonderful than that of Amerigo Vespucci; and the circumnavigation of Magellan is more celebrated than that achieved half a century later by Francis Drake.

To reach for the first time an unknown region is the explorer's dearest ambition. For this reason the mysterious Poles attract restless and courageous souls, who rush toward them like moths towards a light.

There, in the silence of frozen nature, is a chance for them to gain immortality, and leave to posterity names as glorious as those of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, and Cook.

The explorer does not consider the victims who have already fallen, because he, too, is ready to sacrifice his life; he would rather die of cold and of privations, seeking the unknown, than languish of inanition, with an unsatisfied desire within his soul. Therefore the exodus of adventurers toward the regions of silence and of death never ceases, although Nature always repulses them and raises before them barrier after barrier of ice. How long will she hold them back?

Twenty centuries have passed since Hanno's voyage; two thousand years ago one hemisphere of the earth was unknown to the other. How many years will pass before men will touch the Pole? To whom will fall

the glory of that discovery? Every new attempt marks a step of progress; the goal is only a few degrees distant, and, for this reason, the impatience augments, the fever increases.

In 1827, Parry arrived at $82^{\circ} 45'$; Markham, in 1875, touched $83^{\circ} 20'$; Lockwood, eight years later, stopped at $83^{\circ} 24'$; Nansen, in April 1895, touched $86^{\circ} 13''$. It is a continued struggle of intelligence against brute force, of pigmies against a giant.

The accounts of these voyages are more stirring than poems, for they prove that contemporary man is still possessed of enthusiasm for the ideal, capable of great heroism, and will make immense sacrifices to obtain a ray of glory.

These intrepid men who abandon friends and families, to confront the unknown, do not go toward regions rich in fruits and metals, or to the conquest of fabulous kingdoms, where the sands of the rivers glitter with gold and the mountains are full of jewels; neither will they find a marvellous fauna, and peoples of strange customs. They have to travel through deserts of ice, in the darkness of a night lasting six months; they do not encounter a single fellow-man, but meet only with wild beasts, hungry and ferocious. After a few months of this life, they suffer from nostalgia for home and friends, for familiar faces and green meadows; but they do not stop until they are at the end of their strength. Sometimes, worn out by hardships, they die conquered by fatigue or famine, victims of their own temerity; they die alone, in the midst of this frozen immensity, and their last breath is converted into ice as soon as it escapes them.

But this terrible fate does not deter others from going on this lugubrious pilgrimage; those that sail read the Odyssey of their predecessors, and do but look at the map, and saying, "He fell here, but *I* will go further!" they go, go ever, carrying into the frozen regions of eternal ice the fever of their ideas, and that enthusiasm which has in it something of the divine. While men still spend their lives for an idea, and their fellows who remain at home rejoice over their successes and applaud their courage, we need not fear decadence and degeneration.

Men are always inclined to regret and belittle the present, to refuse to recognise, during their lives, the merits of those who have been racial benefactors. But we should not show our discouragement to posterity, because the coming generation will possess wisdom and culture, if they be not a race of athletes, and, with their accumulated knowledge, they will possess the means to remake the world. Nor will there be lacking in this new generation men capable of working wonders by virtue of innate courage and physical force.

We wonder at the heavy pieces of armour in our museums, and are awed by the strength of the men who once wore them, but we men of to-day have instruments and arms which supplement the force of muscle, and the conditions of life do not permit us actually to deplore the past.

The explorers once made their mighty journeys attracted almost entirely by the glitter of riches beyond the seas; now our travellers, who represent a century more wise and civilized, risk their lives, not to

collect the treasures of Kublai-Khan, like Marco Polo, or the fabulous gold of Cipango, sought for in vain by Christopher Columbus, but for the good of science and the love of humanity.

“Nowhere, in truth, has knowledge been purchased at greater cost of privation and suffering. But the spirit of mankind will never rest until every spot of these regions has been trodden by the foot of man, until every enigma has been solved.”

It is Nansen who speaks.

The explorer no longer meets the unknown with the hopes of conquest, but is spurred on by the love of humanity. Science and industry are his constant companions in the most squalid and deserted regions, in the midst of barbarous and inhospitable peoples. A great network of shining railway lines will link the new cities of China and Siberia to those of Europe; steamships, laden with merchandise, will anchor in the ports of Africa. Explorers will be scientists, artists, and poets, who will celebrate in their works the joys and progress of the Earth, and the epoch of war will belong to the past, as to the past will belong slavery and cannibalism. Only thus will men be able to call themselves brothers, and to go proudly on with the conquest of the globe.

Atlases of the future will reproduce the earth with the exactness of the military topographical charts used to-day, where vineyards and factories, brooks and rice fields, pools and marshes, are marked or indicated. We are already on a higher plane, because once adventurers counted with pride the victims they

immolated, while to-day, on the contrary, we do all that is possible to save life, working and studying for the good of the world.

The locomotive and the steamship will, for many years to come, facilitate the conquest of the globe. Let us recall some events in the history of these two inventions.

On the 20th of June 1819 the citizens of Liverpool welcomed at their docks the first steamboat, the *Savannah*, that had left New York twenty-one days before ; the 7th of December 1825, the inhabitants of Calcutta were overcome with admiration at the arrival in their harbour of the steamer *Enterprise*, which had come from far-away England after a voyage of one hundred and thirteen days ; finally, the 8th of October 1829, the "Rocket" of Robert Stephenson travelled successfully forty times over the iron rails between Manchester and Liverpool.

Only eighty years have passed since these first memorable attempts were made, and now every continent possesses thousands of miles of railways, and the Atlantic and the Pacific are lashed by our propellers. But many centuries must pass before this beautiful work will be accomplished, there must be many more victims before man may say : "The Earth has no more secrets for me!" Posterity will write new heroes' names on their geographical charts, as we have written on our atlases those of men who died long ago. In the regions of ice and darkness many more men will perish, like Willoughby, Hudson, and Behring ; in the heart of Africa other heroes will die, overcome by the deadly climate, as Livingstone died ; or fall victims to the ferocity of the inhabitants, like Bòttego, but the conquest will nevertheless be completed, and only then

will man be the joy of man. Our cultured men of to-day are travellers by inclination; they go from Italy to Niagara, from Paris to Benares, from Petersburg to Tokio, from London to New Zealand, as in other times one went from city to city in one's native country. Magellan's voyage round the world, which stupefied every one, to-day is an ordinary affair. On the 21st of August 1841 the ascent of Dessor to the summit of the Jungfrau raised to fever-height the enthusiasm of the most audacious Alpinists; and now the steam-engine climbs up the sides of that mountain!

From the day in which science became the companion of the explorer, barriers fell, obstacles melted away, and peril diminished. The man of science can abandon, without much fear, his quiet laboratory to travel in the Antipodes, and study a new region; the courageous Alpinist can tear himself away from his beloved Alps, without taking a last adieu of them, to attempt the mountains of Alaska or the Himalayas; the artist and the poet can travel with all comfort along the course of the Nile, sketch the ruins of Memphis, and celebrate the unearthed mummies of the Pharaohs. Never before, as in this century, was the inquietude of the voyager so easily satisfied. And for this reason the modern man becomes a cosmopolite; in this way the races most diverse in characteristics and inclination will intermingle, and be regenerated, thus preparing slowly the advent of the future "Homo Sapiens." This condition is the effect of the assiduous and constant work of the explorers who have pointed out the way, and opened it up to commerce, industry, and civilization. They constitute the elect battalion of the

vanguard, who first faced the peril, and indicated to others the goal.

When in years to come, the surface of the globe has been thoroughly explored, will these nomadic heroes disappear, never to return, as warriors and prophets have disappeared?

If there are no explorers because of the lack of new lands to discover, no warriors because of the end of all wars, battle being the last trace of barbarism, how will men of genius, men of great courage, be able to exist in the world?

The abysses of the sea, to-day almost unknown, may perhaps be the theatre of their actions. The submarine regions occupy nearly three-quarters of the surface of the earth; they are more than thirty thousand feet deep, so that in them could be easily submerged mountains like the Gaurisankar or the Goodwin Austen; they conceal a marvellous flora and fauna, and hold treasures carried there by the rivers, and relics of countless wrecks. It is an immense, obscure region that invites the rays of science, a region virgin and rich, awaiting its explorer.

Brave men will accomplish more and greater prodigies, when science provided with air and light is able to guide them into this abyss, where, once slowly and silently, descended the sounding leads of the *Washington*, of the *Challenger*, and of the *Talisman*.

Christopher Columbus stands for the sovereign genius of explorers, he is a colossus in the ranks of the sons of glory. The famous voyage from Palos to Guanahani is not more daring or more adventurous than those

accomplished by Vasco da Gama, or by Magellan, because any courageous sailor would have willingly undertaken it under the same conditions, and perhaps with equal fortune. But the genius of Columbus manifested itself in the design which he conceived before starting, in the divination that he had *de buscar el levante por el poniente*. His constancy of purpose is singularly noticeable; for throughout twelve years he never ceased his efforts to induce the wealthy queen to furnish him with the three caravels necessary for his voyage to the New World.

Strange was the genesis of this discovery imagined and effected by the son of a Genoese wool-spinner, a man of the most ordinary education. To-day, before the numerous documents, which relate the story of his project and the changes of fortune attending it and his voyage, the great navigator appears as mysterious as if he were a mythological hero, instead of a human creature.

He was a tall man, pale-faced, and with projecting cheek-bones, a large and aquiline nose, and long hair; not extraordinary to look upon, although his eloquent and strange temperament gave him the aspect of a visionary, and as such he was considered by all, even by his own crew, up to a few days prior to his discovery.

When one thinks that this poor and unknown man of the people dared to appeal to the most powerful sovereigns of Europe for help and protection, one recognises in him an immense assurance, a marvellous force of will, an absolute and boundless faith in his own genius.

It was a man unknown to every one, remember, an artisan and a seaman, possessed of no title of nobility, and abjectly poor, who, inspired by his own idea, unhesitatingly turned to princes and to rulers, asking for ships and money to sail toward the unknown; and demanded the title of Admiral of the Ocean and Viceroy of the lands that he had yet to discover.

The fact was so extraordinary, considering all the circumstances that accompanied it, that we can understand how the King of Portugal at first, and, later on, the Sovereigns of Castile, received with distrust this mystic prophet, *nudo nocchier, promettitor di regni*.

But Columbus was not discouraged by the refusal of the powerful and the derision of the learned; by virtue of that psychical law of which we have spoken in the chapter on Science, his courage was reinvigorated, and his project loomed still more gigantic before his eyes, in consequence of these checks.

The restlessness which we have found the chief characteristic of explorers, made him live with his thoughts fixed on his great idea, always in search of some one who would furnish him with the necessary means for the undertaking.

At last his tenacity succeeded, and he obtained from the blue-eyed and fair-haired queen that which men of science had denied him.

This fact is important, as it proves the magnetic power and eloquence of Columbus. Without magnetism he could never have acquired any influence over a cultivated and sentimental woman, like Ysabela la Cattolica.

We do not know when Columbus's idea first came to

him ; it might have been suggested to him by some phrase met with in a book, or perhaps it was the outcome of one of those occasional facts that kindle scientific genius, whereof we have already spoken ; certain it is, that from the hour of its conception, his readings and observations confirmed him, more and more, in the positive truth of his theory.

We know that Columbus was a religious man, one may even call him priest-ridden and bigoted ; therefore he was the more tenacious of his intention, because bigoted people are characteristically narrow and obstinate. The character of Christopher Columbus, in fact, was a combination of defects and virtues, which helped him to represent his project as the unique mission of his life, and to refer it to divine suggestion, when it was only the outcome of his natural genius.

In the last years of his life, his countrymen's ingratitude and his many sufferings made him an easy victim to a pernicious and stupid creed, and some of his biographers have maliciously taken advantage of this weakness to tarnish his glory.

On the 23rd of August 1500, Bobadilla's two caravels entered the port of San Domingo, and Columbus and his brothers were sent back to Spain in chains.

So great was the suffering of the Admiral from the humiliation inflicted on him that it seemed to affect his mind. When he saw himself rejected by those whom his genius had exalted, he became even over-appreciative of the grandeur of his achievements, and imbued with religious superstition, he believed himself to be an instrument, especially sent by God, to lead

men to that new World he had discovered. He passed his time searching the Bible for those verses which he believed to be prophecies of his work, and these he collected in his book, "De las Profecias," which is an account of the vision, to which he had now abandoned himself.

After analysing his character, and realising the vexations to which he had to submit, it is easy to understand this belief of the Genoese. He knew himself to be possessed of little or no culture, compared with those who opposed his project; he knew that he had scant learning, and yet he was able to accomplish his undertaking and to withstand the contempt and the derision of the learned who called him a visionary.

How was it, that he, the son of a wool-carder, one without fortune, who had never pursued a course of profound cosmographical studies, could achieve such a prodigy?

Because he was inspired by God. This was the thought that rose in his mind, and assumed such gigantic proportions as to overshadow his fame; he declared that he was a messenger sent from Heaven upon earth, to diffuse Christianity among the barbarous peoples who seemed excluded from their share of Eastern civilization.

In our eyes this assertion of Columbus would not tarnish his glory, but would only prove, once more, that men of genius, in practical every-day life, are subjected to the same ills as ordinary men, and cannot free themselves from the laws of nature, by which grief and physical suffering have a reciprocal and detrimental action on the heart and the brain.

We must not therefore study the genius of Columbus in his book "De las Profecias," as we do not analyse the peculiar genius of Milton, when reading his "Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelacy."

Columbus should be studied in the years that preceded his discovery of America, when he was continually meditating and perfecting his project, until, little by little, it assumed the appearance of an absolute reality.

In the hour when night showed before the Admiral's eyes the uncertain flame that indicated the new continent, the work of his genius was accomplished, and Christopher Columbus became immortal. Subsequent events may interest the historian and the biographer, since they offer many pathetic episodes, but they are not important to us, who are studying genius in its manifestations, and are endeavouring to discover the moment in which it accomplishes its prodigies.

Christopher Columbus arrived at the conception of his project through signs and indications which were in his time known to all, but could suggest a voyage of discovery only to a man of genius. His project once formed, his faith in the existence of a new hemisphere increased, day by day; and the observation of certain facts, and the information received from different navigators, came to be considered by him as valid proofs.

Fortunately, Columbus was not only a dreamer, but also a man of action, and an intrepid seaman; his project, therefore, found in its originator the one most capable of executing it.

There was in him a continual and reciprocal suggestion, the native courage of the seaman enlarging the idea conceived by the genius, the natural enthusiasm of his mind feeding and reinforcing the intrepidity of the explorer ; in this way, two forces stimulated the man to act, and helped to encourage him in the most desperate moments of his struggles, in those moments when defeat seemed inevitable.

Thus the great voyage was conceived and achieved by a single man. If Christopher Columbus had divined the existence of another Continent, without possessing the gift of an explorer, the glory of the discovery would have belonged to another man, and the Genoese would have been only a precursor in the same manner as Paolo Toscanelli.

But Columbus was born a man of action, full of courage, restlessness, and vivid imagination.

Religious as he was, nay, even a blind follower of the Roman Church, he did not hesitate openly to contradict the Bible, Saint Augustine, and all the Fathers, because his conviction was unchangeable. His ideas became a sort of obsession, a fixed mania that swayed him always, and destroyed his sleep, but gave him, at the same time, strength to withstand the attacks of his contemporaries, and demand assistance that was needed before he could start upon his voyage.

A proof that the Genoese conceived his project by divination, is the absolute conviction he had of the existence of these lands, which induced him, during the voyage, to deceive his crew as to the extent of the distance they had travelled, lest their great distance from Spain might cause them to become discouraged and mutiny.

This absolute certainty was only possible in the mind of a man such as Columbus—a mystical genius, inclined to believe in divine inspiration; a dreamer who, as we have seen, believed himself designed by God to accomplish this work.

“I have done that which until now mortal force has not been able to achieve; because, if of these islands something was written or spoken by others, it was all ambiguous and conjectural. No one acknowledged to have seen them; and the proof of it was that when they heard of my design, all treated it with derision, to such an extent that science and authority gave me little assistance among men.”

These words of the great explorer are more eloquent than aught we can say. They prove the faith of genius in its own work, the absolute certainty that lasted many years; and furthermore they demonstrate that, though Columbus knew himself possessed of small culture, he was nevertheless conscious that he had accomplished an act worthy of immortality.

As a genius, therefore, he should be placed among the scientists, because his project was the fruit of a spirit of exceptional observation, like that reasoning of Nansen which suggested to him the way to take in order to reach the Pole.

For these reasons alone these two navigators differ from other explorers; otherwise, their undertakings are marked by the same heroism, the same love of the unknown, which possessed their compeers.

Let us now take the explorer as man of action. Our contemporary Fridtjof Nansen's voyage to the Pole is

fresh in all minds, so we will examine his work, which is that of an explorer, a scientist, and a poet.

He is a Norwegian, born at Vestre Aker, near Christiania, one of a nation of navigators, a people who live and die by the sea, and possess a merchant navy which, in proportion to the population, is superior to that of England. In Norway captains of sailing vessels are at the same time proprietors and commanders of their ships. Almost all the nation earns its living by the sea, and is possessed by a passion for travel. It is enough to look at a geographical chart of Norway—its coast all indented with gulfs and bays and dotted with numerous islands—to be convinced that this people is naturally a nation of sailors.

Between the Norwegian sailor and the Italian is as great a difference as that which exists between the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon races.

Fridtjof Nansen is a true Norwegian ; but, besides, his soul is saturated with Latinity. He is a poet, of imagination, who presents his images in vividly coloured phrases ; as a writer, he is a brother in the flesh to the Latin race ; but as a man of action, he possesses the cool intrepidity of the North.

On account of this happy union, the description of his voyage is one of those works which markedly impress their readers, and are not easily forgotten.

Here is a man enamoured of a scientific ideal, impatient to confront the unknown, and, at the same time, a man gifted with a sensitive soul, that is stirred to its depths by the thought of his distant family ; a man who, in the midst of a solitude of ice, in the very heart of the Polar night, thinks of home and wife and

child ; a man with a lyrical temperament and a Titan's frame ; a dreamer who describes the Polar night in words as warm as the South.

“. . . But, O Arctic night, thou art like a woman—a marvellously lovely woman. Thine are the noble, pure outlines of antique beauty, with its marble coldness. On thy high, smooth brow, clear with the clearness of ether, is no trace of compassion for the little sufferings of despised humanity ; on thy pale, beautiful cheek is no blush of feeling. Among thy raven locks, waving out into space, the hoar frost has sprinkled its glittering crystals. The proud lines of thy throat, thy shoulders' curves, are so noble, but, oh ! unbendingly cold ; thy bosom's white chastity is feelingless as the snowy ice. Chaste, beautiful, and proud, thou floatest through ether over the frozen sea ; thy glittering garment, woven of Aurora's beams, covering the vault of heaven. But sometimes I divine a twitch of pain on thy lips, and endless sadness dreams in thy dark eye.

“ Oh, how tired I am of thy cold beauty ! I long to return to life.”¹

This man of poetic temperament remained three years away from Norway, in regions where death continually menaces, and abandoned the warmth and security of his ship to venture out to the conquest of the Pole, with the eagerness of a bird escaping from its cage.

The *Fram* had been abandoned for thirteen months when Nansen met Jackson at Cape Flora !

Truly he is the prototype of the explorer of the end

¹ Nansen, “Farthest North,” vol. i. pp. 308-309 (Constable).

of this century, and represents our actual generation ; he is the symbol of the Northern and Mediterranean races mingled together.

Nansen was always a sailor, always an adventurer. From boyhood he loved to be alone ; he sailed for days over his native seas, a fisherman among fishermen ; he joined in skating matches, and exhibited all the tastes of a man of action.

Devoted to natural sciences he inscribed himself, when nineteen years old, on the roll of the University, but did not receive his Doctor's degree because in 1882 he embarked on a voyage to the North.

On his return he continued his researches at the Museum of Natural History at Bergen, and in 1885 came to Italy to study biology at the zoological station in Naples.

It was probably during his stay in that great and beautiful city that his poetic temperament was developed. This sojourn in Italy must have left on him that imprint of Latinity of which we have already spoken.

In the meanwhile the youth had become a man, and the short voyages along the fjords of his native land were not enough to satisfy and quiet his impatience. The explorer dreamed of gigantic undertakings ; desired battle, and not skirmish ; glory, and not notoriety.

But the moment he longed for was yet distant. He took a Doctor's degree in Natural Sciences, and made his celebrated journey across Greenland, during which time the idea of the Polar mystery little by little dawned upon him, until it took entire possession of his mind.

Later on, came the day when the *Fram*, the beautiful ship with rounded sides, sailed from the port of Christiania to confront the unknown.

Nansen was a happy husband and father; a child of a few months brightened his home. It was the moment in which a man lives more intensely and is carried away by the happiness of his new life, and more disposed to enjoy exclusively the joy of his family.

But wife and child could not detain him; the passion for adventure was more powerful than love of home, a force against which all rebellion was vain.

He left Norway as eagerly as Columbus left the village of Palos, as joyfully as Vasco da Gama quitted Lisbon.

The moment in which the explorer begins a new voyage is perhaps that of his greatest joy, because before him he has the unknown in all its attractiveness; he is like a writer who has conceived the idea of his masterpiece, and applies himself to accomplish it. There is no bound set to his dreams. When his mission is fulfilled, the soul in spite of the joy of success, feels a regret, not unlike that of the writer who has finished the last page of his favourite work. In the first pages of Nansen's diary and the last this truth is evident.

It is natural enough: an explorer who has finished a voyage is like a warrior whose campaign is ended—repose to him means only inertia and tedium.

To observe the characteristics of the explorer it is necessary to surprise him in his moments of action, to take him suddenly on the deck of his ship, while he is reaching out towards the unknown. Nansen's best pages are those in which he speaks of the Pole, of that

distant goal which is the theme of his dreams, the hope of his waking hours:—"I only think of arriving at the Pole, and from there to open myself a path to the Atlantic Ocean."—*Nansen*.

He chafes at the slow progress of the *Fram* toward the North, and celebrates with libations every degree of latitude at which they arrive. When the ship is stationary in the ice, or when she turns back south, then the character of the explorer is sharply defined in his diary.

While the *Fram* is stationary Nansen is restless, abandoned to discouragement, setting down his project as that of a dreamer—a thing too great to be realised.

"We are lying motionless—no drift. How long will this last? Last equinox how proud and triumphant I was; the whole world looked bright; but now I am proud no longer. . . . Seven more years of such a life. . . . I know this is all a morbid mood; but still this inactive, lifeless monotony, without any change, wrings one's very soul. No struggle, no possibility of struggle! All is so still and dead, so stiff and shrunken under the mantle of ice. Ah! . . . the very soul freezes! What would I not give for a single day of struggle, for even a moment of danger!

"Still I must wait, and watch the drift; but should it take a wrong direction, then I will burn all the bridges behind me and stake everything on a northward march over the ice. I know nothing better to do. It will be a hazardous journey, a matter, maybe, of life or death. But have I any other choice?

"It is unworthy of a man to set himself a task and then give it up when the brunt of the battle is

upon him. There is but one way, and that is *Fram*—Forwards!"¹

This phrase shows us the man. It is an illuminating document, this diary, written in a fever of impatience in the ship's cabin.

Inaction for this man is torture and death. Hard work aboard ship, frequent bear hunts, scientific observations were not sufficient to satisfy him; it was necessary for him to feel his ship moving on towards the North; and he was obliged, from time to time, to dash away on snow-shoes in the direction of that distant goal, thereby to exercise his limbs, and quiet by rapid exercise his vehement and insatiable longings.

We can distinguish in Nansen's book the pages that are published exactly as they were first written, without change, without corrections or additions, and as they were suggested to him in the regions of eternal ice. They teem with impatience, they are breviloquent as an epigraph, sincere as a confession.

And this peculiarity which we find in the diary of Nansen, we see repeated in the books of Stanley, Livingstone, Cameron, and Nordenskiöld; in fact, they may be seen in all the histories of voyages written by the explorer's own hand.

Taking these pages, one by one, the reader has under his eyes the canvas of the whole work, the original web of the author's thoughts.

For this reason, we prefer to read the diary of a journey, rather than the book it has generated; and would rather have seen the hundreds of manuscript pages that Stanley brought to Cairo, after the libera-

¹ Nansen, "Farthest North," vol. i. pp. 379-380.

tion of Emin Pacha, than his printed book; and it would have given us more pleasure to peruse the original diary of Nansen, than these two big volumes, put together with much care and labour.

These two volumes, however, represent to us the epos of the most successful polar expedition, partly on account of its scientific results, partly because the *Fram*, up to now, is the ship that has arrived at the highest latitude; and Nansen and Johansen are the two men who have advanced nearest the Pole.¹ Printed books, however, beside the manuscripts of them, are as photographs beside their living counterparts: the manuscript is the expression of the soul, which day by day writes on paper its real thoughts; the book, on the contrary, represents the evolution of these original ideas, and is, in fact, a composition more orderly, but less sincere; more complete, but less physiocratic.

We have seen how one can, with some certainty, select the pages that were the fruit of the first impression, from those that were written after, and are therefore the record of memory; we will now consider the explorer in the moment in which he manifests his finest physical and intellectual gifts.

The last inch of inhabited land disappears, and the little ship goes on her solitary way toward the unknown.

Erect on the bridge, the explorer gazes questioningly into the distant horizon; he does not regret the home

¹ After the publication of the original Italian edition, it was announced that the Duke of Abruzzi and Capitain Cagni had gone seventeen miles ($86^{\circ} 30'$) further north than Nansen.—*Adapter*.

that he has left, because his thoughts and looks are turned ever toward the north that he has yet to attain.

Now that the inhabited world has disappeared, the explorer is the chief of a small crew of heroes; his will guides the ship, his courage inspires hope and rekindles enthusiasm. Those who accompany him reflect his thoughts and feelings; are, in fact, like the disciples of a prophet. They look up to him, as soldiers do to their commander; theirs is a voluntary homage, that only a privileged few can deserve: "they have courage, the men aboard this ship; courage and blind faith in the word of one man," writes Nansen in his diary. They go towards the unknown, guided not by their own intelligence, but led by another, kindled by his desires, buoyed up by his hopes. As Columbus's sailors submitted to the powerful fascination of their Admiral, so, more than four centuries later, the same fact is repeated, in similar conditions, among men of a more advanced civilization, men of more culture and less superstition.

Cape Chelyuskin is passed: ". . . On to the North, steadily north, with a good wind, as fast as steam and sail can take us, and open sea, mile after mile, watch after watch, through these unknown regions, always clearer and clearer of ice, one might almost say: How long will this last? The eye always turns to the northward, as one paces the bridge. It is gazing into the future. But there is the same dark sky ahead, which means open sea."¹

Then, suddenly, the ice grows thicker; the ship is frozen up, and her course is suddenly arrested. The

¹ Nansen, "Farthest North," vol. i. p. 201.

dark winter night encompasses her. One small ship fixed in this sea of ice guards within her thirteen men who are risking their lives for a scientific ideal, who have left behind them wives, children, relatives and friends, who even now are longing for their blue fjords, their pine forests, their old homesteads, from which they have separated themselves for years, seeking to arrive at a degree further north, a step nearer the unknown, there, where the Alpha of the Little Bear always palpitates at the Zenith.

What impatience burns and frets through those long winter months, what difficulty there is in occupying the men's energies during that season of enforced inaction!

Every time that the *Fram* drifts a degree more northwards, joy is in all hearts, and they celebrate the event with a feast.

In the long months of darkness, the ship's company amused themselves with bear hunts, with long trips on snow-shoes, and in arranging and furnishing the sleighs which were to accompany Nansen and Johansen in their memorable pedestrian trip.

In the days that preceded the departure, Nansen was possessed as by a fever; all the peculiarities of the explorer are exhibited in him.

"And now the struggle is to begin, it is looming yonder in the North! Oh! to drink delight of battle, in long deep draughts. Battle means life, and behind it, victory beckons us on."¹

The great day finally arrived. After two false starts, followed by unexpected returns, on account of accidents,

¹ Nansen, "Farthest North," vol ii. pp. 4, 5.

Nansen and Johansen abandoned the *Fram*, escorted a little way by their anxious companions. The next day, the two daring ones found themselves alone in the midst of that treacherous nature, from whom they were endeavouring to wrench her hidden core of mystery.

The journey goes on dramatically and heroically as an epic poem: it is a struggle of two mortals at war with the elements, who endure every kind of deprivation and fatigue, with a sort of savage joy.

They aid the dogs in pulling the sleighs, they climb to the summit of ice hummocks in order to choose their path, they cook their food, mend their clothing, make scientific observations, write their diaries, and defend themselves from the attacks of hungry bears . . . ; it is a continuous struggle, an incessant motion, an almost unparalleled tension of muscles and nerves.

But the ice becomes more and more rugged, and they seem to be in an interminable moraine of ice blocks. "This continuous lifting of the sleighs at each ridge, is enough to tire out giants."¹

At last they decide to give up this impossible undertaking, and return to the haunts of man.

The 7th of April 1895, Fridtjof Nansen calculates his latitude, and with a trembling hand writes on his diary: 86° 13'.

The return journey now began, slow, hard and trying; at every halt they had to kill a dog because they had not enough food for all the pack.

Arriving at Jackson's Island they decided to winter

¹ Nansen, "Farthest North," vol ii. p. 140.

here ; and their winter lasted nine monotonous months. The travellers sometimes slept twenty hours of the twenty-four. They lived almost entirely on flesh, they were without soap, and their clothes were saturated with grease. To clean their shirts, they were obliged to boil them first, and then scrape away the grease with a knife.

Notwithstanding all this, the two men were always happy, and dreamt always of fresh bread, of cakes, and, above all, of shops full of fragrant linen and new clothes.

When spring returned, they continued their journey, and on the 17th of June 1896, Nansen shook hands with Captain Jackson, whom he encountered near Cape Flora.

Then came the return to his own country, the meeting with Sverdrup, and with the rest of the *Fram's* crew, the triumphant voyage from Vardö to Christiania, the acclamations of the civilized world, and, finally, the peace of his own home, the beloved faces of his wife and little Liv.

Up to this date, no Polar expedition has been so successful, no explorer has been able to carry out his designs as fully as Nansen did. He lost no man, he had not a day of illness during the three years of absence wherein he and his men fought the elements, leaving on their road no other victims than the carcasses of dogs, killed by necessity. For the first time, the terrible ice regions had been compassionate to man ; for the first time, two human creatures had advanced to within a few miles of the dwelling of the Sphinx.

The voyage is memorable, the announcement of his

return moved the whole world, but the Pole is still virgin and intact.

“Unseen and untrodden under their spotless mantle of ice, the rigid Polar regions slept the profound sleep of death from the earliest dawn of time. Wrapped in his white shroud, the mighty giant stretched his clammy ice limbs abroad, and dreamt his age-long dreams.”¹

But this will not be for long; perhaps Andrée, the audacious aeronaut,

“ Centauro alla cui corsa
La nube è fango, e il vano vento è suolo,”²

has found the goal, at the price of his life; perhaps some of the ships who are now travelling toward the North, may reach the “Ultima Thule.”

And after?—

After the discovery of the Pole, crowds will rush on in the same way, until every inch of ground is known, and then new explorers will try that other terrible region of ice, where shines the Southern Cross.

It is always thus, from century to century, because the mind of man needs always some great enthusiasm; because there are, and will always be, men of action who are born for struggle, who willingly sacrifice their lives to a scientific ideal, and to whom glory is preferable to all the comforts of life.

¹ Nansen, “Farthest North,” vol. i. p. 1.

² Giovanni Pascoli, “Short Poems” (Andrée).

CHAPTER VII

THE WARRIOR

WE have seen that the giants of thought—poets, musicians, artists, philosophers, scientists, and explorers,—manifest themselves in acts profitable to humanity.

The poet, musician, and artist educate and civilize men, the philosopher attempts to explain the mystery of the unknown to them, the scientist confers on them his discoveries and inventions, and the explorer makes them lords of all the earth. All these men exhibit a beneficent force which is made manifest variously and characteristically; the net result thereof is an increase of the common welfare.

The warrior, on the contrary, is the malignant genius of his species, a hostile force that tends to destroy the beneficent work achieved by the others.

In the course of centuries the power of the warrior has become a public terror and danger, because it has been continually nurtured by human cupidity.

The warrior of genius is dangerous, because his gifts are not virtues, but defects.

Ambition and cupidity, egoism and rapacity, these fascinate the mob, and incite them to reap a frightful harvest of slaughter. Genghis-Khan and Timur-Leng,

Alexander and Hannibal, Cæsar and Frederick, Napoleon and Von Moltke, are the leaders of this huge and evil legion.

Synthesised in the study of these malignant geniuses, whose names are synonymous with death and ruin, who are incarnate desires for blood and destruction, is the presumption of humanity, the vain-glorious pride of nations. Like the devils, they sow tares of discord and hate; but they are men who exhibit the resolution of Prometheus, who rebelled against Jupiter himself.

These fearless, covetous, and inflexible spirits express not desires but commands; they march straight on to their goal, though the path behind them is strewn with human skulls. They excite the ignorant populace with loud speech "of love of country, offences against national honour"; but, even when they lack a cause, they achieve their evil ends by infecting mankind with the avarice and ambition by which they themselves are devoured. And under such conditions Genghis-Khan attempted the conquest of China, central and western Asia; Alexander of Macedon founded the greatest empire of antiquity; and Napoleon dreamed of seeing the world under his feet.

Men who were idolized by those whom they sacrificed to accomplish their ends; men who have been sung by poets and musicians, and celebrated by painters and sculptors, are to-day recognised as malevolent beings.

War is not extinct among us, but men now only fight with enthusiasm for a noble cause, and, more and more, voices daily cry out for peace, while the great idea of universal disarmament is familiar to us all.

The men of the twentieth century will recognise

war as the last remnant of barbarism, and abolish it as on a level with the tortures of the Inquisition and slavery.

Insurmountable barriers must be raised against man's ambition and greed of gain, until the warlike spirit shall be seen as demoniac and not heroic, and scorn instead of applause shall be dealt those who tread on the heads of all men, even father and brother, making

"D'ambo
Sgabello ai piedi, per salir sublime."¹

This good work has already begun, and will not be arrested. Science itself, by augmenting the power of arms and the force of explosives, has made still more repulsive and frightful this miserable game of extermination, and has sown in the hearts of all honest and enlightened men a hatred and contempt for war, and its promoters.

"The state of perfection at which instruments of destruction have arrived renders war absolutely impossible, because they will cause the destruction of all the combatants." With these words, Ivan von Bloch closes his great work on the subject of war. The perusal of these six volumes, it is said, inspired the Tsar Nicholas with the idea of the International Congress for Peace.

If a man like Napoleon, to-day, tried to incite the people to the conquest of the earth, in order that he might take possession of the thrones whose occupants he had cast out, he would not succeed in collecting a hundred thousand men; nay, more, the attempt would be stifled at birth, by the same people who would

¹ V. Monti, *Aristodemo*, Act I. Scene 4.

formerly have desired to undertake it. Notwithstanding the desire of all nations to raise and equip immense armies, as if they were about to enter into battle, there is in the hearts of all, even autocratic sovereigns, the wish for assured and continual peace.

The warrior will follow in the footsteps of the prophet, and disappear, because reason, little by little, is becoming master of brute force.

In future, when two rival nations disagree, generals will not lead their armies into combat, but the question will be submitted to the arbitration of wise and learned men.

Against the verdict of this supreme assembly no appeal will be permitted, and all nations will accept it, without a thought of resorting to the old arguments of Krupp's cannon, warships, and the guns of Lebel and Mauser, Mannlicher, and Vitali.

The horror that we feel to-day, when reading the chronicles of the Inquisition, will be experienced by posterity when they read the history of our wars ; and they will be as disgusted at our torpedoes and fast-firing guns, as we are with the instruments of torture of the Inquisition.

War will disappear, and be numbered among the things of the past. The militarism of this age is the last great parade of nations before they lay down arms.

The warrior, when a man of genius, achieves power by means of inordinate ambition and immense cupidity. He desires to control the will of others, while preserving his own independence. If he unites personal charm to his ambition, he will become a public idol, and numbers will rise, as one man, to follow wherever

he leads, although the reason for war should be conquest, and not defence. He is to the crowd a kind of divinity, against whom it is vain to contend. It was the crowd who paid divine honours to Alexander the Great and Cæsar, the crowd that worshipped Napoleon. The people have need of a flesh and blood idol. Although they cry out for their liberty, and would fain always hear that they are the real rulers, they are ready enough to submit to the despot, who understands how to manage and dazzle them with his personal magnetism. Courage and strength are the gifts most highly esteemed by the blind multitude, therefore the men nearest the hearts of the people are warriors and brigands. The books preferred by the crowd are those which relate the life-stories of such heroes as John Sobieski, Marco Botzaris, and Giuseppe Garibaldi, or bandits like La Gala, Gasparone, and Tiburzi. It is the atavistic admiration for brute force; the desire for an idol to glorify, a man to follow.

A nation is composed of many different men, a majority of the rude and illiterate, and a minority of the cultivated and refined; two castes, in fact, which we find in all countries of the world, and which are almost always rivals. The diversity of ideas between these two classes, manifests itself also in their choice of heroes.

The crowd exalts and venerates the genius born of its own class, the intellectual minority prefers those who are congenial spirits; the life of Garibaldi is in the hands of workmen, and that of Napoleon in the studies of professors.

Notwithstanding different tastes and diverse char-

acters, all men must espouse the cause of that hero who is wise enough to understand the desire of all, and capable of exalting the will of the multitude until it can achieve prodigies.

At the moment when the crowd is agitated by some universal sentiment, the desire of battle arises, and manifests itself, and it is then that a warrior of genius takes advantage of such exaltation, and by sheer magnetism becomes, in an instant, the master of many souls, the idol of a nation.

When these men are really geniuses, we have Cæsar and Napoleon; but when they are only counterfeits we have Cola di Rienzo and Boulanger.

These men are disastrous to the nations which produce them, even when they are victorious.

Greece and Italy are the mothers of many celebrated warriors, and among all nations, to-day, they are the nearest to decay. A nation that is prolific in such characters, resembles a brilliant boy who achieves prodigies and at the same time is destroyed by his own intensity. In the world's history, as long as the smallest germ of brutal instinct remains in the human soul, warriors will be as inevitable as illness, and as dangerous; even when the men are promoters of liberty, like George Washington, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Vittorio Emanuele II.

This assertion may be considered a paralogism or paradox, because we are accustomed to venerate those men who excite nations to gain their independence; but on analyzing facts and consequences, in respect to humanity in general, not to the individual nation, you will see that the warrior, even when he appears as a redeemer,

represents the malignant genius of the human race. He forces men into wars which, if he had never existed, would have been avoided by arbitration, in a more just and equitable manner.

However, the warrior is an inevitable evil. The genius of war took root in a century deformed by the cupidity of men, and the innate brutal instincts transmitted from the remotest ancestors, who were obliged to pass their lives fighting in self-defence against the wild animals of the caves. This warlike spirit naturally increased and grew, being the reflection of savage passions that are native to the soul of man. If the warrior who is a redeemer, and fights only in a noble cause, may be considered as a misfortune to his race, what must we say of those men who sow discord and strife, and invade other countries simply to gratify their ambition? They are certainly the most execrable of creatures, a disgrace to the land which produces them. However great their genius, or vast their conquests, little by little there is developed in them egoism, pride, cupidity, avidity for power, in fact, all the base and brutal vices of humanity.

It may be said that these warriors are, at least, courageous, that they did heroic deeds. We may be bidden to remember Alexander's passage of the Granicus, Cæsar at the battle of the Sambre, and Napoleon at Arcola. But to our mind the courage of the warrior, like that of the explorer, is derived from a lack of moral sense, is an exclusive instinct, like the power of memory, a passion necessary to be gratified.

A man of genius who, to the gifts of the explorer, adds insatiable ambition, is the typical warrior, the giant

of thought and action who idealizes the most debased instincts of his species—the man who by his example incites all men to orgies of blood and of extermination more repulsive and terrible than those of Sardanapalus and Nero.

In the decline of the warrior's fame, nowadays, we see the beneficent spirit of Science, which, while apparently favouring war, has, in reality, hastened its sunset. The day that substituted explosives for pikes and swords was a memorable one, because men then knew that war was not immortal, but must perish. Little by little, as guns and cannon and other death-dealing instruments were perfected by science, war ceased to be a hand-to-hand struggle between man and man, and degenerated into a slaughter at a distance, in which men destroy their adversaries without seeing them. Modern warfare lacks, in fact, all those feats of muscular strength which once served to develop and increase men's inborn brutal instincts; with the flight of years these instincts, unexcited by the smell and sight of blood, and the rancour aroused by personal assault, will gradually quiet down and disappear. The habit of employing cold steel instead of fire-arms, so common to the impetuous and excitable Latin races, will put them at a great disadvantage in future wars, because the means of attack have become so murderous, as to exclude all real contact with the enemy.

This phenomenon, which, cursorily examined, might seem the refinement of barbarism, will, on the contrary, modify the enthusiasm of soldiers for war, because their actions during the battle are reduced to a series of marches towards an indefinite goal, and firing against a black

compact mass, which represents the enemy. Abolishing personal combat decreases the glory of the fight, and personal hatreds become atrophied, like unused muscles.

Thus, little by little, the repugnance for war will increase, and Peace, beautiful and joy-giving, will spread her white wings over all men, and the new era of rational civilization and progress will begin.

Chronicles of battles fought before the introduction of fire-arms are simply descriptions of rival trials of strength: the soldiers rush at each other, grapple, wrestle, bite, and if possible, cut each others' throats. The conqueror is covered with his adversary's blood; it is a muscular orgie in which man reverts to a wild beast. He becomes as agile as a monkey, as blood-thirsty as a tiger, as loathsome as a hyena. With the use of fire-arms, which kill at a distance, and with less and less possibility of personal combat, the cruelty of the contest becomes, in a measure, less repulsive. Brutal instincts still manifest themselves, but not in excess; they exist with diminished force, and they will disappear like a star that gradually loses its primal heat. The great victories and world-wide conquests of ancient captains would, to-day, be impossible. People still rise in defence of their own homes, but we no longer find armies of eight hundred thousand men to follow a new Timur-Leng to the conquest of the world, nor would people to-day assist quietly at a massacre like that of the ninety thousand prisoners who were murdered at the battle of Angora.

Napoleon was certainly the last conqueror, the last ambitious man of genius whom history records.

Modern sociological theories contain the germs of the

religion of the future ; they hasten the abolition of war, and demolish, day by day, the tradition that surrounds with an aureole of glory the sinister figures of famous warriors. Already contemporaneous history compares the warrior with the brigand, the conqueror with the adventurer.

Nevertheless, Alexander and Hannibal, Cæsar and Scipio, Frederick II. and Napoleon I., will continue to rank among the geniuses of war, and to represent to peace-loving posterity the spirit of past times—the instincts of millions of creatures united and developed in a single man, who has been able to fascinate and lead others, because he was the perfect reflection of the sentiment and desires of all.

The greatest and most famous victories that history records, were gained by men gifted with an intelligence which we may call collective, who were able either by intuition, or the power of genius, to receive and express the warlike passions of a given historical moment.

But, before the tribunal of Science, even the most celebrated victories represent a retrogression along the road of civilization, because they serve only to exasperate the atavistic instincts, which are so deeply rooted in men. If defeat is unfortunate, more unfortunate is victory, because it keeps alive man's bloody instincts, and rekindles the enthusiasm for war and the glory and exaltation of triumph.

For the philosopher whose thoughts embrace the story of the human race, far more unfortunate for humanity than defeats, appear Alexander's victories of Granicus, Issus, and Arbela ; those of Trebbia, Trasimenus and Cannæ, won by Hannibal ; those of

Pharsalia, Pavia, Lützen, Rockroy, Pultava, Leuthen, Jena, and Sadowa, achieved respectively by Cæsar, Charles V., Gustavus Adolphus, Condé, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Moltke.

In the course of centuries, war has, from time to time, set one nation above another, has raised to the height of power Greece, Italy, Spain, France, and England. But the brilliant incidents which glorified the countries that gained by them, were for humanity, in general, degrading and brutalizing orgies, symptoms of a national disease. How eloquent are the coloured charts of a great historical atlas like Spruner's !

Every chart that we turn over is a century that is set, and each century is the record of scores of wars. We see, from time to time, nations enlarging their boundaries, and colouring with their hue other lands, a hundred times larger than their own, until some invasion deprives them of their newly-acquired territory, and the nation which has occupied such a large space, is represented on the map as small and shrunken, filling only a small part of the surface of the chart. Conquerors are vanquished in their turn, and so goes on a continual struggle, in which each nation experiences the vicissitudes of war, and empires oscillate like the barometer. From century to century, there appear such rulers as Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Charles V., Napoleon I., and Queen Victoria. Millions and millions of men are taken away from their families, their commerce and industry, in the prime and vigour of their youth, and saturate with their blood the soil they should have cultivated—martyrs to the malignant desires of warriors.

Turn over the pages of an historical atlas from first leaf to last, and consider the difference in size of the polychrome designs, which change form and colour like the figures in a kaleidoscope, before these continual transformations, each of which has been caused by some terrible struggle. Then you will be able to appreciate the awful consequences of war. You will read in these charts the names of all the battlefields that have been saturated with human blood, from the region of Thymbrium, where was fought the first battle that history records,¹ to the borough of Woerth, where Moltke's victory was won; in these pages filled with names and designs, we may read the history of twenty-four centuries.

War signifies not only the murder of men, but also the destruction of property. Fire and rapine, theft and spoliation, naturally accompany it.

Cities are razed to the ground, blooming fields are devastated, works of art ruined, libraries pillaged and burnt. The evil genius of war has destroyed Nineveh and Babylon, has sacked Rome and burnt Moscow, has overthrown the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, made by Leonardo da Vinci, and that of Julius II., sculptured by Michael Angelo. It has almost effaced da Vinci's painting of the "Last Supper;" it has burnt the wonderful library of Alexandria; has, in fact, destroyed heritages accumulated by the labour of generations, and ruthlessly sacrificed works of art which were as precious as human life. What terrible visions of blood and agony and anguish arise before

¹ The victory of Cyrus over Croesus at Thymbrium, in Phrygia (508 B.C.), described by Xenophon.

those who read the history of war! We shudder at unparalleled cruelty, at unjust spoliation and horrible tortures! Yet our disgust is less strong than our interest in this record, and bloodthirsty instincts awaken in us while reading of these old conquests and sieges, so that, in spite of ourselves, we are carried away in the general admiration and exaltation of these warriors.

These symptoms show that the reign of lasting peace is still distant, that many years must pass before we can eradicate the evil impulses inherited from our ancestors. We who denounce bloodshed, must needs remember the time when Canova's statue of Napoleon appeared to us as the presentment of a god. We, who so plainly recognise the horrors of war, must needs confess that we have taken great pleasure in the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar, the Life of Frederick the Great, the Diary of Napoleon, and the Journal of Von Moltke. That these records can so affect us, proves that we also are cursed with the heredity of brutal instincts, and inspires us with such an anxiety as we should feel if we discovered in our vital organs the signs of incurable disease.

These opposite sentiments, in which reason and instinct do battle together, are, we believe, common to all men, even to students and thinkers, who have never fired at a living target, or crossed swords, save in the fencing-school. Such a condition is logical, because we are born with warlike tendencies; from the cradle, we are accustomed to hear battle-cries and the thunder of artillery; at the same time, we have been taught to detest war, and deplore its consequences. The modern

mind, brought face to face with the problem, sees on one side reason that admonishes, and, on the other, instinct that rebels, and finds within itself two contesting forces. As physicians say, the crisis is near, and we may hope that it will be safely passed, and lead to sure if slow convalescence. Reason must triumph, war must perish, because man is becoming wiser and better.

The man of the future must know how far his individual rights extend, must be protected from all surprises, especially in the most fruitful period of his life, when work is plentiful and health is unimpaired.

From twenty to forty, he should be free to dispose of his physical and intellectual forces, without fear that the government, at any moment, may put a knapsack on his shoulders, and clap a gun in his hand, making him a blind instrument in the hands of others.

Only a perpetual and lasting peace can give men this certainty, and rid them of the anxiety and peril now suspended over their heads like the famous sword of Damocles.

Coming generations, nurtured on these ideas, will spontaneously rebel against making war, for the sake of war, and the warrior will not find a moment propitious to the manifestation of his malign genius.

Ambitious, courageous, and covetous men, who to-day excite crowds and lead them to the battlefield, desirous of a glory born of blood, will one day find themselves soldiers without arms, tribunes without rostrums.

And at last the day will come when they will disappear with the barbarisms of the past, like mists that roll away before the light,

We will now look more closely at these men of war, and endeavour to form a clear and definite opinion of the genius of the warrior.

It would be as impossible to select any single historical character, and study it alone as a type of its class, as it would be by the examination of one body to acquaint ourselves with the nature of all the maladies that attack humanity.

Therefore we shall choose five or six men from among them who may be considered as prototypes of their species. In this way only can we approximate to a correct idea of the warrior's character.

Alexander, Cæsar, and Hannibal; Frederick II., Napoleon, and Von Moltke, these make the twofold trinity of our choice. The first three were conquerors at a time when firearms were not invented; the last three, on the contrary, made war with the aid of terrible and murderous instruments. Their energy, therefore, displayed itself in different ways, partly on account of the different epochs in which they lived, and partly because of the different means at their disposal. Centuries rolled between their battles, but the minds of the warriors were alike.

All of them possessed, in a greater or lesser degree, certain peculiarities common to all warriors of genius—ambition, cupidity, and indomitable will.

Other and purely personal gifts, like the valour of Cæsar and Alexander, the craftiness of Hannibal, the avarice of Frederick II., the prodigality of Napoleon, and the culture of Moltke, may be classed as peculiarities which may enter into play from time to time, but are not qualities common to them all.

In order to understand a man thoroughly we must study him in action; and to appreciate his peculiar genius we must acquaint ourselves with his masterpieces. Thus we know Dante by the "Divina Commedia," Shakespeare by "Hamlet," Beethoven through his "Ninth Symphony"; Wagner is remembered by "Parsifal," Rembrandt by his "Lesson in Anatomy," Leonardo by his "Last Supper," Cellini by "Perseo," Thorwaldsen by his "Adonis," and Aristotle by the "Metaphysics." The world sees Galileo in the "Dialoghi sul Massima Sistemi," Mahomet in the Koran, Luther in the translation of the Bible: in fact, in all masterpieces we hear and see their authors.

So, to understand the warrior, we must study him on the battlefield, especially that one where he won his greatest renown: we must see Alexander the Great at Arbela, Hannibal at Cannae, Cæsar at Pharsalia, Frederick II. at Leuthen, Napoleon at Austerlitz, and Von Moltke in the war of 1870-71.

On the field of battle the warrior is a kind of divinity, fertile of great ideas and sudden resolutions; on his brain and hand hang the destiny of a people and the fate of an army.

Strategy, logistics, and tactics—the direction, movement, and encounter of armies, are the sharpest weapons in the warrior's armoury: these three, brought to bear upon the conflict at a decisive moment, decide the fortune of the day; winning at Leuthen the battle of the wing, or the battle of the centre at Austerlitz.

Let us judge these Titans by their battles; from the study of their actions the figures of the men will emerge like statues from the moulds.

Twenty centuries ago, in the age of Praxiteles, Apelles, Scopas, and Lysippus, at dawn on the first day of October, the armies of Darius and Alexander met, face to face, and the battle began. In this murderous struggle the Persian Empire disappeared as completely as a great forest destroyed by fire.

Darius, who guided and commanded the barbarian hordes, advised Bessus to engage with his Massagetæan cavalry Alexander's left wing. Before their impetuous attack the Macedonians were obliged to give way, and abandoned their position. Meanwhile, Mazeus was sending a thousand of his cavalry to sack the quarters of Alexander.

Parmenion, a Macedonian, who saw the peril, sent Polydamantes to the king to ask counsel.

"Go," said Alexander, "and tell him that if we win the day we shall recover not only what is lost, but will also sack all that belongs to the enemy. Therefore withdraw no soldiers; let the first consideration be my honour and that of Philip my father, and do not think of the damage done to our baggage."¹

The barbarians took possession of Alexander's quarters, murdered the generals and liberated the prisoners, who broke their chains, armed themselves and joined their liberators against the Macedonians. To Sisigambes, mother of Darius, these freed prisoners went, recounting their achievements and boasting of the victory that they would win.

Amyntus, general of the Greek cavalry, who had been sent to defend the quarters, was unable to sustain

¹ Q. Curtii Rufi: De rebus gestis Alexandri Magni, Liber iv.

the attack of the Persians, and returned in haste to Alexander to inform him of his defeat.

In this moment was conceived the idea that changed the fate of the day. Alexander, with the readiness of genius, acted on his impulse, and sent Aretus, captain of the lancers, against the Scythians.

In the meantime the scythe-cars, with which the Persians had provided themselves, increasing their speed, dashed into the midst of the Macedonian phalanx. At Alexander's order the battalions divided, opening up a passage before the murderous machines.

The halted lancers now moved, precipitated themselves against the horses which were harnessed together, entirely surrounded the cars, and overthrew the drivers of the chariots. By this stratagem, Alexander turned to his favour circumstances which seemed likely to be fatal to him. While these events took place, there dashed suddenly upon the Macedonians the company of Bactrians, sent by Darius; and their attack was so violent and impetuous, that the Macedonians were obliged to retreat, leaving numbers of killed and wounded.

Loud cries of victory burst from the Persians, who now believed the battle won. Again Alexander proved himself a man of action. By example and words he recalled the fugitives, reanimated their courage, and sent them back with renewed ardour into the fight.

The right wing of the Persian army had been weakened when the phalanx of Bactrians had been sent against Alexander's camp; and now, against this vulnerable point, the Macedonians directed their attack. The Persians, who were on the left wing,

concentrated their battalions on the defence of their right wing, and an assault upon the enemy's rear.

Alexander next sent a strong detachment of Agriane cavalry against the battalion menacing his rear, and obliged it to halt and engage. This move was an intuition of genius, for the army of Alexander was, at that moment, in a perilous condition, seeing that the rear and wings of an army are, perhaps, its weakest points.

At this moment, the largest battalion of the Macedonian cavalry rushed down on the enemy with such impetus that they took to flight, with their king Darius.

The battle, however, was not altogether won: the Macedonian general, Parmenion, commanding the left wing, was fighting at great odds with the Persian Mazeus. On the point of being overpowered, he informed Alexander of his danger, and the king promptly recalled a squadron of cavalry from the pursuit, and sent it to the help of Parmenion. The news that Darius had fled was already known, and the Persians began to be discouraged. The audacity of the assaults lessened, the Macedonians definitely gained the upper hand, the flight of the Persians became general, and victory was glorious and complete. After this battle, Persia, including the capital, was occupied by the Greeks, and the genius of Alexander shone as brilliantly as the sun.

Before the battle, Alexander had allowed his troops some days of repose, while he explored and studied the surrounding country: and his foresight was rewarded by a complete victory. He had neglected nothing that might strengthen and encourage his troops. The day

before the battle he addressed them in stirring words, thus stimulating them for the coming struggle.

No detail was too insignificant for his notice.

When the right wing of the enemy seemed feeble, he directed his attack against it, protecting his rear by the cavalry of the Agrianeae. When some troops were about to yield to the attack of the Bactrians, he himself rallied them, and conducted them back into the midst of the battle. There was no pause in that personal valour, no hesitation of that inflexible will.

In this battle, called Arbela by historians, though it took place about fifty miles from that city, the genius of Alexander achieved its masterpiece, and gained its most important victory.

From that day his pride became a devouring flame; nothing would satisfy his ambition but frequent conquests, continual raids and violences, and magnificent entertainments, which were orgies.

The destruction of Thebes, the burning of the royal palace at Persepolis, the assassination of Clitus, who at the battle of Granicus had saved Alexander's life, and the unjust murder of Callisthenes, all go to prove that the Macedonian conqueror was led by lust of glory and feverish ambition, not by a desire to improve and benefit his people.

A hundred and fifteen years after the battle of Arbela, a great battle was lost and won on the banks of the Ofanto. This is to-day a vast and beautiful plain, smiling with vineyards and harvests; and here the Romans were conquered in the battle of Cannae, one of the most famous in history.

On that day, Hannibal overcame the united strength of Varro and Æmilius, and destroyed an army almost twice outnumbering his own.

The Romans had eighty thousand men and six thousand cavalry; the Carthaginians had only forty thousand men and ten thousand cavalry.

The victory would certainly have fallen to the larger army if they had been commanded by a Scipio or a Cæsar. Lacking these, the issue was a hecatomb for the Romans, and the Sedan of the ancient Republic. Seventy-two thousand men remained on the field; and the remembrance of that massacre is still so vivid, that though twenty-one centuries have passed, the battle-field, in the province of Bari, is still called "The Field of Blood."

The two armies began the attack at dawn. Before an enemy of overwhelming number, Hannibal displayed all the ingenuity of intuitive genius.

He formed up his ranks so that his weakest point, the centre, invited the attack of the Romans, and he reinforced as strongly as possible the two wings of the line. The Roman infantry rushed with great impetus against the Carthaginian troops in the centre, disordering and dividing them, forcing them apart as a wedge is forced into the stump of a tree.

Then Hannibal brought his two wings rapidly towards the centre, imitating the movement of a closing compass, and surrounded with an iron circle the legions that had rushed into his snare. It was no longer a battle, but a slaughter. The Consul Æmilius remained dead on the field, and Varro was only saved by flight, with scarcely ten thousand survivors.

So went the great battle of Cannae, which was won under the same circumstances as that of the Ticino, fought between Hannibal and Scipio. Here, again, the Carthaginians disposed their troops so as to surround and attack the Romans at their shoulders, and in this instance, as before, the subtlety and astuteness of Hannibal succeeded in winning the day.

The peculiarity of Hannibal's genius may be summed up in one word: craft. To this he owed most of his successes.

He was as cunning as a monkey, as sly as a fox, as wise as a serpent. The stratagem he used against Fabius, whose troops had to give way before a stampede of oxen with burning bushes fastened to their horns; the manner in which by deceiving the Gortini he saved his treasures; the malice with which he indicated to his soldiers the ship of Eumenes, all these are so many instances of his craft, which faculty on the field of battle often bore fruit in unexpected victories.

He was an able strategist, a prudent general, always choosing positions which were well adapted to the evolutions of his cavalry; his intrepidity was shown in that passage of the Alps accomplished in the beginning of autumn; and his wisdom and tact were able to keep under perfect control an army composed of the most desperate characters, without having to repress a single revolt. A man solid as a rock, audacious as a wild beast, and cunning as a woman—such was Hannibal.

Between the Macedonian and the Carthaginian there is a great diversity of character and a wide gulf fixed.

The Greek-souled Alexander, who had been educated by Aristotle, was intellectual as well as warlike. He carried the poems of Homer with him, loved pleasure and sumptuous banquets, and married the daughter of a dependent prince for her beauty's sake. Prodigal of his strength, as a robber is of the gold of others, he died when only thirty-three years of age, at the zenith of his glory.

Hannibal, on the contrary, lived a sober, calm and prudent life, and at the age of seventy-five years, poisoned himself, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies the Romans.

Thus we have two men of equal genius, absolutely different in character. The one is a beautiful column, with a flowered and decorated capital; the other is a granite obelisk, rigid and bare as the pillar of a bridge.

“The family of Julia to which I belong, descends from Venus, so we are the successors of the sacred race of kings, who are the most powerful among men, their sanctity venerated by the gods who keep them under their especial protection.”

These arrogant words were uttered by Julius Cæsar in his oration at the funeral of the wife of Marius. We repeat them because they reveal the character of this extraordinary man better than a biography, showing him as he really was, a spirit of overpoweringly ambitious cunning in the employment of all the means whereby power is obtained.

Cæsar was, in our judgment, the unique genius of war, a soldier and a politician, who, in a supreme

moment could demand and receive from his troops all that they could give, and at every sacrifice.

The battles of the Sambre, of Alesia, and Pharsalia prove this.

To exercise such an influence, this man must have been possessed of great qualities. Indeed, he united in himself the gifts of an orator, poet, historian, and warrior.

Ambition was his guiding light, so that his achievements were not only dangerous to humanity, but baleful and injurious to Rome herself. Because of him arose civil war, and through him the powerful Republic was converted into an autocratic empire, which gave birth to Tiberius, Vitellius, and Diocletian, the incarnations of despotism, gluttony, madness, dissoluteness, profanity, ignorance, and tyranny.

The adamantine genius of Cæsar exhibited itself in the battle against the Helvetians, in the victories of the Sambre, and Alesia. In these he overcame a larger and better disciplined army than his own; in the battle of Pharsalia his genius touched the height of accomplishment. He was brave even to recklessness, leaving a feast at Ravenna to ford the Rubicon, and march on to Rome; he was crafty even to meanness, when he wrote that friendly letter to Cicero, inviting him to a meeting where they might discuss proposals of peace; he was splendidly shameless when he braved public contempt by apostrophising the tribune Metellus, custodian of the public treasury; he was great and contemptible, a fox in politics, a lion in war, and the malignant genius of Rome.

To us he seems a more pitiable figure than even Nero,

the parricide, wife-murderer, incendiary, and ravisher. Cæsar's apparition flashed across the history of Rome, like lightning which destroys the optic nerve; it was the last ray of light before eternal darkness.

When he became powerful, his ambition burst all bounds. He demanded permission to wear a crown that his baldness might be concealed; he suborned his legions with presents of gold, and deluded them with promises of new wars, rapine, and plunder; he had himself nominated Consul and Dictator for ten years; he applauded the erection of a golden statue in his honour, placed opposite that of Jupiter; he bought the people's friendship by bribes of money and fuel; he delighted and perverted the city with forty-four days of feasts; he dedicated a temple to Venus his ancestress; he conceded the right of citizenship to barbarian Gauls; he entrusted to an adventurer the administration of the Roman treasury; he conferred the highest honours and dignities on his friends and sycophants; and violated the most sacred and rigid laws of the Republic.

Notwithstanding these violences and spoliations, the people and the Senate itself applauded and exalted him, prostrating themselves before the despot as before a divinity.

At last, one afternoon in March, Marcus Junius Brutus turned against the tyrant and stabbed him to the heart. He thought that he was giving freedom to his country, but his useless crime was made of no avail, for after the speech of Antony over the body of Cæsar, the great Roman Republic lay as dead as the despot himself.

We will study Julius Cæsar at the battle of Pharsalia, where he gained his greatest victory.

Pompey's troops, increased in number by his alliance with Scipio, made so sure of victory, that before the battle they counted and divided all the possessions of Cæsar. "In fact, they spoke of the honour due to them, or the prizes in money, or of the best way of revenging themselves on the enemy." The certainty of victory was in the heart and mind of all.

While Pompey's camp was drunken with the idea of coming triumph, Cæsar put in order his provisions, encouraged his troops, and made every effort to discover the enemy's arrangements for the coming battle.

He broke camp, and drew his army up in line not far from the quarters of Pompey ; the following day he changed his position, little by little, until his troops were arrayed under the hill occupied by Pompey's soldiers.

This important and successful manœuvre infused courage into the troops ; then, perhaps, because his cavalry was inferior to the enemy's, he introduced into their midst certain youths exercised and trained in racing, well knowing the power of emulation, and desirous that his thousand cavalrymen should be able to withstand the attack of Pompey's seven thousand. Meanwhile, Pompey, encamped on the hill, was watching the movements of Cæsar, wishing to choose a favourable moment for the attack. Reciprocal snares were in fact being arranged by the two generals, movements resembling the feints with which two athletes approach one another before grappling.

Despairing of drawing on Pompey's attack, Cæsar

determined to change quarters. He consoled himself by the assurance that the changed position would make food and forage easier of provision, and would, at the same time, tire out Pompey's army. Thus he thought there might possibly arise a propitious occasion for battle.

He ordered the tents to be struck, and the signal for departure was given. But, just as his army was preparing to march, Cæsar saw that Pompey's troops had moved from cover. Here and now he perceived the favourable moment for the attack, and, instead of changing his position, he decided to give battle immediately.

This stroke of impulsive genius showed that Cæsar possessed a *coup d'œil* sure and infallible, a gift most necessary to a warrior; a gift made manifest with extraordinary clearness in Napoleon.

Intuition was natural to both Cæsar and the Corsican. It is a quality peculiar to the audacious and daring spirits who have more confidence in their own power of discrimination than in a laborious study of possible happenings. Hannibal, on the other hand, was as prudent and calculating as Von Moltke. One might, therefore, say that the genius of Cæsar was reincarnated in Napoleon, and that of Hannibal in Von Moltke.

Julius Cæsar approached the enemy, in order to discover the disposition of their troops.

In the left wing were the first and third legions, commanded by Pompey himself; the centre was held by the Syrian legion, commanded by Scipio; the legion of Cilicia and the Spanish cohorts formed the right

wing, which was the strongest and best equipped. It was strengthened by a deep ditch filled with branches; and the cavalry was drawn up as a rampart of defence, on the opposite side.

Cæsar, having less men to dispose of, arranged one legion on his right wing; the ninth and eighth, much decimated, formed about a single legion on his left; the centre was composed of eighty cohorts, equal to about twenty thousand men.

Antony commanded the left wing, Sulla the right, Cn. Domitius the centre, directly opposite Pompey. Later on, fearing that the enemy's cavalry would charge and surround his right wing, Cæsar divided the cohorts of the centre, and with these formed a fourth division, which he stationed opposite the cavalry, declaring that on the valour of these men depended the fate of the battle.

It was a beautiful day in August, and the sun had just risen, when the two armies, eager to engage, encountered each other. Bugles sounded in the camp of Cæsar, and the hearts of eighty thousand soldiers beat high and fast.

At the signal of attack, Cæsar's right wing bore down on Pompey's legions, which sustained unmoved the force of the onset; meanwhile, Pompey's cavalry attacked the assailants, who became disordered and fell back, pursued by seven thousand cavalymen, possessed with the savage joy of assault, and drunken with the lust of the chase. Cæsar's legions found themselves in the open, hemmed in and surrounded by enemies. Now was the chance for Cæsar's genius to assert itself.

The fourth division, formed of the six cohorts under Cæsar's command, sprang forward with banners flying, and fell furiously on Pompey's cavalry, who were so intent on the fray, that they were surprised into an ignominious flight.

With the same impetuosity, the cohorts of Cæsar surrounded the left wing, where Pompey's troops still continued to fight, attacking it at the flank and at the rear; at the same moment, Julius Cæsar let loose the third division, which until then had remained idle, replacing his jaded men by fresh and unexhausted troops. The victory was, of course, complete and magnificent.

Pompey's army fled as one man before the enemy, and those who did not fly, fell; Pompey himself sought safety in flight.

At the battle of Pharsalia, Cæsar's genius attained its height; he accomplished there his masterpiece. The Republic of Rome prostrated itself before its new master, and saluted him as future emperor.

After this victory, Julius Cæsar dared everything. His desires became laws, his commands were sacred, even his ambition was a reason for the people's adoration, and they saluted him as "Deo invicto." His overweening pride was, in the eyes of the multitude, a supernatural virtue; only a few strong souls could withstand the fascination of his name and fame.

When the Colossus was destroyed, and Cæsar fell dead at the feet of Pompey's statue, instead of welcoming the dawn of liberty, Rome remained helpless and stupefied, like a blind man who loses suddenly the staff which supports him. It seemed as if Cæsar's

death had extinguished the sun, and the eternal city trembled in darkness, while over the body of the murdered man, Romans applauded the emperor, who would have dragged them down to ruin.

Thus rose to power, and fell by a murderer's hand, a man who filled a century with his name, who marked in history a new era, and was perhaps the most powerful genius that has ever been known.

After having seen the three great captains of antiquity on their battlefields, we shall now study the exploits of another powerful triad—Frederick II., Napoleon I., and Moltke.

More than sixteen centuries separated the birthdays of Cæsar and Frederick; the old instruments of war had fallen into disuse, and warfare itself, with the invention of powder and fire-arms, had changed entirely.

Armies, better disciplined and better equipped, broader culture and greater experience, have made the art of war a profound science, subjected to rigid and decided laws, that only great geniuses dare violate.

The battles of Leuthen, of Austerlitz, and Jena, the campaign of 1870-71, are the masterpieces of Frederick, Napoleon, and Von Moltke; in these superb victories the genius of the warriors manifests itself in full force.

War is now less savage, but equally infamous. Hand-to-hand fights are less frequent; the captain who leads an assault is a figure rarely seen in these days.

The discovery of explosives and the perfecting of

fire-arms spare muscular force, but necessitate, on the other hand, greater intellectual development. Cuirass, coat of mail, helmet, gorget, gauntlet, and shield are now only found in museums, and are objects of curiosity. Instead of club, pike, battle-axe, poniard, cross-bow, dart, battering-ram, catapult, and ballista, we find shells, guns, rifles, cannons, and mitrailleuses.

The tactics of the ancients have declined before the perfection of modern fortifications; beaked ships and splendid galleys have disappeared before the swift cruisers of to-day.

Science has perfected the art of war. Great captains of our day estimate the number of times each soldier can fire in a minute, and count their cannon as in times past Roman captains counted their catapults and swords. In modern warfare the personal valour of the soldier has no longer the importance that was attached to it in bygone days; it has become a secondary element. Of most importance nowadays are the quality of the arms, the range of the cannon, the wisdom of the general, and the exactness of the chart. A modern warrior manages his troops much as a chess-player plays his game. Opposing players and commanders meet craft with craft, skill with skill, calculation with calculation. Every chessman represents a corps of troops, every move means an assault or a defence, and every piece taken a loss.

Prince Eugene, Frederick II., Napoleon I., Suvarof, Moltke, Skobelev, are the Murphys, Andersons, and Laskers of War.

A good and rapid opening, this is the strategy; ability

to move discreetly, here lie the logistics; concentration of the men, at the end, these are the tactics, of war.

Frederick II. was a giant, because even to this day his seventy-four years of life are called the epoch of Frederick the Great.

Imagine how great must be the brain of the man who gives his name to a century of history! And the century of Frederick is as grand, magnificent, and adventurous as an epos.

When the great Prussian king was in the full tide of his feverish activity, science, letters, and art were also at full flood. Giambattista Vico had printed his "Scienza Nuova," Linnæus had published his "Classification of Plants," Morgagni had founded comparative anatomy, Franklin had invented the lightning-rod, Buffon had written his natural history, Diderot and D'Alembert had begun the "Grand Encyclopædia," Pergolesi had composed the "Stabat Mater," Haydn had written his celebrated oratorio, Gluck had finished his "Orpheus," and Mozart his "Don Giovanni."

These were the men who lived and worked in the times wherein Frederick the Great's exploits astonished the world. To this century he gave his name, this extraordinary and tempestuous century, which began with the minuet and closed with the "Carmagnole."

"The battle of Leuthen is a masterpiece of movement, of manœuvre, and of resolution; this alone would suffice to immortalise Frederick, and place him

in the rank of the great generals." Napoleon wrote these words concerning the great field-day of Frederick against Prince Charles of Lorraine.

The Austrian army, composed of about ninety thousand men, on the morning of December 5th, 1757, was drawn out in narrow files, a little more than a mile long; the right wing stretched towards Nipporn, the centre was at Frobeltwitz and Leuthen, the left wing at Sagschütz. These four villages are in a direct line, therefore the troops were disposed in one long column.

Early in the morning of the fifth, Frederick left his encampment at Neumarkt. His vanguard engaged the enemies' troops, under General Nostitz, hard by the village of Borne. Attacked by the Prussian cavalry, this general asked Prince Charles to bring up the infantry to his aid, but the prince took no heed of his request.

It was an epic struggle, in which the regiments of Nostitz were driven towards Frobeltwitz.

Prince Charles then grasped the gravity of the situation. He detached certain regiments from the second column and from the reserve, and sent them to the support of the right wing.

This movement, already divined by the genius of Frederick, favoured the plan of attack which he had made.

The emperor's army was so near that the soldiers could be counted; the right of Nipporn was protected by the woods of Guckerwitz, but the centre and left wing were in full sight. Frederick, therefore, decided to direct all his troops against the left wing of the Austrians.

Having left three and a half battalions of light infantry at Borne, he deployed his men right front in view of the enemy, marched them across the plain which extended from Leuthen to Frobewitz, and concealed them behind the hill, protected by the villages of Radaxdorf and Lobetinz. The enemy watched the manoeuvre, but could not understand the reason for it.

"If they are going, let them go," said Daun to Prince Charles, supposing the movement to be a retreat.

Frederick, following the march of his troops, halted before the windmill of Lobetinz to direct the battle. All was ready, and the genius of the warrior was prepared to act and justify itself.

Opposite the pine woods of Sagschütz, and around the village of Schriegwitz, the great captain stationed his right wing, and the attack began at one o'clock. The enemy permitted the Prussians to advance within seven hundred paces, and then opened fire upon them. Frederick's troops had an immediate advantage. The Wurtembergers first, and then the Bavarians, retreated in disorder, and were almost taken for the enemy by the Austrians at Leuthen.

The heights of Sagschütz were conquered; the left wing of the Austrians retreated towards Glogau, and there sought to reorganise themselves as best they could under a continuous fire.

Frederick developed his plan with the unerring rapidity of genius.

The Prussian cavalry, set in motion at the opportune moment, crossed the ditches between Sagschütz and the swamps of Glogau, and launched themselves in a compact mass against the enemy's dragoons, over-

powering and dispersing them. Ten hussar squadrons of the reserve then threw themselves into the midst of the *melée*, and forced back the left wing, which retreated in great disorder towards the woods of Rathen, where its commanders tried to rally it again.

In this moment the tactical genius of Frederick worked like a flash of lightning. Rapidly he turned his right wing against the enemy, at Leuthen. Prince Charles's troops rushed to the aid of those in the village, but, arriving exhausted by a rapid march, they were time and again repulsed, and the infantry of Frederick were able to throw themselves upon the village and occupy it.

Sunset was near, and it was necessary that the victory should be complete before nightfall.

In the thick of the fight the battle still raged obstinately and fiercely. Both armies succeeded in accomplishing wonderful deeds of valour, and savage instincts were in full play. It seemed as if neither of the parties would yield.

The ferocity of the men, excited by the ardour of the battle, is terrible and indescribable: faces assume a bestial aspect, muscles vibrate and distend like steel springs, the appearance, gestures, and voices become like those of wild beasts. They are incapable of reasoning and judging, all intellectual faculties are withdrawn and sink into the depths of the soul, overpowered with the brutal instincts, which rise terrible and impetuous, like a raging volcano, or a river which bursts its bounds.

In the fury of the *melée*, ferocity reigns unchecked, faces grow brutalised, and man reverts to the wild

beast. It is with the roar of artillery, with the flash and glitter of drawn weapons, that the malignant genius of war makes brutes of men, destroying the good influence which science and art have exercised over humanity.

Reading of heroic deeds, of battles that are the boast of warlike nations, the philosopher pities, but cannot admire; he deplores rather than exalts these victories and these victors.

General Lucchesi, commanding the right wing of the imperial cavalry, supposing that the Prussian infantry was undefended, vigorously attacked their left wing. He was entirely ignorant that the Prussian cavalry lay in ambuscade behind Radaxdorf. As soon as the attack was fairly begun, Frederick ordered General Driesen to proceed to charge.

The dragoons of Bayreuth attacked the Austrians on the flank, Puttmacher's hussars assailed them at the shoulders, and Driesen himself, at the head of his thirty squadrons, rushed with such fury on the enemy, that they were overpowered and obliged to take refuge behind the infantry now rallying again at Lissa.

The imperial cavalry did not again appear on the field of battle, and the infantry, completely routed, abandoned their arms and took flight.

When twilight fell on this vast plain of blood, the victory was absolute and decided. Frederick's military genius had again enabled him to overcome an army larger and better equipped than his own.

In this battle the Austrians lost 21,000 soldiers, 116 guns, 51 colours, and 4000 waggons; the Prussians' loss was only 6000 men.

Thus conquered Frederick the Great, the king, warrior, philosopher, and poet, who, during a glorious reign and continuous wars, found time to refute the "Principe" of Machiavelli, to compile a legislative Code, to write a history of the House of Brandenburg, another of the "Seven Years' War," and various poems on the art of war, in some of which we find thoughts worthy of an Apostle :

"Si vaincre est d'un Héros, pardonner est d'un Dieu.
 Suivez, jeunes Guerriers, ces illustres modèles ;
 Alors la Renommée, en étendant ses ailes,
 Mêlant à ses récits vos noms et vos combats,
 Portera votre gloire aux plus lointains climats."¹

Moreover, this sovereign, much of whose life was passed on the field of battle, whose genius was greater in war than in letters, had, at times, visions of a fruitful peace.

In the sixth ode, written by him on the war of 1747, read these words :

"O Paix, aimable Paix, si long-temps désirée,
 Viens fermer de Janus le temple redouté :
 Bannis de ces climats l'intérêt et l'envie,
 Rends la gloire aux Talens, à tous les Arts, la vie :
 Alors nous mêlerons à nos sanglants lauriers
 Tes myrtes et tes oliviers."

Is this the voice of the conqueror of Rosbach and of Leuthen? Is it not rather a philosopher, or a prophet, who speaks?

When Napoleon I. won the battle of Austerlitz, he was thirty-six years old ; he was at the period of life

¹ "L'art de la guerre," Chant sixième.

when man is at his greatest intellectual vigour, the moment of his fullest development, the summit of his vital parabola. Ulm, Austerlitz, and Jena, were among the achievements of Napoleon, in the most vigorous years of his life, when his genius had come to maturity.

In these years, so greatly did his power increase, that he was considered as invincible, and as inflexible as destiny. He was the most envied of men, the dreamer of wonderful dreams, the only creature capable of carrying out the stupendous tasks he conceived.

In fact, after his three great victories, blinded by ambition, he imagined all humanity subject to his will, as Alexander thought after Arbela, Charles V. after Pavia. Only this despot manifested openly the cupidity and pride which possessed him.

Certain heights are only attained by geniuses once in their lives; since a masterpiece is not repeated. Thus even Napoleon began to decline, when he reached the apex of his glory; like others, he was obliged to submit to the natural law, according to which there are years of progress, moments of greatest vigour, and at last the gradual, but inevitable decline.

Napoleon could no more renew his exploits of Austerlitz and Jena than Dante could have written another "Divina Commedia."

On the evening of December the first, 1805, Napoleon, mounted and escorted by grenadiers, made the rounds of the camp in order to salute and encourage his soldiers, who were on the eve of a great battle. It was his habit to show himself frequently among his

soldiers, because his presence kindled general enthusiasm, and his greeting was considered an honour and a delight.

The fine intelligence of Napoleon never neglected anything that might possibly exalt him in the world's opinion, and knew admirably how to turn to his own advantage all that was best in the hearts and thoughts of others.

At that time he was "*l'Empereur*"—the conqueror of Millesimo, Lonato, Arcola, Rivoli, the Pyramids, Marengo, and Ulm, the idol of France, and the god of his army.

This inspection by torch-light was more powerful than a harangue, and much more efficacious in exciting the troops to battle.

The soldiers, improvising torches of plaited straw and holding them aloft, received the imperial party with cries of joy.

The camp was surrounded with a halo of light. Again and again the army saluted their general, the idol of their faith.

The enemy, from the surrounding hills, saw this blaze of light, and could even distinguish the seven army corps gleaming out in seven lines of fire.

On one side were the French, vibrating with enthusiasm, wild for battle, guided by the giant intellect of Napoleon; on the other side was an immense army vain of its numerical superiority, sure of victory, commanded by two emperors—Francis I. and Alexander I.—the forces of Austria and Russia having combined to overthrow and destroy the great conqueror.

In the Austro-Russian camp, on the eve of the

battle, the leaders made arrogant addresses to the soldiers, such as were made by Darius to his troops before rushing on the legions of Alexander, and to Pompey's men before attacking the army of Cæsar: the Austrians and the Russians seemed as sure of victory as of sunrise after night.

On the first of December, about eighty thousand Austro-Russian troops deployed on the hills that rise west of Austerlitz. They centred in the hill village of Pratzen and in the marshy plain of the Goldbach, with the villages of Puntowitz and Kobelnitz.

The plan of battle for the following day was arranged by General Weyrother. At midnight he assembled his staff and gave orders to the generals, who were to lead the five columns. Weyrother supposed that the enemy would be stationed west of Bellowitz, Schlapanitz, Puntowitz, Kobelnitz, Sokolnitz, and Tellnitz; and, therefore, decided to attack them on their extreme right wing, which would be drawn up near the last-named village.

But Napoleon, who had been watching the enemy's movements, guessed their designs, and saw that they intended to surround and attack his left wing, so, with an audacity equal to his genius, he determined to take Pratzen in order to prevent this manœuvre and make himself sure of the victory.

"Audaces fortuna juvat" thought the great captain, and, accordingly, during the night, he transported nearly all his army to the side of the lake, river, and gorge, opposite to that where the enemy had decided to attack. He crossed the Goldbach and the river Brizk, concentrating a great part of his force on the

villages of Girzikowitz, Puntwitz, and Kobelnitz, so that he could be ready to attack Pratzen. In the neighbourhood of the villages of Sokolnitz and Tellnitz, he left troops enough to resist the enemy and keep them at bay, while he conquered the heights and destroyed the Russians' centre.

It was a magnificent design, and one of unparalleled boldness, because the attack on the centre is perhaps the most dangerous and uncertain of military tactics. Napoleon confided in his genius, and rightly confided, because he was at that time the favourite of fortune.

In the morning, a dense fog enveloped the surrounding country, and concealed everything. About ten o'clock the atmosphere cleared, and Napoleon could see from Schlapanitz the three Russian columns marching in close order towards Tollnitz and Sokolnitz. It was then that he gave Marshals Soult and Bernadotte the order to attack Pratzen in half an hour. They were reinforced by the reserve cavalry, commanded by Murat, by Oudinot's Grenadiers, and the Imperial Guard under Bessières; the two wings under Davoust and Lannes had orders to remain inactive until Napoleon was sure of his attack on the centre.

The plan was a miracle of science and calculation. If the movements of the two armies are traced out on a geographical map, it will be seen that this project of Napoleon's was truly a masterpiece of military genius.

The Russians had just attacked Tellnitz and Sokonitz, and Kutusoff was stationary at Pratzen. At this moment, the Tsar arrived and ordered the troops to

march out on the plain; but no sooner had the battalions left the villages than they were furiously assailed by the French, who were almost in their midst.

The Russians were obliged to take refuge in Pratzen, where they kept up a desperate struggle against an enemy who seemed to rise up in thousands out of the ground.

Aware now of their strategical error, they tried to hold the heights, but all their efforts were vain. The struggle was tenacious and deadly. Three times, a mameluke brought to the emperor flags that he had wrested from the enemy. Napoleon wished to keep the man near him, but he rushed back into the thick of the fight, and was not seen again alive. A captain at the head of his company was wounded by a shot fired point blank, but, notwithstanding, continued to fight until he fell dead. General Rapp, covered with blood and almost exhausted, conducted to Napoleon Prince Repnin, whom, with his own hand, he had made prisoner.

Three regiments of French infantry now beat back the Russian infantry, and the heights of Pratzen were taken by one o'clock in the afternoon.

Kutusoff's corps was dispersed, and the victory was made complete by a vehement attack against the Allied troops under Buxhowden near Tellnitz.

The Russians left 21,000 soldiers dead and wounded, and 133 cannon on the field of battle; and the Austrians lost 5922 men.

After this victory, Napoleon issued the following proclamation to his troops: "Soldats," it begins,

“je suis content de vous, vous avez à la journée de Austerlitz justifié tout ce que j’attendais de votre intrépidité. Vous avez décoré vos aigles d’une immortelle gloire . . . lorsque tout ce qui est nécessaire pour assurer le bonheur et la prospérité de notre patrie sera accompli, je vous ramènerai en France. Là vous serez l’objet de mes plus tendres sollicitudes. Mon peuple vous reverra avec joie, et il suffira de dire: J’étais à la bataille d’Austerlitz! pour qu’on vous réponde: Voilà un brave!”

Two years later, on the eve of the battle of Eylau, Napoleon, wishing to demonstrate his satisfaction at a brilliant charge made by his cuirassiers, embraced their commander, General Hautpoult, before the whole army.

He knew how to deal out both praise and blame, and at all times knew the right word or deed that would excite his soldiers’ enthusiasm for his personality, and demand of them heroic deeds.

Von Moltke’s genius differed entirely from that of Napoleon. The impulsive and imaginative Corsican acted often on the spur of the moment, and his plans were conceived and matured on the battlefield only a little while before his manœuvres and assaults were made. Von Moltke, on the contrary, was a reflective genius, a man of forethought and prudence. Napoleon almost always won his victories by an excess of audacity; Von Moltke, on the contrary, succeeded through an excess of caution; “*Erst wägen, dann wagen*” (“weigh, and then risk”), was his favourite motto. Napoleon was the whirlwind and the flame;

Von Moltke the silent and unsuspected decay that eats out the heart of a great tree until at last a breeze can topple it over. Two athletes were these, lifting the same weights, each in his own manner, one rapidly as light, the other slowly and thoughtfully performing his task.

The campaign of 1870-71 was the masterpiece of Von Moltke, but we cannot surprise him in any single battle, at the exact moment in which his genius achieved its finest effort, because all his victories were the fruit of long preparation and study; and did not burst forth as a flash of lightning, but were as gradual and slow as the setting of the sun.

Napoleon and Moltke resemble two mathematicians, both intent on solving a problem. Each arrives at the same result; the one by immediate intuition, the other after long and laborious meditation.

Napoleon's battles are a problem solved, but without a demonstration; those of Von Moltke are detailed with the utmost particularity.

The victories gained by Moltke at Woerth, at Spikeren, at Mars-la-Tour, at Gravelotte, and at Sedan, are so many works of genius, which, taken together, give a glorious result.

The principal tactic of the Germans during the war of 1870 was the concentration of their forces against the most vulnerable point. This ascertained, they either themselves attacked, or, if necessary, defended some menaced position of their own; they tried always to place the greatest number of troops at the point where they might be most useful, imitating in this the proceedings of men who are trying to lift a fallen cart: all their efforts are directed to the part where the

wheels have given way, and their united strength succeeds in raising it.

Reading the diary of the war, especially that written by Von Moltke himself, the truth of this appears evident.

Kirbach came to the help of Hartmann when the latter was in danger at Froschwiller; Hartmann returned to the combat in order to support Kirbach when he was assailed at Woerth.

It was the victory of organisation, order, discipline, and of method, the triumph of prudence and foresight. One man alone would have been able to neutralise these designs, and with sheer audacity defeat this splendid organisation—the man of genius who once commanded the French troops. Instead of Napoleon III., MacMahon, and Bazaine, Von Moltke should have been confronted by the eagle-eyed Corsican, with his extemporaneous genius. MacMahon was swayed by evil fortune like a shrub in a wind storm; after Gravelotte, Bazaine shut himself up in Metz with a hundred and twenty thousand men, instead of opening a passage to Paris, and Napoleon III., ill and incapable, had not vigour enough to command his armies. The fall of the Empire and the defeat of the Republic were inevitable, because the power of genius irradiating from a single brain, fought against a collection of ordinarily intelligent men who mutually contradicted each other.

Many great deeds were done during this war of six months—only six months, during which time a rich and powerful nation fell from her pride of place like an oak struck by lightning.

The emperor's ruin involved eighty thousand soldiers whom he surrendered to his enemies; and the new

republic which went to war with an army of eight hundred thousand men, also surrendered, asked grace of its conquerers, and opened its capital to them. The enemy occupied Paris, took possession of her fortresses, caserns, and castles, and at Versailles, the most sumptuous palace of France, in the very Hall of Mirrors, where Le Brun's brush once celebrated the glory of Louis XIV., the German Empire was proclaimed, a new and terrible menace throned in the very heart of the nation that had attempted to annihilate it.

And it was a little man who had wrought these wonders. A little beardless man, slender even to emaciation, whose innate power had set him at the side of such giants as William I. and Bismarck. This little man had achieved miracles, had led his army from victory to victory, and, finally, had marched them into the very city of Paris itself.

This pigmy was Count Helmuth von Moltke, the conquerer of Sadowa, the bitter enemy of France; as delicate as a child, but as inflexible as death.

He was a genius of war, dedicated to science, to study and meditation.

After this campaign, he became a legendary figure, and his actions were considered not as those of a man, but of a supernatural being. Bismarck, William I., and he constituted the trinity which directed the Empire, the triple figure-head of the new confederation.

At the end of his diary, concerning the history of the war, Count Von Moltke wrote a page in which is synthesised the whole character of the man: a page clear and incisive, lucid as a postu-

late in geometry. He makes no comments, but records facts more eloquent than any digressions, and sets down numbers, which are more powerful than arguments.

If this epilogue had been written by Napoleon I., it would be teeming with enthusiasm over the achievements of his brain and hand, and overflowing with delight and pride. Von Moltke, on the contrary, does not speak of himself, sings no pæans in his own honour; but his silence is more eloquent than all encomiums, for the reader can see for himself the facts and numbers, and can appreciate all the great and disastrous consequences of this war.

Von Moltke writes thus: "The war was conducted by both parties with an overpowering display of force; it proceeded with wonderful celerity, and was finished in the short period of seven months.

"In the first four weeks eight battles were fought, from the effects of which the French Empire crumbled and fell, and the French army disappeared from the scene.

"A new formation of the masses and of the army, but of minor value, was made; they equalised the numerical superiority of the Germans. We were obliged to fight twelve other battles before we could arrive at a decisive siege of the French capital. Twenty fortresses were taken, and not a day passed without the occurrence of some engagement of greater or less importance.

"The war cost the Germans great sacrifices; they lost 6247 officers, 123,452 men, 1 flag and 6 cannons.

“The whole loss of the French cannot be calculated, but as prisoners alone we find :

	Officers	Men
In Germany	11,860	371,981
At Paris	7,456	241,686
Disarmed in Switzerland	2,192	88,381
TOTAL	<u>21,508</u>	<u>702,048</u>

“One hundred and seven flags were captured, 1915 field cannon, 5526 fortress cannon.

“Strasburg and Metz, wrested from the mother country in her time of weakness, were recovered, and the German Empire was resuscitated.”

This is the terrible and laconic summing-up of Count Helmuth von Moltke.

These men of action have been, we see, as destructive as whirlwinds and as fatal as plagues to their generation ; but their glory is near its sunset, and the fame of their exploits is passing, and must perish.

Art unites itself with science to suppress war, and its work is the more efficacious, since art appeals to the heart, and is accessible to all intelligence. The engravings of Callot, Holbein, Durer, and the pictures of Goya, who was a spectator of the massacre that took place under Napoleon's command, bathing Spain in blood ; the horrible pyramid of heads painted by Verestschagin, the statue of Timur-Leng sculptured by Gêrome, the “Retreat from Russia,” by Meissonier, these are all beautiful and artistic creations, which excite indignation against military despotism and hasten the advent of universal peace.

Literature, also, offers many volumes which tend to the same result: Tolstoi's "War and Peace"; "La Débâcle," by Zola; "Force," by Paul Adam; and the celebrated "Die Waffen Nieder!" by Bertha von Suttner.

Readers of these volumes, which describe the horrible passions and the disastrous effects of war, the barbarity of rape, incendiarism, and plunder, become apostles of peace, and would fain condemn to the flames all treatises on war, even such scientific writings as those that we owe to Niccolò Machiavelli or Henry Jomini.

When men are at peace, the corn grows luxuriantly; the trees in the orchards are laden with fruit, the meadows sweet with the new-mown hay, the patient herds feed along the green hill pastures, cows yield their milk, and flocks of sheep their wool.

In offices and manufactories, work proceeds steadily and tranquilly, and the workmen sing beside their machines. Everywhere, from the palace to the cottage, from the house to the hut, men are winning their daily bread by healthy and profitable toil.

Suddenly, cities, villages, mountains, and valleys, are shocked from their quietness by the cry: War! War! At the sound of this cry, the workmen leave their work, some taking up arms, some fleeing in a panic, and some seeking to shut themselves up in houses that they barricade as if they were fortresses. War roars and thunders, passing like a whirlwind over the happy land.

Offices are deserted, machines, stopped and silent, loom like spectres in the dusky factories; the fields of grain are crushed to earth, cavalry-horses feed on the

hay-crop, cattle and sheep are slaughtered, and the peasant returns to his hut to find it a ruined shell, its stalls and sheepfold empty, its chicken-pen harried. The bare fields refuse to nourish him ; he is wounded by a forgotten weapon ; his doorstep is stained with the blood of his kindred ; and in every direction he sees broken and rusty bayonets and guns.

The city streets are empty, the hospitals crowded, and the dead lie heaped in the common ditch. Magnificent edifices are injured or destroyed, numbers of houses are burnt or pillaged, bridges have been blown up, railways interrupted, churches converted into barracks, theatres turned into stalls, statues overturned, pictures cut into pieces. Women mourn their dead, and thousands of wounded and helpless creatures are left to burden their overworked families.

Men stand foodless and friendless, without any defence against the bitter weather ; misery possesses them as a terrible and avenging Nemesis :

“ Oh, tra le mura che il fratricidio
Cementò eterne, pace è vocabolo
Mal certo. Dal sangue la pace
Solleva candida P'ali ! Quando ? ”¹

¹ G. Carducci : “ La Guerra.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROPHET

IF by another great poetic vision we could, as in the "Trionfo della Fama" of Petrarca, witness a procession of those Sons of Glory, whose lives we have studied up to now, and could ask each one: "What have you given to humanity?" the answer of the bard would be: "a poem"; of the musician, "a symphony"; of the artist, "a picture." The philosopher would point to a metaphysical treatise, the scientist to an instrument or a formula, the explorer to an island or a continent, the warrior to a kingdom or an empire. Each would show something visible or tangible.

The prophet, however, can give nothing but the idea, conceived by his imagination—an idea incapable of proof, which has nevertheless fascinated and enticed thousands, who accept it as a fact and sanction it as a dogma.

How is it possible for one man to become so omnipotent? Born of ordinary parents, without culture, without worldly goods, suddenly, by virtue of some great thought which has set his imagination on fire, he rises above the crowd, he inveighs against creeds that are centuries old, and demolishes established institu-

tions. He controls the thoughts of others, and by sheer force of eloquence and energy, creates a new world in the world around him, of which he becomes the high priest, second only to divinity itself.

This fact should be sufficient to prove the omnipotence of genius, the immense value of an idea, divulged by a man who declares that it was conceived by virtue of inspiration, and asserts that he hears within himself a voice that directs his words and actions.

Belief in the supernatural is always more or less strongly developed in us, and, while still in the flesh, it is impossible to divest the soul of its influence.

There are nations without a creed and tribes without a god, but they are not without the cult of the supernatural. They recognise the power of a chief whom they obey; they venerate their kings, and consider them infallible. This is their faith, less spiritual than fetichism, but the starting-point whence they gradually progress through polytheism to monotheism, from Olympus to Paradise.

If there arise in one of these tribes a man of fervid imagination, who, excited by some unusual phenomenon, passionately proclaims a supernatural event, this apparently insignificant act may give birth to a new religion.

Once, in a violent hurricane, an anchor was washed on the beach of a remote and barbarous country. The strange implement excited the curiosity of the natives.

One day the chief of the tribe, whirling about his club, broke away one of the flukes. The next day he died suddenly. A native wizard attributed his death

to the wrath of the mutilated anchor, and, suddenly, the harmless nautical instrument became an idol before which the savages prostrated themselves, as before a fetich. Thus, from a fact believed to be supernatural, fetichism was born among a barbarous tribe, and, in a similar manner, in cultivated and civilised countries, new religions arise, when a man of genius diffuses ideas which promise new and unexpected bliss.

As long as suffering exists, religion will flourish ; but if, by an unheard-of miracle, suffering ceased, we should see the religion disappear, for suffering is religion's *raison d'être*.

It is an irrefutable fact that pain alone causes man to feel the necessity of a God.

A prophet is a man specially sensitive to all human suffering, a neurasthenic who identifies himself with the woes of others, as an actor identifies himself with the characters he personates.

His universal sympathy fills him with an intense desire to mitigate or suppress suffering, or, at least, to justify it to the sufferer by proving that it is necessary, in order to acquire later a state of peace and happiness, as death is necessary to generate life. Before the spectacle of humanity, torn by passions, subject to illness and death, the prophet would fain quiet every anxiety and heal all wounds ; in fact, he would redeem the world from suffering. All other geniuses are, in a manner, prophets, but their task is practical and positive, because they confront the problem in the field of earthly existence, and render life more supportable by means of their art which gives joy, and their science which mitigates woe. The prophet's work, on the contrary, is

speculative and not practical; it embraces a vast field, for he sees man beyond this life, since man, in his opinion, should not only occupy himself with temporal life but with death and the life to come.

All the mysteries that nature conceals from us—birth, death, and the origin of the world—continually stimulate the souls of prophets, and are the foundations on which they build their great temples of faith and worship, besides being the inspiration of all their eloquence.

No man of genius is more sincere, or more convinced of his own apostleship, than he who believes himself a prophet.

He suffers all the pains of a new creation; he consecrates himself to the study of humanity and of the mysteries of the universe; he seeks within himself to find the reason of grief and joy, illness and death. Suddenly a wonderful idea flashes through his brain, with the rapidity of lightning.

He has solved the mystery, he has found the reason for all misery! at least, he believes he has done so.

His discovery at birth is as delicate as the bud when it bursts from the earth, but, little by little, it increases and expands, it flowers and multiplies, and the man feels himself no longer able to contain his thoughts; he is obliged to speak, to pour into uninitiated souls the joy that is within his. This joy he modestly calls "Revelation," as if it were a gift from above, when, as a matter of fact, it is as much the natural fruit of his genius as the picture is the painter's.

The prophet's idea is reached after his attempt to fathom the mysteries beyond the tomb; and in how

deep an abyss must a man precipitate himself who dares to investigate the mystery of death!

In order that we can understand that mystery in all its immensity, it is necessary that we should meet death face to face, we who, like all others, must die. The flesh that we now cherish with so much care, will putrefy and fall away, leaving the bones to become dust, and the atoms of the body, like the pollen of flowers, to be carried hither and thither by the winds.

But the soul, what becomes of it?

This is the great question concerning which all philosophers have disputed, from Socrates to Spencer, from Plato to Nietzsche.

The problem remains unsolved; twenty centuries of polemics have not advanced it a step. It is there, before us, dark and undecipherable as an Etruscan inscription, inaccessible as a sealed tomb.

One man alone has penetrated the mystery of death, considering it as a necessary passage from a state of grief to one of eternal tranquillity.

This man is the prophet. He is the one creature who is convinced that he has solved the question, that he has seen, beyond death, the future life, as one sees his own image in water.

The prophetic message is an illusion for us who are not prophets, but for Buddha, for Confucius, for Mahomet, this illusion is reality, and becomes an axiom, a dogma. So strong was the conviction of each of these men of the truth of his message, that he deemed it a duty to disseminate it through the world, that others might share the joy he had felt at his discovery.

Up to a certain point the future prophet is only a philosopher, a man who desires, helped by stillness and solitude, to devote himself to metaphysical questions, and to discuss those things that experimental science considers insoluble abstractions.

What is life? What is death? What is the destiny that awaits us beyond the tomb?

These are the questions that arise in the mind of the anchorite, when he dedicates himself to contemplation and to meditation.

After long absorption in analysis and synthesis, his mind hears phantasy respond to those questions which the scientist does not attempt to answer, because they transcend experience.

The prophet is not arrested by the obstacles that bar the road to the philosopher, but as his knowledge does not enable him to understand of what the obstacles are composed, he leaps over them into a world created by his own imagination, a world which has acquired, in his eyes, an indisputable reality.

It is just this leap into the domain of the unknown and of the "unknowable" that makes the philosopher a prophet; he who enters the field of the supernatural is able to evoke all the divinities, from Jove to Jehovah, from Brahma to Allah.

After having surmounted this obstacle, the same inscrutable mystery that arrested the philosopher in his researches, fortifies the prophet with proofs of his great idea. When he was a philosopher, the problems of our origin and end were rocks on which he could be shipwrecked; now that he is a prophet these impediments no longer exist, he is not even conscious of

them ; the mysterious and the incomprehensible assist rather than dismay him.

Then the prophet, inflamed by an idea which he interprets as a revelation, overflowing with enthusiasm which he believes to be divine grace, abandons his solitude, and returns to the world, to daily life among men more interested in terrestrial than celestial existence. To these he proposes to teach the truth, and to unfold the mystery of his vision.

This is the most solemn moment in the life of the prophet, when his soul is at its highest pitch, when he feels within himself the omnipotence of energy accumulated by means of deep study and protracted meditation, when his genius compels him to action.

The first sentiment men experience before a prophet of genius is one of awe, because they know that this man appears before the multitude after long vigils, laborious meditation, that he comes out of solitude, emaciated, full of wisdom, free from guile.

He is morally different from others, a man with something new to tell, an idea to diffuse, an enthusiasm to communicate, a faith to implant.

Before this sudden apparition, the crowd is distracted from its ordinary occupations, and accords a welcome to the newcomer out of sheer curiosity.

The prophet preaches to them from his heart ; he bares his soul before them, and it is not that of an impostor or of an adventurer.

Little by little, his audience is carried away by his enthusiasm. The first to yield are the weakest, the most indifferent follow them. Finally, the strongest surrender to the prophet's enchantment, those who are

already converted adding to his personal influence, as a mirror augments light by reflection.

If an actor simulate in a drama joys and pains which he does not feel, his simulation acquires for the multitude the power and appearance of truth, as is proved by the emotions it excites. What, then, of the prophet, who is a living drama, a man who reveals the true passions that agitate him? He is not the echo, but the voice; not the reflection, but the figure reflected; not the dream, but the reality.

On this account the prophet exercises a natural hypnotism which few are able to resist. Those who listen to his words know that they all must die, but, distracted by the cares of ordinary life, they have rarely turned their thoughts on death. The thought of death, however, is always latent in the soul, as glowing coals lie under ashes, needing but a breath to fan them into a flame.

The prophet breathes on the ashes under which spiritual thoughts lie smouldering, until these thoughts burst into flame, and his hearers look beyond this life, with the common desire of preserving their individualities in the hereafter.

His words of hope and comfort succeed in persuading both poor and rich, learned and ignorant, young and old. He does not speak to the mind, but to the heart; he is a giant of sentiment, a great illusionist, regarding the future world. He symbolises and revivifies presentiments that each man keeps hidden in his inmost soul.

When among a thousand hearers a hundred accept his ideas, the triumph of his cause is almost assured,

because the hundred proselytes are as a hundred mirrors which reflect the new light in all directions.

Meanwhile, the fame of the prophet spreads from village to village with amazing rapidity.

All know that he asks nothing for himself, and offers all things to others, that he is, in fact, the most disinterested of creatures, and this knowledge gains him the esteem of the people, and convinces them of the sincerity of his preaching.

But in accounting for his success one cannot ignore his gift of speech. He does not diffuse his ideas by writing, but with his voice; the writings will follow, and will be the codes of the new religion, as the Pentateuch, the Veda, the Zend-Avesta, the Tripitaca, the Li-King, the New Testament, the Koran, are the codes of the religions to which they respectively belong.

The prophet does not write—he speaks, and his words are fanciful and eloquent. If we think of the most beautiful books that we have read, of the most imaginative poems with which we are acquainted, we shall see that these, in comparison, do not have nearly so great an influence upon us as the rhetorical beauties that adorn the sermon of the prophet. Words are to him as the sword to the soldier, as the brush to the painter—indispensable instruments of his success.

The metaphors of sacred books are almost all magnificent and solemn: “The work of the infidel is like the vapour that rises in the desert, the traveller rushes toward it in search of water, and when he is near he discovers the illusion . . . the work of the infidel is again similar to the darkness that can be felt, at the

bottom of the sea, covered by the waves and by the shadow of the clouds, darkness so thick that the man immersed therein can with difficulty see his own arm." ¹

"If the waves of the sea became as ink to write the praises of the Lord, they would be consumed before having celebrated His marvellous doings." ²

Recall the magnificent hymn to nature in the Rig-Veda, recall the glowing imagery that it contains!

"Aurora, O beneficent goddess, from the moment in which you flash forth upon the world, you become the life and breath of the universe. . . .³ Before the sun, the eye of the universe, the stars seem like robbers, concealing themselves in the shadows of the night." ⁴

Here is another proof of the prophet's power of suggestion. Begin with your friends a discussion on the problem of death and the mysteries beyond the tomb, and you will immediately notice the interest and curiosity excited in all present, for down in the depth of all human souls, though hidden, there lies a torturing doubt about these matters, a doubt which welcomes any light however meagre.

If this effect can be produced by ordinary conversation, think what power was wielded by the prophets, such as Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, Luther, men who dedicated themselves to the study of the spiritual life, who nursed the conviction that they

¹ Koran, chap. xxiv.

² *Ibid.*, chap. xviii.

³ Rig-Veda, Sec. i. Lect. iv. Hymn ii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Hymn iv.

had solved the riddle of the universe and who, burning with the flame of a great enthusiasm, preached with irresistible persuasion, by a series of brilliant metaphors giving life to the most abstract theories. Think how such men must have swayed an ignorant crowd as they promised them the realisation of their fondest hopes.

The sermons that we read in the sacred books, give but a faint idea of the power they exercised, when issuing extempore from the lips of the prophet, who gave them life with the music of his voice and the fire of his enthusiasm. The most simple phrases, the most ordinary words, in the mouth of one who speaks with the voice of the heart, acquire extraordinary vitality ; the most ordinary metaphor seems a beautiful image, and a commonplace invocation becomes an inspiring hymn.

The effect of great oratory is indeed wonderful but not miraculous ; it is natural that an enthusiastic genius should awaken enthusiasm in others. It is easier to convey a suggestion to a heterogeneous and compact multitude, than from one isolated soul to another, precisely as a great flame develops and extends more readily when the combustible elements are numerous and varied.

Such is the way in which a new faith is diffused. It is nourished, moreover, by the disputes of neophytes ; and if, by chance, the constituted authorities rise against it, its success is assured, because that which is prohibited appeals most strongly to humanity.

The ten years' persecution of Christianity was more efficacious in proclaiming it than all the preachings of the holy Fathers.

Thus a prophet persecuted, and perhaps dying a martyr, for his faith, becomes suddenly something more than a man; he assumes, to the multitude, the aspect of a being descended directly from divinity.

Buddha, after the attempt on his life, committed by Dèvadatta; Confucius, after his expulsion from court; Christ, after the crucifixion; Mahomet, after the persecution of the Koresheites; Luther, after the excommunication pronounced by Pope Leo the Tenth, were considered as creatures sent from Heaven to redeem humanity.

Every word they uttered became an article of faith.

When the crowd bowed down before them, as it had formerly done before other idols, now overthrown from their pedestals, the prophets, having reached the apogee of their glory, dared everything, and with reason, since their simplest words were regarded as oracular.

The prophet's most ordinary actions then seemed wonderful, though even his so-called miracles were but the fruit of auto-suggestion and hypnotism, to which persons subject to hallucinations often make a ready response.

As an avalanche steadily increases in volume in its passage from mountain top to plain, so the fame of the prophet's miracles increase in passing from mouth to mouth, from country to country.

For example: the prophet meets a paralytic, looks at him fixedly, commands him to walk and he does walk. It is a suggestion, a phenomenon not very common, but quite possible. The crowd acclaims it as a miracle, the fame of it spreads, awe increases; those who have not seen it, relate it with exaggerations, until, instead of a

paralytic who has recovered his lost energy by force of suggestion, it is a man who has been brought back from the grave. It is not the prophet who has pretended to perform this miracle, but the crowd which has attributed it to him.

Thus, this man, victorious at last, by the use of his faculties, is able to exercise an ever-increasing fascination on those surrounding him.

Gradually his success gives him more assurance in preaching, he employs the most efficacious means to obtain converts, becoming, in fact, an expert agitator.

As he grows more experienced in his part, the veneration that he inspires increases; those who come near him, feel the awe that would affect them in the presence of a mighty monarch: they signify by their actions that their minds are ready to accept his teachings, and that they are anxious to be under the power of his fascination.

And so the notoriety obtained by the prophet is an important element in favouring the diffusion of the faith he teaches.

He is no longer the humble pilgrim, surrounded by a curious few; he has become an irresistible power, his words are decisive and vibrating, his energy volcanic. A crowd of disciples follow his footsteps, as courtiers follow those of a king; he can dare everything, because he is the Buddha, the Master, the Rabbi, the Messenger of God. As the hoop of the wheel embraces all its spokes, he embraces the souls of all the faithful. The crowd instinctively credit him with a supernatural force.

But why this great ardour in the midst of a people

at first so indifferent, and mainly intent on work and the necessities of life ?

Why do hundreds of men abandon their homes, their families, and even the courts, to follow the prophet, as birds come to a lure ?

The problem is complex ; one luminous fact can generally be ascertained, viz., the psychological conditions present at the moment when a nation is converted to a new faith.

The new faith, when it comes to revive expiring hopes, to re-illumine spent enthusiasm, to comfort sorrow, to delude men with the flattering idea of a felicity, sure though distant, and to promise, for every earthly grief, a heavenly recompense, becomes an energy vital as light, heat, and electricity.

Why ?

Because all human creatures have desires, aspirations, and hopes, which cause within them a constant sense of void. In other words, all men are more or less hungry for happiness.

It is this void that all the religions and all the promises of the prophets pretend to satisfy ; all desires and hopes demonstrate the absolute necessity for sorrow, they deceive those who suffer, with the mirage of eternal happiness, as in the paradise of Mahomet, or of eternal oblivion, as in the Nirvana of Buddha.

It is thus that the prophet of genius succeeds in influencing the crowd ; he gives the people the wine of joyous hope. The physician himself knows how efficacious are words of hope and comfort at the bedside of an invalid. On occasion he assumes the *rôle* of prophet, by encouraging his patient to hope for a

speedy restoration to health, and marvellous are the cures sometimes accomplished by such means.

But the prophet is more powerful than the physician, because his words mitigate every grief; with his illusions he causes hope to be born in the most desperate souls, and succeeds in making them willing to accept pain, with the promise that their future felicity will be proportioned to their suffering in this life: "The life of this world is but a light jest; the true life is in the everlasting abode."

So says Mahomet in the Koran.¹

What are the gifts of the prophet? What are the attributes of his genius? What position does he occupy in the hierarchy of the Sons of Glory?

The prophet generally is a great pessimist, a man of melancholy character. A sadness is born with him, and is the stimulus that makes him consider the sufferings of humanity, and see around him more grief than joy. The prophet is gifted with an excessive and extraordinary imagination, and, for this reason, inclines, naturally, more to synthesis than to analysis; his ideas possess a wonderful power of suggestion, which conceal their pessimism, the foundation of their structure.

This man possesses two opposing qualities, but they can combine to create an energy, unique and pleasing.

His habitual original sadness makes him a pessimist, but the great force of his imagination enables him to justify with an hypothesis the state of discomfort in which he exists.

¹ The Koran, chap. xxiv.

That instinctive peculiarity, common to all creatures, of trusting to the future for happiness denied in the present, amounts in the prophet to a mania.

Since his innate pessimism demonstrates to him that, in the terrestrial life, his dreams and desires will never be satisfied, he needs to seek happiness or oblivion beyond this life. Mahomet was more fanciful than pessimistic, his paradise was one of eternal delights and sensual pleasures; Buddha, on the contrary, more pessimistic than fanciful, saw beyond the tomb, spirits dissolving like snow-crystals in the sun.

When the prophet has conceived the idea that justifies in his mind the miseries of existence, his imagination prompts him to reveal his doctrines, because he believes that all men will have faith in them.

Constant preaching and the spectacle of the faithful multitude who embrace his theories, confirm him so strongly in his opinions, that at last the ideal system created by his brain is no longer an hypothesis to him, but a reality; it lives, breathes, exists, and for him is an axiom, a dogma, an incontrovertible truth. Similarly, the poet, who has devoted all his life to one poem, ends by believing that his heroes really exist, and, in fact, forms a new world outside himself, which is nevertheless but the reflex of a world within him which he has animated with his own passions.

Do we desire a proof of this?

It suffices to recall the precepts and rites of the different religions, to discover in them the characters of the men who have framed them. The prophet, unconsciously, confers on his system the elements of

his own temperament, as the writer impresses his individuality on his style.

Buddha, the son of a king, taking advantage of his wealth and social position, tested all the joys of life, only to find that he was weary of love and all the other pleasures of the senses; for him, therefore, the supreme idea of future happiness was necessarily eternal peace and absolute forgetfulness; in other words, he desired Nirvana, the annihilation of individuality in the great chaos of the universe.

Mahomet, on the other hand, who was orphaned when quite young, without fortune, of a sanguine temperament, and married to a woman fifteen years older than himself, saw his ideal of happiness in the free enjoyment of all the senses; he imagined a paradise full of sensuality, lovely fruit, beautiful women, majestic rivers, opulent gardens.

But Martin Luther affords us a striking example of religious individuality, nearer to our own times, and, therefore, better known. Who has not heard of the indomitable strength and unequalled courage of the great reformer?

From the 31st of October 1517, when he affixed to the pillars of All Saints Church, Wittemberg, his famous "Ninety-five Articles," this man fought bravely until his death, using his pen as a sword, and his words as scourges.

He was the one man of conspicuous genius who had the courage to rise against the greatest authority of the times, the Pope.

Luther was born for combat; he only ceased to fight when he ceased to live.

Do you recall his words ?

“ Behold the ink, the paper and the pen ! Come on, therefore, critics, scholastics, gnostics, terrestrial worms, to the work ; demonstrate and expound all the splendour of your science ! ”

In the Leipzig dispute his combative character was more than ever evident ; and when, little by little, the favour of the people accompanied him, he rose among them, a giant of thought and action, and burnt before the terrified crowd the Bull of Leo the Tenth.

The day after, rising in his pulpit, he pronounced these terrible words : “ I burnt yesterday in the public square the satanic work of the Pope ; it would have been better if it had been the Pope himself who had been burnt, and with him the pontifical throne. ”

In the famous hymn of the Reformation : “ Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, ” we see the character of Luther faithfully reflected.

He was as rigid as a bar of iron, and as proud as a despot.

The Reform, instituted by him, perpetuates in simple and severe rites, in concise and eloquent canons, the stamp of Luther’s character, as snow preserves the imprint of feet which have pressed it.

His rigidity and austere pride were transmitted to the new faith ; we find Luther in Protestantism, as we found Cakia-Muni in Buddhism, and Mahomet in Islamism.

There is nothing abnormal in these sovereign creatures, saving genius.

But the crowd considers these men as inspired by God, and credits them with supernatural powers. An

act, therefore, that is due to hypnotism, or to an improvised exertion of will, is transformed into a prodigy, and the prodigy passes from lip to lip, from country to country, and becomes a miracle.

After death, the prophets grew in renown like other men of genius who receive their just tribute of appreciation only after they have descended into the grave.

Study the lives of Moses, Buddha, and Mahomet, and on almost every page you will come across some miracle wrought by the prophet dealt with.

These biographies, written by posterity, sometimes even by the immediate disciples of the master, are very often offsprings of a flighty fancy. The truth which underlies them is like the skeleton of a body, like a mask formed on a corpse.

Who is Buddha for the impartial historian ?

A son of a king, who, having enjoyed life, fled from his kingdom, gave himself up to contemplation and solitude, conceived a stupendous system of moral philosophy, which he diffused with success, and, in his old age, died of indigestion, after a luxurious feast partaken of when he was already ill.

What is the opinion of posterity concerning this man, whose history is so thickly interwoven with legends ?

Let us examine the sacred books of India and judge from them his life. It is a story that delights the reader like a sublime poem.

Mâyâ Dêvî, the maiden predestined to give birth to the Buddha, was troubled on the day on which she conceived him by a mysterious presentiment, and retired

into a remote kiosk in a distant part of the royal park. When the girl entered the Hall of Swans, where nothing could be heard but the musical murmur of the waters falling in a marble fountain, she sent away most of her suite, feeling certain that the wonderful event was near. Surrounded by a few faithful companions, the girl put off her dress, and immersed herself in the water saturated with perfumes, and afterwards fell gently asleep on a bed of living flowers, and dreamt that an elephant, chaste as ice, pure as the snow of the Gauriskankar, had entered her bosom.

The night of the incarnation, a white lotus flower emerging from the water, rose to the heaven of Brahma, and reached it in the form of pure, fresh dew, as if wishing to render homage to the Gods, for grace received.

The predestined Mâyâ enjoyed, in the meanwhile, the quiet natural to her condition; she experienced no pain and no desires, but when the solemn moment approached, she demanded of the king permission to retire into the magnificent gardens of Lumbini, situated near the town of Kapilavastu.

It was the month of April, and nature displayed all her wealth. The turf was radiant and green, as the feathers of a peacock; the plants bowed low under their load of blossoms; on the ponds the lotus-flowers extended a carpet of corollas, in the fragrant air the birds sang of love, and over this mystic garden poured a soft, bright light, that did not offend the eyes, but enthralled the senses like a sweet and exhilarating philter.

The girl, filled with ecstacy, wandered from path to

path, and, as she passed, the flowers bowed their heads in salutation, the birds greeted her with their sweetest songs, all living things vied with each other to pay her homage. It was the feast of spring, and it was the hymn of joy that the earth and the heavens chanted to the young girl.

When she came to a large fig-tree, that lifted toward heaven its leafy branches, she stopped, and the fig-tree, by divine virtue, inclined itself, and saluted her. Mâyâ put out her beautiful hand, and gathered a branch of the marvellous tree.

At this moment the Redeemer of the world, the future prophet, saw the light, without tears and without pain.

From the hour of his birth, Buddha possessed all wisdom, and even knew the thoughts of all men. He moved seven steps toward the four cardinal points, and exclaimed in a voice more powerful than the roar of the lion: "I am the greatest of all creatures; I will overcome the demons; I will put an end to all birth, to all age, to illness and to death!"

While these prophetic words issued from the lips of this wonderful child, the thunder rumbled in the heavens, the Himalayas trembled and oscillated as the needle of the compass, a soft dew fell from above and watered the earth, a warm zephyr agitated the flowers and mingled their perfumes together, and sweet odours issued from the clefts in the rocks.

In that solemn hour the blind saw again, the paralysed rose up and walked, the mad regained their reason. Hate, envy and anger were dissipated, as

if all men had suddenly become perfect. But joy is brief, and the suffering that seemed then to have been abolished, soon returned again.

Mâyâ, after having given birth to the saviour of the world, died suddenly, leaving behind her the record of her radiant youth, and of the great miracle accomplished through her. Her bosom, in which a Buddha had been conceived, was sacred to the gods, and could not be defiled by holding any other earthly creature.

The mission of Mâyâ was accomplished ; she returned to heaven, her natural home.

The orphan, conducted with great pomp to Kapilavastu, received the name of Siddhârta, and was consigned to the care of Gotâmi, sister of the king.

The future Buddha had thirty-two nurses, eight to nourish him, eight to take him about, eight to amuse him, and eight to wash him.

When, according to the custom, he was carried to the temple, he had no sooner put his foot on the threshold than all the statues of the antique deities trembled on their pedestals, descended slowly from their granite niches, advanced toward the newcomer, and prostrated themselves before him.

At sight of this marvel, the crowd burst forth in acclamations of joy, regarding the child as a supernatural being.

And the miracles multiplied.

The jewels and the precious stones with which the king adorned his son, suddenly lost their lustre and colour. The reason for this was the stainless virtue of the child, which, with its splendour, outshone and obscured even the purest of earthly things.

When Siddhârta was conducted before a great philosopher to receive scientific teaching, the boy showed himself more learned than his master. Another time, when they were celebrating the feast of the rice-sowing, Siddhârta sat all alone, under the shade of a tree, and, for the first time, was wrapped up in meditation.

The king and his followers found him there at sunset, and remarked, with great astonishment, that while the sun had changed its position in the heavens, the shadow of the tree had remained immovable about the sitting child.

At the age of seventeen, Siddhârta possessed a marvellous beauty ; all the perfections of body, all the gifts of mind, all the virtues of heart, were in fact united in him, so as to form an incomparable being.

His father decided to give him a wife, and desired the son to choose among the thousands and thousands of maidens who were anxious to fill this position.

Siddhârta retired in a wood to reflect before deciding. When he returned to the palace, he acquainted his father with the qualities that he required in his future wife.

“ She must be beautiful, but not proud of her beauty ; love her husband, and never offend him, even in her dreams ; she must be submissive to him as a slave ; she must have no desire for music, dancing, perfumes ; she must not deck herself as a courtesan ; she must be acquainted with the laws prescribed in the secret books, but neither bigoted nor fanatical in observing the feasts celebrated in honour of the gods ; she must not be vain, but always dress modestly and without ostentation ; she must not be idle, but always employed,

and she should be the first to rise in the morning and the last to retire at night."

The ambassador to whom was communicated the wishes of the young prince, travelled from house to house, from town to town, in search of this miraculous bride.

The ambassador had already seen many families and was about to return in despair, when a young girl called Gôpâ, reading the list of requisites desired by the prince, exclaimed: "Great Brahmin, I possess all these gifts!"

And so this beautiful girl became the bride of Siddhârta-Gotâma.

But the love of the young man was ephemeral; this man wrapped up in his meditations, was possessed of very different desires. In the midst of his slaves and of his almehs, he did not become effeminate, he remained moderate in love, as he was frugal in eating.

Gôpâ was the only creature of whom the virtuous Siddhârta was ever enamoured.

The first indications that revealed in him the gifts of a great prophet were not long in manifesting themselves.

One evening, while sitting happily and quietly among his women, who danced and sang before him, he seemed to hear celestial voices reproving his inertia, and exhorting him to go and preach the law, as the propitious moment had arrived: "The life of man flows as the torrent which precipitates itself from the mountain; his senses are snares into which he stumbles, as a monkey into the trap of the hunter. The desires

generate ignorance and oblivion . . . ; old age that destroys beauty, energy, and fortune, generates death. Thus a beautiful and beloved creature disappears for ever, as the flowers and the fruit that fall from the tree. Death overcomes the athlete, death sweeps away men, as the stream bears away in its current the uprooted pines, and men disappear, they know not where, alone and trembling, to render an account of their works."

These were the prophetic words that the Buddha heard on that memorable evening.

He alone heard the voices, because the almehs continued to dance, and the music mingled its melody with the rhythm of their movements.

But, in the soul of the prince, a change had been effected, a sudden, but decided resolution had been born. From that hour, he determined to flee the pleasures and the temptations of the court, to give himself up to solitude and to meditation ; he wished to be alone, to be able to study himself thoroughly.

On one occasion, going out from his garden, he met an old paralytic, bending on his stick, who, as he walked, murmured incomprehensible words. The sight of this miserable object startled the young prince, who was accustomed to be surrounded by youth and beauty, and he understood then that, though in the spring-time of his life, he had in himself the germs of future decrepitude, such as he saw before him.

Another time, on the side of a dusty road, he saw a man leaning against a hedge, his eyes burning with fever, his limbs livid and trembling. This man was alone ; every one had fled from him, because his disease was contagious.

Siddhârta returned to his palace, more than ever reserved and thoughtful, wrapped up in his great vision of purification.

Another day he encountered a funeral procession ; it was the first time that the young prince had seen death. This spectacle shocked the finest fibres of his being, and his thoughts turned more and more to the examination of facts and things. The more he became acquainted with the misery and grief that affected humanity, the more decided he became to carry out the project he had conceived for their redemption. He wished to suggest to mankind a new faith, in which they would find the strength to support all the evils of life, and to conquer all adversity. He resolved to abandon his kingdom, to renounce his conjugal life and the pleasures of riches, and to give himself up to a contemplative life.

The future prophet communicated to his father his resolutions :

“Sire,” he said, “I desire four things ; if you give them to me, I renounce my project. I desire that I never grow old ; that my youth and beauty never fade ; that health never abandon me, nor death overtake me ; that I be always happy, and that grief be unknown to me.”

These words of Buddha express the desires of all men ; they are the dream of all souls, they sum up the ideal life.

The old father gently admonished his son, but the youth was infatuated with his own ideas.

He dreamed of a new life beyond the paternal domains, beyond his magnificent gardens ; he saw immense crowds prostrated at his feet, invoking his

aid. His faith and his desires consumed him as a flame, rivalling in brilliancy the heavens at sunset. He wished to be the Buddha, the Redeemer of the world, the Chosen of his people.

Before such open rebellion the old king augmented his vigilance. His most faithful soldiers guarded the palace doors; the king himself and his brothers kept a continuous watch over the young prince. The almehs and the slaves became more alluring to induce Siddhârta to abandon his project.

At this time he had a new vision. It was that of a venerable old man, who walked with dignity; he was dressed in a tunic, and carried a vase to collect alms.

Siddhârta recognised in this vision a devotee, given up to charity and penance.

While he was yet absorbed in this vision, his wife gave birth to a child.

But the future Buddha received the news without enthusiasm, and assisted without joy at the feast given in its honour, silently looking on in the midst of the banqueting, the music and the dance.

In the middle of the night he woke suddenly, leapt from his bed, his mind enflamed by the memory of his great vision.

The girls, who a few hours before were dancing so temptingly and gracefully, lay around on the floor, sleeping in disorderly positions, with all the glamour of their beauty blighted. The young man looked at them and turned away with loathing and disgust. Passing outside, and traversing the halls and the corridors of the palace, he arrived at the stables, where his favourite horse was tethered in its marble stall.

Resolutely Siddhârta ordered the groom to saddle his horse, which was as white as snow and as fleet as the wind.

The servant refused to obey, but was finally overcome by the persuasions of the prince, and, in a few minutes, the horse was ready. Before leaving the palace, the future prophet paid a visit to the chamber where his wife and his newly-born child reposed.

At the sight of them he was deeply moved, his heart beat loudly in his breast, and his emotions nearly overcame him. He would have wished, before parting, to give a farewell kiss to his Gôpâ, and to press in his arms the creature to whom he had given life.

But Gôpâ slept tranquilly, with the child in her arms; it was impossible to embrace the child without waking the mother, so Siddhârta, with a supreme effort of will, repressed his loving impulses, tore himself from the room, mounted his impatient charger, and galloped away as if pursued.

The sentinels who were on duty at the gates were all fast asleep; the doors seemed to open as if by enchantment before the fugitive.

Siddhârta rapidly mounted to the summit of a hill which overlooked the city. He allowed his horse a few minutes' rest, and looking down on the sleeping valley, he uttered this luminous prophecy: "O City of Kapila, I will never enter within your walls again until I have attained supreme intelligence; and, when again you see me, you will be standing before me and listening to the teachings of the Law, instead of being immersed in dreams."

He then resumed his impetuous course, and only stopped when he reached the banks of the river

Amouni. He sent back his horse by his groom, and remained all alone, in the midst of virgin nature, in order to meditate, and to discover the mystery of life and of death, so that he might realise the perfection that he had dreamt of.

Siddhârta was then twenty-nine years old; strong, beautiful, healthy, and vigorous; he sacrificed himself "because," said he, "the thought of old age chased from me the joy of youth, the thought of illness the joy of health, and the thought of death the joy of life."

A short time after his flight, Siddhârta applied to the head of a great philosophical school, wishing to acquire wisdom, but the master, after conversing with him, confessed that it would be impossible for him to teach him anything. Notwithstanding this, the Buddha remained for some time at the school of philosophy, and then returned to solitude and meditation, to self-examination and penance.

His body had become spectral, his flesh was so transparent that the ribs were as apparent as the veins of a leaf; his limbs became knotted and distorted, and resembled the gnarled trunk of a tree; his spine was like a braid of white hair, his eyes were like two luminous points in the depths of a well, and his tendons were like long violet furrows in his hands and feet.

It seemed that this man must finally succumb to his privations.

But the gods took pity on him, and exhorted him to relax his penance and care for his much tortured body, in order that he might have the power to accomplish his mission,

The Buddha then accepted the offerings of the faithful, and began to take nourishment again, in order to acquire the energy necessary for the coming struggle.

The great day on which he was to obtain the gift of supreme knowledge was near at hand.

He resisted all temptations, repulsing the evil spirit who tempted him with various and subtle artifices, until one night, while the tempest was raging, the rain pouring, the lightning flashing, and the thunder rolling, the prophet, crouching under a tree, continued his meditations, overcame the devils, and acquired, in that moment, supreme intelligence, the beatific revelation; became, in fact, the Buddha, the all-wise, the all-seeing, the saviour of the world.

This page of the life of Çakia-Muni is a page of lofty and beautiful poetry. The contrast between the war of the elements and the immovable calm of the prophet, who continued his prayers in the midst of this turmoil, offers a vision at once terrible and sublime.

He thus acquired the knowledge of good and evil, and infinite wisdom at the moment when nature, lashed into fury by the scourge of the demons, disclosed her most intimate secrets, like the man who, in the tumult of passion, betrays his real self.

Henceforth we shall see him the man of destiny, the chosen idol of the crowd.

After receiving this revelation, the Buddha allowed four weeks to pass before sallying forth to preach the word. In the first, he tasted all alone the joy of the revelation he had received; in the second, he fathomed more deeply the mysteries of the universe and discovered the origin of things; in the third, the evil

spirit tempted him again, hoping, at least, to prevent the propagation of the new faith. Finally, in the fourth, after receiving rice and honey, offered him by two pilgrims, he was tormented by the doubts and fears that naturally precede great undertakings, and was almost on the point of renouncing his apostolate, when Brahma Sahampati exhorted and counselled him.

Then the Buddha, kindled with renewed zeal, convinced and enthusiastic, returned to the world, and wandered about, wherever he could find the largest crowds, and poured into all souls the joy of his faith, delighted all intelligences with the glowing imagery of his speech, so that proselytes increased day by day, year by year, as fish multiply in a favourable stream.

When the sage returned to the city of Kapilavastu, from which, eight years before, he had fled in the dead of night, he saw verified those prophecies which he had pronounced from the summit of the hill.

All the people received him as the redeemer, and recognised in him the longed-for Buddha. A delirium seemed to have taken possession of every soul, a mania that seized old and young, poor and rich, who, with one accord, prostrated themselves before him, hailing him as the Elect, and unhesitatingly embracing the new faith.

“The law that I proclaim, is a law of grace for all.” This was the magnificent phrase which acted upon the faithful like an enchantment.

In the meanwhile, there arose numerous and crowded monasteries of the new order, and the number of its fanatical apostles increased. India had found the ideal to which she could abandon herself, and this ideal came

to her at the very moment when her imaginative people were ready to be subjugated by it.

Buddha, who had been prince and beggar, husband and father, who had known the joys of riches and the sufferings of poverty, the surfeit of too much food at the royal table, and the pangs of hunger in the forest, the satiety of pleasures among the young slaves of the court, and the tortures of chastity in solitude, divined what was necessary to the people to soothe the woes of this life, and created a religion that responded to their temperament, and created it, as we have said, in the moment most propitious to its triumph.

The Indian is a fatalist by inborn conviction, and Buddhism is the religion of fatalism. The Indian is, by his temperament, imaginative, and Buddhism is prodigal of striking images. The Indian is careless, lazy, and indolent, and Buddhism promises him after death a perennial quiet, absolute peace, the blissful Nirvana. We find in Buddhism, therefore, the elements analogous to the character of the nation by whom it was first accepted, because Buddha himself, being a son of India, possessed the individual characteristics of his race.

Three months before his death, accompanied by his faithful Ananda, the Buddha ascended the summit of a hill that overlooked the city of Vaisali, and from there uttered these memorable words: "Vaisali, where I have received so many tokens of zeal and of love, Vaisali, where the good seed has taken root, I salute thee for the last time!"

Do not these simple and sublime words of Buddha

recall the humble salute pronounced eighteen centuries after by Saint Francis of Assisi, when he abandoned the Auvergne and the sacred mountain where he had received the seraphic vision?¹

In these last three months, the Buddha, having a premonition of his approaching end, redoubled his zeal, travelled all over India, penetrating into the most remote villages to diffuse the word and to preach the four famous Verities.

Finally, after a banquet, where he ate more than usual, he fell ill with indigestion. His stomach, weak on account of repeated fasting, and accustomed to the most simple food, could not digest the succulent viands prepared for him.

Cakia-Muni, the Buddha, the Redeemer of the world, died of nothing less than indigestion!

The fact seems as low as an obscene word in the mouth of a child, and as a curse in the mouth of a priest, and it is necessary to read the translations of the Indian books, where the fact is related, to see how this event, adorned with beautiful images, and, in great part, disguised by the biographers, assumes the aspect of a miracle.

The indigestion that brought the Buddha to his grave becomes in these books a poetic death, as the famous and unclean word pronounced by Cambronne, becomes sublime in the "Misérables" of Victor Hugo.²

¹ "God speed thee, God's Mountain, Holy Mountain. God speed thee, Auvergne Mountain! God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless thee. Remain in peace, for nevermore shall I see thee!"

² "Les Misérables," iii., Deuxième partie, Livre Premier, xv.

Shortly after eating, the Buddha writhed in spasms, and his faithful disciple, Ananda, brought him a glass of water to quench his thirst, and then the prophet took a bath.

When he came out of the water, Ananda laid him in a hammock, suspended between two trees, and the leaves at once, moved at the aspect of the saint, waved to and fro, exhaling round the face of the dying prophet a soft and fragrant breath.

The night descended serene, starry, and silent, and the Buddha again preached the divine word.

When Ananda questioned him as to how his disciples should conduct themselves regarding women, when he should be dead, the wise man answered: "The monks should remain in the interior of their monasteries, with closed doors. . . . Evil desires arise by seeing; the wise man should abstain from even looking at a woman. Always keep silent. A sword suspended over the head by a hair, is less dangerous than to hold converse with a woman. Consider as your mother all women older than yourself; as your sister those of your own age, and as your daughter those younger than yourself; by so doing, you will be able to remain chaste."

The fatal moment had arrived.

The Buddha rose, extended his arms, and, while the flowers were raining their petals on his head, he said: "Behold, I exhort you, all who live must die; try and obtain salvation by the strength of your zeal!"

These were his last words, because, after having pronounced them, he seemed wrapped in thought, as if

resolving an abstruse problem, until he fell, little by little, into ecstasy.

His face, that had been closed and impenetrable, beamed; the joy of his heart shone through his eyes, as if an internal light had transfigured him; and the ecstasy augmented till, by the death of his senses and of his intelligence, he attained the Nirvana.

Thus died the Buddha, at eighty years of age, a quiet death, like a flame that flickers and then extinguishes itself.

But in this solemn moment the earth trembled, the thunder reverberated in the heavens, and voices were heard on high, singing hosanna to the redeemed soul of the saint.

This, reader, according to legend, was the life of Buddha, the exemplary prophet, who was, perhaps, the most marvellous man ever born in the East.

The religion that he created is a poem of wisdom and beauty, and is, without doubt, the most complete religion hitherto invented.

The dogma of his religion is contained in the four famous Verities that form its law and its commandments: the Verity of grief, the Verity of the cause of grief, the Verity of the suppression of grief, and the Verity of the path that leads to the suppression of grief.

What is the cause of sorrow, of death, and of the lives that come after death?

The desire of living, replies Buddhism, the instinct of life that is within us, the desire of an individual existence, in this world or in another.

He who suppresses the desire of living, treads the road towards eternal peace.

Once the four famous Verities are known, the desire for life disappears, our aspirations toward a new existence are extinguished, and the cycle of our successive lives is closed.

Let us especially consider the four Verities, which are the soul of Buddhism—a beautiful and ingenious philosophic conception, an efficacious and unrivalled parallogism.

Behold, brothers, says the Buddha, the sublime Verity of Grief:

Birth is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, to live with those whom we do not love is suffering, not to possess what we desire is suffering, to be obliged to endure what we detest is suffering. In fact, individual existence is, from its very nature, continual suffering.

In this first truth of Buddhism, pessimism is conspicuous in every line.

And this is the second Verity:

The cause of grief is the desire of living, the wish to exist and to enjoy, that purges us from birth to birth, and to seek pleasure in all its forms; the mania of satisfying our passions with a new bliss, in this world or in another.

This Verity reveals the anxiety of all men who hope to find something better on the morrow; it is, in fact, the summary of our aspirations.

And this is the third Verity:

The suppression of grief is the complete annihilation of the wish to live, of the desire to exist and enjoy. It is necessary, therefore, to suppress this wish, to rid

ourselves of it, to redeem ourselves, and to extirpate this desire from our soul.

And this is, finally, the fourth Verity :

The path that leads to the suppression of grief is difficult and fatiguing, and in order to reach this goal it is necessary to avoid two extremes ; that is to say, complete satisfaction of our passions and excessive abstinence.

The middle way is the only true one ; it opens the eyes, illumines the intelligence, and leads to peace, to wisdom, to light, to the Nirvana.

These four great Verities, which are the foundation stones of Buddhism, appear to us to-day a beautiful poem of moral philosophy, that could only have been conceived by a man of genius. In their simplicity they include all human aspirations, they describe clearly and precisely the fatality of human life, and tersely enunciate the whole Buddhist religion.

They reveal, moreover, the soul of the man, who for so many years shut himself up in himself to conceive them, and give us an idea of the joy that Siddhârta experienced on the day in which, under the mystic tree, they were revealed to him.

To live in the spirit of Buddhistic teaching conducts one to the Nirvana, to a state in which the will to live and the desire for existence are entirely annihilated, in which passion, fear, anxiety, and grief disappear. It is for all the souls who enter it a state of perfect peace, that words fail to depict and mortal imagination to conceive.

Buddhism teaches kindness and supreme wisdom without a personal God, continued existence or

spiritual immortality. It promises endless beatitude without a designated heaven, and the possibility of purification without the help of a redeemer—a purification which can be accomplished by the force of our own will, without prayers, sacrifices, penitence, or external devotions, without consecrated priests, the aid of saints, or the intervention of divine grace, and, finally, it offers a supreme perfection attainable in this life and on this earth.

This is the faith proclaimed by Buddha, six hundred years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, twelve centuries before Mahomet wrote his Koran. We can trace, in the tenets of this faith, the melancholy and pessimistic character of the man, this prince disgusted with the pleasures of life; we can perceive the wisdom of the prophet who could put forth excellent precepts without intimidating humanity with the fear of punishment, and without enticing it with the promise of a flowery and sensuous Eden.

What post does the prophet occupy in the hierarchy of genius? Is he truly a benefactor of humanity?

The response admits of no question. In my judgment the prophet contributed more to the progress of civilisation than is generally allowed.

By his power he persuaded men to pause from time to time to consider the mysteries of creation, and thus accomplish, each according to his ability, a profitable mental gymnastic of service in strengthening and sharpening the intellect.

The religion of most people seems to have been imposed upon them from birth, in common with their

sex and name; people are born Christians, Mahomedans, Buddhists, and remain such nominally all their lives. Notwithstanding this, every man, when he arrives at the age of reason, has a religion of his own, which responds to his natural tendencies. Even the most orthodox creature dissents, in some point, from the tenets of his creed; every one who thinks is obliged to judge the great mystery of the beyond, according to his own ideas; and thus there is an individual religion, peculiar to each man, and commensurate with his personal capacity.

If you are a free thinker, your faith is a creation of your own; but if you think you are Christian, Mahomedan, or Buddhist, read the sacred books of your faith—the Bible, the Koran, or the Tripitaka—and you will still see that in many places, your conscience does not accord with the strict reading of the scripture which you consult.

The prophet is not only the inspirer, the source of light to which every man appeals according to his needs, but he is also a great benefactor of humanity, because he always advises men to help one another, to be wise in action, to exercise all the virtues, and to control all passions, especially when they threaten an eruption in the midst of an ignorant and uncivilised crowd.

Unfortunately, we do not possess the data to enable us to study thoroughly the man of genius, as prophet, because his life is, in that case, encompassed with legends almost from the beginning: the real and the supernatural are inextricably mingled, and the result is

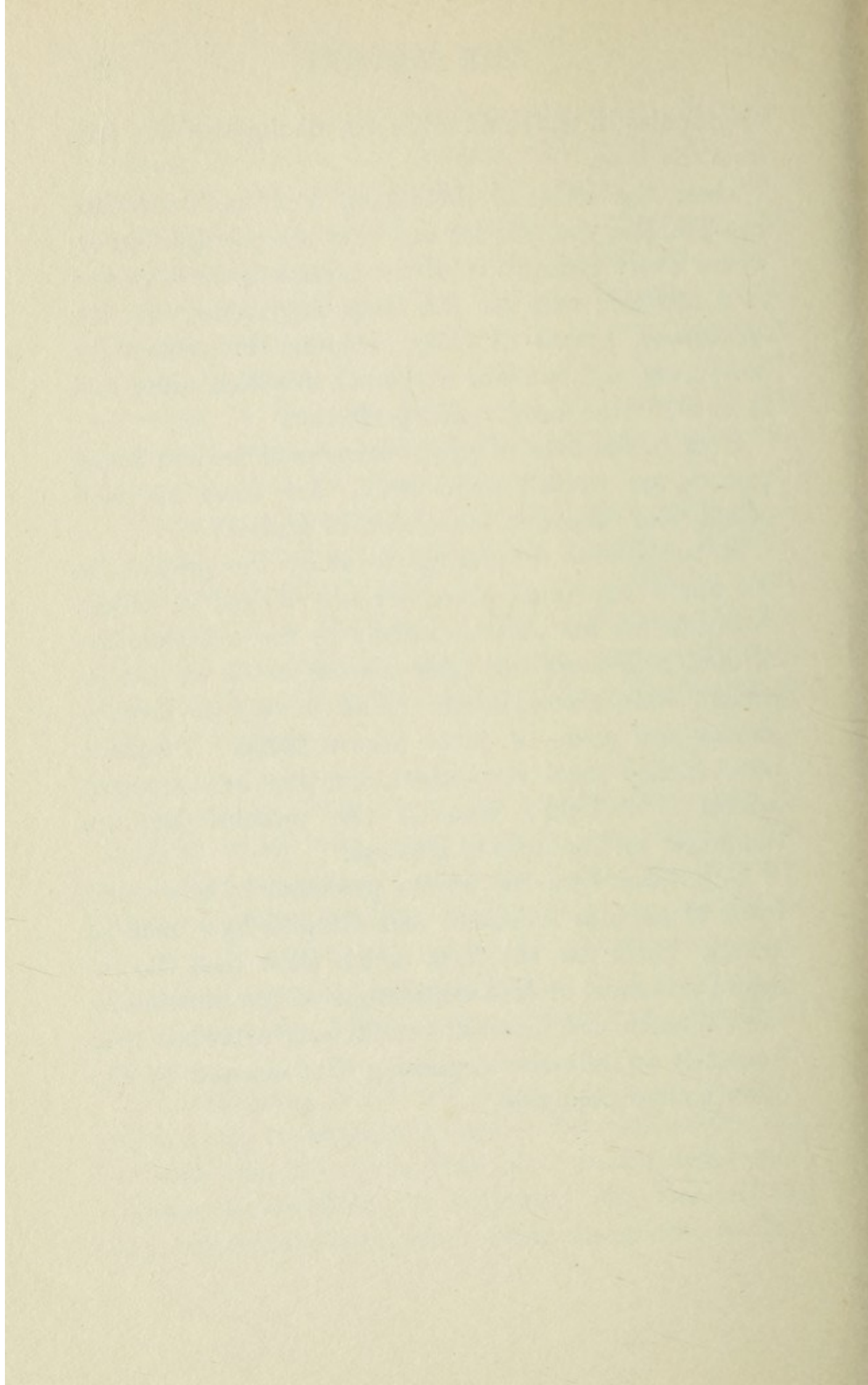
biographies in which no critic can distinguish the true from the false.

Read the lives of Mahomet, Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tsè, and you will see that they are poems in prose, where every human act of the central figure is viewed as a miracle; they are not truly biographies, they are apotheoses, hymns of glory, wherein the protagonist disappears, and becomes a symbol, in which unite and shine all virtue, beauty, and perfection.

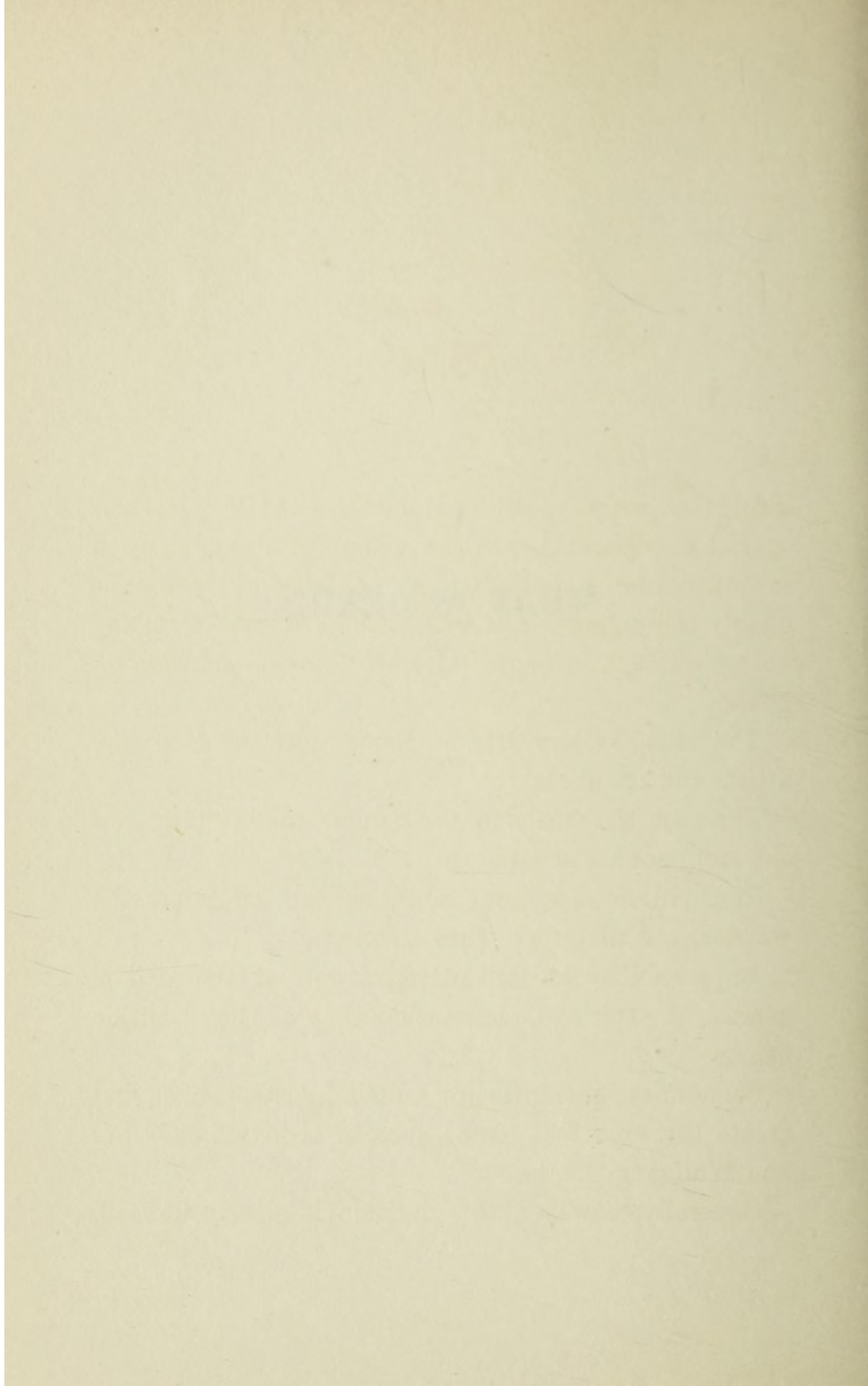
Even in the lives of great reformers of modern times, legends are welded with truth. Are there not still people who believe in the suicide of Luther?

It is, therefore, impossible to study the prophet as we would any other hero; we are obliged to collect materials for his portrait mainly by the consideration of those of his recorded achievements which we can be certain were accomplished. Well worthy to live in history are some of those achievements. Prophets have excited great revolutions, and they have amassed armies of followers, who, at the present day, are numbered by hundreds of millions.

Such have been the effects produced by the moral force of an idea animated and diffused by a man of genius. Such are the facts which show that the inspired preachers of such abstractions as the miraculous, the unknown, and the unknowable, have exercised over humanity an influence surpassing that enjoyed by any other human prodigies.



WHAT IS GENIUS?



CONCLUSION

WHAT IS GENIUS?

Now that we have studied the Sons of Glory in their special manifestations, to the extent of assigning each his own temple and altar, we will try to synthesize clearly the judgments at which we have arrived during our work, and attempt afterwards the definition of genius.

The Sons of Glory may be divided into two classes—artists and scientists.

The poet, the musician, the painter, the sculptor, and the architect are artists.

The philosopher, the inventor, the explorer, the warrior, and the prophet are scientists.

Impressibility is the principal gift of the artistic genius; the spirit of observation that of the scientific genius.

Sometimes these gifts are united in one person, and create the universal genius, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Wolfgang Goethe.

Generally, however, this division is clearly defined,

and we have the genius, decidedly artistic or decidedly scientific.

In sovereign creatures dedicated to the plastic art, there is an intimate connection between the process of mind and the exercise of muscle; it is most clear and palpable, and we can therefore say, that, in the artist, the hand obeys the commands of the intellect, as, in the man of science, the habit of observation excites improvised associations which culminate in his characteristic act of genius.

The poet makes music of words, and his talent consists in the readiness with which he selects subjects that appeal most strongly to the imagination.

The musician who cannot excite laughter, or express a decided sentiment, owes to these disabilities the fascination of his art, because his influence on the imagination is thereby stronger, since music from the ambiguity and the ethereality of its language permits us to identify ourselves with it and interpret it according to our own thoughts.

We have already proven that sentiment is not a particular gift of the musician, because the most beautiful and genial music has been composed by men who manifest, in the greatest degree, the inequality of sexes.

The artist cannot reproduce the exact truth, and it is

absolutely impossible that he should paint or sculpture without leaving in his work the imprint of his own character: the picture and the statue are, therefore, eloquent autobiographies.

The artist, in his endeavour to arrive at the truth, or to improve on it, creates elements which are beyond truth, and in this personal creation resides his individuality; this is what we call the style of the artist.

The philosopher is an imaginative scientist, who conceives a theory explaining the origin and destiny of beings and things.

The scientist, to achieve his discoveries or inventions, accomplishes a creative act, due to an improvised association of ideas. The spirit of observation, united to the abstract talent for mathematics, produces the scientific legislator; and the power of observation, united with the practical cunning of the artisan, produces the scientific inventor.

The explorer is a being courageous and restless. His inborn courage is as natural as the organs of his sex, and is due to the deficiency of his moral sense.

In the warrior we find all the barbaric instincts of the race: he is the supreme type of ambition and of cupidity, and is possessed of an inflexible will.

The prophet is a being sensitive to all grief, who feels not only his own troubles, but identifies himself with the sorrows of others, as a comedian identifies himself with the character whom he represents. His act of genius is performed in his announcement by intuitions of things unknown, as, for instance, the mysteries beyond the tomb. He is generally a great pessimist, a man of melancholy character, an imaginative lypemaniac.

His natural sadness inclines him to the consideration of the calamities that affect humanity, he sees everywhere more suffering than happiness, more pain than pleasure. He cultivates, therefore, two opposing forces, which associated, however, are able to create prodigies. His habitual sadness makes him a pessimist, and his excessive imagination stimulates him to justify with hypotheses the inexorable decrees of Fate.

Let me now consider what is Genius; let me endeavour to define this gigantic force that governs humanity, that guides it towards a glorious end, and, from century to century, creates a new world in the heart of the world itself.

I do not agree with the varied definitions of the man of genius which are discussed to-day. I have an opinion of my own, which has matured slowly as a good fruit, and developed gradually as the leaves of this manuscript have increased on my writing-desk.

I do not hesitate to express my ideas, for I am

convinced that they are true, and I expect them to be practically confirmed by the physiological studies now in progress of Camillo Golgi and Ramonky Cajal.

For me genius is not neurosis, or a form of epilepsy, nor is it caused by a particular development of the cerebral centres, representing judgment and will: genius is simply *a physiological condition of exquisite and exceptional nervous sensibility.*

As an excess of muscular development manifests itself in physical force, and produces the athlete, so an excess of nervous development manifests itself in intellectual force, and produces the genius.

The immense network of nerves twisted and entwined among the muscles, more subtle and permeable than the assimilating fibrillæ, alive to every vibration, sensitive to the slightest movement, in contact with that which they see, and that which they feel, awakes in the man of genius an improvised association of ideas which results in a work of genius.

And as among the athletes, the abuse of muscular force produces various maladies, so, in genius, the dissipation of the innate neurological force generates those anomalies which some consider the causes of genius.

However, they are not the causes, but the effects, as rheumatism in peasants, anæmia in miners, congestion in divers, asthma and pulmonary hemorrhages in dock-labourers, are the effects of their respective occupations.

To declare genius a psychosis, would be to admit that progressive muscular atrophy, cardiac hypertrophy, muscular hernias, tendinous luxations are the causes of athleticism.

That the irregularities of a man of genius are not the cause, but the effects of his genius, are evidenced by the fact that there have been sovereign creatures exempt from these peculiarities, as for example, Galileo, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Voltaire, Machiavelli, Darwin, Huxley, and Verdi; and the Lombrosan school, notwithstanding all its sophistical researches, has not been able to find any indication of their degeneracy.

Even if the future researches of these professors of psychiatry should reveal in these men also anomalies hitherto unknown (it is not difficult with a little astuteness to pervert some act or writing so as to form a paralogism) we would respond that the psychosis is the consequence of an abuse, as heart and liver diseases may be the consequences of excesses, but not the cause of dissoluteness.

But it will be always possible to quote men of genius absolutely exempt from degenerative psychosis, as Galileo, men whom even the Lombrosan scalpel cannot insult, and who, being still incorruptible and unattackable, are the most eloquent contradictors of the now celebrated theory.

The man of genius is, therefore, a giant of the nervous system, which in him attains to a develop-

ment and sensibility far superior to that common to ordinary men, as the athlete is a giant of the myological system who possesses muscles capable of exceptional effort.

But my adversaries may perhaps rejoin: if the man of genius possesses a nervous system exceptionally rich and exquisite, he is an anomaly, on this account alone.

To this remonstrance I would respond that exceptional nervous force is not an illness; on the contrary, it renders the man of genius the more sensitive, and, therefore, the more capable of perceiving the occult relations between the physical and intellectual worlds.

Does not the physiologist teach that the nerves are the transmitters of all sensations? Are they not a vibrating network which responds to every excitation as the seismograph to the slightest shock?

A man, therefore, endowed with a highly sensitive nervous organisation, whereof the network is more crowded with nodules than is the case with ordinary people, is not he, *physiologically* speaking, a member of the highest order of man?

The man of genius is such from his birth, a prodigy of nervous macrophysiology.

The microscope of the histologist, and the experiments of the chemist, will demonstrate some day the truth of this assertion.

I also think that a special vocation for an art or science depends a great deal on the peculiar structure

of the nervous cells, because the impulse that incites the man of genius to be painter or musician, mathematician or philosopher, is inborn; therefore, it can only be the result of a peculiar structure of the nervous cells, which respond to one order of excitation, rather than to another.

If, therefore, the man of genius is obliged to follow an occupation contrary to his inclination, he rebels, and ends by getting his own way, even at the cost of enormous suffering and sacrifice.

Among the *aurea mediocritas* we may find many men who devote themselves to a profession uncongenial to their natural dispositions, but you will never find a man of genius who will submit. Because he is gifted with nervous cellules more perfect, he cannot rid himself of his destiny. It is necessary for him to be poet or mathematician, musician or physiologist, if he was created with an especial tendency for this art, or for that science. In fact, he is like a perfectly constructed musical instrument, which responds only to its con-natural note.

Future physiologists, after discovering the histonomical and histochemical differences between the cellules of a normal man and those of a man of genius, may be able to discover the other cellular peculiarities which are the manifestation of a genius wholly artistic, or wholly scientific, in the same way as the botanist, after having discovered the species, distinguishes the variety

Some geniuses drew their inspiration from a source so rich and deep, that their mortal lives were too short to permit them to exhaust it, and they, after having accomplished their miracles, were exempted from the psychoses from which many others suffered who had been too prodigal of self.

It is and will ever be impossible to draw the exact line between great intelligence or talent, and genius; it is impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins; just as in the field of biology, it is impossible to say exactly where the plant ends and the animal begins.

This fact demonstrates that various intellectual manifestations are halts in a continuous evolution; it proves that the nervous system rises little by little from the mean average to the exquisite perfection which gives us intelligence, talent, and genius; as the force of the muscle augments ordinary force to exceptional strength, and leads us from the strong man to the athlete.

Genius belongs, therefore, to physiology, and not pathology. Illness may be able to manifest itself in consequence of a waste of nervous or muscular force, but it will be the effect and not the cause; it will be the fatality that weighs on genius, and also the expiation of genius itself, as those who follow certain professions are sometimes subjected to the maladies peculiar to their occupations.

The nervous cells of a man of genius are histonimi-

cally and histochemically differentiated from those of a normal man.

His nervous system is like an immense harp of a thousand sonorous chords, a species of photographic plate, sensitive to all colours, even to the ultra-violet which the normal eye cannot perceive.

On account of this, genius sees the light where others can only see darkness, discovers variety where others see only uniformity; divines unexpected events and clearly foretells them, and generates, in fact, the unexpected and the unheard-of, the prodigy and the miracle.

A tangle of exquisitely sensitive nerves, which nestle in his brain and ramify all over his body, like the shoots of the wistaria, more delicate, more divisible, and more flexible than the capillaries; such are the living and vibrating instruments by which genius accomplishes its prodigies.

But why is the nervous cellule more perfect in the man of genius? How is it that two normal beings generate another gifted with an exceptional nervous system? Was not Socrates the son of a stone-cutter and a midwife? Leonardo, of a notary and of a country wench? Burns of a poor farmer and of a peasant girl?

The ovule when fecundated contains all the elements which go to form the living creature. There is in it the substance which transforms itself little by little into muscles, sinews, nerves and bones. In the ovule,

in fact, there is the whole man, as in the seed there is the whole plant.

Now, it is sufficient that in this ovule the nervous element should predominate, in order that the child that is to be born may be gifted with a nervous system, rich and sensitive, possessing all the requisites of genius.

The man of genius is such from his birth ; in fact, he is already a genius in the womb, as the embryo from which the athlete is developed contains the initial vigour of his muscular system.

Men of genius are not degenerates who bear with them around the world the stigma of psychosis ; they are, on the contrary, neurologically speaking, complete organizations in which the nervous cells are, compared with those of normal persons, more perfect, and therefore, better able to receive sensations in their being, and transform them into inventions and discoveries, which are the prodigies of science, or into works of plastic or musical beauty, which are the prodigies of art.

We carry, therefore, the problem of genius into the field of experimental science, where alone there is a possibility of investigating it seriously and fruitfully.

Future physiologists may be able to discover with their microscope the histonomic and histochemic differentiation of genius, and prove my theory by experience, as the Copernican theory was proven by the discoveries of Galileo.

Even so I rise in opposition to a school which has become almost an authority on account of the number of its followers, and the library that has been written to uphold it. If I am alone, I am not unarmed, and, if I am too young to have produced much in print that I can cite as a reason for men's respecting my opinion, I look to the future to make amends, for I purpose to devote my efforts to the study and consideration of the works of others, uninfluenced by the foolish desire for fame at a time of life when study is most agreeable and profitable.

To describe genius is, as it were, to analyse the essence of the universe, to penetrate with the aid of our five senses into the viscera of Nature itself. He who dares this task issues from it, as the porcelain from the furnace, either destroyed or strengthened.

The great risk of the experiment has attracted me. To it I devote wholly and unhesitatingly the future of my life.

I am the slave of my destiny.

THE END



PRINTED AT THE EDINBURGH PRESS

9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET

